

About ETRIA's TRIZ Future conference 2004

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Foreword

Despite the fact that TRIZ Future Conference was held on the exact same day of US presidency election, nobody went fishing in TRIZ world on November 3rd. Once more, the standards established by the previous team organizing TFC (our German colleagues of Aachern) have been reached and even raised a step ahead by... guess who this year? Leonardo Da Vinci's compatriots in Florence – Italy! During three days, in “el convitto della Calza”, more than 125 participants have shared their experiences, expressed both in a written format and defended their beliefs in a viva. An ever increasing amount of countries were represented, way beyond Europe. This year, we were particularly proud to count participants from Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria ...and China, a total of 23 countries. Besides these facts, we also noted an amount of 47 accepted contributions with, for some of them, a high level of expressed novelties proving once more, that TRIZ was a living theory turned towards the future.

ETRIA: A world of... unified differences

What makes ETRIA and TFC an ever growing success throughout the years? The first paradox lies in the fact that ETRIA runs like an ideal structure: No profit means not any other interest than enthusiasm in face with learning from each others. This invisible enthusiasm from its members pushes undoubtedly ETRIA ahead, year after year, like a relay between the organizing team of TFC. ETRIA also gain in legitimacy because of its “non-polarization”; it does not pretend to carry its own truth regarding TRIZ, but “methodologically-wise” observe and allocate a moment of expression for all, as long as you respect (more or less I confess) its main goal: Do NOT sell yourself, but thoroughly explain to the community your beliefs, upon which bases they have been built and how do you think they will help TRIZ community to move ahead. Then, be prepared to be discussed, argued, questioned, ETRIA does not want to turn out to be a “hip hip hurray! Everyone is right”.

Then, came the key moments

The great moments and their added value for our community came at first from our two keynote speakers. They have been invited respectively for their contribution to the evolution of TRIZ in western countries, also for the differences of their visions.

First of all, Victor Fey has brilliantly expressed with sometimes the necessary rude vision, why TRIZ finds itself in the paradoxal situation of being powerful but not “soaring” throughout the world. The accurate and “compromise-less” vision of Victor Fey has probably let a landmark in the participant's mind with his “Don't Touch TRIZ !”. A so clear sentence with so much sense... even followed by a humoristic “...please”. We all know that a theory deserves to be argued, discussed, promoted but any evolutionary vision of TRIZ should be seen as a new theory (or set of theories) renamed, and will then need to prove their value on their own. Even mostly inspired by TRIZ, a theory must not pretend itself as “something better” but as “something different”, then, upon its supersystem and environment, offer better results (maybe...).

Victor Fey has certainly not only been fading in his arguments, several directions of “attitudes regarding its future” have been putted forward both in his speech and in his paper. We all know, how such rude analysis needs sometimes to be said, it deserves to be listened, moreover when expressed from a person that had a so long and close period of cooperation with the father of TRIZ, and a non-neglectable professional experience in the US.

On the third day, we were granted with a dense presentation co-animated with Günter Herr and Hans Jurgen Linde. The latter is well known as the founder of a structured method named “WOIS” but what ETRIA expected from him (and that he undoubtedly complete) was beyond an explanation of wois’ structure, it was in the motivations, the fundamentals, and the historical facts that pushes Hans Jurgen Linde to be partially inspired by TRIZ. Everyone noted his “I got the virus too!” and did appreciate both his talk and the quality of the presentation held with the precious help of Günter Herr.

Year after year, Hans Jurgen Linde’s contribution has gained in popularity among the net of companies he cultivated, throughout the students of Coburg’s Fachhochschule and within the German organizations with whom a relation of trust has been created.

Several other important moments of ETRIA may also deserve to be related. TRIZ Master Simon Litvin has explored how important it was to fit to the needs of our companies’ expectations. His sentence: “Companies does NOT want ideas, they want solutions” had the smell of the added value of the group he created: from marketing to prototype of the artefact. Undoubtedly, we can imagine that many companies upon certain particular projects they have, may adhere to their proposal and be seduced by such a powerful addition of valuable individuals in TRIZ world.

