Everybody seemed to enjoy the two days at the Catamaran Hotel in San Diego during ISD's 3rd retreat. The beautiful beach-front location of the hotel was a nice change after several years at the UCLA Lake Arrowhead Conference Center (at least getting to San Diego did not include reckless bus drivers and slippery mountain roads 😅).

In addition to learning about new research directions and new people in our division, we discovered quite a few artistic talents under the disguise of computer scientists and programmers. The performances of opera singers, jazz players, comedians, and other talented entertainers were surprisingly professional!

However, I am afraid that there was one person who did not enjoy our retreat... Did you pay attention to the face of bartender who was supposed to serve at the open bar during the evening of the social program? That poor employee of Catamaran Hotel probably had the worst day in the history of his job - he was completely ignored by the whole ISD crowd. His sound sleep was interrupted only once by Lauri, who asked for a glass of water 😅.

For those who could not get enough from comparing baby pictures of their co-workers with what they turned into after growing up, I set up a web site devoted entirely to the 1999 Retreat with pictures and some presentations from the social program at [http://www.isi.edu/divisions/div3/retreat99](http://www.isi.edu/divisions/div3/retreat99). This page is still being built, so if you don’t find what you need, come back later!
New Faces in ISD
We are pleased to announce ISD's new arrivals:

Casper Eyckelhof

Although I will be back in The Netherlands when you read this, I'll try to let you know who I am and use the same opportunity to say goodbye.

I'm a 22-year-old student in computer science [1] at the University of Twente [2] in Enschede, The Netherlands. That's the city where Grolsch [3] beer is produced. In the 4th year we have to go for a few months to another university or a company. I decided that I wanted to go to the United States, mainly because I had never been there before and a lot is happening in the field of computer science. Finally, I wanted to practice my English.

In Enschede I am studying at the department of "Tool, Kennis en Interactie" [4] (Language, Knowledge and Interaction), and I was looking for something related to that. My professor, Anton Nijholt, recommended ISI as a nice place (and he was right!). He got me in contact with Lewis Johnson, for whom I'm doing some work on Adele right now. First, I've implemented lip synchronization for Adele with the "old" speech engine (MS Whisper). After that I've had a lot of trouble with companies offering new (and better) speech synthesis software. One of them told me, after I found out that their product did not comply to the standard they claimed to be supporting, "I am afraid that our product is SAPI compatible and not compliant, an area in which the documentation you have received has clearly been misleading." But I have been able to hook up another speech engine to the existing system. Finally, I've started working on a model to improve the prosody of the speech, and at this moment (I'm writing this on Jan. 14) I'm not sure how far I will get with this before I fly back home.

This is, in short, what I've been doing here, and even shorter, what I do back home in Enschede. If you want to see how I live at the only campus in The Netherlands: our house has a web site [5]. The texts are in Dutch, but there are a lot of pictures (>100).

I'm staying here at Ulf's place, which is just a few minutes from ISI by bike: being a Dutchman I have to live up to some expectations of course...(and I can't afford a car either). And you people did a great job arranging a real earthquake during the first night I was here (October 16: Hector Mines quake). The first week I was here, I also received an email from Narbik asking for basketball players, which was perfect, because I was planning to join a team here during my stay.

Another great thing about ISI is the location, Southern California. I almost skipped a winter this way (lets hope spring starts early this year in The Netherlands). Putting up Christmas lights and flags with a snowman does not mean you really have a winter here!

Goodbye to everyone, especially the people at the daily 9th floor lunch room for the nice discussions and games, Fanny and Jane for helping me with my visa, Ulf for not letting me be homeless (and more) and finally the sun for doing such a great job.

I really enjoyed my stay here and I'll miss you.

PS. My email address in The Netherlands is c.j.eyckelhof@student.utwente.nl for at least another year. After that joost@dnd.utwente.nl will probably be OK for many years.

1 Computer Science: http://www.cs.utwente.nl/
2 University of Twente: http://www.utwente.nl/
3 Grolsch: http://www.grolsch.nl/
4 Parlevink: http://parlevink.cs.utwente.nl/
5 Our house: http://joost.student.utwente.nl/flat67/
Neelesh Gokhale

I come from a city called Pune in India. After completing my Bachelor degree in Electronics at the University of Pune, I worked with 'D E Shaw & Co.' doing some amazing stuff in Web Applications. There I decided to continue with a Masters in 'Signal and Image Processing' [USC-MSEE]. My current interests are in the field of Multimedia storage, transmission, and retrieval.

Has it ever happened to you that a single thing had a huge impact on your life? I saw my first stereogram about 6 years ago. It was like magic, it literally opened my eyes to a new dimension. "Very advanced technology is almost indistinguishable from magic" (somebody very famous said this). I spent the next three years learning almost everything about computers and computer programming to make good stereograms. Thus, Software Programming and Image Processing became my life. Even today I collect stereograms and immerse myself into them at a blink of any eye.

