Panels Preface

Panels are the forum for discussing emerging technologies, debating technical and creative controversies, and sharing diverse viewpoints. This year, the Panels Committee selected seventeen panels and one special session for presentation at SIGGRAPH 96. The expanded descriptions of these sessions are published here. These writeups summarize the content of the panels, and provide an archival reference for the panel topics.

The panels selection process began at SIGGRAPH 95 in Los Angeles. There, the SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Committee began actively encouraging the submission of timely proposals for SIGGRAPH 96. The panels effort also joined a cross-functional early concept submission process with the courses, technical sketches, applications, Digital Bayou, and art show (known as The Bridge) programs. The deadline for early concept proposals was October 4, 1995. Twenty- five early concepts were received electronically and reviewed by the Panels Committee. The intent of early concept proposals was to provide review and comment for final proposal submissions. Twelve of the early concepts became final panel proposal submissions, with eight being selected for presentation at SIGGRAPH 96. In addition to assisting the concept proposal submitters, the early concept deadline also highlighted gaps in the content of the panels program. The Panels Committee then began to seek final proposal submissions to fill these holes.

In January 1996, we received thirty final panel submissions that reflected the wide range of interests in the computer graphics community. The Panels Committee met in February 1996 to determine the final selections for SIGGRAPH 96. Our goal was to select a combination of panels that cover important and developing topics, represent new insights, and illuminate differing viewpoints in computer graphics. After the jury process was completed, each panels committee member selected two or three panels to mentor until the final presentation of the panels at SIGGRAPH 96.

Many of the panels presented at SIGGRAPH 96 will highlight the role of networking and telecommunications in computer graphics. A number of the sessions ponder the World Wide Web and its implications for developing and presenting content. The hardware community is represented by two panels which should stimulate discussion. Virtual Reality, Visualization, Advanced Television, and Animation are also topics covered in the SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Program. Finally, we address public policy and social issues impacting the computer graphics community. We hope you find as much joy in attending this program as we experienced in creating it!

The SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Committee developed and shaped this program. The committee members were: Wes Bethel; Leo Hourvitz; Dorothy Simpson Krause; Bill Kroyer; Barbara Mones-Hattal; and Mary Whitton. We were ably assisted and kept in line by the SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Administrator, Dave Taylor. We are also genuinely indebted to the panel organizers for submitting great panel proposals, and the panelists for their contributions. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Computer Sciences Department graciously provided a computer account to run the SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Program during the December 1995 and January 1996 historic government shutdown. Finally, I would like to express gratitude to Holly Rushmeier (SIGGRAPH 96 Papers Chair) and Stephen Spencer (SIGGRAPH Director for Publications) for making the development of the technical program and the creation of the conference proceedings a memorable experience.

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SIGGRAPH 96 Panels Chair