

CIFer: Exchange and Synthesis

The goal of CIFer is provision of a forum for the encounter of two professions, each bringing contributions and knowledge needed and appreciated by the other. The hope is that the combination will greatly exceed its components.

I am honored and delighted to be involved in the first CIFer. The interest in application of the ingredients of computational intelligence to finance has been growing steadily. Results have been published in both the computational intelligence and finance literature. This meeting, for the first time, brings together, under one tent, practitioners from both finance and computational intelligence under the sponsorship of two major influential professional societies -- the IAFE and IEEE. The charter of this meeting is to provide a forum for interaction among serious practitioners in both fields amid a series of high quality technical presentations, panel sessions and tutorials.

Being involved in new undertakings, like the first CIFer conference, puts one out on a limb. This, however, is where there is fruit. Risk is necessary for growth. All great accomplishments, from the construction of the Panama canal to eating blowfish, involve risk. In 1912, the Antarctic explorer, Robert Scott wrote "We took risks". We knew we took them. Things have come out against us. We have no cause for complaint. This was found scribbled in his diary after his exploration party froze. Risk can also apparently lead to catastrophic failure. I am delighted to report, in contrast, CIFer is a major technical success.

Risk in new ventures is minimized by governing matters over which one has control. In the case of conferences, this means being involved with top quality professionals at all levels. This has been the case with CIFer. The General Co-Chairs, Tomaso Poggio and John Marshall, have provided wise and patient leadership. Andrew Lo, my fellow Program Co-Chair, performed at the height of professionalism at all times -- continually insisting on the high technical quality of the CIFer program. The CIFer program committee did a magnificent job in reviewing the papers. Most reviews were returned with detailed comments. The reviewing process for the submitted papers was quite strict. Well over half were rejected. Apostolos Refenes, the International Chair, brought prestige to CIFer with his stature as one who has successfully bridged the fields of finance and computational intelligence. Toshio Fukuda, the International Liaison, contributed significantly to the success of CIFer through his promotional activities. The man who did it all, including conceiving CIFer, was Organizational Chair, Scott Mathews. Scott established the CIFer organizing committee, approached the sponsoring societies, and kept all our eyes on the goal. The position of Finance Chair in a finance conference initially prompted a double take from me. Christine Alan has done a superb job at this post. These, and the other members of the CIFer organizing committee have, indeed, exercised their duties superbly.

I am honored to work with them.



Robert J. Marks II
Program Committee Co-Chair