



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS DEDICATED TO TECHNOLOGY
COMPUTING THE FUTURE SYMPOSIUM 2006
Wednesday, 13th September 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Sydney, 23rd August, 2006

The University of Sydney is to host the “**Computing the Future Symposium**” on Wednesday 13th of September, 2006 to celebrate 50 years since the first high-speed computer was built in an Australian University, SILLIAC! “We are all very excited” said Professor Albert Zomaya, Head of the IT School at the University of Sydney. “We are honoured that leaders from across industry will join our own eminent researchers and international guest speakers to celebrate this wonderful milestone and explore the future of computing.”

There from the very beginning were the SILLIAC pioneers, including Barry Z. de Ferranti who is the Chairman of the SILLIAC Fiftieth Celebrations Organising Committee. “It is hard to believe it has been 50 years” he commented. “And yet when you think of how far things have come in the world of computing – it is amazing to think it has only been 50 years! I feel privileged to be part of the story. The University of Sydney was the first university in Australia to have a computing science department – and I now get to see the amazing things being done in the areas such as robotics, pervasive computing, health informatics, grid computing, optics.”

It all began through a £100 000 donation from Sir Adolph Basser to the then Nuclear Research Foundation, founded by Emeritus Professor Harry Messel, AC CBE to enable the Australian version of the University of Illinois’ ILLIAC to be built. The computer was constructed in the School of Physics and at Standard Telephones and Cables Pty Ltd (now Alcatel Australia), with the first successful scientific calculation on the machine performed on 4 July 1956 and it officially opened on 12th September, 1956.

By 1961 research and teaching of computer science had increased to such an extent, that a computing science department was created within the School of Physics. In 1979 the Department of Computer Science separated from the School of Physics. In 2001, the Department of Computer Science was renamed the School of Information Technologies. One of the professors who has been with the School since 1977 is Associate Professor Judy Kay. She can recall the names of many successful alumni, including David Skellern, CEO, NICTA who is speaking at the Symposium; Vaughan Pratt who was one of the founders of Sun Microsystems and is now Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at Stanford University; John Cameron, CEO, Cameron Systems who was a member of the original team that wrote SEATS, the automated trading system, used by the Australian Stock Exchange; Rahman A Khan, Managing Director, Morgan Stanley; Physics Professor Marcela Bilek who works at the University of Sydney; Professor Jenny Edwards who is the Professor of Software Engineering, University of Technology Sydney; Matt Barrie, CEO, Sensory Networks and many, many more. Associate Professor Kay reflected that “the list of successful alumni displays the many areas the School has excelled in over its history”.

Professor Zomaya is very happy with the purpose-built new home for the School. The state-of-the art \$43 million building is to be officially opened as part of the SILLIAC golden anniversary celebrations. “It gives us a whole new face for our research and academic pursuits. It also is a great place to collaborate with our valued industry partners. The investment is a clear demonstration of the University’s commitment to excellence in the field of IT – and this is to be celebrated!”

Speakers at the Computing the Future Symposium include:

David Murray, Chairman, Future Fund Board of Guardians; Former CEO of the Commonwealth Bank; speaking on "Information and Value Creation"

Howard Charney, Senior Vice President of Cisco Systems; One of the four founders of 3Com Corporation; speaking on "The Internet as Innovation Engine"

Dr Caroline Kovac, General Manager of IBM Pharmaceutical & Life Sciences; Named one of the 50 most powerful women in business by Fortune magazine in 2004 who will speak on "Computing in the Age of the Genome"

Albert Y. Zomaya, CISCO Chair of Internetworking and Head, School of Information Technologies, The University of Sydney; speaking on "The Changing Face of ICT Research"

Professor Benjamin Eggleton, ARC Federation Fellow, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Ultrahigh-bandwidth Devices for Optical Systems, The University of Sydney; speaking on "Optical Logic and the Photonic Chip"

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte, ARC Federation Fellow, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Autonomous Systems, The University of Sydney; speaking on "The Robots are Coming!"

Dr David Skellern, CEO, National ICT Australia; one of Australia's most successful ICT entrepreneurs, sporting a strong background in research, education, collaboration, and commercialisation

Douglas N. Snedden, Country Managing Director, Accenture Australia, speaking on "Australia's IT Investment Agenda: What Business Wants (and What it Needs)"

Founded in 1850, The University of Sydney is Australia's first university. The School of Information Technologies is the oldest computing science school in Australia.

Please contact us at watch@slatteryit.com.au or 02 9423 8850 for more information or to arrange interviews on:

The University of Sydney
SILLIAC
The 50 year History of the IT School
Research Priorities
The new IT School Building
Successful Alumni
The Symposium and SILLIAC Celebrations

If you would like to attend the Symposium, please let us know or visit www.it.usyd.edu.au/cf.

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