

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

TCDE Activities

Maintaining the vitality of the database community within the IEEE Computer Society is important for the long term health of the database field. In his role as TCDE Chair, Kyu-Young Whang has initiated a number of new activities designed for this purpose. Each is described below.

Awards: The TCDE now supports a number of awards for outstanding work, both of a technical nature and for professional contributions. Amr El Abadi has led this effort. For technical work, there is the Computer Science, Engineering and Education Impact Award. For young members of our community, there is the TCDE Early Career Award. And finally, there is the TCDE Service Award for contributions to the community. These awards are described in detail at <http://tab.computer.org/tcde/tcdeawards.html>.

Archive: To provide institutional memory about both the TCDE and the ICDE Conferences, a web site is being designed, the effort led by Wookey Lee, that will serve as an archive for historical information. Combined with our current web site, this should provide everyone with comprehensive information over time about the database community within the Computer Society.

Membership: Membership in the TCDE is important for the long term organizational health of the database community within the Computer Society. Xiaofang Zhou leads the effort to strengthen our community's participation in TCDE. One result of this effort was the New Members' Reception at ICDE'13 in Brisbane. Another is the membership application on the back inside cover of the current (and subsequent) issues of the Bulletin. If you are not currently a member, I urge you to join.

The Current Issue

Hundreds of millions of people the world over (perhaps billions) engage in social interaction at a growing number of web sites. To say that this has changed peoples lives and the way they interact with each other is to understate the obvious. These sites are a wonderful way to stay in touch, to follow what is happening, and who it is happening to. People who barely used computers in the past (e.g. folks of my generation or older) now participate eagerly in this new world.

Web based social services also produce useful data, ripe for analysis. Web services are usually businesses with a profit motive, and hence a need to secure revenue. Advertising is almost always an important revenue component, so social data analysis for ad placement is usually crucial for success in this space.

But direct profit enhancement is not the only function that can be served by analysis of social media data. The utility of social services can also be improved by exploiting geo-spatial and temporal information, social connections, trust relationships, etc. One can, for example, arrange to meet friends who happen to be nearby at the moment in the closest coffee shop. One might use such real time data collection to track any number of interesting social phenomena.

This area of social media data analysis is the focus of the current issue, assembled by Sharad Mehrotra. This area is truly an opportunity for *NOW*. A social media industry is in its infancy, and will surely grow to enormous size. So Sharad's focus on this area in the current issue is a great opportunity to become familiar with what is happening and has happened, as you position yourself for possible participation in a huge collaborative ("social"?) and technical effort that is changing the world. I want to thank Sharad for bringing together a great set of papers, by leading practitioners, focused on this very timely and exciting topic.

David Lomet
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