

2.5 Chairing the FLINS Conference Series (1994-2012)

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Etienne's General Review of FLINS

Prof. Da Ruan took the initiative in the FLINS conferences and has been the chair from the first to the 7th, and the general chair from the 8th to the 10th FLINS conferences.

FLINS, an acronym for Fuzzy Logic and Intelligent Technologies in Nuclear Science, is a well-established international research forum to advance the theory and applications of computational intelligence for applied research in general and for complex engineering and decision support in particular. The principal mission of FLINS is bridging the gap between machine intelligence and real complex systems via joint research between universities and international research institutions, by encouraging interdisciplinary research and bringing multi-discipline researchers together.

- The 1st International FLINS Workshop took place September 14-16, 1994, Mol, Belgium. There were a total of 56 papers selected out of 70 regular submissions and 4 invited plenary papers from 13 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. H. J. Zimmermann from Germany, Prof. E. E. Kerre from Belgium, Prof. G. Klir from USA, and Prof. A. J. van der Wal from the Netherlands.
- FLINS 1996, the 2nd International FLINS Workshop on Intelligent Systems and Soft Computing for Nuclear Science and Industry took place September 25-27, 1996, Mol, Belgium. There were a total of 52 papers selected out of 80 regular and 6 invited plenary papers submissions from 20 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. H. J. Zimmermann from Germany, Prof. E. E. Kerre from Belgium, Prof. P. Smets from Belgium, Profs. M. Modarres, P. P. Wang and X. L. Gu from USA, and Profs. H. Bersini and G. Bontempi from Belgium.

- FLINS 1998, the 3rd International Workshop on Fuzzy Logic and Intelligent Technologies for Nuclear Science and Industry took place September 14-16, 1998, Antwerp, Belgium. There were a total of 55 papers selected out of 80 regular submissions and 7 invited plenary papers from 23 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. L. A. Zadeh from USA, Prof. M. M. Gupta from Canada, Prof. J. Kacprzyk from Poland, Prof. E. E. Kerre from Belgium, Prof. A. J. van der Wal from the Netherlands, Prof. R. R. Yager from USA, and Prof. H. J. Zimmermann from Germany.
- FLINS 2000, the 4th International Conference on Intelligent Technologies and Soft Computing in Nuclear Sciences and Engineering took place August 28-30, 2000, Bruges, Belgium. There were a total of 65 papers selected out of 90 submissions and 6 invited plenary papers from 28 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. L. A. Zadeh from USA, Prof. J. Kacprzyk from Poland, Prof. H. J. Zimmermann from Germany, Prof. P. P. Wang from USA, Prof. M. M. Gupta from Canada and Prof. Z. Z. Bien from South Korea.
- FLINS 2002, the 5th International FLINS Conference on Computational Intelligent Systems for Applied Research took place September 16-18, 2002, Gent, Belgium. There were a total of 70 papers selected out of 95 submissions and 4 invited plenary papers from 30 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Profs. L. A. Zadeh, R. E. Uhrig, P. P. Wang from USA and Prof. H. Prade from France.
- FLINS 2004, the 6th International FLINS Conference on Applied Computational Intelligence took place September 1-3, 2004, Blankenberge, Belgium. There were a total of 113 papers selected out of 162 regular submissions and 8 invited papers from no less than 29 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. H.-J. Zimmermann from Germany, Profs. R. R. Yager and Wang from USA, Prof. Z. Z. Bien from South Korea, Prof. M. M. Gupta from Canada, Prof. J. Montero from Spain, Profs. G. Q. Chen and Y. Xu from China. In order to recognize the invited speakers' contributions to the previous FLINS conferences from the 2004 edition onwards each time several FLINS awards were given. The first FLINS Gold Award was given to Prof. L. Zadeh for his invention of fuzzy set theory and for his continuously supporting the FLINS activities. The 2004 FLINS Appreciation Awards went to Profs. H. J. Zimmermann, R.R Yager, P. Wang, Z. Bien, M. Gupta, J. Montero, GQ. Chen and to P. Govaerts, the general manager of SCK•CEN. The 2004 FLINS Outstanding Service Award went to Prof. Y. Xu for his tremendous efforts to attract many Chinese researchers to FLINS 2004.
- FLINS 2006, the 7th International FLINS Conference on Applied Artificial Intelligence took place August 29-31, 2006, Genova, Italy. There were a total of 131 selected out of 207 regular submission papers and 7 invited plenary papers from 25 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Profs. L. A. Zadeh and P. P. Wang from USA, Prof. Z. Z. Bien from South Korea, Prof. M. M. Gupta from Canada, Prof. D. Mundici from Italy, Prof. F. Ovre from Norway and Prof. E. Sanchez from France. The 2006 FLINS Gold Medal was given to

