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SIGMOD RECORD
A Quarterly Publication of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)
Special Interest Group on Management of Data (SIGMOD)

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CONTRIBUTIONS to the SIGMOD RECORD may be sent to the Editor. They should be camera-ready and typed single spaced. All papers printed herein are unrefereed working papers, unless otherwise noted.

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REGULAR BACK ISSUES of the SIGMOD RECORD (formerly FDT) are available from ACM Headquarters for $2 per copy prepaid. SIGMOD WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS are also available for different prices.
Chairman's Column

Dear Membership:

For the next couple of years I will be the chairman of SIGMOD and have agreed to write a column for our quarterly newsletter. At the moment I am trying to plow through ACM procedures to figure out how to function. (Would you believe a 3 inch manual?) As near as I can tell the current projects of SIGMOD are:

1) to run the ACM-SIGMOD annual conference

2) to help sponsor VLDB and other conferences with a data base component

3) to publish a newsletter

4) to help sponsor "regional" conferences with a data base flavor

I want to briefly discuss each topic in turn. The next SIGMOD conference will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan on April 29-May 1, 1981 with Prof. Toby Teory as general chairman and Dr. Ed Lien as program chairman. Their addresses are:

Prof. Toby Teory
ECE Department
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Dr. Ed Lien
Bell Telephone Laboratories
Holmdel, N.J.
I have asked Toby to make an all out effort to keep the registration price at a reasonable level this time around.

Sometime in the next 9 months a decision must be made concerning where to hold SIGMOD/82 and who will serve as general chairman and program chairman. I would like to offer all of you the opportunity to provide input on these matters. If you prefer a particular city or would be willing to fill either job or have a person you would like to recommend, please contact me.

I have committed SIGMOD to helping sponsor VLDB/81 and assume that the membership wishes this arrangement to go on indefinitely. Moreover, it seems appropriate to sponsor "interface" conferences jointly with other SIGS (such as the recent Workshop on Data Abstraction, Databases and Conceptual Modelling in Pingree Park). Hence, I will attempt to encourage such transfusions.

Concerning the newsletter, I am delighted that Tom Cook has agreed to be editor and has resurrected the RECORD single-handedly. It is clear that the situation is in excellent hands, but Tom cannot do it alone. It is up to you to contribute material. My goal is to have the RECORD as full of paper reviews, short papers, conference notices, news of interest to data base persons, etc. as our budget will allow. SIGPLAN Notices seems a model to emulate in this area.
A while back SIGMOD announced that it would be willing to support "regional" data base conferences. These would be ones which were not national in scope and might be sponsored by a local or regional ACM chapter. A budget was established, but so far only the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand has taken advantage of this opportunity. The question arises whether we should continue this program.

Besides the programs which SIGMOD is already doing, there are several possible things which we might undertake. These include:

1) a speakers bureau

We could nominate a collection of data base speakers who could be invited by local ACM chapters and other groups to make presentations. SIGMOD could pay airfare for such situations. We could model such a bureau after the ACM National Lecturer program which has this sort of arrangement.

2) more workshops

These might be more specialized, less formal and with a smaller number of participants than our annual conference. Perhaps the Pingree Park Workshop or the Lake Arrowhead workshops would be an appropriate model.

3) tutorial workshop oriented toward non academic persons

Such a workshop would present background material and might be along the lines of similar IEEE workshops. Perhaps
it could be held during the days preceding the annual conference.

4) your idea

Do you have any ideas about what SIGMOD should do. Please let me know of you special pet project.

Mail to: Michael Stonebraker
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or send via the ARPANET to mike @berkeley

Next Column: By then I will figure out our financial health and report to the membership on the situation.
Notes from the Vice Chairperson

I'd like to welcome you to the newly reincarnated SIGMOD newsletter. I plan to include a column from the vice chairperson in each quarterly issue, and I'm willing to format it according to your interests. So, I'd like to hear from you at the address below if you have any suggestions. Possible topics of interest include conference synopses, conference previews, short descriptions of new database research projects that are sent to me, proposals for new conferences, etc. For this issue, I'm including a reminder of the various upcoming database and general conferences. For more details, see the ACM Communications.

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES


Feb. 24-26, 1981: ACM Annual Computer Science Conference, St. Louis, MO.

Mar. 8-12, 1981: 5th International Conference on Software Engineering, San Diego, CA.

Apr. 29-May 1, 1981: ACM SIGMOD 81, International Conference on Management of Data, Ann Arbor, MI.

May 4-7, 1981: NCC 81, Chicago, IL.

Sept. 9-11, 1981: Seventh International Conference on Very Large Data Bases, Cannes, France.


Pat Selinger
IBM Research Lab K55/282
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San Jose, CA 95193
Editor’s Notes

Welcome back! We missed your readership over the past year or so!

The Record is back, and under new management. I am the titular editor, but putting together a newsletter requires more time than I or any other gainfully employed person can devote. That means that all of you are going to have to help me out. The initial goals for the Record are to have

- at least 4 issues a year;
- a regular column reviewing pertinent conferences;
- a regular column reviewing recent publications (theses, books, etc.) a la Computing Reviews, but tailored to the Record audience;
- a regular column on people so you can watch your friends fall in and out of tenure, go up and down the company ladder, or watch them move to and from Silicon Valley; and,
- a prejudice toward short technical papers. The Record should be a communications forum for quickly floating new (not necessarily well developed) ideas. I’ll try to keep it from becoming a dumping ground for old material. As the Record matures, a section (or, perhaps, special issue) for refereed papers can be started.

Obviously, I need help. I would like people to volunteer to be "Conference Reviewer" and "Publication Reviewer", and I would like all of you to send in the latest word on what people are up to. Of course, the most important part of the Record is the technical work submitted – so please start submitting (to the address below).

A few quick words about the material in the Record:

- it looks like we'll need about a three month leadtime on conference announcements;
- only official conferences can be announced;
- the Record cannot publish any sort of advertising; and,
- only typewritten material is acceptable, and, if possible, material typed on a machine is best (so I don't feel quite so bad about asking for format changes, etc.).

In the meantime, please forgive the Record for any flaws. We are still new at getting information together, and through all the proper publication channels. Again, the Record needs your help, so please forward suggestions, pledges to volunteer, and other items of interest. Thanks.

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Dear Editor, SIGMOD Record:

RIGEL is an experimental language designed for research on interactive database applications. The language includes: relations as built-in types, query constructs, relation constructors, generators, relational view constructors, and data abstractions.

An implementation of RIGEL is now available to run on a VAX under the UNIX operating system. A version of the system will be available for VMS, the DEC supported operating system, sometime in early 1981.

Write to the following address for further details:

Prof. Lawrence A. Rowe
Computer Science Division-EECS
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

or send ARPANET mail to larry@berkeley.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. Rowe
The Database Directions III Workshop was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, October 20-22, 1980. The Workshop was sponsored by the National Bureau of Standards and the ACM. The prior two workshops were held in 1975 and 1977: proceedings from the first were published as an issue of the SIGMOD Record, and proceedings from the second have been published by NBS (Special Publication 600-64), and will be published in the Record this year.

The title of the workshop was "Information Resource Management - Strategies and Tools". There were four major working panels, and each panel was further divided into smaller working groups. The four working panels were:

- Uses of the Data Dictionary;
- Standards and Controls for IRM;
- Logical Database Design; and
- Physical Database Design.

It is difficult to evaluate the results of the workshop, because the results are still in the process of being put together. The workshop brings together a wide variety of database people for two days of fairly intensive sessions on fairly broad topics. The final session was a brief synopsis by each working panel of its results, though the true results are still being hashed out by several people in each working group. NBS plans to publish the results when they are available (presumably soon).

The workshop had a decided tilt toward data dictionaries as a topic of discussion. Rumor had it that NBS is interested in formulating some initial standards for data dictionaries (they have a publication entitled "Prospectus for Data Dictionary System Standard" (NBSIR 80-2115)), and were testing the waters for supporting information and ideas.

The effect of the data dictionary emphasis was fascinating. Since very little has been published on data dictionary systems, many participants were in a realtime scramble for ideas and thoughts. This produced (in my opinion) about half a day of non-communications because so many people were using different terminology, but from the frustration arose some surprisingly unanimous feelings toward what a data dictionary is, and its role in "information resource management".

I don't think any startling technical results will fall out of DBD III, but I do think the workshop was very valuable for the participants. The workshop is one of the few forums where academic people and industrial people are required to not only talk, but to understand one another. Most conferences tend to be very clique-ish with few opportunities for the seeds of pragmatism and idealism to be sown outside their home fields; DBD III was a refreshing breeze that blew seeds all over. I doubt that any proceedings can convey the spirit of the discussion (proceedings tend to gloss over the 3 hour discussions on the meaning of the working group title). John Berg (editor of DBD II, and now a SIGMOD officer) has suggested that the SIGMOD annual conference could encourage more small group discussion sessions ... any energetic champions out there?

Tom Cook
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