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Either a task in informatics reflects any image in mind or not; references (hints) to any reality can take place in the task. This reality can relate to local circumstances, the host town, the host state or to sponsors of the informatics olympiad (at the same time, the task should be "culturally neutral"). By our experience of conducting informatics olympiads in Kyrgyzstan since 1985 and submitting tasks to preceding IOIs we classify such references, survey such tasks and propose some techniques to make tasks more interesting and original and to attract different sponsors. Alternative types of tasks are also discussed.



John Atanasov - Junior: the new Bulgarian award for most ingenious solution of the competition tasks. Statuette by sculptor Tsvyatko Siromashki.

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Existing olympiads in mathematics and informatics are fixed form competitions for individuals with quite stable lists of task types. Outside the scope of these competitions falls a lot of interesting and challenging tasks like puzzles, games, logic tasks, and practical tasks outside the classroom. Team competitions offer a new dimension in a task solving process where successful collaboration between team members is one of basic requirements for achieving high results. This paper describes an annual (since 1996) Latvian team competition in mathematics and informatics for high-school students called „Ugale“. Classification of the main task types is given and representatives of these task groups are given. Suitability of different task types in different contests is discussed. The evolution of the form and content of the competition is described.

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The competition tasks at the International Olympiad in Informatics have evolved over its 20-year history. We distinguish three periods in this evolution and highlight it from various viewpoints. The 101 competition tasks are presented in a table that summarizes their task type and difficulty level, and that classifies them according to concepts involved in their problem and solution domains.



We were there during an unexpected heat wave (the climate is usually similar to our own), so the cool breezes from the complex's lakes and the swimming pool were much appreciated.

Although individuals knew their own scores, and the team leaders knew how many people would get each type of medal, we arrived

unaware of the medal boundaries. After a procession of speeches all was finally revealed. We received a gold and a bronze medal, with our gold medallist Patrick Smears coming second in the whole competition, and our bronze medallist Justin Santa Barbara narrowly missing silver. Lev Bishop and David Armstrong, our other competitors, both performed very respectably

despite missing medals.

The competition was a great success, both for the week's events and the team's performance. Inevitably there were a few hiccups, but thanks to the hard work of the organisation and the guides everyone involved had a wonderful time!

Richard Forster,
 Deputy Team Leader of the
 British delegation