Dear Professor Menczer,

As follow up to your letter dated October, 30 2007, I would like to inform you that the University of Palermo has undertaken several actions, whose subjects have dutifully kept you up to date in the course of time. Unfortunately, the process has taken more time than foreseen to be resolved mainly because of the lack of prompt responses from the professional societies involved.

As conclusive act, the Rector of my University appointed an international Committee, which I had the honor to chair; this committee met on July, 16 2009 and produced the conclusions that I am sending to you.

The International Committee showed its appreciation for the work done by the internal Committee of the Department of Computer Engineering, as you also did in your letter to Prof. Chella dated December, 5 2007.

It is my pleasure to point out that the International Committee expressed the hope that valuable future research contributions and possible collaborations may arise among both research groups.

Kind regards,

F. P. La Mantia
On July 16, 2009, from 0915 am until 1230 pm, in the office of the Dean of Facoltà di Ingegneria of the University of Palermo, the International Committee appointed by the Rector of the University met in order to assess the actions undertaken in response to the plagiarism accusation moved by Prof. Filippo Menczer of Indiana University against a research group working at the local Dipartimento di Ingegneria Informatica (DINFO, Department of Computer Engineering).

The Committee was composed of the following members:

Prof. Francesco Paolo La Mantia
Dean of Facoltà di Ingegneria of University of Palermo

Dr. Ronald F. Boisvert
National Institute of Standards and Technology (USA)
Mathematical and Computational Sciences Division
Co-Chair, ACM Publications Board

Prof. Jon Rokne
University of Calgary (Canada)
Member, Board of Governors, IEEE Computer Society
Vice President for Publications Service and Products, IEEE

Prof. Carlo Ghezzi
Dipartimento di Elettronica ed Informazione
Politecnico di Milano
Member, ACM Council

The committee was granted access to all the documentation produced by the internal committee appointed on Nov 20, 2007 by the director of the Department of Computer Engineering in order to investigate on the accusation by Prof. Filippo Menczer.

The documentation was analyzed by the Committee, and is attached here as an integral part of this document:

1. Report of the internal committee appointed by the director of the dept. of computer engineering
2. E-mail from Prof. Vicent Shen to the co-authors from DINFO, dated Sep, 27 2006.
3. E-mail from Mr Luca Gatani and co-authors replying to Prof. Shen, dated Oct, 5 2006.
4. E-mail from Prof. Vincent Shen to Mr Luca Gatani and co-authors, dated Nov, 1 2006.
5. E-mail from Prof. Lo Re and co-authors replying to Prof. Shen, dated Nov, 10 2006.
6. E-mail from Prof. Lo Re and co-authors replying to Prof. Menczer, dated Nov, 10 2006.
7. Letter from Prof. Menczer sent to IEEE, IOS Press and in copy to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Palermo, and to the Director of the ICT Dept. of CNR, Oct, 10 2007.
8. Letter from Prof. Salvatore Gaglio, and Prof. Giuseppe Lo Re to this committee, Nov, 22 2007.
9. Letter from Mr Alfonso Urso to this committee, sent on Nov, 28 2007.
10. Letter from Mr Luca Gatani to this committee, sent on Nov, 28 2007.
12. Copies of all the papers produced by DINFO affiliates regarding the topic under examination.
13. Copies of all the papers produced by Prof. Menczer et al. regarding the topic under examination.
14. Contents of Prof. Menczer’s website, mentioned in the letter listed at point 6 above, and still active during this committee’s work (http://homer.informatics.indiana.edu/~nan/65/plagiarism/).
16. Technical and scientific analysis produced by this committee.
17. E-mail from Prof. F. Menczer to ACM, on Jun 27 06
18. ACM document on plagiarism policies, available on line at URL: http://www.acm.org/pubs/plagiarism%20policy.html

During the meeting Prof. La Mantia summarized the episode under examination and the committee members engaged in an extensive and thorough discussion of all aspects of the case.

The committee makes the following observations and recommendations:

While the extent and seriousness of this infraction was initially underestimated by the research group involved, once the Department Chair and University officials were notified, in the opinion of the Committee, they acted appropriately and aggressively to handle the situation.

As a result of this incident, the University developed a new policy on ethical guidelines for publication at the University. We commend the University for taking this action. The committee recommends that a process be established to brief new students and faculty on this process.

The committee notes that the action of removing the publications involved from the University database, which is part of this policy, and which has been applied in this case, may result in a loss of University research funding due to internal procedures. The Committee sees this as a positive measure which might mitigate possible future cases.

The committee expresses some concern that the process has taken a good deal of time to be resolved. We observe that this is in large part due to the lack of
prompt response from the professional societies involved. As a result of this meeting, the IEEE member of this committee has committed to take prompt action to resolve this situation.

In conclusion, the Committee expresses the following statements.

The International Committee unanimously deems the actions of the University of Palermo as correct and complete in all respects; in particular the conclusions drawn and actions taken by the internal committee of the Department of Computer Engineering were appropriate and commensurate with the seriousness of the incident.

The International Committee observes that the actions carried out by the University of Palermo fully comply with the policy stated in the “Codice Etico della Pubblicazione Scientifica dell’Università di Palermo” (Ethical Guidelines for Scientific Publishing at University of Palermo) and that such actions can be adopted as a model for potential analogous situations.

Finally, the International Committee looks forward to valuable future research contributions and possible collaboration that may arise among the involved research groups at DINFO and Indiana University.

Prof. Francesco Paolo La Mantia

Dr. Ronald F. Boisvert

Prof. Jon Rokne

Prof. Carlo Ghezzi