I recently attended the annual meeting of *IEEE Internet Computing*'s editorial board, an opportunity for the volunteers to discuss such topics as upcoming theme issues and tracks, columns and departments, new additions to the editorial board, and so on. Here, I’ll reflect briefly on some of our discussions there and issue a call to the *IC* readership to provide feedback on the direction the magazine should take.

**Choosing Editorial Content**

First, I’d like to thank the many volunteers who sacrificed a few days to travel to our meeting. We had the largest turnout for an editorial board meeting in several years, including several first-time attendees. The purpose of this detailed planning is to make *IC* the highest quality magazine we can. Modesty aside, we think we’re doing a good job: the magazine provides a broad spectrum of content, almost all of which is accessible to readers with widely variable backgrounds and expertise. One reason we have such outstanding content is the high quality of submissions, whereas another is the editing the professional staff does for each article. I enjoy reading and learn something new from each issue. I’m sure you do too, or you wouldn’t be reading this column.

However, we might improve our editorial planning if we had more information on which to base our decisions. We know the topics that interest us, but we’re making our best guess at what we think will interest the readership at large. (Because the editorial board comes from a cross-section of the communities the magazine represents, this isn’t a complete shot in the dark, of course.)

Unsurprisingly, the total number of subscriptions has declined significantly since the magazine debuted at the start of the Internet bubble, and the trend toward fewer subscriptions continues across the IEEE Computer Society (CS) and similar organizations. Thus, it’s crucial to publish material that you, the reader, will find interesting and useful. The way to do this is to get the readership involved.

Thus, I very much want to thank those who responded to my call for proposals for theme issues. Historically *IC* would create its calendar by brainstorming about possible topics and then finding people (on or off the editorial board) to guest edit the issues. For the past couple of years, we’ve received 15 to 20 solicited proposals for the eight theme issues and tracks we select annually, which gives us a better opportunity to consider a broad cross-section of possible topics and provides a ready-made set of highly motivated guest editors. In hindsight, however, I’ve made a slight mistake by soliciting proposals only from those who are offering to run a theme: I should also solicit suggestions for themes our readers wish we would run, and this column is an attempt to, however belatedly, identify those gaps – if they exist.

A few members of the editorial board — especially my three predecessors as editor in chief — have been with the magazine since its inception. (I joined a few years later.) Over the magazine’s history, I’ve seen it cover several topics with great regularity, such as middleware. I’ve seen other topics rise in importance; for instance, content relating to the Semantic Web constitutes the single largest community of nontheme submissions to the magazine. Other topics, such as security and pervasive computing, now get coverage from their own CS magazines and appear in *IC* to a much lesser extent. Still others, such as mobile agents, were “hot” a few years ago but less so now. Because we plan our editorial calendar one to two years in advance, we
All Systems Go

Terminology

For those who might wonder about the distinction, here’s a breakdown of the various types of IC content:

• A theme article is an article submitted and accepted to a special issue.
• A nontheme article is one submitted “over the transom” and affiliated with no particular issue.
• A track is like a special theme issue, but spread out with one article per issue for a year. The current tracks are on e-commerce and Web-scale workflows.
• A department has an editor who reviews content provided by various authors.
• A column is written by the same person each time it appears.

What haven’t you liked? What topics are coming up that you are looking forward to? Which ones do you just not care about? And especially, what areas are we missing?

You can start by completing a survey IC has been running to find out answers to these questions (available through http://preview.tinyurl.com/2kvhru/ or IC’s homepage at www.computer.org/internet/). You can also contact me directly with your feedback. Any feedback received in the first couple of weeks after this appears in print could help to shape our editorial calendar, before the next set of theme issues and other (periodic) content are carved in stone.

What Should IC Be?

A typical issue of IC is a mix of peer-reviewed technical articles (mostly for a theme, plus one or two non-theme articles as space permits), columns, and departments (see the “Terminology” sidebar for an explanation of these terms). Some of the columns and departments appear just about every issue, some alternate issues, and some are more

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IEEE INTERNET COMPUTING
The Eye of the Beholder

Sporadic than that. We try to cover a broad spectrum of topics, such as architecture, middleware, networking, policy, semantics, standards, tutorials, and, well, rants. We hope to expand this to include other topics such as mobile computing.

But what are we missing? One area we hope to address is international markets, focusing, for example, on Internet technologies in China or India. Another aspect is online presence: we will be integrated with a new Computing Now (CN) electronic magazine run by the CS to provide an improved, integrated online experience for its magazines. (Dejan Milojicic, who serves on IC’s editorial board and has been responsible for the “Trend Wars” interview series that is excerpted in IC and appears online in audio form, is its first editor in chief.) Going forward, we plan to use CN to provide interesting content that you can’t get in the print magazine: podcasts, blogs, webinars, interactive forums, and so on.

So, in a few months we can have a discussion about the content of IC online via CN. In the meantime, drop me an email and let me know how we’re doing. And fill out that survey.

Acknowledgments
The opinions expressed in this column are my personal opinions. I speak neither for my employer nor for IEEE Internet Computing in this regard, and any errors or omissions are my own.

IC Welcomes a New Board Member

B arry Leiba is a senior technical staff member at IBM’s Research Division in Hawthorne, New York. He has worked on email and related technology since the early 1980s, and currently focuses on antispam work, messaging and collaboration on mobile platforms, security and privacy of Internet applications, and Internet standards development and deployment. Leiba has a BS in mathematics from the University of Florida and an MS in computer science from George Washington University. He’s been active in the IETF for roughly 10 years, has authored numerous current and pending proposed standards, chairs the DKIM working group (developing standards for domain-level signatures to provide email integrity), and is on the Internet Architecture Board. He is a program chair for the 2008 Conference on Email and AntiSpam, and he edits the Standards department for IC.

Letter to the Editor

The article “Is HTML in a Race to the Bottom?” (Mar./Apr. 2008) is painfully accurate about standards — organizations will use the least effort/expense approach toward implementation. This has painful long-term side effects, since the noncompliant Web pages will not retain the same accessibility over time. There is a solution to this that requires only one or two companies to take action. If Google clearly indicates they will give preference for validateable XHTML Web pages in their results, the quality of Web pages will improve dramatically. This same incentive can be used with Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) considerations, or even full compliance with ISO Standard 23026 (IEEE Std. 2001) Software Engineering — Recommended Practice for the Internet — Web Site Engineering, Web Site Management, and Web Site Life Cycle, which calls for both XHTML and WAI compliance.

This is not divergent from Google’s objectives — sites conforming to these standards are more likely to be credible in their information content, and also to operate with diverse browsers and devices. This yields better-quality information for the individual initiating the search. Of course, other search companies could also seek quality improvement by applying such criteria.

— Jim Isaak, past chair of IEEE’s Web Engineering Best Practices standards committee

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