

Onward! 2011 General Chair's Welcome

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 10th Onward!. This year marks its first year as a *bona fide* SIGPLAN symposium; its proper name is **ACM Symposium on New Ideas in Programming and Reflections on Software**. Its familiar name, though, remains **Onward!**—with the exclamation point.

“New ideas in programming” means that we are interested in ideas that can move us forward or radically sideways. A good Onward! paper has two characteristics: readers will wish they had thought of it, and they will believe “it might just work.” We don’t expect detailed proof the idea will work, but we don’t accept pure claims. Onward! papers are well written, well argued, and compelling. They are generally bigger than technical papers, more radical, more visionary, wider ranging, more thought provoking, more frustrating even. Here is what they are **not**: ordinary OOPSLA papers with lousy validation.



“Reflections on software” means that sometimes the way forward begins by looking back and thinking hard, finding new (and better) ways to view what has gone before, in order to provide a new vector. We call such papers “essays.” Essays are reflective, often personal, and cover a lot of ground in unexpected ways. Essays are hard to write. Very hard to write. Over the years we have had a good number submitted, but only a scarce few accepted. Here is what they are **not**: ordinary OOPSLA papers with lousy validation.

We welcome submissions about every and any aspect of programming, software, and software engineering. When what you want to say doesn’t fit into the research papers or essays bucket, you can submit a film.

This year we accepted seven out of 23 research papers and five films for presentation and publications. While authors of research papers are proficient at writing technical papers, the essay form has proven to be more difficult, and this year, though we had 13 submissions, none were taken. We decided, then, that this year’s essays track take the form of a writers’ workshop in which a couple of good essayists will coach budding writers in the essay form.

Our keynote speaker is Markus Püschel who is well known for his work on **Spiral**, an automatic performance programming framework for a small, but important class of functions called linear transforms. In his talk he will draw attention to the performance / productivity problem for mathematical applications and make the case for a more interdisciplinary attack.

I wish to thank my organizing committee:

Eelco Visser, Research Papers Chair
David West, Essays Chair
Bernd Bruegge, Films Chair
Pascal Costanza, Workshops Chair
Tobia Pape, Web Chair
Constanze Langer, Designer
Richard P. Gabriel, Steering Committee Chair[†]

I am looking forward to an interesting and inspiring symposium.

Onward!

Robert Hirschfeld
Hasso-Plattner-Institut Potsdam
Onward! General Chair

[†] Ever vigilant but (mildly) annoying.