



Prospective authors please note the closing date for final submissions is **March 14, 2014!** We encourage you to check other important dates and information, by referring to the following pages:

<http://21stcenturywiener.org/call-for-papers-2/>

<http://21stcenturywiener.org/instructions-to-authors-and-students/>



OPENING THE CONFERENCE: Dr Peter Staecker, IEEE President 2013

"A fortunate few can say, in their lifetimes, that they made a difference within their profession. A remarkable few can say that they not only changed their profession, but other professions as well. Norbert Wiener stands unambiguously in the smaller group. Like Maxwell and Newton, Wiener's contributions profoundly altered our world in ways that continue to be felt today. This IEEE conference will celebrate the work of Norbert Wiener, while noting his influence on developments and innovation that continue to shape and change our lives. I urge students, students of students, colleagues, technical historians –in short, everyone - to join me and those who knew this truly remarkable technologist." - Dr Peter Staecker



Flo Conway & Jim Siegelman to keynote the Conference Dinner

We are pleased to welcome two renowned authors and award-winning journalists, Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, joining us as our honored guests and keynote speakers for the Conference Dinner. For 30 years, they have been tracking the human impact of the communication revolution Norbert Wiener's science of Cybernetics ignited at the midpoint of the twentieth century. Flo and Jim have lectured at more than 40 colleges and universities, and spent a year as visiting scholars and researchers in the University of Oregon Communication Research Center's Project on Information and Social Change.

CSI invites you to two one-day seminars in March

The Computer Society of India (CSI) NW21C India Committee, will hold two one-day seminars about Norbert Wiener, Cybernetics, Humanity & Technology, on March 7 and March 9, as follows:

Friday, March 7, 2014: Indian Statistical Institute, 203 Barrackpore Trunk Road, Kolkata 700108, India

Sunday, March 9, 2014: Indian Institute for Information Technology, Devghat, Jhalwa Allahabad-211012

For details about these two and other related events please refer to <http://21stcenturywiener.org/related-events/>



FEBRUARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Coping with complexity through Cybernetics: On a journey to become a Trusted Business Adviser (TBA)

By MGPL Narayana, Chief Scientist, BS&CC, TCS, Hyderabad

"The cybernetics and systems research at this centre has resulted in crafting cutting edge models and frameworks that were successfully deployed in business systems and Information Technology (IT). BS&CC has embarked on a concept called "Trusted Business Adviser" (TBA) to unify several ongoing research initiatives under one umbrella program known by the same name. A TBA organization delivers value that it promises to its clients by translating the qualities that it develops in a solution conceived for its client's problem by suitably engaging its associates with matching competencies, imparted to them by a definitive process. The researchers at BS&CC would present the following work at IEEE 2014 Conference on Norbert Wiener in 21st Century..."

Full text: http://gallery.mailchimp.com/9840b0f44655019a7e9ea70b1/files/An_ARTicle_on_BSCC_presentations.pdf

A Grammy Awaits Norbert Wiener in the 21st Century

By Suyash Chopra, Business Systems & Cybernetics Center, Tata Consultancy Services, Hyderabad, India

"...but whatever be the case, it is more important today than ever that the current world, growing and thriving on the over-dose of information should not forget the contributions of this 300 pound plus mathematician who regularly puffed his cigar at an angle of 45 degrees to the ground. Not accepting any research funding from the military establishments and participating in those has often been cited as the reason for his poor and often no positioning in the history. He was not invited to participate in the Manhattan project which ultimately created the atomic bombs. His good relationship with researchers from erstwhile Soviet Union was always suspected during the Cold War era. He often voiced his concerns over the interference of the political establishments in the research works and in the application of science and technology to wage wars and develop weapons of mass destruction..."

Full text:

http://gallery.mailchimp.com/9840b0f44655019a7e9ea70b1/files/A_Grammy_Awaits_Norbert_Wiener_in_21st_Century.pdf

Cybernetics and Humane Understanding of Communications [Coding, Asemic Writing and Semiotics]

By Dr. T V Gopal, Professor & Chairman, Division II, Department of Computer Science and Engineering Anna University, Chennai, India

"Under the umbrella of cybernetics, scientific trends that had been suppressed under Stalin began to emerge under new, cybernetic names, and began to defy the Stalin-era orthodoxy. "Biological cybernetics" (genetics) challenged the Lysenkoites in biology, "physiological cybernetics" opposed the Pavlovian school in physiology, and "cybernetic linguistics" (structuralism) confronted traditional comparative philology and historical linguistics. Soviet cybernetics enthusiasts set the goal of achieving a comprehensive "cybernetization" of modern science by representing the subject of every discipline in a unified, formalized way and by moving toward a synthesis of the sciences. They aspired to translate all scientific knowledge into computer models and to replace the ideology-laden, "vague" language of the social and life sciences with the "precise" language of cybernetics. For many, words and sentences are tools for communicating. The author opines that Cybernetics attempts to integrate "words and sentences" within the context to understand the nature and origins of interactions amongst various life forms..."

