Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

The Current Issue

Data is the "new oil". Or is it the "new bacon"? It hardly matters. Data is everywhere, being accumulated everywhere, being exploited everywhere, and expanding in usefulness, in an ever widening collection of applications. The results are dramatic, from the mundane ad placement application to the socially envaluable use in fighting sex trafficking. We are awash in data. And in an ideal world, finding the right clever machine learning and/or mining techniques would be our main focus.

Life is not so simple. While clever techniques are surely important, many data scientists find themselves spending more time dealing with the "rat's snarl" of data that is dumped in their laps. Data is all too frequently awash in inconsistencies, spelling errors, ambiguities, noise, and any number of other contaminants. It is this "data quality" that is the focus of the current issue.

Editors Shazia Sadiq and Divesh Srivastava, who were recruited by Bulletin editor Xiaofang Zhou, have assembled a very comprehensive set of papers that span large portions of the "data quality landscape". This landscape is too large to be fully encompassed by any single issue. Nonetheless, this June issue does a great job of surveying both data quality in many of its variations, and technology that can clean it. This is a topic that will not be going away. This issue can help you prepare for the task and lead you to some promising approaches to dealing with quality issues. Thanks to Shazia and Divesh for their work in preparing the issue and to the very successful result of their efforts.

"No" on Proposed IEEE Constitutional Amendment

The Computer Society is part of the IEEE. As such it has a role to play in the governance of the IEEE, as do all societies within the IEEE. A proposed amendment to the IEEE constitution would change the way that the IEEE is governed. As of this moment, the Computer Society is joined with nine other societies who have had formal votes in opposition to the amendment. And no society has voted in favor of the amendment.

The thrust of the IEEE amendment is to move governance partially out of the constitution and make it subject to the more easily changed by-laws. Prior versions of the amendment have suggested that the purpose may be to reduce the role of societies in IEEE governance. It also removes IEEE members from some governance votes that are currently required. The proposal in detail can be seen at

`https://www.ieee.org/documents/constitution_approved_amendment_changes_election.pdf`
(login is required using your IEEE account).

As a member of the Computer Society Board of Governors (BOG), I have participated in BOG discussions on the proposed IEEE amendment, and agree with the position taken by the Computer Society in opposition. I believe the amendment is misguided. Professional meetings can be contentious, as there are sometimes conflicting interests that need to be resolved. But the change proposed seems to me to not improve the way we deal with these conflicts but rather seeks to bury them. That is not the way democracy is supposed to work.

Part of my "agenda" at the Computer Society BOG has been to empower constituent organizational parts to do more, e.g. by enabling Technical Committees to retain a fund balance from year to year. The IEEE amendment moves things in the opposite direction, toward concentrating power at the top of the organization. So I urge you to vote "no" on this amendment.

IEEE TCDE Award Winners

The Technical Committee on Data Engineering (TCDE) initiated awards for the data engineering community in 2014. This is the third year for the awards. The winners of the awards this year are listed on the TCDE web site
`http://tab.computer.org/tcde/tcdeawardsrecipients.html`

This year, award winners have the opportunity to publish a short communication about their thoughts as a result of the award in the Bulletin. The current issue contains short communications from Early Career winner Arnab Nandi and Contributions Award winner Gio Wiederhold. Impact Award winner Michael Carey's communication is scheduled for the September issue.

Award winners have made truly distinguished contributions. I want to congratulate them on their awards, and I would encourage you to see what they have to say in the current issue.

Changing Editors

Every two years, I am faced with the most important part of my job as Editor-in-Chief of the Bulletin. That is, I need to appoint new editors. One of the big reasons for the Bulletin's continuing success is that great computer scientists have been willing to serve as editors for its special issues.

The current set of editors, Chris Jermaine, Bettina Kemme, David Maier and Xiaofang Zhou have continued the high standards set by prior editors and have produced great issues, from declarative systems to data quality. I try very hard to appoint terrific editors who span a wide crosssection of the engineering community. I count these most recent editors as a very successful continuation of this story, and want to thank them for the outstanding issues that they have produced.

So... you are asking, who are the new editors? I am happy to be able to announce that my success in attracting great editors continues. The new editors will, starting with the September issue, be Tim Kraska of Brown University, Tova Milo of Tel Aviv University, Chris Ré of Stanford University, and Haixun Wang of Facebook. I am absolutely delighted that Tim, Tov, Chris, and Haixun have agreed to serve as editors and I look forward to working with them over the next two years to continue to bring our readers terrific issues with papers from many of the premier database researchers and practitioners in a wide array of data engineering areas.

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