**COMPUTER’S BIRTHDAY**

David Alan Grier’s article in *Computer’s* July issue (In Our Time, “Across the Great Divide,” pp. 8-10) and the publication’s approaching 40th birthday inspired me to revisit the history of *Computer’s* birth.

Back in the 1960s, the IEEE had no magazines. The Transactions were the only periodicals. They published mainly theoretical research results with a lot of mathematical analyses. They were only interesting to, and accessible by, a small minority of members and, importantly, a small number of potential members. The Transactions were research journals and had that appearance, with the name and a list of the papers in monochrome on the cover. The IEEE had no publication where the results of applied systems or component research or experience with new systems could be shared.

I was the Computer Group’s publications chairman—we had no vice presidents or societies at that time; Dick Tanaka was the group’s chairman, and Harry Huskey was the editor of *Transactions on Computers*. We decided to start a new publication, in addition to the Transactions, to fill the unmet need.

Huskey was in Los Angeles then, and he hired John Kirkley to be the first editor. Kirkley established the West Coast office to handle the publication.

We decided on several criteria for the new publication:

- The articles should be of interest to and readable by college graduates working in technical aspects of the computer field. No PhD required.
- Articles on applied research and experience with laboratory or operational systems would be welcome.
- The magazine would publish news about the Computer Group and the rapidly growing business and profession.
- Technical accuracy was an absolute requirement.
- The magazine would have an attractive cover. Each issue would have a different artist-designed cover, in color, evocative of the issue’s theme or a major article.

Our start was shaky. I had to write the only article in several issues, since there were no contributions. However, contributions started to arrive, and we had a going publication.

*Computer* was a success. Other societies emulated our approach, and now all major IEEE societies have at least one magazine. *Computer* became the publication provided to all Computer Society members. It continues to serve the members well.

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**COMPETING WITH GIANTS**

In “Can Indian Software Firms Compete with the Global Giants?” (July 2006, pp. 43-47), Prabhudev Konana states that “To become recognized global brands and move up the value chain, Indian software firms must promote knowledge leadership, create incentives to innovate, and foster efforts to enhance cultural alignment.” The author focuses on concepts such as “knowledge leadership, concept leadership, and process leadership,” but he overlooks the most important factor: how to retain talented engineers.

I disagree with the statement that “Unless the Indian educational system can produce a large number of high-quality new graduates to meet the demand for IT workers, there will be a gradual movement of work to other emerging countries.” Scientific advancement is not a numbers game—in other words, it is not population-related. For example, the UK’s technological foundation has had a strong performance record for centuries despite the fact that there are only about 100 universities, many of which now have a significant population of foreign students.

When I was a student in the UK, three classmates who received the highest marks were all foreign students, but none of their native countries is a technological super power. Recently, more Asian students have been winning international program-