ASK THE EXPERTS

What Conferences Should I Attend?

Editor,

My boss has just approved my travel and registration for at least one engineering conference this year. can you recommend which one I should go to? At least, can you give me several to choose from?

Thanks,

J. P.
Hartford, CT

Major High Frequency Events

OK, J.P. Here's a few suggestions:

In the RF/microwave industry, the single biggest event is the IEEE Microwave Theory and Techniques Society's International Microwave Symposium (IMS). This year, the IMS is held in Long Beach, Calif., June 11-17. IMS has an extensive technical papers program and a large exhibit hall featuring components, instruments and EDA tools. Check the web site for more information: www.ims2005.org.

This is not the only event that may be of interest. If you are interested in "marketplace research" to see what your colleagues and competitors are doing, then an industry-specific conference and trade show may be appropriate.

In the wireless communications business, the CTIA show (New Orleans, March 14-16—www.ctia.org) is the biggest event in the "cell phone" industry. Among the CTIA's current emphasis areas are 3G services and mobile Internet access.

The Wireless Communications Association (web site: www.wcai.com) has this year's main conference and trade show in Washington, DC, June 28-July 1. WCA emphasizes WLAN, point-to-multipoint and rural broadband access technologies.

Broadcast technology is featured at the huge NAB show, held each year in Las Vegas (April 16-21 this year—see www.nab.org). Technical papers are not academic level, but are useful, and the exhibition will have everything imaginable for audio and video production and transmission.

Technical Conferences

The MTT IMS venue also includes the RFIC Symposium (formerly the GaAs IC Symposium) and the Automatic RF Techniques Group (ARFTG). The RFIC symposium focus is what its name suggests: integrated circuits for RF and microwave. ARFTG focuses on high-performance measurement technologies for microwave applications. Visit www.rfic2005.org and www.arftg.org for more information.

If you are an antenna and propagation specialist, the main event is the IEEE AP-S International Symposium and USNC/URSI Meeting. This is a conference with strong international participation and an extensive technical program. This year's conference is July 3-8 in Washington, DC. See http://apursi2005.org for more information.

Smaller Conferences

There are many well-focused conferences that draw attendees in the low hundreds rather than the thousands. In our experience, these can be every bit as valuable as the big conferences. There are more chances for in-depth discussion with the paper authors, plus a very congenial atmosphere that can only be found at a small event. We highly recommend that you attend any of these that are nearby and, therefore, much less expensive to attend.

Two conferences of note are the IEEE Wireless and Microwave Technology Conference (WAMICON—www.wamicon.org), held April 7-8 in Clearwater, Fla. This conference has evolved from an internal conference of corporate supporters, faculty and students at the University of South Florida (USF). The conference covers a wide range of topics of interest to RF and microwave engineers.

Another conference that is growing is the IEEE Radio and Wireless Symposium (formerly the Radio and Wireless Conference—RAWCON). The next conference is actually next year, January 17-19, 2006 in San Diego, and it will be a much larger event than previous RAWCON conferences. See www.mttwireless.org for more information.

Present a Paper!

One of the best ways to participate in a conference is as a presenter. The "academic" level varies considerably among the various conferences, with some geared to practical techniques and product development case histories. It is not possible to list all the potential places to consider, but review our "Meetings and Events" column on page 8, and check out the conference listings at www.ieee.org.

IEEE or other engineering society journals and newsletters usually include listings of conferences. Of course, Internet search engines will turn up some prospective events, too.