It is a great privilege for me to work here at ISI and observe cutting edge research being applied to real life problems. I can almost envision the future. Currently I am working for Milind Tambe on the integration of Palm VII, GPS Receiver and the Multi-Agent team framework (TEAMCORE project). I seriously believe that Palm size computing is the next wave. Integration of these devices with the Internet and thus making them remote interfaces (with powerful multimedia & gaming capability @) will enable amazing new applications (similar to what we are currently exploring in the TEAMCORE project) to bring myriad of services to our fingertips.

Siva Jayaraman

I got my Bachelor of Engineering degree in Computer Science from the University of Madras, INDIA. I came to LA in the fall of ’99 to work towards a Masters degree in Computer Science.

I come from one of the oldest cities in India called Madras. It's a small city as far as cities go, roughly about a quarter the size of LA but has about six times the population..... which means a lot people ahead of you in line everywhere..... The most notable feature of Madras is the beach - it's the second longest beach in the world, but you have to travel a little away from the city to leave behind the masses and find a strip to yourself.

I love LA, but am still coming to terms with SC.... My American experience has been great so far, but there's a whole lot of issues that I need to come to terms with. It's so different to be in a place where people (most of them) actually obey the law!!! I was busted for jaywalking twice in one week when I just came in!!!

I have a keen interest in all things unnatural - occultism, mysticism, Extra-terrestrial Intelligence and paranormal behavior (I hate the X - Files!!!).

Music is the primary reason for me being even a little bit sane... many, many moons ago I used to play the flute (Indian Classical).... As far as enjoying music goes, I listen to just about anything, although I have a special passion for Jazz and Blues. Lately, I have acquired an interest in Celtic tunes.

My South Indian affiliations go only as far as my diet..... I maintain to this day that no cuisine beats a South Indian meal... my initial forays into the
kitchen has not burnt down the house (yet), but in fact, has improved over time (i.e. the food doesn’t come out black in color any more).

My long-term goal is to graduate (by hook or crook) and if possible become a little more responsible (just to please my mom). My more immediate goal is to drive on the 405 without injury to self and/or others!

Vinay Kulkarni

Born in what was then known as the "Garden city of India" and now known as the "Silicon Valley of India" (I'm talking about a place called Bangalore, a city in southern India), I grew up with both nature and technology around me. I got hooked on computers during my schooling days, mainly because I could play (and hack for cheat keys) interesting computer games. And later I realized that I could write a few good programs and have more fun pulling the Operating Systems down.

I did my schooling in Bangalore and Delhi. And then an engineering college near Bangalore picked me up since they believed that I did not deserve a lot of free time and relaxation. At the National Institute of Engineering, Mysore, I had a chance to study communication technology and was introduced to computer networks for the first time. At that time, many people in India still used to exchange data on floppy disks and everyone had opinions about the best disks around which could better withstand data corruption. And I was taken by the concept of having a network and its myriad features and advantages.

After graduation I was again picked up by a leading IT company in India - Tata Infotech. Working in this field is fun. After an intensive training on various platforms, we got to work on live software projects. The 2-year experience was fantastic. I got to work on quite a few projects and to gain good team-work experience and software design skills. I learnt about the ISO standards writing quality software and reinforced my programming skills. While working there I realized my interests in Computer Networks and decided to study further with a focus in Networking.

USC got my application and it too quickly decided that I was undeserving of free time and the easy life. So USC picked me up. I am now studying in the EE department with Computer Networks as my specialization. I am also working as a Research Assistant in the Ariadne project because Craig Knoblock guessed that I had a little free time cached away! At ISI, I am developing GUI for the Ariadne project, using Swing Java features.

I like to travel and to listen to music during leisure. And I am one of the few graduate students who believe that summers are not for internships but for splashing around in water. I'm not sure, however, if I would follow what I preach.

There are three engineers in a car; an electrical engineer, a chemical engineer and a Microsoft engineer. Suddenly the car just stops by the side of the road, and the three engineers look at each other wondering what could be wrong.

The electrical engineer suggests stripping down the electronics of the car and trying to trace where a fault might have occurred.

The chemical engineer, not knowing much about cars, suggests that maybe the fuel is becoming emulsified and getting blocked somewhere.

Then, the Microsoft engineer, not knowing much about anything, comes up with a suggestion: If we close all the windows, get out, get back in, then open the windows again, maybe it'll work?"
Hayoung Lee

I am a new GRA working on the TEAMCORE project with Milind Tambe. I started my Ph.D. program at USC in the Fall 1999. I had no idea what AI was, but I always wanted to study the area of AI because it sounded as if it would make me intelligent. I've worked for Korea Telecom for about 7 years since I graduated from San Jose State University with a master degree in Computer Science in 1992. I felt that I needed some fresh new ideas so here I am back in school. I was so amazed that there were so many freeways crossing here and there in Los Angeles. When I was in San Jose, there were only 2 freeways to remember, the 101 and 280.

