

International Conference on Data Engineering

ICDE (the International Conference on Data Engineering) is the flagship database conference of the IEEE. The 2009 ICDE will be held in Shanghai, China at the end of March. I would encourage readers to check the "Call for Participation" on the back inside cover of this issue of the Bulletin for more details. ICDE has become not only one of the best database conferences, but one of the largest as well. I attend this conference every year and always find my time well spent. Not only is the research program first-rate, but there is an industrial program, demos, and workshops as well.

The Current Issue

This issue revisits "cloud" based data management. An earlier Bulletin issue (December, 2006) gave a preliminary look at this general area, outlining some of the promise and opportunity, but largely before there was much in the way of real data management in the cloud. That is no longer the case. The past few years have seen an explosion of interest and work in this area. But while we now have some experience and insight as well, this is an area that will continue to be a challenge and opportunity for a long time.

Why a long time? This is a combination of: (1) the cloud is a platform that will be of increasing importance over a very long period, as our industry makes a phase change from in-house data management to cloud-hosted data management; (2) the problems associated with dealing with cloud data are formidable, from performance issues to security and privacy, from metadata management to high availability. These aspects to issues make them great research areas—importance and challenge. Providing solutions will help to enable the dream not only of "information at your fingertips", but also "available wherever you happen to be".

Beng Chin Ooi and Srinivasan Parthasarathy have assembled an issue that contains a very interesting cross section of the work that is going on right now, both at academic institutions and in industry. There are consortia that have emerged that make it possible for researchers, regardless of where they are, to join in the "cloud" effort. So I hope these papers provide a way to entice some of you to enroll in this effort. Beng Chin and Srinivasan have done a fine job assembling this issue, very successfully involving both academia and industry. I am sure you will find it of great interest.