Working Conference on Software Visualization Charter

The Working Conference on Software Visualization (VISSOFT) is dedicated to the free exchange of information among researchers and practitioners interested in applying visualization techniques to various tasks of software development and maintenance.

I. History

VISSOFT is a continuation, and consolidation, of several major conference series and events related to research in the area of software visualization. In order to place the current evolution of VISSOFT in context, a brief outline of its history is given next. Additional material pertaining to this history is publicly available online at http://www.softvis.org.

Dagstuhl Seminar on "Software Visualization" (2011): Increasing interest in software visualization, combined with developments in the related fields of data and information visualization, on the one hand, and program analysis on the other hand, have led to the organization of a Dagstuhl seminar dedicated to the emerging field of software visualization. The results of this seminar have laid out the foundations for the software visualization field as a separate research discipline. These results are described in a Dagstuhl seminar report and a book (*Software Visualization*, International Seminar Dagstuhl Castle, Germany, May 20-25, 2001, Revised Lectures, Springer LNCS 2269 (ed. S. Diehl), 2002).

VISSOFT workshop (2002-2011): Following the Dagstuhl seminar, interest in software visualization has grown and led to the creation of the IEEE International Workshop on Visualizing Software for Understanding and Analysis (VISSOFT). The workshop has had six editions from 2002 up to and including 2011, organized roughly on a bi-yearly basis. One of the aims of this workshop has been to provide a platform for new emerging ideas to be presented and discussed by participants in a true workshop (working group) format.

SOFTVIS symposium (2003-2010): In parallel with the creation of the VISSOFT workshop, a symposium on software visualization (SOFTVIS) was created, and held for five editions, on a roughly by-yearly basis, typically in alternating years with VISSOFT. In contrast to VISSOFT, which was sponsored by IEEE, SOFTVIS was sponsored by ACM (except for its last

edition of 2010 when SOFTVIS was jointly sponsored by ACM and IEEE). Also, in contrast to VISSOFT, the flavor of SOFTVIS has been closer to a classical conference featuring more mature research results, rather than a workshop for discussing new emerging results.

VISSOFT Working Conference on Software Visualization (2013-present): Around 2012, the software visualization community has seen an increasing convergence of the audiences, aims, and goals of SOFTVIS and VISSOFT. This has led to the decision of the two steering committees of the two events to join their forces and create a single annual event focusing on software visualization. This event was called the Working Conference on Software Visualization (VISSOFT). The steering committee of the new working conference has been created by joining members part of the steering committees of SOFTVIS and VISSOFT. To date, the Working Conference on Software Visualization, to be called VISSOFT in the remainder of this document, remains the main international event on software visualization. The new VISSOFT event has known three editions (2013, 2014, 2015). VISSOFT is sponsored by the IEEE Computer Society's Technical Council on Software Engineering (TCSE).

II. Definitions

A year is defined to be the period of time from the start of one conference to the beginning of the next. This period will normally be close to a calendar year.

The "conference chairs" are the general chair(s) and the program chair(s) of a conference.

III. Steering Committee

The steering committee exists to guide the conference, preserve its flavor and integrity over the long term, and carry out the other responsibilities listed below in III.A.

Except where otherwise directed by this charter, the steering committee conducts its business and meetings under the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

A. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the steering committee include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing a history and "organizational memory" for the conference, so that experiences can be passed from one year to the next.
2. Selecting future conference chairs, locations, and dates.
3. Directing changes in conference scope and sponsorship.
4. Selecting and retiring its members and chair
5. Maintaining and evolving this charter.

B. Meetings

The steering committee will meet each year (physically or virtually) during or at least 2 weeks after the conference, with the central goal to select the chairs, location, and dates of the conference at least one year in advance. Other meetings and discussions will be held by email, subject to the conditions below.

Once appointed, conference chairs of the current and next edition of the conference may attend steering committee meetings as nonvoting advisors.