Full text: http://gallery.mailchimp.com/9840b0f44655019a7e9ea70b1/files/Gopal_Discussion_Note_23Feb.pdf

FEBRUARY FEATURE: *Freely Obtainable Truth*

Norbert Wiener both innovated, and reflected on what encourages innovation. This is a debate with many sides. Economists tend to focus on organizational structure, but even the most informed are divided. While Joseph Schumpeter ("creative destruction") suggests large corporations have the most resources, so can best support innovation, for Michael Porter ("competitive advantage") the historical record doesn't support this.

Wiener focused on the role of the individual. Regarding the threat of anti-intellectualism in the US he wrote: "New ideas are conceived in the intellects of individual scientists, and they are particularly likely to originate where there are many well-trained intellects, and above all where intellect is valued." (Invention: The care and feeding of ideas, N. Wiener, p.96.)

Individuality can be troublesome, because individuals are quirky and unpredictable. One of Wiener's heroes was Oliver Heaviside, author of Maxwell's Equations (if you thought Maxwell wrote his four equations, sorry to disappoint). Heaviside worked out that distortion on communication lines could be addressed by adding inductance, but he was unable to get financial acknowledgement for his invention (AT&T paid someone else \$750,000 for the idea).

Wiener wrote: "I do not wish to convey the idea that Heaviside would have been easy to deal with under the best of circumstances. Like many deaf men, he was a strong individualist, and he was as bristly as a porcupine. Those who tried to help him at difficult periods found him no very mild recipient of favors. I have talked with B. A. Behrend, who went down to Heaviside's little cottage at Torquay to persuade him to accept an honor conveyed by the American Institute of Electrical Engineers [forerunner of IEEE]. Heaviside was recalcitrant. It was only because he was made to realize that Behrend, his friend, would have been very much hurt by his refusal, that he was persuaded to accept the honor." (Invention, p.75.)

Wiener concludes his short book, "At any rate, whatever benefits are awarded for scientific creation should have the good of the community as their purpose even more than the good of the individual. As such, they should be contingent on a full and free publication of the new ideas of the discoverer. The truth can make us free only when it is a freely obtainable truth. (Invention, p.154.)

- Dr Greg Adamson

OTHER NEWS

Monopsony on the Radar of Antitrust Enforcers

United States (U.S.) antitrust enforcers may decide to challenge the proposed \$45 billion merger of Comcast Corp and Time Warner Cable Inc. The U.S. Justice Department's Antitrust Division is all but certain to examine the potential monopsony power, or buying power, that a combined Comcast and Time Warner Cable would have over media companies that provide TV programming, according to lawyers with expertise in antitrust law. URL <http://ca.reuters.com/article/technologyNews/idCABREA1K1V120140221>

US Federal Communications Commission Back in the Headlines Over Its Role in the Freedom of the Press

On February 21st, the agency was forced to suspend plans for a survey of television and radio stations after it became public knowledge and generated widespread dissatisfaction about the government taking steps seen as an attempt to assert control the content of America's news programs despite the prohibitions of the First Amendment.

URL <http://www.examiner.com/article/freedom-of-the-press-the-fcc-and-the-house-of-cards>

US Psychologists Push for Ban on Assisting Military Interrogations

The American Psychological Association (APA) membership has voted to prohibit all psychologists from working at Guantánamo Bay, from the CIA black sites, and any other setting that the UN has declared to be in violation of international law excepting those psychologists who are performing no task other than offering treatment to fellow soldiers.

URL <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/20/us-psychologists-push-ban-military->



21ST CENTURY WIENER ON IEEE TV AND MIT TV

We're proud to announce that the 21st Century Wiener videos, featuring interviews with Dr Greg Adamson and Professor Iven Mareels are now live and promoted on IEEE TV and MIT TV Channels, in addition to our YouTube Channel and the channel of Adam Ford.

We take this opportunity to say a big Thank-You to:

- » **Adam Ford** for generously donating his time and equipment to produce both videos.
- » **IEEE TV** and specifically **Mark David**, Manager, Member Products, Member & Geographic Activities, and **Terence Martinez**, Product Manager, Member & Geographic Activities, for their time and kindness to prepare them for IEEE TV and promote, and their overall support.
- » **MIT TV**, and specifically **Emran Amin**, for his expediting support and time to have our videos feature on MIT TV, and making this happen so swiftly.

For those of you who have not had a chance to see the interviews yet we encourage you to do so and share with your networks.

IEEE TV

Professor Iven Mareels

<https://ieeetv.ieee.org/player/html/viewer?dl=#professor-mareels-exclusive-interview-about-norbert-wiener-in-the-21st-century>

Dr Greg Adamson

<https://ieeetv.ieee.org/player/html/viewer?dl=#norbert-wiener-in-the-21st-century-conference-concept>

MIT TV

Professor Iven Mareels

<https://techtv.mit.edu/videos/27804-norbert-wiener-in-the-21st-century-by-prof-iven-mareels-university-of-melbourne>

Dr Greg Adamson

<https://techtv.mit.edu/videos/27818-norbert-wiener-in-the-21st-century-by-dr-greg-adamson-university-of-melbourne>

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This is one of a series of Conference newsletters.

To be added to the mailing list, please e-mail submissions@21stcenturywiener.org

