



What is IMS?

The Intelligent Manufacturing Systems (IMS) initiative encourages the formation of international research consortia to address 21st century manufacturing challenges. The scheme aims to boost industrial competitiveness, solve problems facing manufacturing worldwide, and develop advanced manufacturing technologies and systems to benefit humanity. IMS members currently include the EU, Norway, Korea, Japan, Switzerland and the United States of America.

In this issue

- Editorial
- Interview with the new IMS Chairman Claudio Boër
- Sources ...
- News
- Upcoming Events

Impressum

This Newsletter is issued by the European IMS Secretariat c/o European Commission

IMS Cordis Website:
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Editorial

The first international Manufacturing Technology Platforms (MTP) workshop, organised by the IMS Inter-Regional Secretariat (IRS), took place on 24 April 2008 in Bern, Switzerland. The event brought together 70 research stakeholders (31 from the EU) to discuss 27 ideas for MTP initiatives under five sessions.

MTPs are intended to be knowledge sharing platforms for researchers in different IMS regions. They bring together experts to develop a global perspective and to spark new ideas for R&D and draw upon knowledge generated in running programmes.

The five IMS MTP themes are: sustainable manufacturing, energy efficient manufacturing, key technologies, standards, and education. Promising initiatives in sustainable manufacturing involve product recycling and maintenance issues. In the key technologies MTP discussions converged around themes such as "Interoperability and the Model-Based Enterprise", and "Interoperability for Micromanufacturing". Under standardisation discussions quickly reached consensus on issues such as "Industrial Automation Design" and "Model-driven Interoperability". The details and outcomes of the workshop will be published on the IMS website, soon.

Although the MTP concept is still emerging, it nevertheless seems capable of attracting similar projects across the globe to join their efforts in R&D. We will report more on this in later Newsletter editions.

Dr Erastos Filos, Editor, European Commission, Brussels

Interview with the new IMS Chairman Claudio Boër, Director of ICIMSI-SUPSI, Lugano, Switzerland

Professor Boër, Switzerland has taken over the IMS Chair from South Korea & you have been appointed IMS Chairman. What are your priorities for IMS in the coming months?

The following priorities have been discussed with the Swiss IMS team before taking over the Chair. These are:

Firstly, to bring back the two partner countries (Australia and Canada) that for one or another reason have left IMS in the recent past. With Australia we have a good chance that this will happen very soon. They are already preparing their team to rejoin IMS. With Canada there are contacts but it may need more time.



Secondly, to bring new countries/regions into IMS. The IMS International Steering Committee (ISC) has given us the mandate to approach the BRIC countries (e.g. Brazil, Russia, India & China) and to investigate the conditions for their integration into IMS. With Brazil the contacts are already well advanced and we had three guests in the framework of the last ISC meeting with whom we already have established very good contacts at industrial, academic and government levels. If during our Chair we can bring Brazil, and perhaps another country into the IMS programme, I will feel that we have accomplished our task.

Thirdly, to increase the IMS project portfolio. This is really important because without projects a programme like IMS does not really make sense. At the moment this portfolio is relatively small but it has been a time of transition between the first and the second phase of IMS. At present there are a number of proposals that are in preparation and some abstracts have already reached the Inter-regional Secretariat (IRS) for evaluation. It is clear that as we are still in the beginning of the 7th FP

News

Commission casts ICT in green role

The importance of ICT as a driver of growth and productivity is widely recognised. In contrast, the considerable impact of ICT on energy productivity growth, as well as in improving efficiency in the use of natural resources whilst reducing pollution and dangerous waste, needs to be made more visible. This enabling role of ICT in improving energy efficiency, cutting across the whole economy, is the focus of the Commission communication "Addressing the challenge of energy efficiency through Information and Communication Technologies" adopted on 13 May 2008. See details under: ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sustainable_growth/energy_efficiency

Public consultation on "ICT enabling energy efficiency"

The purpose of this consultation is to gather information and opinions from stakeholders regarding the sectors (including manufacturing) that offer the most promising prospects for improved energy efficiency through the use of ICT and what are the actions to be taken at EU level in order to maximise these effects. The results of the consultation will provide input for a second Commission document defining a concrete policy approach. Go to the public consultation website: ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=ICT4EE

German ministry for research (BMBF) launches "Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing" programme: For details see:

www.produktionsforschung.de
Download the background study (in German) prepared by Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft: www.produktionsforschung.de/fzk/groups/pft/documents/internetdokument/id_062401.pdf



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(in which also Switzerland is a full partner) new consortia and projects under IMS may emerge soon. We believe however, that IMS should not just be passive and wait for projects to form but needs to be rather proactive and promote strongly the reasons why industrial and academic partners should work together in IMS projects. We have started a new dissemination campaign, explaining what IMS is and we are also pursuing the idea of promoting IMS directly with industrial associations and potential industrial partners.

