New and Retiring Bulletin Editors

Every two years, I appoint a new set of issue editors for the Data Engineering Bulletin. This is the single most important thing that I do as the Bulletin Editor-in-Chief. I am very proud of the distinguished record that these editors have established over the years. I want to thank them, one and all, for the great jobs done over the years.

It is now time to thank the editors who have just completed their terms. Each has done the two issues that our "contract" requires. These retiring editors are Gustavo Alonso of ETH, Minos Garofalakis of Intel Research, Meral Ozsoyoglu of Case Western Reserve, and Jignesh Patel of the University of Michigan. Thank you one and all for a fine job. Special thanks also goes to those who assisted significantly in the editorial process over the past two years, Gultekin Ozsoyoglu of Case Western Reserve and Dan Suciu of University of Washington.

I am very pleased to now introduce the Bulletin issue editors for the next two years. They represent on-going evidence that the Bulletin is held in high regard and continues to attract outstanding members of the database community. These new editors are Anastassia Ailamaki of Carnegie Mellon University, Jayant Haritsa of the Indian Institute of Science, Nick Koudas of the University of Toronto, and Dan Suciu of the University of Washington. Parenthetically, Dan has already been a co-editor of the March 2006 issue. I want to both welcome them to the Bulletin and also thank them for joining us in what, in the final analysis, represents a great cooperative venture to deliver timely reports on the very latest that is happening in the database field.

Nominations for Chair of the TC on Data Engineering

I want to call your attention to the letter following this one from the Nominating Committee for the election of a new chair for the Technical Committee on Data Engineering (TCDE). The TCDE is the organization that sponsors the publication of the Bulletin as well as the International Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE). The chair position has significant responsibilities and TCDE members should take an interest in the election. Please read the next letter and consider nominating someone as TCDE Chair.

The Current Issue

When people ask questions of a web search engine, their expectation is that the results produced will represent a best effort. They anticipate scanning, with human eyeballs, the results in order to discover the most useful and accurate information from a potentially vast sea of possible results. Users of database systems have very different expectations. When they submit a query, they expect that the answer will be precisely what they requested and that it will accurately reflect the situation about which they care. This can be essential, as in the case where it is not a human, but a computer, that will be interpreting and acting on the delivered results.

Unfortunately, even data in dtaabases needs to come from somewhere. And that somewhere is only sometimes other database systems. Ultimately, all data originates from outside of the database system. So what are we to make of this data? It is, in fact, not always accurate, it is sometimes simply imprecise, at other times contradictory, and frequently redundant. This is where one needs to consider, and hopefully solve, the problem of data quality. And it is data quality that is the subject of the current issue.

Nick Koudas knows this area and the researchers, both industrial and academic, who are actively engaged in sorting out the very complex and demanding problems surrounding data quality. The current issue represents a snapshot of some of the very exciting work going on in this area. I want to thank Nick for his efforts in bringing this issue together. I am sure that readers will find articles of immediate interest and will want to come back again to the this issue to re-examine the work in this field. That is, indeed, a core strength of the Bulletin, giving readers a status report on research that represents an on-going effort to deal with the hard problems of our field.