

# PREFACE

WELCOME to the Seventeenth International FLAIRS Conference, which this year is in beautiful South Beach, Miami.

We are very pleased this year to continue our cooperation with the American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI). Flairs continues to attract a large number of authors and participants from around the world, and this year we received a substantial number of submissions to the general conference and to the 21 special tracks. The overall acceptance rate was 54.9%, with a 48.8% acceptance rate to the general conference. The efforts of the program and special track committee members have resulted in an excellent program that combines the general conference with the breadth represented by the special tracks and spans numerous areas within AI. We are sure you will find this program interesting over the next several days. In addition, we are pleased to present the following invited talks by five distinguished speakers:

- Living Life to the Fullest: Long-Term Relationships with Embodied Conversational Agents  
Justine Cassell, *Northwestern University*
- Some Scientific and Engineering Challenges for the Mid-Term Future of AI  
Edward Feigenbaum, *Stanford University*
- Fast Adaptation with Random Neural Networks  
Erol Gelenbe, *Imperial College, London*
- The Semantic Web—Bringing AI to the World Wide Web  
Jim Hendler, *University of Maryland*
- Machine Learning for Decoding Human Brain States from Functional MR Images  
Tom Mitchell, *Carnegie Mellon University*

A best paper award will be presented at the conference. Furthermore, we are grateful for the additional efforts of those reviewers whose work will carry on past the conference as they review a number of extended papers which are under consideration for a special issue of the *International Journal on Artificial Intelligence Tools* (IJAIT).

In addition to thanking the program and special track committee members, we would also like to thank Ingrid Russell, FLAIRS-2004 general chair, who brought wonderful organization to this conference. Mike Hamilton and the staff at AAAI have done a wonderful job of producing the proceedings. And, as is the case year after year, Jean Gerber has handled all the conference registrations in a thorough and efficient fashion.

We hope you enjoy the conference and find these proceedings to be a valuable resource in the future.

– Valerie Barr and Zdravko Markov  
FLAIRS-2004 Program Cochairs

