



## CIB NEWS ARTICLE

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in Building and Construction

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### Around the Task Groups and Working Commissions

#### W102 - Information and Knowledge Management in Building

## Report of the 3rd International Conference "Information and Knowledge Management - Helping the Practitioner in Planning and Building" held in October 2007 in Stuttgart, Germany

by

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### Background

Compared to predominantly scholarly domains, the architecture/engineering/construction (A.E.C) community is characterised by information users that in their majority are information technology laymen (spreading use of online search engines notwithstanding), who have to satisfy information needs under strong time pressure. Experience also shows that the implementation of online information sources into the workflow of planning and building projects still has not been embraced in the same way other industrial sectors have. Against that background, in itself previously the subject of research work, this conference has been staged with the aim to create a platform to intensify the interrelation between information specialists/developers/researchers and the end user communities, esp. practitioners from the fields of planning and building, and thus to promote the use and implementation of online information sources in the workflow of planning and building projects.

### Organisation

The conference was organised in cooperation of two European partners who already have a long-standing working relationship in the field of information procurement:

Fraunhofer IRB,  
the Information  
Centre for  
Planning and  
Building of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, being  
Germany's central facility for national and international



knowledge transfer in planning and building. Earlier this year, the institute launched CIB's new online repository of publications, the [ICONDA@CIBlibrary](mailto:ICONDA@CIBlibrary).

Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment CSTB, a State-owned industrial and commercial corporative, placed under the administrative supervision of the French Ministry of Housing. It is one of Europe's leading research and evaluation centres, with a specialist staff addressing the most complex construction problems from a multidisciplinary standpoint.



### Conference Program

From the multitude of submitted abstracts and papers, the set of thematic tracks was shaped:

- Design & Knowledge
- Knowledge Management & Models (4 sessions)
- Project Management & Information Systems (2 sessions)
- CoP & Knowledge Mapping
- Ontologies & Management
- a special session on e-Business was hosted by UICB

The conference opening session featured addresses from the Conference Chairmen, all with a common thread: the relevance of knowledge transfer and its facilitating technologies and tools for today's and tomorrow's producers of the built environment. Thomas H. Morszeck, Director of Fraunhofer IRB welcomed all participants and officially opened the conference. Dr. Alain Zarli, representing CSTB,

focussed on the information intensity of the building industry and the call for international networking deriving from the complexity of the sector as well as the merging of markets. Dr. Wim Bakens, CIB General Secretary, challenged all experts in the field of knowledge transfer to claim their competences to be put at the core of all planning processes in the built environment.

## Keynotes

As did the UICB-hosted session, the Keynotes and their speakers reflected and underlined the conceptual approach described above.

Dr. Michel Bohms of Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research TNO, The Netherlands discussed in his keynote "Smart and Open Building Information Modelling (BIM)" the relevant aspects of BIM: semantics, interoperability, information management versus handling etc., complementing theory with implementations and demonstrations from various projects and initiatives.

Prof. Jeffrey Wix of AEC3 Ltd, UK, and Visiting Professor at University of Salford, UK discussed "Capturing and Using Knowledge With Building Information Modelling", and where this can help to accelerate the growth of technology use, drawing on real examples of knowledge capture and use including building codes development and housing design.

Beate Koegel, Project Manager Technical Knowledge Management at Bilfinger Berger AG, an engineering and services group employing about 50,000 staff worldwide, highlighted on "Value Knowledge Management" from the perspective of a building industry representative – how to capture, leverage and manage the know-how of people over the projects, technical background, customers or the market from non-stationary business processes, utilising semantic technologies. It should not go without notice that the attending participants entered into a very lively discussion of this example of a working (and still being further developed) example for a semantic KM system, which found its end only by the announcement that lunch was about to grow cold.

The discussions were resumed later in other context. Dr. Gert Birnbacher focussed in the UICB session keynote "E-business and Building Information" on how building information can be seen in an e-business and customer orientated perspective.

## Conference Frame

The event was held in conjunction with three events, also hosted by Fraunhofer IRB:

- the Annual Meeting of the CIB Working Commission on Information and Knowledge Management in Construction W102

- the Annual Meeting & Seminar 2007 of the International Union of Building Centres UICB
- the Annual Meeting of the ICONDA® Bibliographic Board, the supervisory committee for the bibliographic section of ICONDA® The International CONstruction Database



The Conference was staged at Stuttgart's Haus der Wirtschaft (House of Commerce), in the centre of the city.

## A Spotlight on Jaime

Its incorporated restaurant was the venue for the conference gala dinner, which was also the frame for a farewell ceremony: on the occasion of his retirement, after managing for more than 20 years ICONDA® The International CONstruction DATABASE, Mr. Jaime Acevedo-Alvarez, received warm-hearted addresses from CIB General Secretary Dr. Wim Bakens and Fraunhofer IRB Director Mr. Thomas H. Morszeck, in acknowledgement of his career's achievements and his never tiring impetus as a "pontifex" in international knowledge networking.



## Conference Conclusions

Feedback received on the organisation of the event and the thematic scope was very positive and included a special appreciation for the involvement of UICB as host of a session dedicated to solutions from the practitioners' domain. It is expected with anticipation in how far this aspect of the event will be a spark for further joint activities.

Even though this conference was not one of the largest ones, it showed how broad the scope of R&D in knowledge management and information technologies

for the planning and building sector is, reflecting a multitude of facets in issues discussed and models explored that make it impossible to pin down or single out a predominant, "hot" topic.

Pertaining the ambition of the organisers, it must be said that the response in terms of participants numbers from the user/practitioners' side was not as strong as had been hoped for. In our view, this seems to be a further indicator that still a lot of communication work is to be done with respect to the scenarios and goals described in the introduction.

Pictures of the event can be viewed on the conference website

<http://cib-w102.iconda.org/conference2007stuttgart>



### Proceedings

The printed proceedings of the conference, presently in preparation, will be available in early 2008 through the conference website and will be announced via a separate CIB News article.

### Next W102 Conference

The next W102 event will be the joint CIB W102|W096 Conference on "Improving Performance" organised by W102 Information and Knowledge Management in Building & W096 Architectural Management Helsinki, Finland June 3-4, 2008 conference website:

[www.ril.fi/web/index.php?id=231](http://www.ril.fi/web/index.php?id=231)

### Additional Information

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