Formal Methods Europe
Minutes of the 37th meeting
Held in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
Monday 6 September 2004

Present at the meeting were:
- Ana Cavalcante (from item 9 on the agenda)
- John Fitzgerald (Chairman)
- Alessandro Fantechi
- Stefania Gnesi
- Neil Henderson (from item 9 on the agenda)
- Nico Plat (Secretary)
- Dino Mandrioli
- Kees Pronk (Treasurer)
- Peter Ryan (during the discussion on item 5)
- Claire Smith (during the discussion on item 5)
- Marcel Verhoef
- John Warwick (during the discussion on item 5)
- Jim Woodcock (from item 9 on the agenda)

Apologies had been received from: Derek Andrews, Eerke Boiten, Raymond Boute, Jonathan Bowen, David Crocker, Stephan Gruner, Anthony Hall, Randolph Johnson, Cliff Jones, José Oliveira and Jan Storbank Pedersen.

1   Welcome
John Fitzgerald welcomed all those present at the meeting. He thanked Claire Smith for her work organising the meeting.

2   Agree upon agenda
The agenda distributed at the meeting was agreed upon.

3   Minutes of the meeting held in Canterbury on 4 April 2004
The minutes of the meeting were approved without modification.

4   Action list
Action 34/7: Action continues. However, it was noted that the Education Subgroup had produced a paper which was accepted at the *Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods* in Ghent. A web version of this paper is supposed to be published on FME's website as well but the web masters had not received it yet.
Action 37/1: Nico Plat to ask José Oliveira to send the paper accepted at the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods to be published on www.fmeurope.org.

Action 35/4: Done. This appears to cause more (potential) problems than to solve any. Action closed.

Action 35/10: Nothing has been received but the action was closed and replaced by an action for John Fitzgerald to ask Tiziana Margaria to send the presentation again.
Action 37/2: John Fitzgerald to ask Tiziana Margaria to distribute her presentation on ISOLA to the FME members.

Action 36/1: Done, action closed.

Action 36/2: Done, action closed.

Action 36/3: Done. Discussion had taken place between Kees Pronk and Raymond Boute. Action closed.

Action 36/4: Done, but Raymond Boute did not think that an advance would be needed after all. Action closed.

Action 36/5: Done. We should now await Jonathans Bowen's plans for resubmittal of the proposal. John Fitzgerald was asked to inform about the progress.
Action 37/3: John Fitzgerald to enquire with Jonathan Bowen about his plans to resubmit the FMnet proposal.
Action closed.

Action 36/6: Done, action closed.

Action 36/7: Is no longer considered relevant. Action closed.

Action 36/8: Not done, but there was some discussion on how beneficial this would be as Springer would require FME to collect the subscription fees itself, causing administrative overhead and also extra banking costs for FME members transferring the fee to FME. John Fitzgerald was asked to enquire amongst the FME members to see if there is any interest.
Action 37/4: John Fitzgerald to find out amongst the FME members to find out if there is interest in a reduced subscription rate for FACJ and to discuss with Cliff Jones the relationship between FME and FACJ.
Action closed.

5   Status report on FM'05
John Fitzgerald reported on the progress of FM'05. Progress with the organisation is going very well, details can be found in the report accompanying these minutes. To support the paper selection progress, the PC will use Metaframe. Just before lunch, the members present were taken on a tour to inspect the FM'05 premises.

6   Status report on FM 2006
Stefania Gnesi reported briefly on FM 2006. McMaster University has agreed to organise FM 2006 and the way things look at the moment the Symposium will be held in the last week of August 2006. Discussions between the OC and FME (guided by Stefania) have already begun.

John Fitzgerald reported that he had been approached by FLoC (Moshe Vardi) in relation to holding FM 2006 as part of FLoC, also around August 2006. The commitment already having been made to McMaster, it is necessary to decline co-location with the next FLoC.
Action 37/5: John Fitzgerald to inform Moshe Vardi that FM2006 will not co-locate with FLoC

7   Report on the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods
There was no formal report from Raymond Boute. Dino Mandrioli, however, reported that progress with the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods is going very well. The proceedings, which are almost ready, will be published in Springer's LNCS series. The Call for Participation is out. Dino Mandrioli offered to promote the event in the SE-community he is involved in.

8   ForTIA
Marcel Verhoef reported on the current state of affairs: Anthony Hall and Richard Moore had

stepped down as Chairman and I-day Organiser, respectively. Jorge Cuellar and Marcel had tried to find replacements for both positions but so far failed to find suitable (and willing) candidates, none of the existing ForTIA (board) members are willing to take these positions. Within ForTIA Marcel had expressed concern that ForTIA would fade away if nothing happens soon. He is willing to put in effort into ForTIA, but not just by himself alone.

I-Day and ForTIA were considered as separate issues. John Fitzgerald, in his capacity as General Chair for FM'05, pointed out that he had received no formal proposal for an I-Day. It was remarked that if ForTIA could not organise I-Day, there was probably not going to be such an event at FM'05.

The meeting expressed disappointment to learn about the ForTIA situation but expressed its gratitude to Anthony Hall for his work in getting ForTIA 'off the ground'. It was pointed out that subgroups are expected to be active and that ForTIA had not even organised its AGM, as it is supposed to according to its own regulations. It was therefore decided to ask ForTIA to deliver a viable action plan at the very latest one month before the next FME AGM. If ForTIA does not succeed in doing this it is probably no longer worthwhile maintaining its status as a subgroup of FME.

