Book Review Column

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Welcome to the new Book Review Column of SIGMOD RECORD. In this column we plan to regularly feature reviews on books of general interest to the SIGMOD community. Book review columns have been running successfully for other special interest groups for many years providing a substantial added value to the respective communities. When talking to the editor of SIGMOD RECORD, Ling Liu, I found the idea of a book review column immediately interesting and challenging. Since I am currently building up a small library for my new lab at EPFL this activity appeared also to be very timely for me.

While gathering ideas on books to be proposed for review in the first call, which appeared in the last issue, it became pretty clear that there exist at least three categories of books with quite different profiles. Firstly, we have standard database textbooks. We usually know them, but frequently new books or new editions of existing books appear. I see the role of reviews here in informing our community about the specific characteristics of the new books or about major changes in new editions. Their qualities as introductory texts and textbooks are undisputed and the choice is a matter of subjective taste. Then, we have books in the database area, which address specialized topics. Here we find a wide variance in the breadth and depth in the way these books treat their topic. Reviews on such books will help to understand which exact technical field a book covers, the level of specialization it provides and its potential uses. Finally, we have books, which are peripheral to the specific technical area of database management, but are of general interest. After all, data management is a field that needs continuous exchange of ideas with its application areas as well as with other research disciplines and fields that influence our methods and tools. The role of reviews of these books is to identify interesting new sources of information for databases researchers and prompt their curiosity. Naturally book reviews are, in addition to being a media to provide information, a forum to express opinions. I shall like to draw the reviewers' attention to the fact that writing a book is valuable service by the book authors for the community - we all know how busy we are - and thus a positive mindset is appropriate when reviewing a book.

Having said this, I shall like to invite all readers of SIGMOD RECORD to consider contributing to this column. If you are interested in submitting a book review contact me by E-mail (karl.aberer@epfl.ch). I will try to obtain a copy of a book from the publisher, if needed. You may consider reviewing a book you have selected on your own or select ones from the list of books I will propose with every issue.

All information relevant to submitting book reviews is provided at the Web page http://www.acm.org/sigmod/record/bookreviews.html. There you will find the current list of books proposed for review. However, if you would like to submit reviews of other books, feel free to contact me. You will find on the Web page also additional information related to the book review column, in particular book review guidelines. Reviews for the forthcoming March 2002 issue should be submitted by January 1st, 2002. The length of a book review should not exceed 2 pages.

For this issue I had proposed a number of new database textbooks, a collection of recent books on data mining, which I believe are of interest to many of us, and a few special area books that I simply found

interesting. I am very glad to say that thanks to the hard work of the reviewers I was able to obtain for this initial book review column the first two reviews. Interestingly, the special topics section received the most attention, probably also because some of the books are of more general nature and thus reviewing takes less time. The reviews we find in this issue are:

Transactional Information Systems: Theory, Algorithms, and the Practice of Concurrency Control and Recovery by Gerhard Weikum and Gottfried Vossen. Review by *Marc Scholl*. This is a textbook on the field of transactional data processing that appeared this year. It exhibits strong formal foundations and comprehensiveness while maintaining accessibility for a broad readership.

Information Warfare and Security by Dorothy E. Denning. Review by *H. V. Jagadish*. This book covers information security from a large number of perspectives. It provides a comprehensive and timely introduction and overview on the many security issues in information management.

For the next issue I plan to leave the standard database and special topic section as they are, and extend the general interest section only. In particular, I hope for the next issue to obtain a good coverage on the data mining books, including ones that are not proposed.

If you would like to contribute to this column, to propose books for review or to express your opinion on this column in general, please don't hesitate to contact me. By active participation of the community I think together we will be able to make this column a success and thus an asset for us all.

Karl Aberer,
Associate Editor.

Books proposed for the next issue:

DATABASE TEXTBOOKS
Database Systems: The Complete Book, 1/e by Hector Garcia-Molina, Jeffrey D. Ullman, Jennifer D. Widom, PRENTICE HALL, 2002.
Database and Transaction Processing: An Application-Oriented Approach by Arthur Bernstein, Michael Kifer, Philip M. Lewis, ADDISON-WESLEY, 2002.
Database Systems Concepts by Abraham Silberschatz, Henry Korth, S. Sudarshan, MCGRAW-HILL, 2002.

SPECIAL DATABASE TOPICS
Mining the World Wide Web, An Information Search Approach by George Chang, Marcus J. Healey, James A. M. McHugh, Jason T. L. Wang, KLUWER, 2001.
Principles of Data Mining by David J. Hand, Heikki Mannila and Padhraic Smyth Published by MIT PRESS, 2001.
Fundamentals of Data Warehouses by Jarke, M., Lenzerini, M., Vassiliou, Y., Vassiliadis, P., SPRINGER, 2001.
Data Mining: Concepts and Techniques by Jiawei Han, Micheline Kamber MORGAN KAUFFMAN, 2000.

GENERAL INTEREST
Mobility: Processes, Computers, and Agents by Edited by Dejan Milojicic, Fred Douglis, Richard Wheeler, ACM PRESS, 1998.
Multiagent Systems: A Modern Approach to Distributed Artificial Intelligence by Gerhard Weiss (ed.), MIT PRESS, 2000.