INTRODUCTION

The International Workshop on Distance Education Technologies (DET) has been established as renowned event covering the newest trends in distance learning. It focuses on creative solutions on distance education and combines several advanced topics on design, implementation, and applications of e-learning. Submissions cover novel approaches on distance learning tools, communication mechanisms, distance learning and culture, new educational technologies, virtual worlds and serious games, distance learning and the arts. Special attention is devoted to intelligent tools in various distance education systems.

The *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies* (IJDET) was found in 2003 by S. K. Chang and Tim Shih, while the first DET workshop was held in 2004. Thus, the 2010 DET workshop is the 7th workshop. DET workshop is closely associated with the International Conference on Distributed Multimedia Systems (DMS) on the one hand, and with the IJDET journal on the other hand.

In 2010, this workshop was held in conjunction with the 16th DMS in Chicago. Authors that submitted work to the DET 2010 workshop came from United States, Asia, Africa, Europe, with remarkably many submissions from Italy.

PAPER OVERVIEW

This special issue includes three papers outstanding out of the twenty submissions we received for DET 2010. After an already rigorous review process at the conference, we invited only 4 authors to submit an extended version of their contribution to this special issue. All these submissions were of very high quality, but unfortunately it was only possible to include the following top-ranked submissions into this special issue, which – however – give an excellent overview about the various topics covered in Distance Learning Technologies in DET 2010.

The first contribution from Angela Gourmet, Kathleen A. Stirbens, Joseph Williams, and Charles Haiber (Kent State University at Stark, North Canton, OH, USA) introduces WAVES, a tool for the fast retrieval of information in a web page for blind and visually impaired people. This system adopts visual cues to scan...
web pages and to produce an excerpt of information that helps users to decide if a page is worth reading. This paper won the Best Paper Award of the DET 2010 workshop.

The next article from Yuki Terawaki, Yasushi Kodama and Kazuo Yana (Hosei University, Tokyo, Japan), and Yuichi Takahashi (foreach ltd., Tokyo, Japan) is the second place winner and concerns the integration of different Relational Database Management Systems of two Course Management Systems (CMSs) to cover incompatibilities between CMSs and the Japanese educational system. This experience is interesting, giving the high specificity of the considered educational system. The last (but not least) work from Carmelo Ardito and Rosa Lanzilotti (University of Bari, Italy) proposes a system for generating mobile didactic excursion-games, following an end-user development perspective. This paper collects and extends the results of two works of the same authors appeared both in DET 2009 and DET 2010.

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank many people who made this special issue possible. First, I would like to thank Qun Jin and Fuhua (Oscar) Lin, Editors-in-Chief of this journal, who gave me the opportunity to act as guest editor in this special issue. Then, I would like to thank the DET 2010 and DMS 2010 organizers and committees, who helped to manage an exceptional event. In particular, I would express my thanks to Shi-Kuo Chang, the Steering Committee Chair of DMS 2010, and to Qun Jin and Paolo Maresca, the DET 2010 Workshop Co-Chairs. Next, I would like thank all members of the program committee as well as the reviewers of this special issue. After that, I do not want to forget the authors, who dedicated a hard time in selecting the best papers from those excellent submissions. Last but not least, I want to thank all those participants who made their way to Chicago, allowing DET 2010 to become a success. I hope this issue of DET best papers will be of interest to the readers and will encourage future innovative and synergetic research. I look forward to the IJDET next issue of the best papers of the DET 2011 workshop that will be hold in Florence, Italy.

Rita Francese
Guest Editor
IJDET