

New Year's speech of Jos Baeten, January 9, 2010

When we look back on 2011, the most important event of the year was undoubtedly the evaluation exercise. It was a collected effort, in which CWI was reviewed to be an excellent institute. We are already awarded by NWO with half a million euros as a result of our evaluation, and there is more to come. A large part of this money must be spent on top sectors. In 2011 we also celebrated our 65th birthday with a soiree in February, where 2 Van Wijngaarden Awards were awarded, and a reunion party in December.

In 2011, we appointed 3 CWI fellows: Martin Kersten, Jan van Schuppen and Jan Karel Lenstra. There were also 3 royal decorations awarded, to Jan Verwer, who sadly passed away soon shortly after, Jan Karel Lenstra en Herman te Riele. There were other appointments: of a new director, and of two new professors: Ronald de Wolf and Jan van Eijck (different university). Jason Frank held his inaugural address. Peter Hildering is the new head of the communication department, Lynda Hardman became cluster leader of Information Systems, Stefan Manegold was appointed as the new group leader of the Database Architecture group and Arjen de Vries as leader of the Interactive Information Access group.

CWI was also present in the media in 2011. Rob van der Mei got a lot of media attention with the ambulance efficiency project, and Ute Ebert with research on sprites on other planets. Earlier this year, Joost Batenburg's article in Nature and Wouter Koolen's thesis on software advice on stock market investments were present in the media.

2011 brought no new spin-offs, but the sale of the existent spin-off VectorWise to Ingress gave all employees an extra payment. CWI became core partner of EIT KIC ICT Labs, and started housing COMMIT. We expect to benefit from both alliances. We were also active in the international Mathematics Olympiad and received a number of awards, of which the Cor Baayen Award, received by Stratos Idreos was the most prominent.

Also new, slightly before 2011, is the new Dutch government, whose policies will have a substantial impact on the way that scientific research in The Netherlands is funded. COMMIT is the last FES project, new funding will be organized around topsectoren, innovatiecontracten and Topconsortia Kennis & Innovatie (TKI). There is an ongoing discussion on the content of the topsectoren, with CWI contributing to 7 to 9 topsectors. It should be mentioned that the topsectoren are not just a threat, but also open up new opportunities. In particular the ICT Roadmap, which transects all topsectors, reflects many of our research priorities. Arnold Smeulders is doing a lot of work on this roadmap. Rob van der Mei is working on logistics, and Han la Poutré and Barry Koren on energy.

The budget cuts at NWO will result in a lower basic funding for our research, starting 2013. As a consequence of this, CWI cannot open new tenure track positions in 2012, not even as a replacement for someone who retires or leaves CWI. As another consequence, more attention would be given to projects that make money, or at least awareness should be raised on what makes money and what does not. I expect that we are able to withstand this storm without reorganizations or forced dismissals.

Looking forward to 2012, we see that it is the year in which we will draw up a new strategy plan for 2013-2018. A work group is set up, but input from every employee is appreciated. Although strategy will certainly be about topsectoren, this is not all. We will still set our own research priorities in areas which we think are important. In 2012 we will work on topsectoren, flagships (we are involved in 4 out of 6), COMMIT, ICT Labs and the Horizon 2020 plans.

The service department will continue to make things digital in 2012, such as the verlofbriefjes. 2012 is also Alan Turing Year, who is the founder of computer science and was born 100 years ago. CWI will contribute to events and festivities surrounding the Alan Turing Year. There will be further outreach: the mayor of Amsterdam will visit in March, CWI in Bedrijf will be revitalized and CWI's researchers should be involved in the Open Dag.

Although the year is young there are already new appointments as per January 1st. Paul Klint is now CWI Fellow and is succeeded as leader of the Software Engineering cluster by Han la Poutré and as group leader of Software Analysis and Transformation by Jurgen Vinju.

Let us now toast to 2012.