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Let Us—Together— Make CACM Exciting

It's been four months since we launched the "new CACM." By now, I hope it is quite clear to our readers that the revamped flagship publication of ACM has undergone a rather

dramatic transformation in both appearance and content. In my July editorial I began explaining the new editorial model of *Communications*, particularly the Research Highlights section that provides a bird's-eye view of the breadth and depth of computing research.

But there are several other innovative editorial features to this publication. The Practice section targets professionals in the software industry with an emphasis on software engineering. Articles published in this section frame and define technical problems and challenges ahead while helping readers sharpen their own thinking and ability to pursue innovative solutions. Practice articles do not focus on industry news or the latest solutions. Rather, they explore disruptive technologies that are just on the verge of breaking through. The editorial board of *Communications'* Practice section also serves as the editorial board of *ACM Queue*, enabling us to benefit from their experience in creating great computing-practice content.

The third novel feature is the greatly expanded News section, now publishing a selection of brief news updates and in-depth news articles on a broad range of topics. The goal of this section is to cover major developments in computing in a broadly accessible manner. As a monthly publication, *Communications* cannot offer the immediacy of the mass media, but it can cover topics in an increased depth, as befits its sophisticated readership.

The fourth new editorial element is the section featuring Review Articles that describe new developments of broad significance to the field and highlight unresolved questions and future directions. Unlike survey articles that provide a detailed introduction to a technical area, a Review article in *Communications* offers a high-level perspective. This is consistent with our goal of offering its readers a broad perspective on new developments in computing.

Finally, the new editorial model inherits two successful features from its previous model. The Viewpoints section is dedicated to opinions and views that pertain to issues of broad interest to the community, typically, but not exclusively, of a nontechnical nature. This section consists of both regular columns, some that have been appearing in *Communications* for years and some that are new to the magazine, as well as unsolicited opinion pieces and point-counterpoint editorial debates.

Finally, Contributed Articles features unsolicited articles from the community covering the abundant spectrum of the computing field—its open challenges, technical visions and perspectives, educational aspects, societal impact, significant applications, and research results of high significance and broad interest. *Communications'* editorial policy toward contributed articles has changed significantly with the July issue, as we now require that such articles be aimed at the broad computing and IT community.

Unlike some other flagship publications, most of *Communications'* content is produced not by professional writers but by members of the computing community. To succeed, *Communications* must become a venue of choice for computing content of the highest quality. While many of *Communications'* articles are solicited by members of its editorial board, unsolicited articles are crucial to our success. It is important, however, to recognize *Communications'* unique role. It does not aim to compete with ACM's dozens of scholarly journals or nearly 150 conferences. *Communications* enjoys a uniquely broad readership; ACM's 90,000 members consist of students, educators, researchers, software developers, CTOs, and CIOs. Such a diverse and international readership calls for articles that are aimed at a broad rather than specialized audience. Prospective authors are advised to consult this issue, or the three previous editions, for great examples of this new editorial focus. Interested authors are advised to review the recently revised Author Guidelines (www.cacm.acm.org/guidelines) for detailed information on how to position, prepare, and submit manuscripts.

Let me end by repeating the last paragraph of my January 2008 essay, "CACM: Past, Present, and Future." We live in a consumer society, so it is easy to evaluate products from a consumer perspective: "Is *Communications* a satisfactory product?" "Am I getting my money's worth for my ACM membership?" ACM, however, is not a consumer-product vendor, it is a professional society. We are not ACM customers, we are ACM members. *Communications* is not a product, it is a project. For this project to succeed, the membership of ACM must collectively undertake it. Let us—together—make *Communications* the exciting publication it should be. Please write to me at eic@cacm.acm.org.

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