

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

News

I want to draw your attention to a new section of the Bulletin, the “News” section. There was enough happening to warrant a section of its own. I wanted to direct the reader’s attention to this more than was possible by simply including additional letters.

TCDE AWARD WINNERS: Every year at the International Conference on Data Engineering, the Technical Committee on Data Engineering presents awards to individuals who have distinguished themselves in a particularly noteworthy way, through impact, service, education, or as an accomplished young researcher. This issue of the Bulletin provides the award winners with an opportunity to share their views on having received the award and describe the work that led to their receiving this distinction. Each awardee statement has a different “flavor”, but all tell great stories. I enjoyed reading them and can recommend them to you.

TCDE CHAIR ELECTION: The chair of the Technical Committee on Data Engineering serves a two year term. Thus, every other year, the TC holds an election for chair. It is the chair’s responsibility to appoint the executive committee, whose members you see listed on the inside front cover. Xiaofang Zhou, the current chair, is precluded by a two term limit from seeking re-election to a third consecutive term. We have two distinguished and experienced candidates, Thomas Risse and Erich Neuhold, who have agreed to run for and serve as chair if elected. I would urge you all to express your preference by voting in this election.

The Current Issue

Data is everywhere. And it is increasingly valuable as we find improved ways of dealing with it. Indeed, data has been referred to as “the new oil”. There is a worthwhile analogy here. Oil gushed from the ground spontaneously long before our modern era, and was largely wasted. Whether gigabytes through exabytes or more... it is not enough to simply have data. One needs to derive value from data.

As a technical community, we need to distill meaning from data. But perhaps more importantly, we need to provide technology that others (application experts) can use to distill meaning. Going a step further, we need to construct tools that can place the meaning in context, evaluate the strength of the analysis, and determine whether we should believe it. And the list goes on! This is challenging. And that is the focus of the current issue that Alexandra Meliou has put together for us. Alexandra did a great job in identifying people and their work that makes this Bulletin issue invaluable to not just members of our technical community but to anyone trying to understand how data is used and what it means. Thank you Alexandra.

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