

Executive Committee of the TCDE

The inside front cover of this issue of the Bulletin includes the new Executive Committee of the IEEE Technical Committee on Data Engineering, the sponsoring organization within the IEEE for database activities, including the Bulletin and the ICDE Conference. Matters pertaining to the TCDE should be addressed to Paul Larson, the TCDE Chair.

Workshop on Self-Managing Database Systems

The current issue contains a report on the second Workshop on Self-Managing Database Systems, sponsored by the Workgroup on Self-Managing Data, a workgroup of the IEEE Technical Committee on Data Engineering. This workgroup was formed less than two years ago and has already sponsored two workshops and had an issue of the Bulletin devoted to the topic. Self-managing database systems is a subject of keen industrial interest as users focus on reducing total cost of ownership (TCO) for their data processing systems. The workshop report on page three captures some of the real excitement in this area.

The Current Issue

The current issue of the Bulletin is on the topic of data management issues in social sciences. Computers and the internet are having a striking impact on the lives of not only technical communities but on communities of what might be called "ordinary" users. Web sites cater to social interaction, becoming places to "meet", socialize, post videos, etc. Web search enables people distributed physically over much of the earth's surface to find likeminded individuals who share their interests. This has become a really dramatic phenomenon.

The database community brings to bear on social science issues technologies that it has developed over the years for managing business data. But the social sciences require new ways of looking at and "massaging" data. This has led to ideas and constructs such as social and affiliation networks, new search paradigms, and new ways to organize systems to support these technologies. We can see this social phenomenon changing in real time, and hence it presents a moving target, as social scientists struggle to keep up with what is happening.

I want to thank issue editor Nick Koudas (and Dimitris Tsirogiannis who provided editorial assistance), who has brought together in the current issue a sampling of the substantial amount of work going on in the social sciences by folks who are in or close to the database community. There is real excitement in this area, including industrial excitement as companies try to figure out the best way to attract users to their web site— which is one key to attracting advertisers. The business model for the web is now pretty clearly advertisement based, so you can expect this kind of "social science" work to remain an important area for many years to come.