Message from the General Chairs

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Welcome to the 20th IEEE Virtual Reality Conference (VR 2013) being held March 16th - 20th, at the beautiful Walt Disney World Swan Resort in Orlando, Florida, VR 2013 adds two major highlights this year:

The inaugural IEEE VR Doctoral Consortium - a day-long event where promising PhD students present and get feedback on their research to senior members of IEEE VR.

The Florida Academic Virtual Reality Showcase (FLAVRS) - an evening event showcasing demonstrations of virtual reality research by some of Florida's leading universities.

Inspired by broad student interest and successful events at other conferences, we have added a Doctoral Consortium (DC) associated with IEEE Virtual Reality 2013, chaired by Si Jung "Jun" Kim and Frank Steinicke. The purpose of the DC is to provide a unique interactive and supportive mentoring opportunity for mid-level graduate students in VR, offering them a valuable opportunity to get the independent perspectives of senior individuals with a strong collective breadth and depth of knowledge, at a time in their studies when it can make a significant difference. Our DC occurs before the official start of IEEE VR (during the time of workshops and tutorials) to enable participants to start establishing networks and relationships with the IEEE research community. The schedule includes a dinner where the students can meet and encourage each other socially, followed by a day-long private workshop where they present their work to a panel of senior VR researchers and receive specific constructive feedback. Posters on their work will be exhibited with the other conference posters. We hope this begins a new DC tradition at VR.

The Florida Academic Virtual Reality Showcase (FLAVRS) is an exciting event organized in partnership between the University of Central Florida and the University of Florida. Supported in large part by a generous donation from the University of Central Florida, FLAVRS is scheduled for the evening on Monday, March 18th, in the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel. FLAVRS replaces the traditional university visit by conference attendees with a "reverse university site visit" - research groups are traveling to the conference to show their work. From universities around the state of Florida, labs conducting virtual reality and related research were invited to present their work at FLAVRS. The response was very strong and we are excited that over 25 demos from University of Florida, University of Central Florida, and University of South Florida will be participating in the FLAVRS event. Further, Orlando-area simulation and modeling, military, and education dignitaries are invited to join this family-friendly event. We anticipate a large, vibrant crowd that will engage the virtual reality researchers and conference attendees.

VR 2013 is also continuing the collocation with the 8th Symposium on 3D User Interfaces (3DUI) and the ACM Interactive 3D Graphics (I3D) conference. Effectively creating an interactive graphics week, the collocation of VR, 3DUI, and I3D provides attendees a significant "bang for your buck" by having a single place and concentrated time for all things related to interactive graphics. We would like to thank the General Chairs of IEEE 3DUI (Mark Billinghurst, Anatole Lécuyer, and Frank Steinicke) and the General Chais of ACM I3D (Marc Olano and Miguel Otaduy) for working with us to make this happen. Thanks to this tight grouping of related conferences, we continue to see a growth in paper submissions, international and local attendees, and exhibitors.

IEEE VR spans five days, with the first two days including five workshops and three tutorials. The following three days includes a strong program of papers, panels, posters, demos, and videos. Of special note is that this year featured both a high number of, and a higher than usual quality of, submissions. This results in a packed program that did require the panel sessions to coincide with a few paper sessions.

The Exhibition will start with an Exhibitor's Reception on Sunday night. The exhibition will be open from Monday through Tuesday evening. The shorter exhibition session this year was in response to feedback from exhibitors to more effectively utilize their resources to interact with IEEE VR attendees. This year, we welcome several new companies exhibiting with IEEE VR, including VR startups.

We hope you enjoy a full week of exciting programs starting with 3DUI, VR workshops and tutorials on Saturday-Sunday, IEEE VR on Monday-Wednesday and ACM I3D on Thursday-Saturday.

We are continuing the publication of all long papers in a special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (TVCG). We would like to thank the VGTC Executive Committee and its Chair, Klaus Mueller, and the current TVCG EIC, Ming C Lin. We also thank the VR program chairs Sabine Coquillart, Joseph J. LaViola Jr., Zhigeng Pan, and Dieter Schmalstieg, who assembled a very good program committee to support a two-phase review process. Further this year, some of the talks at the conference will be video recorded and archived (and available at no cost). We thank vgTC for their support of video recording of portions of the IEEE VR 2013 program.

We are excited that this year's conference is being held at the Walt Disney World resort in Orlando, FL. In addition to increasing interest and attendance by the VR research community, the location has allowed us to leverage the large simulation and modeling community to interact with the conference attendees and Florida researchers at the FLAVRS event. Further, Mark Mine, the Director of Technical Concept Design at Walt Disney Imagineering, is giving one of the keynote talks. Finally, all conference attendees will enjoy the spectacular IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth fireworks display at Epcot at the Walt Disney World Resort after the Tuesday night banquet.

The three keynote speakers, Jeremy Bailenson, Richard Satava, and Mark Mine, represent the multidisciplinary nature of VR research. Jeremy is a Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Stanford University and researches digital human representation. Richard is a Professor Emeritus of Surgery at the University of Washington Medical Center and has pioneered simulation and medicine. Mark is at Disney Imagineering working on integrating simulation and VR into commercial design and development. We anticipate this group of talented researchers will inspire the conference attendees as to the wide-ranging impact of the research done in VR.

Finally, we would like to thank the faculty, staff and students at the University of Central Florida's Institute for Simulation & Training and at the University of Florida who provided ongoing support over the year it took to organize the conference. We had an amazing team this year. Really. People were responsive, reliable, enthusiastic, and proactive. In particular, the student volunteer, local arrangements research demos chairs, and exhibits chairs this year went above and beyond the call of duty. Specifically we want to thank (alphabetically by last name) Karla Cobriero (overall), Mike Eakins ("space czar"), Aleshia Hayes (FLAVRS), Arjun Nagendran (demos and FLAVRS), Remo Pillat (power, Internet, and FLAVRS), Amela Sadagic (exhibitors). The other committee members, and many other volunteers, all deserve thanks from all of us. We would also like to recognize the thirty student volunteers (who were sponsored by a donation from the University of Florida), Paula Anderson—

our fantastic meeting planner from IEEE MCM, and the support and staff at the Walt Disney World Swan Hotel. We extend special thanks to the conference Publications Coordinator, Meghan Haley, from Junction Publishing. We thank the IEEE TVCG staff whose service and support was instrumental in converting all the proceedings materials to TVCG content for online.

We hope that you will all enjoy IEEE VR 2013, Orlando, and the Florida research community!