I am a mother of a 4 year old son, Sunny, who is still confused of what "Sunny outside" means. Sometimes I feel guilty that I deprived him of his right to be with his best friends in Korea. But then I console myself that I will give him more chances to experience new things. You may guess correctly that I am very good at self-conflict or causing problems. That's another reason why I need to study AI.

I envy the voice and the style of Sting, Whitney Houston and enjoy singing at the singing rooms in Koreatown. I like movies in romantic comedy style and travels. My favorite place to visit is Montreal in Canada, where I found the mixture of French, English, and American touch. My husband, a professor at a junior college in Korea, promised to buy me 5 houses in San Francisco, Seoul and Jeju Island in Korea, Montreal, and Fiju island with all the valuables I want in the future. I am very happy and busy to imagine and decorate the interior and the exterior of houses there. Do you think my husband is too ambitious? Well, I am very happy to be here and looking forward to making good friends.

Aseem Mohanty

Background: BS in Computer Engineering from Gujarat University, Dharmasinh Desai Institute of Technology, Nadiad (a small town 20 km from Anand, famous for India’s white revolution - milk and poultry).

Info @ on my life can be found at http://www-scf.usc.edu/~amohanty (Follow the link that says LIFE.)

Research interests: primarily machine learning as applied to robotics.

Hobbies: The usual: books (fiction and non-fiction, philosophy- bet there are lots with THAT interest around here); music - classic rock and hard rock; travelling - have been to five countries (not a lot but seems to be a good start); and, of course, computers (haven't figured out completely how one works yet).

Perfume

"I want my husband to pay more attention to me. Got any perfume that smells like a computer?"
Ranjit Nair

I did my B.E. in Computer Science in India and then worked for a year before I decided to make life more difficult for myself by studying some more. So I headed off for America in search of the American dream (not true but it sure makes for good reading). I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at USC and prepared myself for years of back-breaking toil. I was told this would mean a lot of sacrifices and plenty of fast food. But just a few visits to McDonalds (I have used McDonalds as a prime representative of its class) convinced me that if I was to get through this in one piece I would have to don my apron and wield my ladle. I have developed a passion for cooking (that's the way I am with most things that I do) and take it very seriously. I believe in living on the edge, and I don't mean eating what I cook. Nor is this an indication of how I work. I enjoy trekking, skydiving and would never baulk at a chance to do hand-gliding or white-water rafting. My research interests include Intelligent Agents, Knowledge Representation and Natural Language Processing. So that's me: self-proclaimed chef, adrenalin-junkie and AI geek.

Paul Scerri

I am originally from Melbourne, Australia. I started my University education at Melbourne University two years into an engineering degree. I decided engineering wasn't for me and switched to RMIT University and a Computer Science course. It was at RMIT that I first got involved in the RoboCup competition, building a team for the 1997 RoboCup World Cup as a final year project. Lawrence Cavedon and Lin Padgham, my supervisors at RMIT, convinced me that I should go into graduate studies. While on holiday with some friends in Thailand, Lin ended up in Sweden on personal matters. While there, she arranged a graduate student position for me at Linkoping University (just south of Stockholm) working on a data exchange format for use between European aerospace companies. So one week after my final exams in Melbourne, I was in Sweden stuck in the middle of arguments between engineers from England, Germany, France, Italy and Sweden. Needless to say I was soon back working with intelligent agents.

My current research focus is on Adjustable Autonomy. The idea is for humans to have some control over intelligent agents without having to take back complete control. We have a prototype agent development and adjustable autonomy currently being tested with Saab's air-combat simulator. I've also stayed heavily involved in RoboCup, both as participant and organizer.

Away from work my interests include travelling, playing sports (mainly Australian Rules Football - a little like Gaelic football or sort of a cross between...
ISD Publications

Magazines:

The "New Scientist" magazine (Jan 15, 2000) published an article on the research conducted by M. Tambe & H. Jung. The article entitled "Just argue it out - computer conflicts need not lead to disaster" discusses their research on computer conflict resolution via argumentation.


Journal publications:

Best paper selection: "The Journal of Autonomous Agents and Multi-agent Systems" has selected a paper entitled "Experiences acquired in the design of RoboCup teams" (Authors: S. Marsella, J. Adibi, Y. Alonaizan, G. Kaminka, I. Muslea & M. Tambe) from ISD for its special issue on the "Best of Agents'99 conference".

