ICDE and its Steering Committe

The Interational Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE) is the flagship conference of the IEEE Computer Society in the area of databases (data engineering). This conference is held annually during the late winter or early spring at locations around the world, whereever there is a community of database researchers and/or database industry. For example, ICDE'01 was in Heidelberg, Germany, while ICDE'02 was held in San Jose. ICDE'03 will be held this coming February in Bangalore, India. A "call for participation" for ICDE'03 is on the back inside cover of this issue of the Bulletin.

I suspect that most individuals do not know the details of how the ICDE conference is organized. While the conference is sponsored by the Technical Committee on Data Engineering (TCDE), the conference is, in fact, organized and run by the ICDE Steering Committee. By coincidence, Erich Neuhold is the chair of both the Technical Committee and the ICDE Steering Committee, though having different chairs is more common. Erich was just re-elected to a second two year Steering Committee term. Members of the Steering Committee are limited to serving two two-year terms. Other current members of the ICDE Steering Committee are Elisa Bertino, Dimitrios Georgakopoulos, Masaru Kitsuregawa, Paul Larson, David Lomet, Calton Pu, and Philip Yu. They meet at least once a year, usually twice, and select from among the proposals that are presented to them for conference venues. To be eligible to serve on the steering committee, one must have first served in a significant capacity in an ICDE conference.

The Current Issue

"Integrating" data from multiple sources is a major problem of our industry now and it will continue to be a problem in the future. We as a community have become increasingly aware of this because of the emergence of the web. But, indeed, enterprises faced this problem earlier, within their own organizations. There is too much foresight and too much coordination needed to avoid having local centers emerge, each with its information stored in a manner ideosyncratic to the local center. Hence, this is likely to be a permanent problem. Clearly, the more that we can know about the data involved, the better able we will be to integrate it effectively. Hence "metadata" (the information about data) and how we treat it becomes a very big part both of the integration problem and of any solution to it.

"Integration Management" is the subject of the current issue. Once again, in the Bulletin tradition, the issue reports on work across a wide swath of our community, academia, industrial research, and industrial development and product. Renée Miller is an academic who has worked in this area herself, *and* with two industrial research labs working in the area. She knows the area well and has assembled a fine issue that provides a broad snapshot of the latest technology in information integration. Renée had a very busy summer, and was originally reluctant to commit to doing the September issue. But the result speaks for itself. I want to thank René both for the fine job and for her cooperative attitude, which surely makes my job easier.