Preface

This proceedings presents the research and experience papers selected for presentation at the 22nd international conference on Very Large Data Bases, being held first time in India at Mumbai. It also contains the abstracts of industry track presentations and panel discussions. The 48 papers selected from submissions received from all over the world have been organised into 16 sessions, which, among them, represent current focus areas of database research.

This year's VLDB had 3 program committees covering 3 geographic areas – Americas, Asia/Australia and Europe. In forming the program committees, the PC chairs tried very hard to (1) find well-qualified new faces, and (2) avoid including too many people who had served on VLDB PCs in the last 2–3 years, while at the same time trying to cover all the important topics in database management. This was very hard to do but we mostly achieved our goals in this area.

The 3 PC chairs received in all 340 papers out of which 48 were selected for inclusion in the conference (approximately 1 out of 7 papers was selected). Each paper was refereed by 3 people. For the first time in a VLDB conference, authors were requested to send in electronic versions of the abstracts of their papers. These abstracts were circulated amongst the PC members to let them give their reviewing preferences. The goal was to find the best set of referees for each paper. Certain rules were followed to deal with conflict of interest situations. The preferences provided by the PC members were used as guides by the PC chairs to assign papers. The feeling amongst the PC chairs and the PC members is that this method of referee assignment has worked out very well. We would like to acknowledge H.V. Jagadish of AT&T Research for leading the way with this methodology for SIGMOD96. Jagadish also helped us by providing the software he had developed to manage all the refereeing-related work electronically. Except for mailing of papers to the PC chairs by the authors and to the PC members by the PC chairs, everything else was done electronically. Use of email worked out very well, resulting in cost and time savings.

The Americas PC met at IBM Almaden Research Center, the European PC at the Technical University of Darmstadt and the Asia/Australia PC at Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. Based on the recommendations of the 3 PCs, the PC chairs met in Darmstadt to finalise the list of papers.

This year we tried to encourage more practically-oriented papers to be submitted by treating papers describing "experiences/applications" specially. We have accepted 4 such papers and they are identified in the contents section of the proceedings. The VLDB Endowment would like to see more such papers appearing in future VLDB conferences. The goal here is to make VLDB conferences even more relevant for database practitioners.

Thanks to the work of the industrial program chairs, especially Jim Gray, we have an excellent set of presentations in the industry track. A one-page, unrefereed write-up corresponding to each of these presentations is included in the proceedings.

A committee consisting of Theo Haerder, H.V. Jagadish and Jeff Ullman was entrusted the task of selecting a paper from VLDB'86 that has had the most impact on the field. The committee chose the paper, *Object and File Management in the EXODUS Extensible Database System* by Michael J. Carey, David J. DeWitt, Joel E. Richardson and Eugene J. Shekita, and based on it decided to invite Mike Carey to give a talk at VLDB96. We would like to thank Theo, Jagadish and Jeff for their help in this regard. A paper which forms the basis of Mike Carey's invited talk at this conference appears in the proceedings. The program has three other invited talks: Don Haderle of IBM Santa Teresa Laboratory and Karl-Heinz Hess of SAP and a keynote speech by Umang Gupta of Centura Corporation. Brief synopses of the talks by Umang Gupta and Karl-Heinz Hess are included in this proceedings.

We would like to thank Sham Navathe and Deepak Phatak for their work as General Chairs. Our thanks also go to the external referees who assisted our PC members in reviewing some of the papers. A list of these referees appears elsewhere.

Thanks to the efforts of Jim Gray and Michael Ley of University of Trier, and cooperation from the VLDB Endowment and Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, electronic version of this proceedings is being made available on the internet (http://www.informatik.uni-trier.de/~ley/db/conf/vldb/vldb96.html and on several mirror sites). This is the first time such a thing is being done at a VLDB conference. Morgan Kaufmann is the publisher of the proceedings.

Thanks are due to the authors, without whose contribution and cooperation none of this would have been possible. Finally, we are greatful to a number of individuals and organisations who have helped directly or indirectly in the preparation of the program and the proceedings. We thank them all, without naming them individually.

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