Prof. Z. Bien, D. Mundici, F. Owre, E. Sanchez and M. Marseguerra for their support to the FLINS conferences. The 2006 FLINS Outstanding Service Award went to Prof. C. Kahraman for his tremendous efforts to attract many Turkish researchers to FLINS 2006.

- FLINS 2008, the 8th International FLINS Conference on Computational Intelligence in Decision and Control took place September 21-24, 2008, Madrid, Spain. There were a total of 184 papers selected out of 292 regular submissions and 6 invited plenary papers from 35 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. P. Bonissone from USA, Prof. W. Pedrycz from Canada and Prof. E. Trillas from Spain. During the Gala dinner all session chairs as well as the young local organizers got a 2008 FLINS Pin Award. The 2008 FLINS Silver Pin awards were given to Dr. P. D'Hondt, to Profs. L. Magdalena, A. Murari and B. Vitoriano. The 2008 FLINS Golden Pin Awards were awarded to Profs. P. Bonissone, W. Pedrycz and E. Trillas. Prof. L.A. Zadeh got a special 2008 FLINS Friendship Award.
- FLINS 2010, the 9th International FLINS Conference on Computational Intelligence Foundations and Applications took place August 1-4, 2010, Chengdu, China. There were a total of 177 papers selected out of 263 regular submissions and 4 invited plenary papers from 32 countries. Invited keynote speakers were Prof. Z. Z. Bien from South Korea, Prof. B. Bouchon-Meunier from France, Prof. M. M. Gupta from Canada and Profs. V. Novak and I. Perfilieva from Czech Republic. The 2010 FLINS Silver Pin awards were given to Profs. J. Montero, T. Li and C. Kahraman. Prof. E. Kerre received from a very emotional Prof. Da Ruan the FLINS Golden Chair award for his continuous support to the FLINS conferences since their inception in 1994.
- FLINS 2012, the 10th International FLINS Conference on Uncertainty Modeling in Knowledge Engineering and Decision Making will be taking place August 27-29, 2012, Istanbul, Turkey. Invited keynote speakers will be Prof. A. Maiseu from France, Prof. A. W. Deshpande from India, Prof. J. Lu from Australia, Prof. I. B. Turksen from Turkey and Prof. H. J. Zimmerman from Germany.

All of us expect many successful upcoming editions of FLINS conferences in the future as Prof. Da Ruan would have desired.

Martine and Mike's Memories

We were closely involved by Da in the organisation of 3 FLINS conferences, respectively in Bruges (2002), Ghent (2004) and Genova (2006). We learned to know Da as a very engaged conference organizer who put a lot of effort and energy into his project. With an eye for every detail, he even chose the design and colour for the covers of the FLINS proceedings himself. His aim was for the

spines of the books to form a rainbow of colours when placed next to each other on a book shelf.

The FLINS Editions of 2002, 2004 and 2006



Da in FLINS Conference in 2002

At the same time we experienced quite a lot of respect and freedom from Da. He engaged us as “FLINS co-managers” in 2002 and let us deal with nearly all FLINS correspondences, which mainly dealt with all the email traffic on submitted papers. We also got to organize the review process – of course with the help of Da and other FLINS organizers – which finally resulted in the difficult process of selecting the accepted papers. We vividly remember how we struggled with several so-called borderline papers (do we accept this paper or not?) and how Da came to the rescue during one of the most intense periods in our young scientific careers. In the beginning of May 2002 we both defended our PhD (with just one weekend between the public defence), and the hours before Mike’s PhD were not marked by silent concentration, but by Da and us browsing through the papers, giving comments and finally making acceptance/rejection decisions based on the reviews. The publisher’s deadline was close, and, to get the most out of every valuable minute, Da insisted that we even continued the process while Mike was changing into formal clothes for his PhD defence. The PhD-defence itself – with Da as one of the jury members – was in that sense only an “unavoidable interruption”, with the selection of accepted papers continuing after the defence... It is quite a nice scene to look back at!

