Call for papers for Computer

Computer is soliciting articles that cover all aspects of computer science, technology, and applications. Computer is aimed at a broad audience, whose interests are not limited to narrow specialties; articles are usually survey or tutorial in nature and cover the state of the art or important emerging developments. Submit six copies of the manuscript, including illustrations, references, and authors' biographies, to the editor-in-chief:

- Michael C. Mulder
  Applied Research
  University of Portland
  Portland, OR 97203
  Phone: (503) 283-7433

In addition, special issues of Computer are being organized. Submit six copies of relevant articles directly to the guest editor:

- Education: Submit by December 1, 1985, to Ronald Holzemer, University of Pittsburgh, Electrical Engineering Dept., 348 BEH, Pittsburgh, PA 15261.
- Technical articles on any subject of current interest to Computer Society members are considered for publication; submit to Michael Mulder.

An authors' information sheet can be obtained from Michael Mulder at the above address or from the IEEE Computer Society West Coast Office, 10662 Los Vaqueros Circle, Los Alamitos, CA 90720; (714) 821-8380.

23rd ACM/IEEE Design Automation Conference: June 29-July 2, 1986, Las Vegas, Nevada. Submit five copies of papers (1000 words maximum; include an abstract) by November 15, 1985, and proposals for panel discussions and mini-workshops by December 13, 1985, to Donald E. Thomas, IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, PO Box 218, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.

IEEE Computer Society Workshop on Motion: Representation and Analysis: May 12-14, 1986, Kiawah Island, Charleston, South Carolina. Submit three copies of papers (25 pages maximum) by December 15, 1985, to T.S. Huang, Coordinated Science Laboratory, University of Illinois, 1101 W. Springfield Ave., Urbana, IL 61801 or J.T. Tsotsos, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A4, Canada.

Medinfo 86, Fifth World Congress on Medical Informatics (AHIPS, IFIP, ASIS): October 26-30, 1986, Washington DC. Research papers (suitable for 20- to 30-minute presentations); descriptions of innovative systems (suitable for 10- to 15-minute presentations); opinion, review, or analytical papers (suitable for 10- to 15-minute presentations); and abstracts of scientific demonstrations (half-page summary in proceedings) are sought. Submit seven copies by January 15, 1986, to Medinfo 86, Organizing Committee, George Washington University, Medical Center, Office of Continuing Medical Education, 2300 K St., NW, Washington DC 20037; (202) 676-8929.

IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering: Papers are sought for two special issues. The first, which is planned for publication in December 1986, will be devoted to distributed systems. Submit six copies of a paper by January 31, 1986, to Flavio Cristian or Dale Sken, K55/801, IBM Almaden Research Center, 650 Harry Rd., San Jose, CA 95120-6299. The second issue will cover advances in software engineering for Ada technology. Submit six copies of the manuscript by March 1, 1986, to Joseph E. Urban, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Center for Advanced Computer Studies, PO Box 44330, Lafayette, LA 70504. Guidelines for submitting manuscripts appear on page 315 of the March 1985 issue of IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering.

IEEE Workshop on Languages for Automation: August 27-29, 1986, Kent Ridge, Singapore. Papers on the conference theme, "Languages for Computer and Information System Design," are sought. Submit manuscripts (20 pages maximum) with 200-word abstracts by March 1, 1986, to Christos A. Papachristou, Case Western Reserve University, Dept. of Computer Engineering and Science, Cleveland, OH 44106; authors from Asia are asked to submit their manuscripts to Juzar Motiwalla, Institute of Systems Science, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge, Singapore 0511.

Visual programming: Let's be scientific about it

To The Editor:

As a working computer scientist and a graduate student (my thesis subject is concerned with visual programming), I must thank you for the wonderful issue on visual programming (August 1985). I am well on my way to having read it cover to cover.

As much as I join in the enthusiasm toward the possibilities of visual programming, I must ask if we are letting the enthusiasm cloud our reason when stating the advantages of visual programming over conventional programming. Drs. Grafton and Ichikawa overstate the findings of Glinert and Tanimoto, I think, by saying that "95 percent of the programmers [surveyed in the PICT project] definitely preferred it to conventional methods." Glinert and Tanimoto did not seem to make such a definitive statement in their article, admitting that "the experiments...can be criticized on the grounds that they lack the methodology commonly used in the behavioral sciences" and that "under the circumstances, we should probably avoid analyzing our data with powerful statistical tools."

It is my opinion that we should carefully consider the advantages that visual programming might offer over conventional textual programming methods, perhaps taking a semiotic approach to our analysis, and not rush too quickly to conclusions based on "common knowledge" or informal surveys of small populations (possibly making poor choices based on our intuition or scant evidence that we might be years in "undoing"). Are we too quick to use icons, metaphors, and animation before we understand more about the visual representation of information and its interpretation (both machine and human)? Would a combined visual and textual language be more "readable" than a purely visual one? As Dr. Raeder advises in the closing remarks of his article, should we not take a more systematic and reasoned approach in investigating this new communication medium?

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