IFIP WG 3.1
Working Conference
Barcelona, 17th - 21st October 1994

**Integrating information technology
into education**

Words of Welcome given by
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Both on behalf of the Conseller d'Ensenyament and myself, I would like to welcome you to Catalonia, and its capital, Barcelona. Participating in this IFIP Working Group 3.1 Working Conference "Integrating Information Technology into Education" are representatives from more than 25 countries world-wide.

The extraordinary development of information technology over the last ten years has generated overwhelming interest and activity, an example of which is this Working Conference. It is not possible to comment upon here, in these brief words of welcome, the diverse and profound impact that IT has had on society which is so apparent in the industry and service sectors, in applied and theoretical research, and in the worlds of intellectual work and entertainment.

Education today cannot be distanced from this situation nor the problems and challenges that the future holds for both students and the welfare of society. There is widespread interest in the ways in which IT can be integrated into education in a beneficial manner, and this can be seen in many ways: the formulation of specific IT in education policies in many countries of the world; in the allocation of important economic resources and efforts in human investment; in the many educational innovative initiatives led by the professionalism of teachers; and also in the increasing number of international opportunities to exchange information, knowledge and experience.

We believe that Catalonia, because of its educational achievements over the last few years, is in an excellent position to hold an international conference upon the integration of information technology into education.

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This is because we have highly trained and motivated people with a wide scope of experience. In Wednesday's presentation you will have the opportunity to know about our aims and achievements in this field.

I take this opportunity to point out that the Catalan government encourages and supports this activity. Our government aims to give all pupils in the education system within the obligatory age range (6 - 16 years) the opportunity to acquire both knowledge and practical skills for information processing and technology by "living" this technology at school.

The knowledge and skills which they develop will widen their personal prospects, will facilitate day to day learning, will aid further and advanced studies, and will improve their position when joining the labour market, resulting in economic and industrial development and in greater creativity and job satisfaction. Additionally they will develop their own personal vision of information technology, which is a very important factor in its control and its use in serving individuals and society.

The implementation of these aims will help to build a general technological culture and will improve the equality of opportunities for all. These orientations clearly coincide with the directives of prestigious international bodies such as the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OCDE), the European Commission and IFIP itself.

We appreciate the confidence that a prestigious international organization such as IFIP places in Catalonia and her people in order to host one of its most characteristic and profitable activities: to receive and unite experts from all corners of the world to promote the dissemination of information and the creation of knowledge in such an important field, both for education itself and for the contemporary society.

We are certain of the personal value of having the opportunity to know about a wide range of situations, approaches, and experiences, as well as of the importance of the contributions that will emerge from this Working Conference through joint collaboration in this international environment of highly qualified and motivated professionals.

Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you once more to our country, and wish you an enjoyable stay and a successful conference, and I hope that the memories of your time here will persuade you to revisit us soon.

I declare the opening of the IFIP Working Group 3.1 Working Conference "Integrating Information Technology into Education". Thank you very much.