The FLINS 2002 conference was our first experience in organizing a conference. It was very intense, but we truly appreciate to have been given this chance. Da valued our efforts and in 2004 we got some more responsibilities and made it to co-editors of the proceedings. In 2006 we also got full financial responsibility. We will always be grateful for these experiences.



Da in FLINS Conference in 2004

Javier's Memories

It is extremely difficult to maintain a strictly academic discourse about a colleague that unexpectedly passed away when he was a friend and when he has been playing a key role in your recent research activities. He will be deeply missed. In this short note we shall bring here some highlights of the relationship between our research team and Da Ruan, starting with our relationship with the International FLINS Conferences.

Since the beginning of the contacts of members of this Complutense University team on Decision Aid Systems with Da Ruan and his collaborators at SCK•CEN and the University of Ghent, the FLINS conference appeared for us as a singular conference, where practitioners and theoretical researchers could find an easy environment for interchanging knowledge and developing joint projects. FLINS

initiative (acronym standing for **F**uzzy **L**ogic and **I**ntelligent **T**echnologies in **N**uclear **S**cience) was launched by 1994 in line with the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre (SCK•CEN) and the initial objective of giving PhD and Postdoc researchers the opportunity to carry out future-oriented research. Since then, objectives have evolved into much wider interests, covering now any research within computational intelligence and knowledge engineering in decision and control, still keeping the foundational declared objective of producing a real advance in the theory and applications of decision making and control for complex systems.



Da in FLINS Conference in 2006

Since its conception, Prof. Da Ruan put into the organization of each FLINS conference an extremely careful effort to facilitate such a scientific interchange, indeed keeping a kind attention for the needs of all conference attendants to create a good climate for communication. Coming to FLINS conference has been always a wonderful experience, both scientific and personal. Beside such a unique approach for a rather small but still somehow heterogeneous community open to any issue related to complex systems, a number of illuminating talks by colleagues come to our mind. But we have also to remind with pleasure all those scientific discussions we could have with colleagues during FLINS conferences, sometimes around a pot of Belgian mussels, or simply around a beer after the conference, or even walking along a beach or some historical site (needless to say, not taking care too much about the surrounding beauty because of the intense scientific conversation we were having). Such a kind of human relationship between the

conference attendants created a quite familiar ambience, which cannot be understood without Da's personality, his continuous smile and the devoted dedication of all his FLINS organization. Particularly, I will be always grateful to Da and the FLINS community for the kindness, support and friendship I found in some difficult personal times. We are proud of being a part of his FLINS project.

The FLINS Edition of 2008

Da Ruan gave this research team at Complutense University of Madrid one of the most important moments: the organization of the FLINS 2008 conference in Madrid. The organization of this conference represents a cornerstone on the history of our research group. We learned a lot from previous organizers, we jumped in international visibility, and we sincerely enjoyed it very much.



Da in FLINS Conference Gala Dinner in 2008

The 8th International FLINS Conference on Computational Intelligence and Decision Control was held in Madrid (Spain), September 21-24, 2008, with the participation of scientists coming from 35 different countries and the presentation of 184 papers, selected in a strict peer review process from the 292 submitted papers. A short version of all accepted papers has been published in the FLINS 2008 proceedings. Moreover, special issues with selected extended papers were accepted after a second strictly peer-reviewed process according to the regular standards of five scientific journals: Information Sciences, the International Journal of Computational Intelligence Systems, the International Journal of General Systems, Mathware & Soft Computing and TOP, the official journal of the Spanish Society of Statistics and Operations Research, The FLINS 2008 special issue in the International Journal of Computational Intelligence Systems, since then the official

journal of the European Society for Fuzzy Logic and Technologies (EUSFLAT), represents a nice example of the spirit of FLINS, since it is a direct consequence of an intense discussion produced during a FLINS plenary talk, counting with the participation of P. Bonissone, H. Bustince, S. Guadarrama, J. Kacprzyk, L. Magdalena, L. Maguire, C. Moraga, W. Pedrycz, E. Ruspini, R. Seising, E. Trillas, L.A. Zadeh and Da Ruan himself.

Based upon our previous collaborations and some joint projects, Professor Da Ruan joined our research project TIN2009-07901, funded by the Government of Spain. Da Ruan was currently member of this project, to be finished by Dec 31, 2012.

