FROM THE EDITOR

Logging on

Specifying, designing, building, testing, deploying, and evolving complex computer-based systems are all difficult tasks. Transferring new technologies from university, government, and industrial research and development centers into production status is a time-consuming, expensive, and not well-understood process. This is true if we are transferring new hardware, packaging, or fabrication technologies or transferring device technology, such as that involved in optical disks, laser printers, or high-performance graphics workstations. It is also true if we are transferring technology into the myriad of software systems in use today, such as distributed and networked operating systems, very high level language optimizing compilers, and integrated design and programming environments.

One of the purposes of Computer is to function as both a conduit and a filter in the technology transfer process. Computer also serves as a source of information about the wide spectrum of activities sponsored by the Computer Society and the volunteers and staff involved in these undertakings.

Over the next several months, we will be putting in place a number of features and departments that will, I hope, aid Computer in achieving these goals. We will be starting a Surveys and Tutorials Department that will cover both mature and promising technologies. A survey will review the state of the practice and/or state of the art in a given area. A tutorial will focus on providing a technically substantive introduction to a given topic.

We intend to publish articles by a number of senior scientists, engineers, and educators in a wide variety of areas in our field. These articles will range from position statements, exemplified by the article by Fred Brooks in this issue, to various interviews being planned with industrial, government, and academic leaders.

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We will be broadening our book review coverage to embrace a larger scope of topics and will review material other than books, for example, video tape lectures and audio cassette-based courses. We will be previewing and reviewing Technical Committee task forces, workshops, panels, and related activities in a new department beginning in the May issue. Later this year, conference-related material will be highlighted in a new department called the Conferences and Calendar Department. We are revitalizing the Standards Department; we will, from time to time, be using a point/counterpoint discussion of various standards issues.

Additionally, we will be exploring ways to collaborate with the Computer Society’s specialty magazines; for example, Computer will jointly publish a theme issue on programming environments with IEEE Software later this year.

It will, of course, take several months to start these activities and several months beyond that to get the pipeline full of refereed manuscripts and reviews to sustain these features and departments. I invite and encourage you to contribute material to any of these activities, as well as to become a member of our expanding pool of referees.

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