Software Tools, Techniques and Architectures for Computer Simulation

Gabriel A Wainer and Olivier Dalle

In recent years, the complexity of computer simulations has increased steadily, and it is now common to see very complex software development for simulation studies. These tasks are particularly challenging in the field of computer systems and networking simulations. Although there have been numerous efforts in the field of modeling and simulation of computer systems and computer networks, there have been few opportunities for researchers to discuss and highlight the main issues they face when building new software tools, techniques and architectures for these applications.

Following the success of the first SIMUTools International Conference on Simulation Tools and Techniques (Marseille, France, March 2008), and its follow-up editions in Rome (2009) and Malaga (2010), this special issue aims at giving such an opportunity. The idea of this issue is to provide a timely reference of the current best practices and thus contribute to help the simulation community to tackle new problems and improve the current state-of-the-art techniques and tools. The first edition of SIMUTools received 114 submissions in this field out of which 33 were accepted for publication as full papers in the conference proceedings. The authors of the best of these papers and numerous other contributions in this area were submitted to this issue. After a long review process, this double-volume issue includes a number of varied topics briefly summarized hereafter, including a few extended versions of the original papers from SIMUTools, and many other interesting articles related to simulation tools and techniques.

The paper ‘A Simulation Environment for Hierarchical Process Chains Based on OMNET++’ by Falko Bause, Peter Buchholz, Jan Kriege and Sebastian Vastag, introduces the use of the networking tool OMNET++ in a different application domain: process chains. The authors introduce ProC/B, a library for hierarchical modeling that can be mapped into discrete-event simulation models. The idea is to map a graphical specification model and convert it into an OMNET++ library for simulation purposes. The authors present the design of such a library, and discuss validation results of the transformation process.

The article ‘Application-Level Simulation for Network Security’, by Stephan Schmidt, Rainer Bye, Joël Chinnow, Karsten Bußka, Ahmet Camtepe and Sahin Albayrak, presents the design of NeSSI, a network simulator that incorporates varied network-security models (automated attack generators, trace analysis, intrusion detection, etc.). The main goal is to allow network service providers to improve security through simulation analysis, using a library tailored specifically for security experts and network administrators. The tool allows the user to model hierarchical networks, and it provides an advanced GUI to create network topologies and varied scenarios. The models can be executed with high performance, based on a parallel...
simulation engine. The authors present interesting case studies based on the detection and prevention of computer worms, and they show different projects where this tool has been recently used.

Wolfgang E. Denzel, Jian Li, Peter Walker and Yuho Jin introduce their work entitled ‘A Framework for End-to-end Simulation of High performance Computing Systems’, in which they present a software tool for studying HPC systems with thousands of components and varied interconnects. The main problem they try to address is high scalability in the simulation of these systems, which is not straightforward. They used OMNET++ to build a library with focus on their applications. The tool allows them to collect traces, organize the code better, and use the graphical interfaces of this well-established environment. They introduce varied simulation results for validation purposes, including a discussion on parallelization of this environment to improve performance based on MPI middleware.

‘A Network-based Simulation Architecture for Studying Epidemic Dynamics’ by Chung-Yuan Huang, Yu-Shiuan Tsai and Tzai-Hung Wen introduces a network-based simulation applied to the study of epidemiology. The authors use a new architecture based on demographics, in order to be able to run advanced simulations applied to complex epidemics. Their model is based on cellular automata, and it uses spatial distribution of the entities, and their geographical scale. They show the use of their tool through an example based on the SARS and HIV epidemics, comparing the predicted simulations with the empirical data (for validation purposes).

Finally, the article ‘A Methodology for Solving Logistic Optimization Problems through Simulation’, by Mercedes Narciso, Miquel A. Piera and Antoni Guasch, introduces a methodology for decision-making analysis in logistics, based on simulation and optimization. The authors propose to define discrete-event models using colored Petri nets (CPN), and their application to logistic problems (which, being NP-hard, can be studied through simulation methods). The idea is to first model the system as a discrete-event model, specifying the resources needed, queues, delays, etc. The method they propose allows one to convert this model into a CPN, and do reachability analysis using standard tools. Then, an optimization algorithm is applied to the reachability tree, trying to find optimal solutions through different heuristics. They show the feasibility of their proposal through an interesting case study on job-shop operations.

We would like to thank the valuable work by all the authors, the numerous reviewers, and, in particular, the authors, for their hard work in preparing this issue.

References

Gabriel A. Wainer, SMSCS, SMIEEE, received M.Sc. (1993) and Ph.D. degrees (1998, with highest honors) from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the Université d’Aix-Marseille III, France. In July 2000, he joined the Department of Systems and Computer Engineering, Carleton University (Ottawa, ON, Canada), where he is now an associate professor. He has held positions at the Computer Science Department of the University of Buenos Aires, and visiting positions in various places (the University of Arizona, LSIS (CNRS), the University of Nice and INRIA, Sophia Antipolis, France). He is the author of three books and over 200 research articles, has edited four other books, and helped organize over 90 conferences, including being one of the founders of the ICST SIMUTools Conferences (program co-chair in 2008, general co-chair in 2009, and steering committee member since 2009). He was PI of different research projects and is a recipient of various awards (NSERC, Precarn, Usenix, CFI, CONICET, ANPCYT, CANARIE, IBM Eclipse Innovation). He is the special issues editor of the Transactions of the SCS, associate editor of the JDMS (Journal of Defense Modeling and Simulation), a member of the editorial boards of Wireless Networks and the International Journal of Simulation and Process Modeling. He has been a member of the board of directors of the SCS, and a chairman of the DEVS standardization study group (SISO). He is director of the Ottawa Center of the
McLeod Institute of Simulation Sciences and chair of the Ottawa M&SNet, and one of the investigators in the Carleton University Centre for advanced Simulation and Visualization (V-Sim). His current research interests are modeling methodologies and tools, parallel/distributed simulation and real-time systems.

Olivier Dalle is Maître de Conférences (associate professor) in the Computer Sciences department of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis (UNS). He received his B.Sc. from the University of Bordeaux 1 and his M.Sc. and Ph.D. from UNS. From 1999 to 2000, he was a post-doctoral fellow at the French Space Agency center in Toulouse (CNES-CST), where he started working on component-based discrete-event simulation of multi-media telecommunication systems. In 2000, he was appointed to UNS, and he joined the MASCOTTE research group, a joint team of UNS, CNRS and INRIA. His current research interests in discrete-event simulation are on methodology support, very large-scale networked systems, and wireless communication systems. He was one of the founders of the ICST SIMUTools Conferences (program co-chair in 2008, general co-chair in 2009, and steering committee member since 2009).