

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the June 2012 issue of the ACM SIGMOD Record!

The issue opens with the Database Principles column, where Mikolaj Bojanczyk explores algorithms based on algebras (and in particular, on monoids) for solving word and tree problems, such as evaluating binary queries on words and forests. The paper by Peter Wood surveys query languages for graph databases, a topic on which attention is renewed due to the popularity of important applications such as Semantic Web graphs of RDF data, and social network graph analysis. Query languages are analyzed from the viewpoint of features (expressive power) and then under the angle of their associated algorithmic complexity.

The survey by Ferreira, Gonçalves and Laender focuses on an important problem in scholarly and bibliographic data management systems: automatic author name disambiguation. This problem is a well-known particular case of data cleaning, where errors can be due to erroneous data entry or to natural changes in the names and affiliation an author has along her or his career. In other contexts, two different authors may actually have the exact same name, complicating the task of setting their publications apart. The survey formalizes the problem and outlines two main computational techniques used to solve it: author grouping attempts to group the references of the same author according to some similarity, while author assignment aims at directly assigning each reference to the right author. Finally, the survey places a wide selection of relevant work in the classification space thus defined.

The issue includes two Distinguished Profiles in Databases. Tamer Ozsu, recipient of the SIGMOD Contribution Award of 2006 and an ACM Fellow, muses on the spirit of object-oriented database hovering above current database modeling tools, even as pure object-oriented databases have by now disappeared. Tamer is also known to have voiced strong opinions in the conference versus journal discussions, and in this interview he explains how the database community has overplayed the role of conferences and should join the majority of the scientific community in giving more importance to conferences. If you have hated 8-pages major conference submissions as much as I did, it is time to learn Tamer's arguments in favor of it! Tamer also discusses the PVLDB model, the Springer database encyclopedia, left-wing politics, his 600-strong fountain pen collection, and more!

Our second Profile features Erich Neuhold, now a professor at the University of Vienna and a director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Publication and Information Systems in Darmstadt. Just like Tamer, Erich has been involved over time in object-oriented and XML databases, and he discusses his own lessons learned in this area. Erich also comments on his experience managing a large industrial and then a larger University department, and draws an interesting comparison between research in the US versus Europe. Erich shares many insights into the historical evolution of German and other European research institutes, in particular from the perspective of their funding. The interview also recalls the days when 64 K seemed more memory than a program would ever need, and about the innovative idea of connecting ten such computers into a distributed database system!

The issue closes with two calls for contributions. The VLDB Journal editors-in-chief want it to be known that survey submissions are still very much welcome to the Journal! Closing the issue is the call for papers for ICDT 2013, to be held in Genoa, Italy, early next year.

Changes to the editorial board Last but not least, I am pleased to announce the presence of new members in the SIGMOD Record Editorial Board:

- Anish das Sarma (Google) joined us to help Brian Cooper edit submissions to the Reports column;
- Nesime Tatbul (ETH Zurich) is the new survey co-editor, helping Cesar Galindo-Legaria;
- Alkis Simitsis (HP Labs) joins Ugur Cetintemel as a co-editor of the Research Centers column, with the plan that Alkis will take over from Ugur in a short time.

Welcome to the new editors and may they enjoy a happy tenure!

Your contributions to the Record are welcome via the RECESS submission site (<http://db.cs.pitt.edu/recess>). Prior to submitting, be sure to peruse the Editorial Policy on the SIGMOD Record's Web site (<http://www.sigmod.org/publications/sigmod-record/sigmod-record-editorial-policy>).

Ioana Manolescu

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Past SIGMOD Record Editors:

Harrison R. Morse (1969)
Daniel O'Connell (1971 – 1973)
Randall Rustin (1975)
Thomas J. Cook (1981 – 1983)
Jon D. Clark (1984 – 1985)
Margaret H. Dunham (1986 – 1988)
Arie Segev (1989 – 1995)
Jennifer Widom (1995 – 1996)
Michael Franklin (1996 – 2000)
Ling Liu (2000 – 2004)
Mario Nascimento (2005 – 2007)
Alexandros Labrinidis (2007 – 2009)