

Preface

Welcome to VLDB '98!

This volume contains the proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth International Conference on Very Large Databases being held in New York City, August 24-27 1998. VLDB is one of oldest and most international database conferences, and its proceedings are recognized as one of the most frequently cited collections of papers in the database community worldwide. This year's VLDB contributions continue and strengthen this trend.

Two other conferences are being co-located with VLDB this year: The Third IFCIS Conference on Cooperative Information Systems (CoopIS '98) is being held August 20-22, and the Fourth International Conference on Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD-98) is being held August 27-31.

The VLDB conference program consists of six subprograms: research, industrial papers, tutorials, panels, industrial exhibits (new this year), and invited talks. Since the conference is being held in New York City, a special emphasis has been placed on talks, tutorials, and panels of interest to the financial community. These sessions have been concentrated on Tuesday, August 25.

The research program was selected by two program committees representing two distinct geographical areas: Americas/Australia, chaired by Jennifer Widom, and Africa/Asia/Europe, chaired by Oded Shmueli. The research program is divided into three sections: regular, vision, and experience. Acceptance was extremely competitive, with 51 research papers accepted out of 328 submissions, representing an acceptance ratio of about 15.5%. (28 papers were accepted by the Americas/Australia committee and 23 by the Africa/Asia/Europe, almost exactly reflecting the relative numbers of submissions.)

We thank all of the research program committee members and external reviewers for their conscientious and diligent reviewing work as well as their cooperative spirit during this long and sometimes tedious process. An endeavor of this scope requires excellent support. At Stanford we thank Michael Rys and Chen Li for programming and systems work, and Marianne Siroker and Sharon Lambeth for administrative support. At the Technion we thank David Konopnicki for his superb programming and systems support, and Gitta Abraham for her excellent administrative work.

The Africa/Asia/Europe PC meeting was held at INRIA in France, and we thank Eric Simon for graciously hosting the meeting, with help from Elisabeth Baqué and Mokrane Amzal. Finally, a big thanks to Praveen Seshadri and Michael Rys, whose *Predator*-based software made the web-centered submission and reviewing process a joy, and whose work is likely to be used for many conferences to come.

The industrial program committee, led by Dennis Shasha (for Americas/Australia) and Patrick Valduriez (for Africa/Asia/Europe), put together this year's rich industrial program. The industrial track accepted 18 papers out of 25 submissions, covering a range of exciting technical features in deployment in database products.

The program is rounded out by five tutorials, two panels, and eleven industrial exhibits. The excellent selection of tutorials (on electronic commerce, web caching, financial time series, data mining, and database reverse engineering) was made by the tutorial chair, H. V. Jagadish. The panel chairs, Klaus Dittrich and Yannis Ioannidis, selected two interesting panel sessions. Andy Witkowski and Nelson Mattos worked hard to organize and recruit demonstrations for the industrial exhibits program, the first in the history of the VLDB Conference, covering a range of exciting technical features in deployment in database products.

We are honored to have as keynote speakers Charles Rozwat, Senior Vice President of Oracle Corporation, David E. Shaw, Chairman and CEO of D. E. Shaw & Co., Inc., and Prof. Doug Tygar of Carnegie Mellon University. Dina Bitton of Integrated Data Systems and Jim Gray of Microsoft Corporation are the recipients of the 10-year Best VLDB Paper Award (presented to the paper selected from the 1988 VLDB conference as the most influential over the past decade) for their original paper on "Disk Shadowing". Thanks to Jeff Ullman for chairing the awards committee.

A conference of this magnitude is the work of many people. We thank all of the authors for their high-quality contributions, each of the 78 members of the research and industrial program committees, the 176 external referees for carefully reviewing the submissions, the corporate sponsors for their involvement and financial support, Ashish Gupta for putting these proceedings together, Ken Ross for managing the finances, Priscilla Rasmussen for managing the local arrangements for the conference, the members of the local committee Jason Wang, Alex Delis, Euthimios Panagos and Vibby Gottemukkala, and all of the other volunteers who are helping to make this conference a success. Generous thanks are due to Hector Garcia-Molina, Stanley Su, Arie Shoshani, and Peter Lockemann of the VLDB Endowment for their tireless efforts in helping us understand what it takes to organize such a conference, especially in the initial phases.

Finally our thanks to all of you attending the conference. We are sure that you will enjoy the city of New York, you will be inspired by the conference and the proceedings, and that the program we offer matches the expectation raised by 24 years of distinguished VLDB history.

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