Fourthly, the Manufacturing Technology Platforms (MTP) Programme is a new concept which is strongly promoted by our friends in the USA and supported enthusiastically by the other IMS regions. Here the idea is not to start new projects from scratch, but to rather use the available potential of (running) regional R&D projects and to help them find each other, share results and develop synergies among them, across IMS regions and beyond. The first MTP workshop was held under our Chair in Bern in April and it was very successful. We believe that between two and six so-called MTP initiatives will have signed a cooperation agreement before our next ISC meeting in October.

How do you see the importance of manufacturing & the issues at stake for the IMS member countries/regions?

The importance of manufacturing for an economy can be seen in emerging economies such as China. China has seen a tremendous growth because of its manufacturing competence. In some developed economies (like those of IMS participants) the thinking for a long time was that the service sector is the future. However, everyone realises now that services strongly depend on manufacturing. Also, there is the realisation that manufacturing is a global affair and that there is a need to share more and more pre-competitive research among the developed and developing economies in order to reap larger returns on investments. IMS is therefore an ideal platform supporting this sharing of competencies, knowledge and experience.

According to your view, what is the added value of IMS for participating researchers & industrial companies?

When partners work together in a national R&D project they invest only a part of their resources but they gain the results developed by all partners. They therefore gain a larger return on their investment (ROI). An IMS project does a similar thing but on a global scale and therefore the investment may be multiplied by a factor of 3 or more. Besides "tangible" rewards, there are also intangible gains in an IMS project such as cross-cultural understanding and a global exposure for the involved partners.

Sources ...

First Issue of VIMation Journal available

The VIMation Journal, issued by the European Virtual Institute for Human Machine Interaction and Models in Production, reports on scientific results, innovations and applications in Human Machine Interaction, Information Technology and Production. VIMation is a branch of the I*PROMS Network of Excellence and provides an information forum for members of the institute as well as for the wider scientific community.

To receive a copy of the first issue, please register at www.vimation.eu (membership is free) or contact Mr. Thomas Schlegel, Fraunhofer IAO, Editor@journal.vimation.eu.

Upcoming Events

BASYS'08, Porto, 23-25 June 2008: 8th IFIP Int'l Conference on Information Technology for Balanced Automation Systems. For details, see: www.basysconference.org

FAIM2008, Skövde, 30 June - 2 July 2008: 18th Int'l Conference on Flexible Automation and Intelligent Manufacturing. Details under, www.faim2008.org

I*PROMS 2008 Conference on Innovative Production Machines and Systems, The Internet, 1-14 July 2008: The conference seeks to provide a platform for presenting, discussing and disseminating research results contributed by scientists and industrial practitioners. Topics range from Automation Systems through Production Machines, Optimisation Techniques to Sustainable Manufacturing. See details under, conference.iproms.org

IFAC'08 World Congress, Seoul, 6-11 July 2008: Triennial event of the Int'l Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC), see: www.ifac2008.org/

ECPPM 2008, Sophia-Antipolis, 10-12 Sept. 2008: Primarily a conference on ICT in AEC/FM. The scope, however, is very broad and encompasses process optimisation, extended products and future services for homes, buildings infrastructures etc. as well as environmental impact and energy efficiency. See details under: 2008.ecppm.org

IWEI2008, München, 18 Sept. 2008: 1st Int'l Workshop on Enterprise Interoperability. See details under: www.ics.kth.se/iwei

MiNaT 2008, Stuttgart, 7-9 Oct. 2008: International trade fair for precision mechanics, ultra precision, micro & nano technologies. See details under: cms.messe-stuttgart.de/cms/index.php?id=15015&L=1