

Press Release

Hasso Plattner Institute opens new Research School “branch” in Israel

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Haifa/Potsdam. The Research School of the German Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) has opened its second international “branch” following the one in Cape Town: On Tuesday, 13 April, the “HPI Research School at Technion” opened in Haifa, Israel. HPI Director Prof. Christoph Meinel welcomed five Israeli doctoral candidates and their mentoring professors. Including the postgraduates from Haifa and Cape Town, the Research School now has a total of 37 members. Together, the highly talented young computer scientists from around the world explore the field of “Service-Oriented Systems Engineering”.

The doctoral candidates at Israel’s renowned Technion - Israel Institute of Technology are particularly interested in Scalable Computing. They research the structure and the potential use of new hardware and software architectures of modern multicore computers. The first international branch of the HPI Research School, the “HPI Research School at University of Cape Town”, was previously opened in April 2009. Postgraduate researchers there focus on information and communication technologies for developing and emerging countries.

From the Technion side, Prof. Paul Feigin, the university’s senior executive vice president, Prof. Oded Shmueli, executive vice president for research and the three deans, Prof. Moshe Shpitalni (Jacobs Graduate School), Prof. Eli Biham (Computer Science), and Prof. Adam Shwartz (Electrical Engineering) took part in the opening ceremony. HPI Director Prof. Meinel came from Germany with Proxy Dr. Timm Krohn and Eran Davidson, CEO of the venture capital fund Hasso Plattner Ventures.

“We are delighted that Israel’s technological university has joined our graduate school in educating talented junior researchers”, HPI Director Meinel said. According to him, the work on Scalable Computing matches the focus of HPI’s projected top-level research lab, the “Future SOC Lab”. It will open this summer and provide a unique academic environment for researching the interplay of ultramodern computers with multicore processors and immense main memory capacities, on the one hand, and massively parallel software, on the other hand.

The branches in Haifa and Cape Town both build on the model developed at HPI in 2005: postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers are mentored jointly by all professors rather than by a single supervisor. The scholars work on a

problem from the topical, multidisciplinary field of “Service-Oriented Systems Engineering”, each from the perspective of their individual specialization. Once a week they discuss their work and findings in a research seminar. Twice yearly the researchers get together for a convention. Additionally, they participate in academic workshops and symposia.

Cooperation with Haifa and Cape Town broadens HPI’s research

“The cooperation with Technion and the University of Cape Town enables us to broaden the scope of our research and to improve our networks with internationally renowned research groups in the field of IT-Systems Engineering”, Meinel said. Technion senior vice president Prof. Paul Feigin explained: “This collaboration with HPI and its Cape Town partner fits in well with Technion’s strategy of globalization in research and education. The Technion is proud and happy to have its researchers and students work together with those at Potsdam and Cape Town – an interaction that will undoubtedly lead to new advances in the computer science and electrical engineering aspects of service-oriented systems.”

Just like their South African colleagues, the Israeli junior researchers work from their home university, but are awarded scholarships from HPI in Germany. They are mentored jointly by their professors and integrated in the activities taking place in Potsdam. They participate in joint conferences and symposia. “Furthermore, there is an exchange between the young researchers, and new research projects are acquired jointly”, Meinel added.

Short profile of Hasso Plattner Institute

The Hasso Plattner Institute for IT-Systems Engineering (HPI) in Potsdam is Germany’s university excellence center for IT-Systems Engineering. It is the only university institute in Germany to offer a Bachelor’s and a Master’s program in “IT Systems Engineering” – a practice- and engineering-oriented alternative to conventional computer science studies. Current enrolment is at about 450 students. Overall, a good dozen professors and more than 50 other lecturers, visiting professors and contract teachers work at HPI. The HPI conducts excellent research, not least for renowned industry and business partners. The primary area of research is the basics of and applications for large, highly-complex, and cross-linked IT systems.

Since October 2005, HPI has its own international graduate school, the Research School on “Service-Oriented Systems Engineering”. In October 2007, the “HPI School of Design Thinking” was established, Europe’s first innovation school for students. Every year, it teaches 120 students from various disciplines to develop user-friendly IT-related products and services in multidisciplinary teams. The school is run in close cooperation with Stanford University in California. In November 2008, the two schools launched a joint research program on innovation. Furthermore, HPI cooperates closely with Israel’s Technion, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the U.S., the Technical University of Beijing, the University of Cape Town, and various European universities.

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