Guidelines for Organising DICTA

Version 1.1 alpha

1   Introduction

Digital Image Computing: Techniques and Applications (DICTA) is the major scientific event organized under the auspices of the Australian Pattern Recognition Society (APRS). The APRS is the Australian member society of the International Association for Pattern Recognition (IAPR).   The aim of this conference is to bring together national and international experts to share their experiences and to promote research and development in Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition.

The conference is hosted by an APRS member team in a major Australian city, often a capital city. Any team interested in making a proposal to host DICTA must proceed according to the rules outlined below. It is expected that Proposers familiarise themselves with the guidelines for organising DICTA first, to fully plan their bid. The submission of a bid implies full agreement with the guidelines and procedures for organising the conference as well as with the APRS constitution.

A call for bids to host a future DICTA will be issued by the APRS National Committee shortly before the current DICTA. Bids can then be made to host the DICTA that will take place two years from then. The selection of the conference venue will be made by the APRS BGM or Business meeting during the current DICTA (two years prior to the proposed conference).

The mission of DICTA is to be a quality International CVPR Conference hosted in Australia. It could be compared to BMVC which is a national conference that has achieved high scientific ranking even though it never travels outside the UK. As scientific community event, changing location and organizing team is a measure of quality. This document is intended to ensure that international standards and participant expectations will be met despite regular changes in the organizing team.

2   General Information

2.1   Timing and Location

The conference is held every year, in different geographic cities, preferably with a rotation from one area to another. DICTA usually takes place sometime between late-November to mid-December but deviations may occur depending on special conditions. Information on previous DICTAs can be found on the APRS website (www.aprs.org.au).

DICTA should be held in a quality venue such as a hotel or convention centre so that delegates can enjoy the experience and recommend the event to others. Institutional support is encouraged as long as this does not encroach upon DICTA's reputation as an independent scientific event. Holding the event at a research centre or university is not recommended as this is generally not pleasant nor convivial for international guests.

Moreover such a venue risks DICTA being seen as a "captured" event rather than being an inclusive and independent scientific event.

2.2   Language

The language of presentation and publication of DICTA is English.

2.3   Hosts

A DICTA is hosted by a team of people usually from a variety of institutions. The team should include at least the General Chair and Program Chair.

2.4   Scientific Program Organisation

A DICTA is often organised as a number (usually 3) of parallel scientific tracks, usually over three days. The scientific program is organised mainly by the Track or Area Chairs, co-ordinated by the overall conference Program Chair. The Track Chairs are responsible for appointing Program Committee members, for the assignment of manuscripts for review, making accept/reject decisions for manuscripts and for organising the structure of the scientific program of their track (liaising with the conference Program Chair). The Hosts are expected to provide assistance to the Track Chairs such as the management of paper submissions and collection/dissemination of reviews.

2.5   Financial Responsibility

The Hosts are responsible for financial arrangements and associated risks. The APRS cannot accept unlimited liabilities with respect to DICTA. A loan can be provided by the APRS to the Hosts to cover some of the initial expenses. Official APRS approval of the DICTA budget is a prerequisite for this loan and the maximum amount is AUD5000. The borrowed funds have to be returned after the conference with 20% interest in the event of a profit. In addition, the organizers must pay the APRS one year of APRS membership dues for each Australian delegate to the conference.

3   DICTA Organisation

3.1   Budget and other financial matters

Upon request, the APRS National Committee will issue a spreadsheet which can be used to draft the budget for DICTA as well as to report the accounts after the end of the conference. When presenting the budget, the following points must be addressed.

3.1.1   Income
- Registration (early/late fees, APRS member/non-member fees, student fees);
- Expected grants and sponsorships;
- APRS and other loans;
- Exhibits and demonstrations;
- Excess page charges (if any).

3.1.2   Expenditure
- Venue hire and other infrastructure (e.g., audio-visual equipment);
- Insurance and security;
- Production and shipping of proceedings;
- Secretariat, publicity, communication, mailing;

- Conference Banquet, Conference reception, coffee breaks;
- Invited speakers;
- Expenses of Track Chairs for face-to-face meeting (if any)
- Various awards
- APRS Membership Fees for all Australian Delegates

Notes:
1. Full registration shall include proceedings (possibly in electronic form) and banquet;
2. Discount on registration fee for APRS members shall be at least 5%;
3. There shall be a reduced student fee, which includes proceedings (in electronic form only, at least) and banquet.

3.2   Paper Review Protocol

The peer-review process for papers submitted to DICTA is one of the most important determinants of the scientific quality of the conference. As such, the whole process must be managed by scientifically knowledgeable people, i.e., the Program Chair and the Track Chairs. Under no circumstances must a non-scientific organiser (e.g., a commercial conference organiser) be involved in the selection of reviewers and in the assignment of papers to them.

The use of a web-based paper submission and review management system is essential. Test runs of the system must be performed well in advance of the date when submissions are due to start being accepted. There is considerable expertise within the APRS National Committee in using such conference management software which the organisers can draw upon.

