Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

IEEE Computer Society News

In my role as TCDE Chair, I just attended a Computer Society Technical Activities Committee (TAC) meeting, this year held, very conveniently for me, in Seattle. TAC members consist of TC chairs (like I am for the TCDE) as well as a chair appointed from a higher level of the Computer Society, and some at-large members. The two noteworthy (and recurrent) items addressed at this meeting were (1) governance and(2) finances.

On governance, our governance subcommittee recommendation to have TC chairs elect the TAC chair had been rejected earlier. To address TAC governance, Elliot Chikofsky, our current (appointed) chair, proposed electing a TAC vice chair (an informal position). I was not initially enthusiastic, but I decided to support this after suggesting that the vice chair attend and participate in the meetings of the Technical and Conferences Board (T&C). The T&C is the TAC "parent board" where the TAC chair represents the TAC. This was approved, and a vice chair, Sven Dietrich of the TC on Security and Privacy, was elected. This is a very tentative step, and we will have to see how this plays out.

On the financial front, we heard a proposal suggesting that TC's like TCDE be able to carry over part of their fund balance from year to year. This is important for a few of reasons. (1) It removes the potential large volatility in our budget allocation each year, which depends on conference revenue. (2) It gives us an incentive to initiate profitable conferences. (3) It permits us to do longer range planning, which is difficult when finances are so uncertain. Importantly, however, little detail was provided, and the proposal is under study.

None of the above is final in any sense. But there is at least an indication that the Computer Society may be capable of change for the better.

TCDE Chair Election

I want to draw your attention to the "Nominations for Chair of TCDE" letter from Paul Larson and Masaru Kitsuregawa on page 2. The TCDE chair represents us at TAC meetings like the one described above. The chair also appoints our executive committee and, with their advice, decides which conferences we should sponsor. So there are issues of importance that require attention, and the TCDE Chair is the one who organizes and deals with them. Who serves as our Chair is thus important. I would urge you to think about whom you would like to have in this office and to participate in our electoral process.

TCDE Logo

Attentive Bulletin readers will notice a change in the cover of this Bulletin June issue. Computer Society TCs were asked to provide logos for the Society to use on their web pages and in their literature. We did not have an "official" logo, so we sought our people that we knew who had generated ICDE logos, and asked them to submit proposals. The winning proposal, as voted by the TCDE Executive Committee appears on the cover in place of the Computer Society logo.

This logo was produced by Jun Yang of Duke University. I want to thank Jun for his very successful artistic effort with the logo. It captures that the TCDE is part of the IEEE (the blue diamond), that we deal in data (the 1's and 0's), that we are engineers (the compass), and that this is the TC on DE (look for the "de" in the logo). This is a lot to capture in a small logo but Jun's design succeeds in all these aspects, as well as looking very stylish. Bravo and thanks, Jun!

The Current Issue

"Big data", however one might define that term, is a current catch phrase in our technical community. And for good reason. Commercial enterprises have found that they can extract sufficient "meaning" from huge stores of

data to enable them to have a real competitive advantage. Competitors see that happening, and the result is an arms race involving huge volumes of data and how to exploit it.

This data intensive activity has gone on for longer than the term "big data" has been commonly used. Long enough that there is now a wealth of knowledge about effective ways of operating on and using big data. Long enough that it is timely to take stock in this activity, and to try and understand what works and what does not.

With this in mind, Brian Cooper has brought to the bulletin a collection of "war stories" about how to support, how to mine, and how to exploit huge data volumes to win the marketplace competition. Not surprisingly, authors in this Bulletin issue are drawn from industry. Industrial focus, which I regard as a unique aspect of the Bulletin is hence especially strong in this issue. I want to thank Brian for bringing it to us. I think there is both much to enjoy in the issue, and much to learn.

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David Lomet
Microsoft Corporation

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Nominations for Chair of TCDE

The Chair of the IEEE Computer Society Technical Committee on Data Engineering (TCDE) is elected for a two-year period. The mandate of the current Chair, David Lomet, expires at the end of this year and the process of electing a Chair for the period 2013-2014 has begun. A Nominating Committee consisting of Paul Larson and Masaru Kitsuregawa has been struck. The Nominating Committee invites nominations for the position of Chair from all members of the TCDE. To submit a nomination, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee before August 15, 2012.

More information about TCDE can be found at http://tab.computer.org/tcde/.

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Paul Larson and Masaru Kitsuregawa
Microsoft Corporation and University of Tokoyo

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