Please Read: Bulletin Formats

In an effort to simplify the preparation of the Bulletin, and to reduce disk storage on our server, I would like to eliminate some of the versions of the Bulletin that are available on this web site (and via ftp). Specifically, I propose to *eliminate the draft versions* of the Bulletin. These are the versions in which many figures are not included. The purpose of the draft version was to increase the probability that something could be successfully printed, even if the figure could not. I have heard no complaints from anyone about their ability to display or print the Bulletin. The current issue (September, 2000) will include draft versions on the web site. But I intend to discontinue them for subsequent issues. Indeed, I intend to remove all draft versions from the Bulletin web site. If you believe you need draft versions, please send me mail at `lomet@microsoft.com`. I am willing to re-consider this should there be sufficient concern expressed about this. But please, only send me comments if you actually depend upon the availability of the draft versions.

About the Current Issue

For those of us (most of us) who are regularly "on-line", web searching has become an everyday part of our lives. And it is surely not only the technical community, but people everywhere who are benefitting from web search technology. Indeed, an important part of the usefulness of the web lies exactly in the ability to find information that very frequently derives from many sources from all over the world. So the impact of effective web search has been enormous, and will continue to grow in importance over time, as even more people access ever more information made available at web sites around the world.

Of course, the challenging nature of web search and its commercial opportunities have not escaped the attention of both the research and the industrial database communities. Indeed, the distinction between research and industrial communities has all but disappeared in many cases as researchers frequently join startups in the exploitation and improvement of web searching. The field is moving very rapidly, and those with database skills are playing a substantial role in the development of the field. After all, search is one of the things that database folks have been doing for over thirty years.

Luis Gravano is the editor for the current issue. He has assembled an issue that includes articles describing work going on in both research labs and industrial enterprises. Much of this work is an effort to move beyond "vanilla" key word search by considering "meta" information derived from the way that information is organized on the web, both for the semantic relevance of the result and for assessing the quality of the information. Luis has done a fine job in assembling this very interesting and timely collection of articles on web search, and I thank him for this. I am confident that readers will find this issue to be both interesting and useful.