C. Quorum and Voting

Quorum is defined in two ways: quorum at the meeting held each year, and quorum for votes held through electronic means.

During the annual meeting and only for the purposes of selecting the conference chairs, location, and dates for the conference, quorum will simply be the steering committee members who attend the meeting. This is in order to simplify and expedite the selection process, to ensure that future conference chairs will have the opportunity to be notified as early as possible, and to stress the importance of steering committee members attending the meeting. The steering committee chair will contact all steering committee members to inform them of the time, medium, and location of the meeting.

For meetings and votes held through electronic means, quorum requires at least a one week advance notice, at least a one week voting period for any motions, AND at least 50% participation of the steering committee. These decisions include such issues as changes to conference chairs, locations, and dates, such as might be necessitated by the resignation of a conference chair or unavailability of suitable facilities at a location.

All decisions of the steering committee are made by majority vote, except in cases where this charter explicitly dictates.

D. Membership

1) Composition: The steering committee will have a maximum of six members. The current steering committee is formed by the members listed in the 2015 VISSOFT proceedings. The steering committee is led by a steering committee chair (Sec. IIIE).

2) Terms: Steering committee members are elected for five-year terms. They can serve two consecutive terms at most, after which they are not eligible to be elected again for the third consecutive term. This aims to ensure a good balance between preservation of knowledge and bringing in new experience.

3) Automatic retirement: Any steering committee member who misses three consecutive conferences will automatically be retired from the committee, unless they submit a request to remain on the committee. Such requests must be approved by a majority vote.

4) Elections: The retirement of candidates, following the clauses 2 and 3 listed above, creates vacant seats on the steering committee. These vacant seats are filled in with new members by an election process described next. The election of steering committee members follows an open model. In a plenary session of the conference, typically part of or directly following the closing session, candidate names are put up for election by the steering committee. Additional names can be put up by the participants. The participants next publicly vote for the announced names. The candidates who receive the highest amount of votes are next appointed to the steering committee's vacant seats, until all such vacant seats have been filled up. In case of a tie, the voting is repeated for the candidates involved in the tie, until one candidate gains majority.

E. Committee Chair

The steering committee will elect a chair from within the committee to serve a term of two years. The responsibilities of the steering committee chair are to conduct its meetings and to represent the steering committee in any discussions with external entities. The chair has no special decision making power, and is responsible for keeping the entire steering committee informed of any discussions made in the capacity of committee chair.

IV. Internationality

The steering committee aims to optimally reflect the international nature of the software visualization field. This reflects, in turn, to the selection of program chairs and the general chair for the upcoming edition(s) of the conference.

V. Sponsorship and Finances

This section formalizes the relationship between the conference and its sponsoring organizations.

A. Motivations and Rationale

The conference exists as described above, to promote the free exchange of information among researchers and practitioners. It should not become political nor a source of extensive income. Any such alteration would be considered a violation both of this charter and the spirit in which it was drafted.

In addition, the steering committee will select sponsors annually, based on circumstances and issues of internationality, within the bounds laid out below.

Fiscal responsibility is important for the long-term viability of the conference, and sponsoring organizations require a *quid pro quo* for endorsing and promoting the conference and for accepting financial and legal liability. To the extent that this may affect the integrity of the conference, the steering committee has set forth these sponsorship principles.

1) Primary sponsor: The primary conference sponsor each year will be the IEEE Computer Society's Technical Council on Software Engineering (TCSE).

2) Additional sponsors: Additional sponsors may, and should be, sought for specific editions of the conference. These include national research organizations and commercial organizations such as software companies. Such additional sponsorships should not infringe the conditions of sponsorship laid out by the core technical sponsor TCSE. Also, they should not affect in adverse ways the international, open, and scientific character of the conference.

VI. Amendments

Amendments to this charter must be approved by two-thirds of the steering committee. If the steering committee decides to let this charter be approved by IEEE, then amendments must be also approved by the chair of the TCSE.