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IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer Tour - Colombia and Panama

Summary Report from Dr. Xavier Fernando

I have been fortunate to deliver lectures on research in wireless communications and networking in several countries in the past. Consecutively, IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer designation was given to me in January 2012.

As soon as my name was posted in the ComSoc website, I received e-mail invitations from Colombia, Panama and Peru. They are very interested in one of my topic, 'Underground Communication Systems' because mining industry is big in this region. Unfortunately I could not visit Peru due to time conflict. However, my visit to Cali and Bogota in Colombia and Panama was very fruitful.

My tour started at the Cali Chapter in Colombia. On Wednesday, May 16, I arrived in Cali. I visited the ICESI University in Cali on May 17 and received warm welcome from Professors Gonzala Ulloa Villegas (Dean of the School of Engineering). My DL was part of the IEEE Colombia Communications Conference (COLCOM <http://ieee-colcom.org/>) 2012, a very well organized conference that played a valuable role in enhancing student experience. I was attending the welcome ceremony and technical sessions on Thursday, 17th.

I gave a lecture on underground communication systems, design challenges and cross layer optimization issues. There were about 60 attendees, some faculty members, a few industry people, and many graduate

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and undergraduate students, from ICESI and other nearby universities. The audience showed a great interest in the topic, and I enjoyed the interaction in the Q&A period after the presentation. In particular, I received emails from some students before and after the seminar. Some of them wanted my power point slides.

From my communications with the students, I understood they have two different programs, '(computer) systems engineering' and 'telematics engineering'. The latter is in fact electronic and communication engineering. The telematics students seem a bit worried about the job prospectus.

My second stop is at Bogota, the largest city in Colombia. I was arrived Bogota Saturday afternoon and the DL was arranged at 5 PM at the Universidad de los Andes. I was introduced by the Engineering Head Prof. Roberto Bustamante Miller who was very interested in space division multiple access and MIMO systems. I gave two lectures, 'Communication Systems for the Smart Grid' and 'Underground Communication Systems' in Bogota. There were 75 attendees for the event. Most of them are from the industry. I saw there was a keen interest in learning about the smart grid. The general feedback I received from the engineers after the talk was that they felt Colombia is behind in implementing many smart grid initiatives. Also they are very keen on learning the COMSOC standards related to the Smart Grid.

I met Mr. Andres Assmus after the Bogota lecture who was the CEO of the IT-Green Group that has some operations in Montreal. He was very keen on some of my research initiatives.

On Sunday May 20 and Monday May 21, IEEE student members took me around the Bogota city. Monday was a holiday in Colombia. I have to mention the hospitality they showed was amazing. Since they took so much trouble I paid for the dinner on Sunday. I saw a keen interest in learning English among the students.

I delivered my third lecture at the Panama Section on Tuesday, May 22. It was at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel. The meeting room was full although they had to pay and register in advance. Most audiences were from the local utilities and they are keen on learning the upcoming standard on the Smart Grid. We got into discussion the broadband over power line standard P1901 and its similarity with 802.11 series standards, especially in OFDM related aspects. Some professors were also keen on learning about my current research.

I returned to Toronto, Wednesday, May 23. There was a transit in Houston. I missed the connection flight due to tight security measures in Houston. Anyway, I arrived home safely midnight May 23.

I like to thank Eng. Carlos Andrés Lozano Garzón, IEEE Colombia Section Chair and DLT Coordinator who was very helpful with the trip. Prof. Andres Navarro Cadavid was the IEEE Section Chair and the key organizer of the COLOCM. I have to specially thank Prof. Juan Manuel Madrid Molina (Cali) who spent good amount of time with me showing the city around.

Overall, the DLT experience was wonderful. There was plenty of information sharing.

-Xavier Fernando

Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada



Xavier Fernando
Recibió su título de ingeniería en el año 1992 de la Universidad de Peradeniya (Sri Lanka). Maestría del Asian Institute of Technology, Tailandia en 1994 y posteriormente en el 2001 obtuvo su título como Ph. D. en Canadá por la Universidad de Calgary.

LABORAL Y ACADÉMICO

Trabajó como ingeniero de desarrollo e investigación para la organización AT&T desde 1994 hasta 1997. Ha pertenecido al Departamento de Ingeniería Eléctrica de la Universidad de Ryerson desde el año 2001.

IEEE

Es el presidente de la IEEE Communications Society, Capítulo Toronto y es un Miembro Senior de la IEEE. Fue elegido "Distinguished Lecturer" por la IEEE Communications Society para el periodo comprendido entre 2012 y 2013.

