

ION GNSS 2008, Sept. 16-19, 2008, Chang-Hee Won

The weather forecast was rain, but fortunately rain did not come. We registered at the Conference Center on Tuesday September 2008. We had to take a ferry to the conference center. It took about 5 minutes across the river. The ferry had an antique quality with wood work and details that probably was done decades ago. The plenary session was on the Tuesday afternoon. John Grimes of United States Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration, and Department of Defense Chief Information Officer talked about GNSS. The Russian point of view was give by Yury Nosenko, Deputy Head of Russian Federal Space Agency. Finally the European view was represented by Paul Verhoef, Head of Unit-Galileo. It was interesting to see three different perspectives. The talks were very general. The technical sessions started on Wednesday morning at 8:35am. I attended GNSS-Inertial Navigation Systems session. There were a number of interesting works. Low cost GPS/INS integration seems to be an active research area.

There were a number of exhibitors at the conference including Boeing, Javad, Raytheon, Novatel. I mostly talked to the companies involved in GPS/INS integration, which were Novatel, OXTS, Xsense, and Honeywell. The technology seems to be maturing but still the price were too high for any mass market production.

I attended Novel Applications session during the afternoon. This section seems to be “what ever did not fit in other session but worth while paper” session. Some were technical, such as adaptive sensing, and some papers were informational, such as Lawnmower competition and Mini Urban Challenge. Mini Urban Challenge seems to be an ambitious competition that Air Force is sponsoring for the high school students. They use Lego Mindstorm kit to navigate a mini city made from Legos.

Thursday continued in a similar fashion. There were Aviation applications, UAV applications, Galileo & GPS/Galileo User Receivers. During the afternoon, I attended indoor positioning session. Xsens presented an interesting paper about augmenting GPS signal using ultra wide band positioning system. There were panel discussions going on throughout the sessions but I did not attend any of them.

Friday, there was an interesting session on software receivers. I especially enjoyed the talk by Novariant Inc.’s “FPGA-Optimized GNSS Receiver Implementation Techniques.”

Savannah, Georgia is an interesting city. The buildings are old but the city is well organized. It has a little bit of European feel and Southern US culture. The River Street was lined with restaurants, bars, gift shops, and candy stores. It was a little touristic, but prices were reasonable. The only issue that I had with Savannah was the taxi cabs. They have this strange system and charge different fare by where you are going and how many are in the cab. I paid 31 dollars from airport to down town and 41 dollars from Conference center to the airport. The cab driver claimed that the conference center is South Carolina and it is more expensive!



The River Street in Savannah, which was across the river from the Conference center. Restaurants, bars, gift shops, and candy stores, with the “old world” charm, are in this street.