WELCOME TO THE MAY/JUNE 2015 ISSUE OF IEEE CLOUD COMPUTING. The issue features five articles covering various topics, from context-aware mobile cloud computing to the possible use of standards to leverage cloud security service-level agreements. Another interesting article looks at the intersection of containerization and platform-as-a-service (PaaS) clouds.

We also have an interesting array of columns and departments. James Mitchell of Strategic Blue describes the best ways to purchase cloud services in the "Cloud Economics" column. Alan Sill also brings economics, specifically socioeconomics, to his "Standards Now" column. In “Cloud and the Law,” Henry Chang of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong, presents the regulatory and privacy model for cloud computing in Hong Kong. Finally, in the "Blue Skies" department, Rajiv Ranjan, Joanna Kołodziej, Lizhe Wang, and Albert Zomaya investigate the cross-layer cloud resource configuration challenge given that big data is evolving fast in the market. The guest authors are all members of IEEE Cloud Computing’s new advisory boards, which I’ve added with the sole purpose of providing supervision, guidance, and input to the various columns and departments. Members of the advisory boards may also write for the columns and departments they oversee. I believe that with such advisory boards, the columns and departments will deliver better editorial products that will benefit all readers. See the full listing of advisory board members in the accompanying sidebar.

I’m also pleased to introduce a new addition to IEEE Cloud Computing’s editorial board: Kevin Jackson. Kevin is an industry leader in the role of cloud computing in the government. He’ll lead the “Cloud and Government” column. Please read his biography in the accompanying sidebar.

I recently attended a conference that included a huge exhibit of technology vendors and service providers, as well as a few consumer-side companies. Walking the hallways of the conference and mingling with the companies’ representatives in the exhibit, I felt as though we’re about to enter the era of “quantum transcendental ultra-multidimensional hypergalactic” computing. Using such an approach, businesses will have access to endless, very cheap resources, and thus have infinite agility to instantaneously respond to any threats or opportunities. Well, maybe not.

But it seems we’re also caught in a never-ending cloud of gobbledygook … and the market is deliberately making it more confusing to the average Joe. For example, one company told me about its operational expenditure (OpEx) cloud, as if it’s different from any other cloud. The basic premise behind cloud computing is leasing IT services from somewhere and not having to come up with any capital expenditures (CapEx) to get cloud services. So what does OpEx cloud really mean? I couldn’t get an answer.
I’m pleased to announce the members of our new advisory boards for the following columns and departments. Boards for the remaining columns and departments will be announced as they are filled.

**Blue Skies**
*Rajiv Ranjan* is the department’s lead editor.

*Joanna Kołodziej* is an associate professor in the Institute of Computer Science at Cracow University of Technology, Poland.

*Lizhe Wang* is a professor in the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth at the Chinese Academy of Science, China.

*Albert Zomaya* is the Chair Professor of High Performance Computing & Networking in the School of Information Technologies at the University of Sydney, Australia.

*Paul Watson* is a professor of computing science at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

*Schahram Dustdar* is a professor at the Vienna University of Technology, Austria.

*Surya Nepal* is a principal research scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Australia.

**Standards Now**
*Alan Sill* is the column’s lead editor.

*Rosa Badia* is a researcher and team lead at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center, Spain.

*Robert Bohn* is the cloud technical program manager at the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

*Mark Carlson* is a principal engineer for Industry Standards at Toshiba, USA.

*Dan Romascu* is the director of External Standards at Avaya, USA.

**Cloud Economics**
*Joe Weinman* is the column’s lead editor.

*Oleksiy Mazhelis* is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

*James Mitchell* is CEO at Strategic Blue, UK.

*Dirk Neumann* is a professor of information systems research at the University of Freiburg, Germany.

**Cloud and the Law**
*Kim-Kwang Raymond Choo* is the column’s lead editor.

*Christopher Millard* is a professor of privacy and information law in the Centre for Commercial Law Studies at Queen Mary University of London, UK.

*John W. Bagby* is a professor in the College of Information Science and Technology at Pennsylvania State University.

*Françoise Gilbert* is the Cloud Security Alliance’s general counsel and founder and managing director of the IT Law Group, USA.

*Pauline C. Reich* is a professor and the director of the Asia-Pacific Cyberlaw, Cybercrime, and Internet Security Research Institute at the Waseda University School of Law, Japan.

*Henry Chang* is the information technology advisor in the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong.
The term “galactic-scale” was being thrown around everywhere at the conference. Economies of scale allow delivery of cloud services at very low cost for the cloud service provider and low prices for the consumer. The higher their economies of scale, the easier it is for service providers to deliver cheaper cloud services. However, achieving very large economies of scale is a “galactically” difficult endeavor and tends to be more skill and art than science, as we need to deal with a different set of problems that current technology alone can’t solve. A very few companies have been able to achieve the large economies of scale where the term “hyperscale” might be meaningful. But galactic scale? What does it really mean? Maybe next we’ll hear about hypergalactic, ultrahypergalactic, or even ultrasuperhypermegagogalactic scale (thanks to my colleagues who came up with these terms and provided other guidance). I’m sure there are many other terms and definition that can’t hold up in any discussion. The use of these terms also tells you that creative innovation in the cloud computing industry is as much the province of the marketing department as it is engineering, IT, and operations.

It could be argued that this is a sign of a maturing industry. It seems that nearly every day brings new features and pricing models from established competitors; launch announcements from enterprise players that have belatedly realized that this industry is replacing traditional business, technology, and operating models; new entrants with new angles; and acquisition of cloud pure-plays by legacy players. Marketers can perhaps be forgiven for pulling out every trick in the book in an attempt to distinguish their offers and get their 15 seconds of fame.

ALL OF THIS MAKES IT HARDER FOR THOSE OF US WHO NEED TO MAKE BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY DECISIONS BECAUSE WE REQUIRE ACCURATE INFORMATION AND USEFUL INSIGHT. At IEEE Cloud Computing, we strive to do just that, eschewing technobabble for solid technology and trend analysis throughout the magazine, and focusing on technology, business, economics, and legal issues through dedicated columns and departments.

So let’s leave the “galactic federation” to science fiction and video games, and focus on real technologies with real business impact.***

**NEW EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER**

We welcome Kevin L. Jackson, the newest member of the IEEE Cloud Computing editorial board! He’ll serve as lead editor for the “Cloud and the Government” column.

Jackson is the founder and CEO of GovCloud Network, a management consulting firm specializing in helping corporations adapt to the new cloud computing environment. He’s also cofounder and lead instructor of CloudTekU, an online cloud computing training platform. He’s author of the blog “Cloud Musings,” as well as two books: GovCloud: Cloud Computing for the Business of Government and GovCloud II: Implementation and Cloud Brokerage Services (Government Training, 2011 and 2012, respectively). He has been deeply involved in the collaborative effort between industry and the US National Institute of Standards and Technology on the broad adoption of cloud computing technologies. Jackson has an MS in computer engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School and an MA in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College, and he is currently pursuing a PhD in applied information technology at the George Mason University Volgenau School of Engineering. He serves as a cybersecurity fellow at the National Cybersecurity Institute at Excelsior College.

Selected CS articles and columns are also available for free at http://ComputingNow.computer.org.