Report on My Visit to ICOT

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1 Impressions

Before my visit to ICOT I had heard much of the organisation both indirectly – by its prestigous reputation – and directly – from the participation of ICOT researchers in the international situation theory community. I was honoured to receive an invitation and I am very grateful for the opportunity of visiting Japan and for the generous hospitality that ICOT has shown me throughout my visit. My experience here has been highly stimulating both intellectually and culturally and I very much hope to return some day.

I have been impressed by the scale and integrity of ICOT. It is far larger than any research organisation I have visited before and yet appears to retain a sense of cohesion which much smaller organisations lack. I think much credit must be given to the cross-cutting division of research into laboratories and working groups which seems to foster internal co-operation as well as allowing room for individual research interests and contact with other companies. If I have any criticism it is only that it would be better for more researchers to spend more time at ICOT! In particular, I think ICOT would benefit from more of the sustained research that the senior research positions make possible.

ICOT provides a pleasant and productive research environment. I am not used to the open-plan style of office accommodation but I found it surprisingly easy to adapt to. A larger amount of desk-space would be preferable, but perhaps that is only because I still work with pencil and paper. The long periods of time allocated to the meetings of working groups allow the possibility of detailed exposition and extended discussion. For these reasons I found the experience of participating in the Situation Theory and Situation Semantics Workshop very rewarding. I sincerely hope that ICOT will continue to provide an excellent environment for basic research throughout the 1990s and into the next millenium.

During my stay in Japan I was able to attend the combined International Symposium and Workshop on New Models for Software Architecture '91 and the 3rd confernce on Situation Theory and its Applications, at which I presented a paper. I am very grateful to ICOT for making my attendence at the conference possible. Each year I am impressed by Japanese involvement in the situation theory community, much of which has been initiated by ICOT researchers and fostered by ICOT's Situation Theory and Situation Semantics Workshop.

My short stay in Japan has been a very enjoyable one. In my adventure with Japnanese cuisine Hasida-san, Mukai-san and Yusakawa-san have

been excellent guides as well as generous hosts. My visit has been greatly enriched by the helpful advice and recommendations of Karakawa-san: she has enabled me to get a taste of Tokyo life. I also spent a relaxing two days outside of Tokyo in Hakone and Kamakura – the latter by the kind invitation of Mukai-san.

The organisation of my visit has been admirable thanks to the diligence of Hasida-san, Yasukawa-san, Iwata-san and Karakawa-san, to whom I am,again, very grateful. I am also grateful to the many researchers whohave presented some of the different aspects of ICOT's work and to Ikeda-san and Yokota-san for helping me use the ICOT computers. Finally, special thanks is due to the management of ICOT without whom my visit would not be possible.

2 Outline Diary of Visit

My first appointment at ICOT was at the STASS workshop on 13th November at which I gave a talk entitled "Proof Methods for Reasoning *in* and *about* Situations." The workshop lasted the whole day as another talk was given by Dag Westerstaal (visiting ICOT from Sweden). It was an interesting day and the generous time allowance enabled me to elaborate on ideas which I have not previously presented.

On 14th November Mukai-san explained to me some of his ideas concerning the relationship between information theory and modern physics. We had a fascinating discussion and I shall be very interested in any further research that emerges from these ideas.

From 18th November to 22nd November I was absent from ICOT attending the International Symposium on New Models for Software Architecture '91 at Waseda University and the 3rd confernce on Situation Theory and its Applications at the Prince Hotel, Oiso. A number of ICOT researchers as well as researchers from companies who attend ICOT's STASS workshop were in attendence and so I was able to find out more about "Japanese Sitaution Theory" by listening to their talks and contributions in discussion.

On my return on 25th Novmeber Yokota-san and Yasukawa-san presented some of the work of the 3rd laboratory and gave an introduction to the knowledge representation language, QUIXOTE. I discovered a number of interesting connections with my own work on the proof theory of situation theory and we arranged to discuss this further.

The 5th laboratory's model generation theorem prover was demonstrated

on 26th November by Fujita-san. On the same day, I presented my work on extending my work on the elementary proof theory for situation theory to higher-orders at STASS workshop. That was the first time I have talked about this aspect of my research and so I was especially interested in the comments I received.

On 27th November, Hasida-san presented his Dynamic Physical Systems. We had a fascinating discussions about his ideas.

On 28th November, I had a dicussion with Yasukawa-san about Quixote and its relationship with proof systems for Situation Theory.

On 29th November, Nitta-san and Ichiyoshi-san presented some of the work of the 7th laboratory, legal reasoning systems in particular.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Personal Details

Date of Birth: 23rd February, 1964.

Place of Birth: Shoreham-by-sea, West Sussex, U.K.

Nationality: British.

Current Position: Post-doctoral fellow, Department of Philosophy, Indiana University.

Education

1977-82 Brighton College, Brighton, East Sussex.

1983-86 Wadham College, Oxford University.

1986-89 Centre for Cognitive Science, University of Edinburgh.

Qualifications

1986 B.A. Oxford University, Mathematics and Philosophy.

1990 Ph.D. University of Edinburgh, Cognitive Science.

Awards

1980 Scholarship, Brighton College.

1984 Scholarship, Oxford.

1991 SERC Post-doctoral Fellowship (2 years).

Appointments

1989-91 Research Associate on the DYANA project (an ESPRIT Basic Research Action) at the Dept. of Artificial Intelligence, Edinburgh, (half-time) and also at the Human Communication Research Centre, Edinburgh (half-time).

Current Research Interests

Logic (proof theory, modal logic, feature logics, situation theory, property theory, constructive type theory, illative logic) and the philosophy of mind (especially informational approaches).