

Editor Notes

As you probably noticed already, this issue is smaller than the recent ones, and I would like to make the reason for this the focus of these notes.

As you know there is a topic I have consistently addressed in recent issues of the *Record*. That is the one of the role of the *Record* in our community. After talking to many of our colleagues I am convinced that the *Record* is meant not to be “yet another journal” but instead fulfill its role as a high quality technical newsletter. As such it should contains articles that would not quite fit in a typical conference or workshop, granted, of course, those articles should still be mostly technical by nature. As an example of such articles I would refer, you to those analyzing database authorship and citations (e.g., two articles by Erhard and Thor, and by Sidiropoulos and Manolopoulos, both published in Dec./2005), and those discussing the single-blind vs. double-blind review (those by Madden and DeWitt, in the Jun./2006 issue, and two articles by Tung and Snodgrass, respectively, in this very issue). Needless to say the columns also play an adequate and important role in this scenario and have been handled very well thus far. (It is never enough to acknowledge and thank the volunteer help of the associate editors!)

Why am I saying all that you ask. In a sense to justify why this issue is, and likely the next ones to come will be, shorter. Once the view above is adopted many submitted papers, which would be otherwise worth publishing in the proceedings of a typical meeting, are no longer suitable for publication at the *Record*. As a consequence, the ratio of rejected papers has been increasing, thus leading to less “research articles” being published and finally resulting in shorter issues. This being said I still very much encourage submissions of technical papers with broader and/or provocative views, as well as comprehensive survey papers.

Another, orthogonal reason for this short issue, is that while I do have a good number of papers currently being under review, the reviewing process is taking longer than the usual. I ask the authors of papers which are waiting for the results of their submission to be patient. We all have to understand that peer-reviewing papers is a volunteer work. I have always tried to look for well-qualified reviewers, and typically those are the same people who are often recruited for the PC of good conferences. With conferences deadlines almost tied back-to-back, those people when not preparing a submission for a conference themselves are more often than not reviewing a conference submission by someone else. (Add to this the Summer, when most of us take some (deserved) time off.) Since conference reviews have tight deadlines it is not surprise (though not fortunate) that other reviews receive lower priority, hence taking longer to complete. Unfortunately I do not see an easy to solve this, though I am trying to get some commitment from reviewers I am also realistic about our workload and ever shifting priorities.

That is about what I wanted to say today. I hope you enjoy this issue, in particular the articles about our reviewing processes and their implications. I dare to suggest that our community (and not necessarily only ours) might want to do some (re)thinking about the role of conferences and reviewers. And I have to say that I am glad to see the *Record* being used to document such reflections. Cheers!

Mario Nascimento, Editor.
August, 2006.