International BPM Conference Proceedings

November 2004

Business Process Management: International Conference, BPM 2003 Eindhoven, The Netherlands. (LNCS 2678)

Wil van der Aalst, Arthur ter Hofstede, and Mathias Weske (Eds.). Springer, 390 pages, $71.

and

Business Process Management: Second International Conference, BPM 2004. Potsdam, Germany. (LNCS 3080)

Jorg Desel, Barbara Pernici, and Mathias Weske (Eds.) Springer, 306 pages, $67

by Paul Harmon

For two years now, researchers and technical experts on workflow and business process management systems design have been meeting to discuss the technical underpinnings of BPM systems. The first meeting was held in the Netherlands in 2003 in conjunction with the annual Petri Net Conference. The second was held in Germany, this year. In both cases, the technical papers presented at the conferences have been gathered together in books published by Springer in its Lecture Notes in Computer Science series.

The conferences are designed to advance the scientific knoweldge of BPM, although there are also a few invited talks by industry experts from SAP and IDS Scheer. The BPM 2003 volume contains 26 papers. We've listed the first 12 below to provide a sense of the two volumes:

Business Process Management: A Survey by Wil M.P. van der Aalst (Eindhoven Uni of Tech.), Arthur H.M. ter Hofstede (Queensland Uni of Tech, and Mathias Weske (Uni. of Potsdam).

Workflow: A Language for Composing Web Services. Giacomo Piccinelli (Uni College London), Scott Lane Williams (HP Software & Solutions).

Mining Most Specific workflow Models from Event-Based Data. Guido Schimm (OFFIS).

Evaluation of Correctness Criteria for Dynamic Workflow Changes. Stefanie Rinderle, Manfred Reichert, and Peter Dadam (Uni. of Ulm).

Integrated Business Process Management: Using State-Based Business Rules to Communicate between Disparate Stakeholders. Donald C. McDermid (Edith Cowan Uni.)

Structuring Business Objectives: A Business Process Modeling Perspective. Dina Neiger, and Leonid Churilov (Monash Uni.).

Use Cases as Workflows. Michel Chaudron, Kees van Hee, and Lou Somers. (Eindhoven Uni. of Tech.)

A Model to Support Collaborative Work in Virtual Enterprises. Olivier Perrin, Franck Wynen, Julia Bitcheva, and Claude Godart (ECOO, LORIA).

Towards a Library for Process Programming. Guangxin Yang (Bell-Labs Research).

Generating a Process Model from a Process Audit Log. Mati Golani, and Shlomit S. Pinter (IBM - Haifa Research Lab.).

Contracting Workflows and Protocol Patterns. Andries van Dijk (Deloitte & Touche Mang. & ICT Consultants.)

Security in Business Process Engineering. Michael Backes, Brigit Pftzmann, and Michael Waidner (IBM -- Zurich Research Lab.).

As you can see from the articles cited, there are only a few articles of broad, general interest. Overall, these books contain technical discussions of how one architects and designs information systems to support workflow and BPM systems. There are some interesting papers, in addition on languages like BPEL and on new workflow tool designs. Thus, these books are really only for those who are interested in a very rigorous discussion of the technical issues associated with the creation of BPM systems. That said, for those with technical interests, these books provide a very rich and comprehensive source of the latest thinking on the problems of creating and managing BPM systems.

Wil van der Aalst, writing to describe the conferences, suggested that:

"The success International Conference series on Business Process Management can be explained by the fact that BPM is one of the most exciting topics in information systems because it addresses the interplay of people and organizations on the one hand and “process aware software” on the other hand. Particularly interesting are generic tools like workflow management products to support the creation of business process systems. The definition of a business process management system used for this conference series is: “a generic software system that is driven by explicit process designs to enact and manage operational business processes.” The system should be process-aware and generic in the sense that it is possible to modify the processes it supports. The process designs are often graphical and the focus is on structured processes that need to handle many cases in parallel.

BPM extends the traditional workflow approach by providing support for the diagnosis phase -- Business Process Analysis (BPA) and Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) -- and typically allows for more flexibility (E.g. case handling). At the same time, there are many emerging standards to support BPM. For example, BPEL4WS is often named as a basic language to support process execution. These topics have been addressed in BPM 2003 and BPM 2004, and will again be addressed in BPM 2005."

The third International Conference, BPM 2005 will be held in Nancy, France, in September 2005. Those interested in participating are invited to submit a paper. For more information, check http://bpm2005.loria.fr

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