Best paper selection: "The Journal of Autonomous Agents and Multi-agent Systems" has also selected "Towards flexible teamwork in persistent teams" (co-authors M. Tambe & W. Zhang) for its special issue on the "Best of the International Conference on Multi-agent systems, 1998".

G. Kaminka & M. Tambe, Robust agent teams via socially attentive monitoring. "Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research (JAIR) (to appear)"


W Zhang, "Iterative state-space reduction for flexible computation", (accepted to AIJ).


In Conferences:


J. Kim & Y. Gil, "User Studies of an Interdependency-Based Interface for Acquiring Problem-Solving Knowledge"


W. Zhang & R. Hill, "A Template-Based and Pattern-Driven Approach to Situation Awareness and Assessment in Virtual Humans".
R. Hill, J. Gratch, & P. Rosenbloom, "Flexible Group Behavior: Virtual Commanders for Synthetic Battlespaces."

J. Gratch, Emile, "Marshalling Passions in Training and Education."

J. Gratch, "Modeling the interplay between emotion and decision making", 9th Conference on Computer Generated forces and behavioral simulation

I. Muslea, S. Minton, & C. Knoblock, "Selective sampling with co-testing." The CRM Workshop on "Selecting and Combining Models with Machine Learning Algorithms", April 12-14, Montreal, Canada

S. Marsella, L. Johnson & C LaBore, "Interactive Pedagogical Drama Dataflow Plan Execution for Information Agents."


J. Ambite & C. Knoblock, Invited book chapter, the book is on intelligent agents stuff, final title of the book and publication date unknown.


Books:

L. Johnson, a book chapter "Natural Interaction with Animated Agents" for J. Bradshaw (Ed.), Handbook of Agent Technology (AAA/IMI Press).

(see details at http://www.isi.edu/isd/zhang/book.html)

ISD Tidbits

Tom Kaminka was born on November 3, 1999 at 7.11 (pounds) 3.491 (kilos).

The most recent addition is Emily Lauren Grier, who was born on February 9 at 7.5 lbs.

Ed Hovy was recently promoted to the rank of Research Associate Professor in USC's Computer Science department. Ed's promotion recognizes his distinguished record of research and service in Artificial Intelligence.

Naveen Ashish passed his thesis defense on January 4 with flying colors. He accepted a position of Visiting Faculty at the University of Georgia.

Jafar Adibi has passed his quals on February 14! (He probably asked the cupids to make the committee fall in love with him just for one Valentine's day 😊)

Tanya Schenk received a Master's in Political Theory Science from the University of Hawaii. She is finally getting her 1st degree black belt and a pilot's license. So if you see somebody waiving at you from a plane with "Hello Kitty" signs all over it – it must be Tanya during her flying lessons.

Leaving ISD

Marcelo Tallis left ISD to work with Bob Balzer in Div 1. His new office is 1036 and his extension number is the same.

Andre Valente left ISI to pursue his career with a start-up company.

We recently lost one project leader Bob MacGregor (although he was quickly replaced with Hans Chalupsky) due to his new work at a start-up insurance company.

Dan DiPasquio just left a comfortable west-side window office in order to polish his Spanish while traveling in South America. Rumors say he will reside in Guatemala for several weeks.

Project Leader's memories of Dan's job performance: "One morning I opened a newspaper and there was a front-page picture of my project member being arrested!"

Just look how happy he is to leave ISI and get that sweatshirt! And that is the same person who placed all those demotivational posters around ISI. How demotivating!!!
## Upcoming AI Seminars

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<th>Speaker</th>
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<td>March 10, 2000</td>
<td>Christian Freksa, UC Berkeley</td>
<td>&quot;Communicating With Autonomous Mobile Robots by Means of Schematic Maps&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24, 2000</td>
<td>Thomas Dietterich</td>
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<td>March 31, 2000</td>
<td>William Cohen, AT&amp;T Shannon Laboratory</td>
<td>&quot;WHIRL: A Formalism for Representing Web Data&quot;</td>
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<td>April 14, 2000</td>
<td>Milind Tambe</td>
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<td>April 21, 2000</td>
<td>David Heckerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10, 2000</td>
<td>Stuart Russell, UC Berkeley</td>
<td>&quot;Object identification as probabilistic inference&quot;</td>
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## Candid Pictures

Curious to see what others do here, at ISD, during these beautiful sunny/rainy days at the Marina? Take a look at what we found...

- Chin-Yew prays to the Goddess of Summarization
- Wei-Min is hiding his treasures before moving to another office.

## Outgoing Mail @ ISD

For everyone’s convenience an outgoing mailbox was placed near ps9f in room 952. The mail will be picked up Monday - Friday at 3:30 PM. Any outgoing mail placed in the box after 3:30 PM will go out the next business day. Furthermore, a mailbox was removed from the smaller copy room at the south end of the floor (room 964).

P.S. Don't forget to put the red flag Up!