Yang and Tianrui's Memories

During the FLINS2008 conference in Madrid, all of FLINS delegates were concerned about who will host the next FLINS. It was known that at least three universities, including Southwest Jiaotong University, China, Istanbul University of Technology, Turkey and Federal University of Paraiba, Brazil, applied to host FLINS2010. Especially Prof. Cengiz Kahraman and his team, nearly 20 participants, from Istanbul University of Technology, Turkey attended FLINS2008 and hoped to host FLINS2010. In fact, the decision of the host of FLINS2010 by Prof. Da Ruan et al. was as very difficult. However, they considered that FLINS has been held in Europe eight times and it was the right time to promote FLINS in Asia. They also considered that Southwest Jiaotong University, China had successfully hosted ISKE2007 and had many experiences on the organization of international conferences. Therefore, they finally selected Southwest Jiaotong University, China as the host of FLINS2010. At that time, they also decided to select Istanbul University of Technology, Turkey to host the next FLINS.

The FLINS Edition of 2010

In order to better organize FLINS2010, the first concerned thing by Prof. Da Ruan was the selection of the venue of the conference. Six sites of Chengdu and E'Mei, China were recommended and all the information of them was sent to him. After investigating the materials, he made decision that it is better to hold FLINS2010 at E'Mei. Therefore, he chose the three sites at E'Mei as the candidate venues for FLINS2010. In 2009, he personally inspected the three candidate sites by the occasion to lecture in Chengdu, China. At that time, one of his feet was just not in a good condition. A long walk was very difficult for him. However, he put himself out of the way and still adhered to visit the three candidate sites. Finally, the Hongzhu Shan Hotel, E'Mei was selected as the venue of this conference.

Secondly, Prof. Da Ruan gave meticulous guidance on the organization of the conference. He was also in charge of the most important task to contact the press

for the proceedings and editors-in-chief of international journals for the special issues of the conference. In his efforts, several famous journals, including International Journal of General Systems, International Journal of Uncertainty, Fuzziness and Knowledge-based Systems, Knowledge-based Systems, Journal of Multiple-Valued Logic and Soft Computing, International Journal of Nuclear Knowledge Management, etc agreed to publish special issues of FLINS2010. During the preparatory of the conference, he worked hard to revise the notice of Call for papers, edit the proceedings, and design the program. Particularly, he found a symbolic error in one of papers of FLINS2010 during the proofreading process of the proceedings. He thought we should contact the authors as soon as possible to confirm the changes due to the limit time for publishing. We remember at that day we had a class at the new campus of our university. Although the time in China was close to the noon, it was in the early morning in Belgium. He had already started to work and called me several times. Since we could not answer the phone during the class, he finally reached me after we finished the class. Later, we promptly contacted the authors and successfully completed the proofreading work. The proceedings of FLINS2010 were then published in time.



Da delivered a welcome speech at the opening ceremony of FLINS2010

In addition, before the start of the FLINS2010 conference, Prof. Da Ruan specifically took aside his time and came to Chengdu a little early to help us prepare the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference. He ignored the time difference and immediately joined us on the preparation of the conference. Specifically, he took his rest time to revise each word of my speeches at opening and closing

ceremonies of FLINS2010. Moreover, in the arrangement of the banquet, we did not consider the awards and performance session during the course of the banquet. He reminded us timely and joined us to amend the agenda that very night. Ten activities including awards and performances were then scheduled during the banquet. Through these activities, the whole atmosphere of the banquet was more exciting. Delegates interacted actively. The unexpected awards and perfect performances again and again made the atmosphere to reach its climax. In particular, delegates were deeply impressed by the improvisation of Spanish flamenco dance. More importantly, these activities made delegates not only enjoy the academic “feast”, but also feel the joy of life and have a lot of unforgettable memories at FLINS2010.

In the closing ceremony, Prof. Da Ruan announced that the tenth FLINS conference will be hosted by Istanbul University of Technology, Turkey. It drew FLINS2010 to a successful close. Then, delegates gave a warm applause to Prof. Cengiz Kahraman and his team, congratulated them and acknowledged them for their tireless efforts to support FLINS. It is also reflected the FLINS conference initiated by Prof. Da Ruan has a great international influence.