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Proceedings of the 20th Congress of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA 2018)

Volume VIII: Ergonomics and Human Factors
in Manufacturing, Agriculture, Building
and Construction, Sustainable Development
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Preface

The Triennial Congress of the International Ergonomics Association is where and when a large community of scientists and practitioners interested in the fields of ergonomics/human factors meet to exchange research results and good practices, discuss them, raise questions about the state and the future of the community, and about the context where the community lives: the planet. The ergonomics/human factors community is concerned not only about its own conditions and perspectives, but also with those of people at large and the place we all live, as Neville Moray (Tatcher et al. 2018) taught us in a memorable address at the IEA Congress in Toronto more than twenty years, in 1994.

The Proceedings of an IEA Congress describes, then, the actual state of the art of the field of ergonomics/human factors and its context every three years.

In Florence, where the XX IEA Congress is taking place, there have been more than sixteen hundred (1643) abstract proposals from eighty countries from all the five continents. The accepted proposal has been about one thousand (1010), roughly, half from Europe and half from the other continents, being Asia the most numerous, followed by South America, North America, Oceania, and Africa. This Proceedings is indeed a very detailed and complete state of the art of human factors/ergonomics research and practice in about every place in the world.

All the accepted contributions are collected in the Congress Proceedings, distributed in ten volumes along with the themes in which ergonomics/human factors field is traditionally articulated and IEA Technical Committees are named:

- I. Healthcare Ergonomics (ISBN 978-3-319-96097-5).
- II. Safety and Health and Slips, Trips and Falls (ISBN 978-3-319-96088-3).
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Altogether, the contributions make apparent the diversities in culture and in the socioeconomic conditions the authors belong to. The notion of well-being, which the reference value for ergonomics/human factors is not monolithic, instead varies along with the cultural and societal differences each contributor share. Diversity is a necessary condition for a fruitful discussion and exchange of experiences, not to say for creativity, which is the “theme” of the congress.

In an era of profound transformation, called either digital (Zisman & Kenney, 2018) or the second machine age (Bnynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014), when the very notions of work, fatigue, and well-being are changing in depth, ergonomics/human factors need to be creative in order to meet the new, ever-encountered challenges. Not every contribution in the ten volumes of the Proceedings explicitly faces the problem: the need for creativity to be able to confront the new challenges. However, even the more traditional, classical papers are influenced by the new conditions.

The reader of whichever volume enters an atmosphere where there are not many well-established certainties, but instead an abundance of doubts and open questions: again, the conditions for creativity and innovative solutions.

We hope that, notwithstanding the titles of the volumes that mimic the IEA Technical Committees, some of them created about half a century ago, the XX Triennial IEA Congress Proceedings may bring readers into an atmosphere where doubts are more common than certainties, challenge to answer ever-heard questions is continuously present, and creative solutions can be often encountered.

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