We also remind the humoristic “hat exchanges” of Sergeï Ikovenko who, once more, had proven that he was a master, in pedagogy. And an everlasting thanks to Ellen Domb (besides coordinating a so valuable @TRIZ-Journal for TRIZ community) had animated two papers: one was a proper contribution, the other (she anecdotally and humoristically reports) was a paper in which the author was absent but asked her to present in his place. She concludes her introduction as follow : “I reserve myself the right to present only the part I don’t quite agree with!”.

Let’s now remind one of the intense moment of the last afternoon, where a newly participating country to ETRIA: China, with the voice of Haibo Duan, created a moment of emotion when a compromiseless vision of their evaluation of western and eastern approaches of teaching TRIZ were depicted, slide after slide, to end up with the conclusion that China was developing a self adapted software to their model and culture. While finally participating to a worldwide TRIZ movement, it seems evident that now we should pay attention to the participation of China in the discussions regarding TRIZ evolution.

What is on ETRIA’s “TO DO” list now?

After the end of the conference part of TF, was held the annual board meeting to discuss the following outlines:

1. Next TRIZ Future Conference will be held in Austria (to be confirmed but most probably in Gratz), coordinated between **Jürgen Jantschgi** in cooperation with ETRIA board.
2. Discussions about the necessity to share existing knowledge regarding TRIZ world collected during TFC sessions. Besides the yearly publication of TFC, a new task has been expressed: Structurize the collected knowledge and make it available for all communities.

To achieve this, several partial steps have been initiated:

- Establishing a team of cooperating persons in charge of this task: The two responsible persons that constitute this task force are: **Sergio Lorenzi** and **Giacomo Bersano**. A proposal for structurizing their action is :
 - Building a frame for representation of this knowledge in order to codify it (let’s call it knowledge tree).

- Establish rules for selection, storage and updating (dynamizing its construction);
 - Submit a proposal to a board of selected persons from ETRIA for an evaluation of the knowledge tree they have built;
 - Redistribute this knowledge using 2 means :
 1. Books of TRIZ-Future sessions (all contributions);
 2. Web portal for a constant access and update of the contents with two level of access to this knowledge : free of charge for abstract description; membership fees for pdf downloading of full article;
3. Constitution of a list of existing universities/centres involved in TRIZ both in research/teaching and redistributions with the persons in contact in these organisms in order to have a better picture of the entities with whom we might interfere with. Responsible for the gathering of these datas: **Gaetano Cascini**.
 4. As with any theory, when a core of research entities creates new knowledge regarding common scientific fields, the necessity of a scientific board arises. The objectives of this scientific board should be to act as referees for an International Scientific Journal co-organized with other entities of TRIZ world (Altshuller Institute, MATRIZ). The starting point of this action is to gather upon the relations that members of ETRIA already have; a list of possible referee, highly recognized and having a “voice of authority” then to interact with AI and MATRIZ to start such a project. **Denis Cavallucci** is in charge of this task.
 5. A common newsletter should be coordinated with MATRIZ and AI in order not to overflow mailboxes of TRIZ peoples with multiple information’s. The board agreed on acting jointly in this direction and proposed **Gerhard Weimar** as the corresponding person for ETRIA.

In conclusion, TFC 2004 will certainly remain in memories for long, a milestone for TRIZ evolution where the triangle formed by Enterprises-Academia-Consulting has found a place for expressing everyone’s concerns, listening to the experience of the others, delighting from our differences.

Let’s hope that ETRIA will remain a group of individuals, representing tendencies and divergences in the countries where TRIZ develops, in order to learn from each other... and this... without any commercial interests. Anyone who does not play this main rule of ETRIA exposes this community to the risk of loosing the most precious value, gained within years of enthusiastic investment from many: its legitimacy in a TRIZ world in search for soaring.