This year marks the start of the second quarter-century of *ACM Transactions on Database Systems*. That in itself is not remarkable. In the last fifteen years, the number of serial titles across all disciplines has increased by 50%, to 164,400 today. New journals appear regularly, yet it is difficult to recall even a single journal that has been terminated. What is notable is the extent to which *TODS* has evolved since its founding to become the premier database journal.

Summarizing a citation analysis of database literature, considering over 100,000 citations, the web page <http://www.acm.org/sigmod/dblp/db/about/top.html> lists the top-cited papers and books. Thirty *TODS* papers appear on this list; 31 papers were from all other journals combined. *TODS* also dominated all conferences. The top-cited database paper of all time, Peter P.-S. Chen's "The Entity-Relationship Model," appeared in the inaugural issue of *TODS*.

TODS fares similarly well in an summary of estimated impact from the Research Index database (<http://citeseer.nj.rec.com/impact.html>), which ranked journals according to their average citation rate. *TODS* was judged the database journal with the most impact, appearing in the top four percent of the 800-odd journals and conferences analyzed.

These measures of impact correlate with journal accessibility (the causality probably goes both ways). It may surprise you that *TODS* has thousands more print and electronic subscribers than any other ACM Transactions. Of course, the journal (including all past issues) appears in the ACM Digital Library and is thus available to the many individual and institutional DL subscribers. *TODS* is also included in the *SIGMOD Anthology* and *SIGMOD Digital Symposium Collection* CDROM publications. 5000 copies were sent all over the world last year; another 5000 copies on DVD will appear shortly. These disparate media (print, web, CDROM, DVDROM), widely distributed, ensure that *TODS* articles are easily available to database researchers.

Due to the reputation and pervasiveness of this journal, taking over its editorship is a daunting proposition. The publication was founded by David K. Hsiao in 1976; Robert W. Taylor took over the editorship five years later and Gio Wiederhold five years after that. Won Kim served from 1992 until now, maintaining the excellence of the journal while increasing coverage of systems-related issues and decreasing the time to publication.

On behalf of the entire database community, I wish to extend our collective appreciation to the departing members of the Editorial Board, Serge Abiteboul, Yoshifumi Masunaga, Jeffrey F. Naughton, Moshe Y. Vardi and of course Won Kim, for their service to *TODS* over the past decade. It is due to their efforts that *TODS* is where it is today. And I welcome the following new members who have joined over the past year: Peter Buneman, Surajit Chaudhuri, Michael J. Franklin, Christian S. Jensen, Alberto Mendelzon and Z. Meral Özsoyoğlu. I would like to thank them and the continuing members of the board for agreeing

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to serve. Their contact information is given on the masthead on the inside front cover. Finally, I welcome Curtis E. Dyreson who joins as *TODS* Information Director. Curtis has revamped the *TODS* web site at <http://www.acm.org/tods> and has plans for improvements down the road.

My challenge as Editor-in-Chief is to maintain *TODS*' position as the foremost database journal, while also ensuring that it is relevant and timely in this Internet age. It is my firm belief that with the glut of information on the web, much of it of dubious quality, the authoritative source of refereed papers on databases that is *TODS* will be even more important.

I am working closely with the Editorial Board to respond to the challenges confronting scientific publishing. Our first innovation is to solicit focused surveys on topics relevant to *TODS*. These should be deep and will sometimes be quite narrow, but should make a contribution to our understanding of an important area or subarea of databases. More general surveys that are intended for a broad-based Computer Science audience or surveys that may influence other areas of computing research should continue to go to *ACM Computing Surveys*. Brief surveys on recent developments in database research are more appropriate for *ACM SIGMOD Record*. *TODS* surveys should be educational to the database audience by presenting a relatively well-established body of database research.

These surveys are intended to summarize the "state-of-the-art", which the Random House dictionary defines as

the latest and most sophisticated or advanced stage of a technology, art, or science: "a camera considered the state of the art in design".

A similarly broad definition is employed here: surveys can summarize prior literature on a theoretical or systems research topic, or can explain approaches implemented in commercial systems. A survey of the former type summarizes the literature on a particular subject, presenting a new way of understanding how the papers in this literature fit together. A survey of the latter type summarizes the best industrial art and can be acceptable even if it represents no new contribution over what has been used in industry for years, if the paper's content is not to be found in the published literature. (Sometimes such practice is ahead of the published research; especially in such cases it is important for researchers to know about these engineering advances.) I thank José Blakeley for his persuasive advocacy of such surveys.

Due to a complex combination of factors, *TODS* issues have been coming out several months after their cover date. This tardiness concerns me greatly and must be addressed. I have been working hard on this, and have made some progress. In particular, *TODS* is in the first group of journals to adopt a new production process. In the past, accepted articles were converted from their submission format, $\text{\LaTeX}$ in most cases, to SGML for printing, which took considerable time and introduced errors. I am pleased to announce that from this point forward accepted articles will be typeset directly from their $\text{\LaTeX}$ source into PDF, for both the printed version and the version in the ACM Digital Library, provided that the source is prepared using the *TODS* style file (see the author information on the *TODS* web page for more details). This

approach will result in fewer errors, faster production and thus a more timely publication. Moreover, since authors will know what the final version will look like, fonts and all, they can better fine-tune the appearance of their papers.

In closing, I ask that you keep three opportunities in mind. With its high quality, wide accessibility, short reviewing time, improved production process and small backlog (four to six months from notification of acceptance to appearance), there has never been a better time to submit to *TODS*. Secondly, I encourage you to consider submitting a survey article, whether on a theoretical topic, a systems topic, or previously undocumented approaches in implemented systems. Finally, *TODS* is above all a shared resource for the entire database community. I welcome your suggestions for how we can evolve this publication to better meet your needs.

RICHARD T. SNODGRASS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF