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Alan Bridger
Nicole M. Radziwill
Editors

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Introduction

This year's software conference included status reports from telescopes under development, descriptions of more generalized software frameworks for easing development, and detailed descriptions of software accomplishments in the areas of instrument control, telescope control, scheduling, and observing systems. The topics ranged from design to implementation to operations, and covered design strategies, design patterns, middle-ware, data handling techniques, and approaches to quality improvement within astronomical software systems. There were many conference presentations and posters of a very high quality.

The highlight of our three days of discussion was a "town hall" style forum where we discussed the merits and challenges of sharing software, introduced by a paper on the subject (Chiozzi et al). Over 100 people attended the forum in a rather hot meeting room and there were many very good points made and issues raised. Inevitably there were differences of opinion about what can be achieved, but we were very pleased at the level of debate and thank everyone who attended. There was a strong feeling that the discussion session should be repeated in 2010.

We recognized that sharing is not just limited to the source code that drives our instruments and observing processes, but also the concepts, ideas, and dominant designs that are continually refined with each new project. Although most of us agreed that more extended collaboration should be a goal, we noted that there are financial, technical, and sociological barriers that need to be overcome. We discussed several strategies for doing this, including producing "reusable components" that attempt to solve parts of a problem rather than stimulate large-scale reuse. Between now and 2010, we aim to launch an active and sustainable discussion in this area to fuel wider, practical collaborations across the community, in addition to within the conference environment. This could include launching an online forum, developing a formal body of knowledge to support future conference publications, or other ideas that members of the community would find helpful.

We would like to thank our very active conference committee not only for their contributions to organizing the sessions, but also in their continued commitment to improving the practice of software engineering at astronomical facilities. Finally, we thank the SPIE staff for all their work and especially their patience.

**Alan Bridger
Nicole M. Radziwill**

