Towards Wide-Spectrum Spreadsheet Computing

This talk will address the idea of blending spreadsheets and general programming languages.

Almost 40 years ago, spreadsheets played a critical role in the personal computing revolution. Still faithful to their original design, they continue to be widely used – and almost equally vilified. We argue their success is due to more than simple "first mover advantage" in the form of "learning inertia." Unfortunately, spreadsheets have also inherited fundamental shortcomings that have robbed the world from the full power of their expressive computing paradigm.

The talk will look at spreadsheets from the perspective of programming language design. We will introduce the ZenSheet project: an expedition to seamlessly blend spreadsheets with modern programming languages. The project's end goal is realizing a wide spectrum computing environment that, while familiar to mainstream spreadsheet practitioners, also supports many features that are desirable to accomplished software engineers. Emphasis will be given to design choices that support type checking, functional abstraction, and model rendering.

Enzo Alda is the founder of Lakebolt Research, a startup creating tools for modeling processes and live data in an interconnected world. He previously worked at recognized companies, like Oracle, Bloomberg LP, and Google, as well as obscure startups in the storage, healthcare, and telecommunications sectors. Before coming to the U.S., Mr. Alda lectured courses in compiler construction and programming language design. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Software Engineering and Computer Science respectively, as well as an MBA from The Wharton School of Business.

Date: Thursday, March 15, 2018, 8:00 pm.
(Refreshments and networking at 7:30 pm.)
Place: Small Auditorium, Room CS 105
Computer Science Building, Princeton University
35 Olden St., Princeton NJ
Information: Dennis Mancl (908) 285-1066
On-line info: **http://PrincetonACM.acm.org**

All Princeton ACM / IEEE-CS meetings are open to the public. Students and their parents are welcome. There is no admission charge, and refreshments are served.

A pre-meeting dinner is held at 6:00 p.m. at Ruby Tuesday's Restaurant on Route 1. Please send email to **princetonacm@acm.org** in advance if you plan to attend the dinner.