Neil Deaton Jones

A Great Dane: Reminiscences from 38 Years - A Laudatio

Dines Bjørner

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Summary

• NDJ is a great gift from the US of A to Denmark.
• And now he is a Danish citizen (1991, NDJ’s 50th Year).
• NDJ has indispensably and significantly improved the professional and international status of computer & computing science as it was pursued in Denmark before 1976.
• In this laudatio I will reminisce over three seminal “events” in NDJ’s life here in Denmark.
• The laudatio ends with some totally unrelated matters: some critical remarks about threat from within and without. — since I seem to have a captive audience!
Three Highlights

- Professorship
- The First PE&MC Symposium
- The “Maxwell Equations” for Computer Science
Professorship

• It nearly all went wrong
• and we might not have had Neil as a “Royally” appointed professor!

Better not write the rest down!
It is entirely my highly subjective recollection!
The PE&MC and PE Symposia

• In 1978 I rewrote formulas of a 1977 paper by Andrei P. Ershov
• That lead me onto Mixed Computation and PE
• I met Andrei Petrovich almost yearly 1978–1988
• Then Andrei P. Ershov
  at a IFIP TC2 Work. Conf., Bad Tölz, FRG, April 1986, asked me to arrange what became the
  ⋆ IFIP TC2 PE&MC WC, Gl. Avernæs, DK, October 1987
  ○ The Three “Amigos”
    ○ Yoshihiko Futamura 7 Japanese Scientists (Sakes)
    ○ Andrei P. Ershov 7 “Sovjet” Scientists (Vodkas)
    ○ Neil D. Jones 7 US of A Scientists + Neil! (Bourbons)
    + 62 more!
The “Maxwell Equations” for Computer Science

from Maxwell

\[ \nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} \]
Faraday’s Law: electromagnetic induction

\[ \nabla \times \mathbf{H} = \mathbf{J} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{D}}{\partial t} \]
Ampère’s Law: source of the magnetic field

\[ \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0 \]
Gauss’s Law: divergence of the magnetic field

\[ \nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho \]
Gauss’s Law: sources and sinks of electric charge

\[ \nabla \cdot \mathbf{J} = -\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} \]
Maxwell: continuity of charge

to Futamura / Jones

Target = [mix] Interpreter Program
Compiler = [mix] mix Interpreter
CompilerGenerator = [mix] mix mix

• The UNU-IIST ‘Charter’ Brochure, 1993 (pages 17 and 23):
... and now to something else ...
Some General Remarks

• The foundational studies of Informatics are at risk.
  ★ The IT industry is pressuring for mass production.
  ★ Politicians believe universities should provide this production.
  ★ “Powers–that–be” do not understand the quest for understanding.
  ★ Irresponsible industry-groups do not appreciate abstractions.

• “Modern” universities threaten elite studies and student scholars.
  ★ Queer forms of “management” are taking over.
  ★ Complicity is rampant.
  ★ **We risk loosing accumulated knowledge.**

• It was fun while it lasted, i.e. accumulating knowledge.
  ★ No need to linger on ! To otherwise daily witness the losses !
“New Public Management” is Destroying Science

The “Bullshit” Terms

- change-readiness
- concept
- creative
- cross-disciplinary
- dynamic
- efficient
- flexible
- globalisation
- inclusion
- innovative
- inter-disciplinary
- market relevance
- modern
- multi-disciplinary
- quality
- vision
THANKS

Thanks, Neil, for holding the fort.

Thanks, Neil, for upholding and exceeding greatest standards.
Thanks, Neil for educating Nikolaj!