The Data Engineering Conference ICDE'06

The next International Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE'06) will be held in Atlanta in April, 2006. This conference is the flagship conference of the IEEE Technical Committee on Data Engineering. Atlanta is a great venue, and April is a wonderful time to visit the city, with balmy weather and with magnolias and peach trees in bloom. This year's conference is sure to be of very high quality as submissions continue to be very very high. The result is a very selective conference with high quality papers. Please look for more information about ICDE'06 in the next issue, where additional information about the conference will be available and when a visit to the web site can provide a preview of the technical program.

The Current Issue

When the database field first started up, THE problem to solve was business data processing. That kept the database community fruitfully employed for around 20 years. Over that course of time, business data processing evolved to include not just OLTP and payroll, but decision support, OLAP, data warehouses, data mining, etc. These new directions in business data processing truly kept the database field on its toes over the years.

More recently it has become harder to view databases as only a solution for business data processing. While this area continues to evolve, databases have been used to help tackle other areas as well. The interesting thing about the current issue is that techniques that have attacked these other areas also have overlap with the newer requirements of business data processing. So even as we as a community go off in new directions, many of the things that we do continue to be relevant to the original application area that gave our field its start.

This preamble has surely given the game away for what comes next. Location data management is one of the newer areas of database research. And it has applications in new application areas (mobil phone services come to mind). But the technology also can be turned around and applied to traditional business data processing for inventory control, i.e. you use the technology to keep track of where your inventory is. This kind of application is particularly relevant as just-in-time inventory management increasingly becomes the normal mode of operation.

So location data management looks to have a lively future, not just as a research area, but also as an area with real-life application. It is this kind of real-life relevance that has long distinguished the database field. So I was pleased when Jignesh Patel, this issue's editor, suggested location data management as a topic. Jignesh has pulled together an issue that includes both academic and industrial efforts in this area, demonstrating the wide interest generated in this area. I want to thank Jignesh for the fine job he did on the issue, which should stimulate even more interest in this area.