



Peter Bollerslev

30 Jan 1936 – 10 Nov 2015

The IFIP World Computer Congress in Beijing in August 2000 and the World Conference on Computers in Education in Copenhagen in 2001 are amongst the highpoints of IFIP's history. Their success owed much to Peter's commitment as IFIP President and to his personal charm and quiet skill at making everyone around him feel valued and appreciated.

Peter was elected as IFIP President in 1997 and served from 1998-2001. He had previously been the Chair of IFIP TC3 on Education for 6 years. He served on TC3 as the Danish representative from 1983 to 2005, serving as Chair of WG3.1 on Informatics and ICT in Secondary Education from 1983 to 1989. In 1996 he became the General Assembly representative of the Danish member society, today called Dansk-IT, and continued in that capacity until 2013. He was awarded the IFIP Silver Core in 1989.

Peter trained as a school teacher, but by the early Sixties he was employed at the Teacher Training College of Aalborg, teaching mathematics. At the end of the Sixties, he was involved in the first experiments in Denmark using computers in school instruction on Olivetti Programmas. He subsequently participated in a number of ministerial committees, including contributing to an important report published in 1972, recommending introducing IT at all levels of the Danish educational system. At the same time, Peter contributed to ensuring that all teacher training colleges in Denmark were equipped with computers in order that the development could get started.

Erling Schmidt, a student of Peter's, remembers him as a very open-minded and inspiring person, providing space for students like himself to work with all the new equipment. Peter himself did not write programs or work with the computers directly, his role was that of the facilitator, working at the political and practical level to create the framework for the development.

By the end of the Seventies, Peter had moved back to Copenhagen, where, among other things, he built a service centre in the Ministry of Education for the teacher training colleges of the country. As Head of this centre, Peter had all the freedom he needed, enabling him to involve himself in activities, national and international.

Peter is recalled by Brian Samways, a fellow member of TC3, as a shrewd, conscientious and politically aware person who earned the respect of colleagues wherever he worked. As the Chair of IFIP TC3, his six year period of office saw many great changes and advances, but these were only possible with his foresight and management. So often he predicted the action of others and was able to complement their wishes in ways that were for the good of all. Many a time he avoided conflict between colleagues by his clever manipulation of situations, which enabled everyone to move forward and enhanced IFIP's reputation in the world.

The IFIP World Computer Congress (WCC) in Beijing was the largest in the modern history of IFIP with over 2000 delegates. The WCC is always a major organizational challenge because of its scale and the distance between the local on-site organisers and the programme organisers. The local organisers only

informed IFIP at the last moment that the Chinese State President, Jiang Zemin, would open the event. In his usual unflappable fashion, Peter greeted him with a big smile and a firm handshake. The opening ceremony was a triumph topped off by Jiang Zemin, having delivered a formal speech in Mandarin, stepping around the podium to talk directly to the audience in English about his student days as an electrical engineer and his continuing interest in computing.

The following year saw the personal climax of Peter's presidency when he brought the World Conference on Computers in Education to his native Copenhagen. With 1200 delegates it was another major success and a fitting close to Peter presidency.

After his presidency, Peter made room for others to lead IFIP but remained ready to provide valued advice and support whenever asked. In particular, he was an active member of the Steering Committee for the first two World IT Forums held in 2003 and 2005. At the same time Peter worked as a Chief Consultant with the largest Danish publishing house as an author, an advisor and as an external editor.

In an interview, after retiring as President, Peter said that in his spare time he liked to go to theatres, cinemas and art exhibitions, to read, to cook, and to play golf and bridge. He also took every opportunity to travel with his wife, Hanne, to experience foreign lands.

It is typical of everything that made him a popular and successful IFIP President that the notice of his passing, published in a Danish national newspaper, included a final message to all who had known him: "Peter thanks everyone who has contributed to making his life a magnificent experience. With special thanks to members of the family and thanks to Hanne for many wonderful years."