It is recommended that the specification of the format and length of papers submitted is as close a possible to that of the final papers to be included in the proceedings. This practice enables the review of a more representative (of the final) version of the papers and enables early checking for adherence to formatting guidelines.

It must be noted that the members of the Program Committee are chosen by Track/Area Chairs as prominent experts in their field and are expected to be the primary pool of reviewers. Each PC member will be allocated a number of papers by the Chairs for which they are responsible for producing reviews. If, at their discretion, PC members can identify competent reviewers outside the PC, they can delegate some papers (that are possibly not entirely within their field of expertise). PC members are, however, still responsible for the quality and timeliness of the reviews allocated originally to them.

It is very important that the collection of Program Committee members demonstrates strong international representation (suggest at least 1/3), reflecting the international stature and ethos of DICTA.

Typically, the protocol for the paper review should be as follows:

1. Track Chairs appoint PC members well in advance (at least six months before the submission deadline).
2. After the submission deadline, the Conference Secretariat makes full papers available to Program Chair and Track Chairs.

3. Track Chairs assign three PC members to each paper.
4. Conference Secretariat makes available to each PC member their allocation of full papers along with review forms; PC members act as reviewers or, if appropriate, appoint competent additional reviewers and delegate some papers to them.
5. Reviewers return reviews to Chairs via the manuscript/review management system.
6. Chairs accept/reject papers and, together with the Program Chair, assign them to sessions, thus constructing the scientific program. In setting the acceptance threshold, the Program Chair and Track Chairs should refer to the Quality section under "Good Practice" below. It is advised that a face-to-face meeting of the Track Chairs takes place to make final decisions on acceptances and rejections and to construct a draft program. The Hosts are responsible for reimbursing reasonable expenses incurred by the Chairs in order to attend this meeting.
7. Notification concerning acceptance distributed to authors along with reviewers' comments. Reviewers must remain anonymous.

Papers submitted by Track Chairs or other Conference Chairs are generally handled outside the paper management system by a separate process in order to avoid organizers having access to the information on their own papers.

Notes: From experience, the following are considered good practice:

- The invitation letter to potential PC members should briefly state what is expected of them (i.e., approximately how many papers of how many pages each may be allocated to them to review over what time period). The letter should also give the invitee the option to refuse, possibly recommending another colleague.
- The number of papers allocated to a Program Committee member for review must reflect reasonable expectations of time and effort spent and must take into account other workload constraints. It should not be assumed that PC members can always delegate a large proportion of their reviews allocation.
- Reminders to reviewers that have not completed their allocated reviews must be sent at suitable intervals before the due date.

3.3 Timetable

The following table provides the guidelines for the timing of strategic actions:

	Months prior to conference
Selection of required skeleton organisational structure for bid preparation	30, or 6 months prior to DICTA(n-2)
Proposal to APRS National Committee	25, or 1 month prior to DICTA(n-2)
Selection of venue by SGM/BGM	24, or at DICTA(n-2)
Budget approval and request for APRS loan	21, or 3 months after DICTA(n-2)
Approaching industry, government and other parties for	18

donations. Organising website, inviting PC members, arranging IAPR and IEEE endorsement.	
Initial progress report and updated budget to APRS National Committee	13, or 1 months prior to DICTA(n-1)
First call for papers (email, APRS website, IAPR website, IAPR Newsletter, IEEE calendar, etc.), poster of conference	12, or DICTA(n-1)
Second call for papers	9
Final call for papers	8
Deadline for paper submission	6 (absolutely latest)
Face-to-face meeting of Track Chairs	4
Notification to authors concerning acceptance	4
Publication of authors and titles of accepted papers on website	4
Detailed (draft) program on website	3
Deadline for camera-ready paper	3
	Months after conference
Report for inclusion in IAPR/ APRS Newsletter due	1
Financial report and detailed statistics due	6
Return of APRS loan (if any) and payment of APRS membership dues	6

4   Good Practice

DICTA is the premier Australian international conference in the field of Pattern Recognition, providing a unique overview of research directions in a wide variety of subfields. It is also the venue which is most important for the development of the next generation of researchers.

The inclusive ethos of DICTA and its traditions must be maintained and enhanced wherever possible. The following are some objectives that DICTA organisers must adopt as far as possible.

4.1   Quality

Ensuring the quality of the DICTA is paramount to maintaining and enhancing the significance of DICTA to its participants and its reputation in the wider community.

A significant measure of quality is that the program committee should comprise about 1/3 international researchers to ensure that papers meet international standards. Another is that the Hosts should invite leading international keynote speakers.

The most important aspect of quality is that of papers presented at the conference. Care must be taken not to allow other factors (e.g., budget balance or contract with venue) to dilute this by accepting more papers than the professional judgment of the Program Chair and Track Chairs dictates.

