Ten Years as Editor-in-Chief

In 1992, Rakesh Agrawal, then chair of the TC on Data Engineering, asked me to be the editor-in-chief of the Data Engineering Bulletin. I paused before accepting this offer. I knew that this was a substantial undertaking. But, if I can be permitted to "toot my own horn" a bit, I think that the effort have been largely successful.

A good way of judging the credibility of the Bulletin is to see who has contributed toward its success. This space is too short to list them, but I am very gratified by the success of our editors in enlisting authors from the best academic and industrial settings of our field, leading practitioners all. However, the space is sufficient to list the associate editors who have served the Bulletin so well during my tenure as editor-in-chief. It is these editors who, issue after issue, plan and solicit the technical content. I am proud to have recruited these outstanding people to serve as editors: Daniel Barbara, Surajit Chaudhuri, Umeshwar Dayal, Amr El Abbadi, Ahmed Elmagarmid, Michael Franklin, Shahram Ghandeharizadeh, Johannes Gehrke, Goetz Grafe, Luis Gravano, Alon Halevy, Joe Hellerstein, Meichun Hsu, Yannis Ioannidis, Christian Jensen, Donald Kossmann, Renee Miller, Eliot Moss, Elke Rundensteiner, Betty Salzberg, Sunita Sarawagi, Gerhard Weikum, Kyu-Young Whang, and Jennifer Widom. In addition, Divyakant Agrawal, Fabio Casati, Sharma Chakravarthy, and Ron Obermarck served as single issue editors. Thank you all for consistently doing a fine job.

Finally, I want to thank people who have contributed in other ways over the past ten years. Mark Tuttle twice produced latex style files and prototype issue frameworks that enable us to generate the Bulletin both electronically and in hardcopy. The Bulletin could not be published in its current form without Mark's efforts. Rakesh Agrawal, Betty Salzberg, and Erich Neuhold, as TCDE chairs, provided unwavering support, and have worked to assure that the Bulletin can continue to be successfully published. The IEEE Computer Society staff has been helpful in many respects, especially in providing membership lists and coordinating the hardcopy publication of the Bulletin.

The Current Issue

Web services are rapidly becoming a part of our collective familiar landscape. No longer do we wonder whether one can purchase something on-line. The answer is clearly "yes" almost all the time. The so-called B2C e-commerce is florishing. Certain forms of B2B e-commerce are likewise commonplace. Less common, however, is the integration of web services across enterprises, in which programs interact with other programs, as opposed to programs interacting with people. And, of course, there are any number of potential glitches or "gotcha's" to deal with, security, privacy, reliability, availability. Further, robust web services have been notoriously difficult to implement, with problems that include providing the preceding "ities", simplifying application programming, providing standards for metadata and protocols, etc. There is also the problem of integrating specific applications with generic web services provided by other vendors, and exactly how to make this seamless.

This issue discusses many of the problems associated with web services and their implementation and exploitation. As is characteristic of articles by technical professionals, be they product developers or researchers, the emphasis is on frameworks, architectures and generic approaches as opposed to specific web service instances. This should not surprise anyone, given that the authors are from universities or software providers, not application specialists. And, indeed, the real technical leverage is frequently gotten by such a generic focus. Nonetheless, the current issue ends with examples of useful web services. Fabio Casati, as guest editor, and Umesh Dayal have thus succeeded in capturing a broad snapshot of the current state of web services. Bringing this information together in one place and in such a timely fashion is a significant contribution to the dissemination of this technology. So I want to thank Fabio and Umesh for their thorough and timely editorial work. This area, an evolution of transaction processing, can be expected to remain important for years. The current issue should thus be a worthwhile source of information for a long time.