The IFIP Portal

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INTRODUCTION

Many professional societies and organisations make use of Web portals to allow access to their many facilities, resources, and varied content materials. The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) is no exception and the IFIP site (www.ifip.org) provides access to a vast amount of information about IFIP itself and its constituent parts. Being a portal, although the site itself has some useful information, most of the information accessible through the IFIP site is stored at various locations around the world on servers in universities, other societies, and the computer industry. This article examines aspects of the IFIP portal with particular reference to several IFIP Working Group sites.

BACKGROUND

The International Federation for Information Processing was established in 1960 and is a nongovernmental, nonprofit umbrella organization for national societies working in the field of information processing (IFIP, 2006a). IFIP was established under the auspices of UNESCO (2006) following the first World Computer Congress in Paris in 1959. IFIP holds Formal Consultative status with UNESCO and maintains formal relations with other agencies of the UN System (IFIP, 2006a).

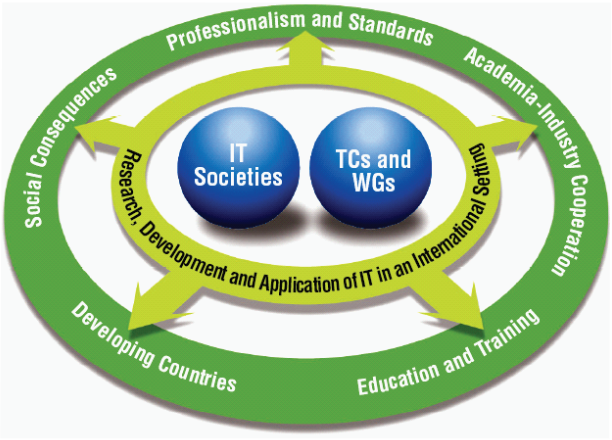
Membership of IFIP relates to national IT societies. The following countries and organisations are full members of IFIP: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, CLEI (Centro Latino Americano de Estudios Informatica), Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritius, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA-based/ACM, USA-based/IEEE, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In other membership categories, Argentina, Iceland, and New Zealand are corresponding members, and CEPIS, FACE, IAPR, IASC, IJCAII, IMIA, INFORMS, SEARCC, and VLDB are affiliate members (IFIP, 2006a). IFIP is also a Scientific Associate with the International Union for Science. It maintains contact with the International Federation of Automatic Control, the International Association for Mathematics and Computers in Simulation, the International Federation of Operational Research Societies, and the International Measurement Confederation. IFIP represents IT Societies from 55 countries or regions, with a total membership of over half a million, and links more than 3,500 scientists from Academia and Industry (IFIP, 2006a, 2006b).

IFIP's principal aim is to promote information about science and technology by fostering international cooperation, by stimulating research, development, and the applications of information processing, and all aspects of computing and communication in science and human activity. It does this by furthering the dissemination and exchange of information and by encouraging education in information processing and communication.

IFIP's mission is to be the leading, truly international, apolitical organization which encourages and assists in the development, exploitation and application of Information Technology for the benefit of all people. (IFIP, 2006a)

IFIP is organized around a series of technical committees (TC), each of which is comprised of a number of

Figure 1. IFIP structure (IFIP, 2006a)



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working groups (WG). Each of these technical committees is effectively a management team responsible for a given field of activity and for the operations of its working groups. The working groups share experience and develop their specialized knowledge by running open conferences and smaller working conferences, offering seminars and tutorials, circulating papers, and by electronic conferencing and by e-mail (IFIP, 2006b). IFIP's technical committees and working groups are presented in Table 1.

THE IFIP PORTAL

We adopt a broad view of what constitutes a portal as "providing a gateway not just to sites on the Web, but to *all network-accessible resources* whether involving intranets, extranets, or the Internet. In other words, a portal offers centralised access to all relevant content and applications" (Tatnall, 2005). Like all portals, the IFIP portal is multilayered, with initial access being via IFIP's home page (www.

Table 1. IFIP's technical committees and working groups

TC1: Foundations of Computer Science • **WG 1.1** Continuous Algorithms and Complexity • **WG 1.2** Descriptional Complexity • **WG 1.3** Foundations of System Specification • **WG 1.4** Computational Learning Theory • **WG 1.6** Term Rewriting • **WG 1.7** Theoretical Foundations of Security Analysis and Design • **WG 1.8** Concurrency Theory	**TC 9: Relationship between Computers and Society** • **WG 9.1** Computers and Work • **WG 9.2** Social Accountability • **WG 9.3** Home Oriented Informatics and Telematics • **WG 9.4** Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries • **WG 9.5** Applications and Social Implications of Virtual Worlds • **WG 9.6** Information Technology: Misuse and the Law (= WG 11.7) • **WG 9.7** History of Computing • **WG 9.8** Women and Information Technology • **WG 9.9** ICT and Sustainable Development
TC 2: Software: Theory and Practice • **WG 2.1** Algorithmic Languages and Calculi • **WG 2.2** Formal Description of Programming Concepts • **WG 2.3** Programming Methodology • **WG 2.4** Software Implementation Technology • **WG 2.5** Numerical Software • **WG 2.6** Database • **WG 2.7** User Interface Engineering (= WG 13.4) • **WG 2.8** Functional Programming • **WG 2.9** Software Requirements Engineering • **WG 2.10** Software Architecture • **WG 2.11** Program Generation • **WG 2.12** Web Semantics (= WG 12.4)	**TC 10: Computer Systems Technology** • **WG 10.1** Computer-Aided Systems Theory • **WG 10.3** Concurrent Systems • **WG 10.4** Dependable Computing and Fault Tolerance • **WG 10.5** Design and Engineering of Electronic Systems
TC 3: Education • **WG 3.1** Informatics and ICT in Secondary Education • **WG 3.2** Informatics and ICT in Higher Education • **WG 3.3** Research on Education Applications of Information Technologies • **WG 3.4** Professional and Vocational Education in IT • **WG 3.5** Informatics in Elementary Education • **WG 3.6** Distance Learning • **WG 3.7** Information Technology in Educational Management • **SIG 3.8** Lifelong Learning	**TC 11: Security and Protection in Information Processing Systems** • **WG 11.1** Information Security Management • **WG 11.2** Small System Security • **WG 11.3** Data and Application Security • **WG 11.4** Network Security • **WG 11.5** Systems Integrity and Control • **WG 11.7** Information Technology: Misuse and the Law (= WG 9.6) • **WG 11.8** Information Security Education • **WG 11.9** Digital Forensics
TC 5: Computer Applications in Technology • **WG 5.2** Computer-Aided Design • **WG 5.3** Computer-Aided Manufacturing • **WG 5.5** Cooperation Infrastructure for Virtual Enterprises and Electronic Business (COVE) • **WG 5.6** Maritime Industries • **WG 5.7** Integration in Production Management • **WG 5.10** Computer Graphics and Virtual Worlds • **WG 5.11** Computers and Environment • **WG 5.12** Architectures for Enterprise Integration • **SIG-CAI** Computer Aided Innovation • **SIG Bioinformatics**	**TC 12: Artificial Intelligence** • **WG 12.1** Knowledge Representation and Reasoning • **WG 12.2** Machine Learning and Data Mining • **WG 12.3** Intelligent Agents • **WG 12.4** Web Semantics (= WG 2.12) • **WG 12.5** Artificial Intelligence Applications • **WG 12.6** Knowledge Management • **WG 12.7** Computer Vision

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