

PACT 2013 Report

This year's PACT, hosted in Edinburgh, was a great success. Attendance at the conference increased over the previous year, with 190 delegates attending from countries across every continent. This is the second highest attendance in the history of PACT. 19% of delegates attended from Scottish universities and companies. The conference had a multitude of high-class submissions, which were presented in two simultaneously running presentation sessions.

Each day's theme was highlighted with one of three keynotes, preceding the rest of the presentations. They provided a great outlook on the successes and future directions of the field. The first emphasized energy efficiency and how to better utilise parallel architectures using hardware/software co-design. The second day's keynote discussed the challenges we face dealing with strict resource constraints, particularly on mobile devices and the interesting new domain of applications that "always connected" devices offer us. The last keynote highlighted the need for ways to more easily exploit parallel architectures; taking this direction suggests designing programming models which both allow for efficient software as well as hardware.

PACT provides a fantastic forum for students and established academics alike to discuss the state-of-the-art in computer architecture. Most notably, the coffee breaks between sessions were a great way to informally discuss ideas, and network with academics from other institutions and industry. The format of each presentation included a question and answer session, so delegates could also ask questions in a more formal setting.

Prior to the main three day conference, there were two days of workshops on a range of computer architecture topics. These were highly popular, with many delegates registering for both the workshops and the main conference. They consisted of a mix of presentations and tutorial style sessions.

The conference was also a great way to socialise with people from the architecture community. A large banquet was held on the Tuesday evening at the Hub on the Royal Mile, and there was a tour of central Edinburgh on the Tuesday afternoon.

In conclusion, this year's PACT was a fantastic forum for keeping up with advances in the field of computer architecture, and showcased Scotland as a leading centre for research.