4.2   Low Participation Cost

One of the foremost facilitating factors for achieving and enhancing inclusiveness and accessibility is the cost effectiveness of participation. The Hosts are strongly encouraged to achieve this through:

- **Controlling costs.** The Hosts are expected to make cost-effective arrangements for hosting DICTA. The desirability factor of the conference location and social program (e.g., banquet) should be seen as a bonus that is affordable only if there is sufficient sponsorship/subsidy (see below). It is not seen as good practice to pass on the majority of the cost of such secondary items to the participants. Organisational expenses should be minimised by using reliable volunteers as far as possible and keeping the number of non-fee paying participants to an absolute minimum. Finally, it is recommended to set up conference bank accounts with "non-profit" or "charity" status so as to minimise (or avoid) paying bank fees and taxes. To that effect, an academic institution associated with the Hosts may be able to handle these accounts within its financial system.
- **Sponsorship.** The Hosts are encouraged to actively seek as high levels of sponsorship/subsidies from external organisations as possible. These can be funds from grant-awarding bodies as well as from other commercial and governmental/non-profit organisations. Ideas, contact names and advice can be sought from the APRS National Committee.
- **Student incentives.** Discounted registration fees and provision of inexpensive accommodation for students is essential.

4.3   Visibility

It is the responsibility of the Hosts to ensure the high visibility of DICTA. It is mandatory for the Hosts to seek IAPR endorsement and IEEE endorsement. These endorsements are not automatic and should be obtained as soon as possible. The APRS National Committee can advise on the procedures to follow.   IEEE endorsement is free and the APRS will bear the costs of IAPR endorsement.

This can be achieved by judicious advertisement in quality publications as well as mailing lists. It must be noted that conscious effort must be made not to over-advertise in mailing lists. The best channels will be the mailing lists of the IAPR member organisations and the list from the previous DICTA. Advertisement in the IAPR newsletter is essential. The possibility of advertising DICTA in IEEE Computer and in various journals must be investigated (bearing in mind it has to be cost-effective). Conference posters can also be

produced, ready for distribution at relevant events attended by members of the wider research community.

The visibility and availability of the proceedings papers is an important issue that it is not only functional but it enhances the visibility of DICTA. A contract with the IEEE-CS Press (publishers of several previous DICTA proceedings) usually allows the contents of the proceedings to be hosted on-line at the Conference website and that authors can list/distribute their own papers, provided the IEEE-CS copyright notice is included in each paper (the IEEE-CS can provide the PDFs of the papers with that notice).

4.4 Accessibility

Participants must be able to attend the conference without any restriction of nationality (in terms of refused entry to the country), political situation etc. This is one of the key principles of the APRS and IAPR.

4.5 Professionalism

DICTA and any associated activity of the Hosts is expected to adhere to and project high standards of professionalism. On a higher level, the best practice on as outlined by professional societies (e.g., IEEE) must be followed. On a daily organisational level, it is expected that the Hosts will fulfil their duties as outlined in this document. In particular, Hosts must be responsive to requests for information by the APRS National Committee.

4.6 Continuity

It is strongly recommended that DICTA organisers have a face-to-face debriefing and handover meeting with at least their immediate predecessors (probably towards the end of the preceding DICTA). To ensure continuity at all levels, the handover should take place at all organisational levels (i.e., between Hosts as well as between Track Chairs and other officials).

4.7 Prizes/Awards at DICTA

A number of awards are usually associated with DICTA. There are two prizes/awards that originate from the APRS and are presented during DICTA. These are:

- Best Paper Prize sponsored by APRS and IAPR
- APRS Best Student Paper Prize

Responsibility for the advertisement and selection of these awards rests with the organizing committee in liaison with the APRS National Committee.

4.8 Proceedings

Proceedings should be published by a major publisher under an ISBN number. The publisher will store copies of the proceedings and will issue copies on request to libraries and other requesting parties. The publisher should ensure that ICPR papers are listed in major engineering and science databases such as INSPEC. The Hosts must ensure that DICTA papers are available through a recognised digital library and listed in major electronic resources, such as DBLP and CiteSeer.

It is strongly recommended that the proceedings are available in electronic form in addition to, or instead of, the printed form. The electronic form can be CDs or USB key or (see also *Visibility* – Section 4.3 below) a free access website (at least for registered participants). The publisher may allow the latter, so the Hosts are encouraged to take advantage of this.

Note: *The IEEE Computer Society Press usually allows the posting of full camera-ready papers on the conference website as long as the IEEE copyright notice is included. The Hosts are strongly encouraged to investigate and implement this entitlement as it is considered a very useful benefit for researchers in the fields covered by APRS.*

4.9 After the Conference

After the conference, a detailed financial account shall be submitted to the *APRS National Committee*.

In addition to the financial report, detailed statistics about the conference (including the list of participants and their contact details) must be submitted to the *APRS National Committee.*

As a condition of IAPR endorsement, a report for inclusion in the IAPR Newsletter should be submitted to the IAPR Newsletter Editor. The same report should be sent to the IAPR webmaster for inclusion in the IAPR website.