Action 37/6: John Fitzgerald to ask ForTIA for a plan of action.

5   FM Education

The Education Subgroup has produced a paper which has been accepted for the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods. An extended version will shortly also be available at www.fmeurope.org. Dino Mandrioli explained the subject of the paper: it addresses a survey on formal education in Europe.

The meeting was interested in the next steps that the Subgroup will take. One of the possibilities suggested was to organise a workshop at FM'05.

Action 37/7: José Oliveira to report on the next planned steps of the Subgroup on Education.

6   FME Publications

Bernhard Aichernig had prepared a note prior to the meeting on FME publications (enclosed with these minutes). His main suggestions were:
- Improved and updated website
- FME paper/electronic publications (e.g. case studies)
- BLOG (on-line diary) on formal methods
- Wiki Board on formal methods

Each of these was discussed at the meeting. It was felt that an improved and updated website, BLOG and Wiki Board should be given priority. Jim Woodcock felt this it was better to use existing journals (e.g. FACJ) as a forum, as opposed to starting up a special FME journal.

Action 37/8: John Fitzgerald to send feedback to Bernhard Aichernig on his FME publication proposal.

11   FME website

Bernhard Aichernig has taken up active maintenance of FME's website. As a result, the site now has actual information, although more information on FME and formal methods can be added. Stefan Gruner has joined the web master's team and is responsible for the "applications" section. One of Bernhard's colleagues at UNU-IIST is responsible for the "tools" section.

Nico Plat said that he still misses a vision on the future of the website, preferably in the form of a plan that makes such a vision concrete. The meeting asked Bernhard to produce such a plan.

Action 37/9: Nico Plat to ask Bernhard Aichernig to produce a vision/plan for the future of FME's website.

12   UK Grand Challenges in Computing
Jim Woodcock and Ana Cavalcanti reported on the initiative "UK Grand Challenges in Computing". Grand Challenges in Computing started in the US (where it had seemed to have died out a bit now), Tony Hoare started a UK version at a conference in Edinburgh in 2003. 140 Topics were proposed and now 7 principal challenges remain. Jim is responsible for GC 6 (Grand Challenge number 6): Dependable Systems Evolution. More information on GC6 is enclosed with these minutes.

Jim wants to set up a repository, which can be used for GC6, amongst others to store case studies and problems. He also wants to organise master classes. He asked for the support of FME by using FME's name for funding request etc. The meeting gladly gave its support. Another possibility is to organise workshops in conjunction with FME.

13   Date and place of the next meeting
Nico Plat will ask Raymond Boute if he is willing to organise FME's next meeting in conjunction with the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods in November 2004, in Ghent, Belgium.
Action 37/10: Nico Plat to ask Raymond Boute to organise the next meeting in November 2004.

The meeting after that (AGM 2005) will be held on Tuesday 19 April 2005 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

14   Other Business
John Fitzgerald reminded the members that the board will likely seek two additional new members dedicated respectively to educational and industrial issues. Offers and potential candidates are sought.

Kees Pronk reported that we need a new (scalable) version of our current logo and that we probably can no longer expect Praxis to provide this. He said he knew some students could probably make one for FME at little costs. The meeting asked him to go ahead with this.
Action 37/11: Kees Pronk to arrange the construction of a new scalable FME logo.

During the meeting, members attended a lively and interesting seminar by Peter Ryan in the School of Computing Science. Peter described work undertaken in the Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration on Dependability, bringing relatively formal work together with psychological (cognitive) and even sociological aspects of e-Voting. The abstract of Peter's talk is as follows:

> *"Digital voting technologies are currently very topical. Various systems are being proposed, trialled and even deployed around the world. 30% of the US electorate will be voting using touch screen machines this November. Assurance for many of these systems is based on claims of "rigorous" verification and testing. Such assurance is extremely fragile: any oversight, mistake or corruption in the process of verification, implementation or maintenance could undermine the dependability goals.*
>
> *By contrast, an approach due to Chaum derives assurance from a high level of transparency whilst preserving ballot secrecy. In effect, we verify the election rather than the system. In this talk I present a variant of the Chaum scheme that preserves the essential characteristics of the original whilst being significantly easier to understand and implement".*

Summary of actions

Action 34/7: José Oliveira to submit a report on the status of the Education Subgroup

Action 37/1: Nico Plat to ask José Oliveira to send the paper accepted at the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods to be published on www.fmeurope.org.

Action 37/2: John Fitzgerald to ask Tiziana Margaria to distribute her presentation on ISOLA to the FME members.

Action 37/3: John Fitzgerald to enquire with Jonathan Bowen about his plans to resubmit the FMnet proposal.

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Action 37/5: John Fitzgerald to inform Moshe Vardi that FM2006 will not co-locate with FLoC

Action 37/6: John Fitzgerald to ask ForTIA for a plan of action.

Action 37/7: José Oliveira to report on the next planned steps of the Subgroup on Education.

Action 37/8: John Fitzgerald to send feedback to Bernhard Aichernig on his FME publication proposal.

Action 37/9: Nico Plat to ask Bernhard Aichernig to produce a vision/plan for the future of FME's website.

Action 37/10: Nico Plat to ask Raymond Boute to organise the next meeting in November 2004.

Action 37/11: Kees Pronk to construct a new scalable FME logo.

Enclosures

- Progress report on FM 2005
- E-mail by Bernhard Aichernig on FME publications
- Note on UK Grand Challenges in Computing