**Instructions for Session Chairs**

**ICST 2009**

The primary responsibility for a session chair at ICST is to manage the session in terms of time and professionalism. Each speaker has 30 minutes, of which 20-25 should be given to the talk and 5-10 left for questions. It is important that session chairs inform speakers at the 20 minute, 25 minute and 30 minute mark. It is also important to avoid too many questions during the talk and stop the questioning at the end if time is up. Specific tasks to support this responsibility are:

* Meet the speakers **before** the session starts. Find out which author is presenting and how to pronounce his or her name. Make sure that each speaker’s presentation will actually appear on the projector. You do not want to waste session time trying to bring up a presentation.
* Be in the presentation room at least 10 minutes before the session starts. Stand at the front of the room and act “officious” so that speakers can guess that you are the session chair.
* Before the session starts, arrange signals (such as signs) with the speakers for when they have used 20 minutes, 25, minutes and 30 minutes (time to stop).
* Start the session on time. If you wait while more people wander in from the hall, it can throw off the schedule, taking time away from other speakers and making it hard for attendees to move between rooms to listen to talks in parallel sessions.
* If a speaker finishes early, do not start the next talk early. Attendees from other parallel sessions may plan to come to your session.
* If a speaker does not show, please do the following:
  + Do not start the next talk 30 minutes early. Tell the audience the next talk will start at the published time and call for a break. (Again, this is so that attendees from other parallel sessions will not miss a talk.)
  + Inform the program chairs as soon as possible. It is important that we keep track of no-shows.
* Introduce each speaker **clearly** and **concisely**. All the audience needs is the speaker’s name, position and affiliation … remember that they are there to hear the speaker not the session chair.
* If the speaker is interrupted by an excessive number of questions during the talk, politely ask the audience to save the remaining questions until the end of the talk (if time permits).
* Do **not** let a speaker go beyond the 30 minute slot. That is unfair to subsequent speakers and the audience.
* If more questions are being asked at the 30 minute mark, politely suggest they talk with the speaker at the next break. (If this is the last speaker in the session, excuse the audience, then suggest questions continue informally.)
* If the audience has no questions, it is a courtesy to the speaker to prepare a question of your own. If the audience has lots of questions, it is courteous to postpone your questions to give others a chance.

Being a session chair is a straightforward but very important responsibility, and we thank you greatly for your service!

*Jeff Offutt & Per Runeson, ICST 2009 program chairs*