A Progress Report on the Activities of the CODASYL End User Facility Task Group

Chairman's Message

Editor's Message

News and Announcements

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This year marks a new era for SIGMOD -- a time of transition from a small limited government Special Interest Group into a large self-governing organization. The past two years have seen rapid growth in our membership as interest in the database area grows.

Last year's annual technical conference was truly an international affair and thanks to Frank King and Vincent Lum a high mark of achievement in overall technical quality was attained. From all indications, this year's technical conference (2-4 June in Virginia), under the direction of Ed Sibley and Jim Rothnie, will continue this trend and will provide an atmosphere for technical interchange.

A phenomenal growth (current membership exceeds 2000) is not without problems. As the membership grows, the diversity and interest levels of the members also broadens. This brings to mind the question of technical relevance of SIGMOD's activities to the general membership. Although there are some members who are avid followers of the technical topics addressed at the SIGMOD conferences (mostly in the Universities and research laboratories) many members may not be able to differentiate between a B-tree or TRIE organization, know how to obtain a Third Normal Form or what the SLICE operation is in data translation, let alone the technical jargon associated with database technology. This situation creates a technological communication gap which we believe needs to be addressed.

In order to increase the current awareness of SIGMOD members, we have decided on the following goal:

To increase member services and involvement while maintaining the overall technical quality of SIGMOD without increasing membership dues.

One of the first steps toward this goal will be to provide the proceedings of the SIGMOD technical conferences and relevant material from CODASYL and ANSISPAC organizations to the membership.

In the area of SIGMOD conferences, one approach to increasing awareness is to present different types of conferences, perhaps more on the survey and tutorial model. Another approach would be to reinitiate professional development seminars on a local or regional basis. Still another would be to precede our annual technical conferences with a survey and tutorial session based on papers presented at that conference. All of these approaches require member involvement. What is your opinion?

To facilitate better communications, we plan to initiate a one page newsletter called BITS AND BYTES to compliment the FDT Bulletin. This informal newsletter will be edited by Bob Taylor and will address technical happenings of interest to the SIG members. Bob is considering including such items as a calendar of technical conferences, a call for papers deadline, and short conference reports.

To coordinate the overall SIG publication activities, I have asked Ed Sibley to assume the post of Director of Publications. His task is to assure a smooth and direct flow of high quality information both inside and outside the Special Interest Group. This issue of the FDT Bulletin also introduces the new SIGMOD Bulletin Editor, Doug Kerr. He has some new ideas about the SIGMOD Bulletin such as not only maintaining the regular schedule, but also increasing the frequency of FDT to bi-monthly. Additionally in the publications area, we hope to appoint a FDT European editor to provide additional liaison with the database activities in Europe.

To organize SIGMOD participation in the ACM National Conference and to initiate other interface conferences, I have asked Diane Smith, SIGMOD Vice-Chairwoman, to be the Technical Conference Coordinator. Not only is Diane busy with the current SIGMOD-SIGPLAN interface conference on Data Abstraction and Definition in March, but she is planning three technical sessions at the 1976 ACM National Conference in Texas and considering a SIGMOD-SIGMINI Interface Conference on Database with Small Processors.

Following the final results of the election last fall, the elected officers have been busy learning the ropes and trying to formulate overall general policies for SIGMOD. (The confusion about the election last year was due to the concern of the SIG/SIC Board, that members who had voted against the self-governing SIG amendment would be disfranchised from voting for the officers if the motion passed. The vote tabulation indicated an overwhelming approval for the amendment and the small number of members voting against the amendment would not have affected the outcome of the election. Attached is the current operational organization of SIGMOD.)

SIGMOD Treasurer, John Joyce, received his Christmas present early last December with a budget from ACM Headquarters. John spent many hours over the holidays juggling and struggling with the figures for the 1977 SIGMOD Budget. As a result of that process, we have decided to run a deficit in order to meet the goal of not increasing membership dues.

The SIGMOD Executive Committee is working for a better SIG and now ask the members of SIGMOD what can you do to support SIG. We have needs for referees, reviewers, technical conference chairpersons, contributors to the FDT Bulletin, and so on.

J. P. F.