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Intelligent Systems in a Connected World

Intelligent Readers,

In my inaugural editorial, I should be visionary. However, the history of AI has been full of visionary thinking, sometimes generating roller coasters of high hopes and deep despairs. So, it is better to be careful not to get into such dangerous territory in my first letter to you. Instead, let me speak plainly.

Thank You, Jim

First, I want to acknowledge the significant accomplishments of my predecessor Jim Hendler. His four years of hard work and dedication have led this magazine to become the number-one publication in AI, as envisioned four years ago in his own inaugural editorial: "I want us to be the *Nature* of AI." Thank you, Jim, for helping this magazine achieve such great success!

At first I thought this would make my job much easier, but then I remembered an old Chinese saying: "It is easy to climb the mountain, but difficult to stay on top." Upon this realization, I immediately asked Jim to remain onboard as both editor in chief emeritus and as the chair of our advisory board, so that our magazine can continue to benefit from his wisdom and experience. Thanks again, Jim, for accepting these positions.

My feeling is that Jim treats the editor in chief position with a great deal of respect and seriousness. Last December, both of us were invited as keynote speakers to the International Conference on Semantics, Knowledge, and Grid, held in Beijing. Jim suggested that we use this opportunity to conduct a "handover ceremony." So I suggested we do this at the Temple of Heaven, an ancient royal ceremonial site where Chinese emperors used to pray for plentiful harvests. This first "handover" photo was great, except for one problem. I brought the wrong magazine for the occasion! So we tried again after dinner; this time, I brought the *IS* Social-Computing special issue and wore an IEEE logo windbreaker. Jim and I were finally satisfied with the photo (see photo, on the next page).

I wish Jim the best and hope his new position at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) will lead to innovative and groundbreaking work in Web science and intelligent systems. As a personal side note, I would like to share with you an "emerging pattern" in my professional career. Since I graduated from RPI 20 years ago, most of the people I succeed have gone on to work for RPI. For example, when I went to Arizona to fill the position left by Jeff Trinkle, he ended up becoming the head of RPI's Computer Science Department many years later. I guess this is my way of paying back my alma mater.

I also want to thank Dennis Taylor, former lead editor of *IS*, for his effective leadership and great service to the magazine. Dennis is now the lead editor of *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications*. Fortunately, he will still be helping us as a senior editor. I am very pleased that Brian Brannon has taken over as our new lead editor. With Brian, we already had a great start during the transition in the past few months.

What Next?

Over the last five years, I have had the privilege to work for *IS* in various roles, from department editor, to associate editor, to associate editor in chief. I am deeply proud of the

We'd Like to Hear from You

Letters to the Editor:

Send letters, including a reference to the article in question, to intelligent@computer.org.

Letters will be edited for clarity and length.

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excellent reputation and significant impact of this great magazine, and of my involvement in its growth and development.

As the new editor in chief, I will work with the editorial board and magazine staff to develop a long-term plan for the development of our magazine. I would like this to be an open and collaborative process that will continue throughout the year. This will result in a list of changes and improvements we can realistically incorporate into our editorial administration, our review process, and our search for research of emerging importance.

At this point, I would like to focus on the following:

- Recruiting the best active associate editors for the editorial board, evaluating their performance, and interacting with them on a regular basis. I encourage young researchers to contact me if they are interested in working with our magazine. The good news is that I have already received a few enthusiastic applications.
- Enhancing our current departments or even replacing some. During our last two editorial meetings, we have extensively discussed this topic, and we need some concrete action now. For example, we have talked about a new department on cyber-physical systems (CPS), and we should move quickly and boldly on this proposal. Our CPS department should go far beyond the next generation of networked embedded systems. We should focus more on intelligent systems that integrate the physical world and cyberspace, real and virtual societies, and human and artificial intelligence.
- Soliciting and selecting special-issue topics that would bring in high-impact and cutting-edge theory and applications that could set the trend for AI R&D. Our quota for special issues has been filled for 2009; we are looking forward to receiving proposals for special issues for 2010 and 2011. In addition to special-issue proposals, I would like to receive suggestions for regular contributions that break new ground, set trends in research and applications, or survey new and significant methods and technologies. For those contributions, we will expedite the review process.
- Promoting our magazine outside US and Europe, especially in China, Japan, and Korea. This is a task I was specifically asked to do when I was appointed editor in chief. There are many ways for such promotion: for example, our last issue was jointly published with the *Communications of the China Computer Federation*, which is widely circulated among Chinese IT professionals. The project was quite a success, and we are looking forward to finding new ways to collaborate with other national publications.

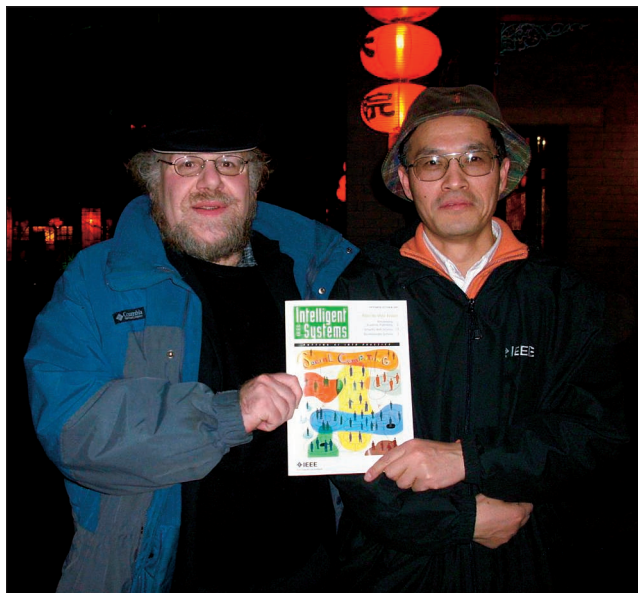
To maintain our reputation and success as a high-impact magazine, I need the support of the entire editorial board and staff. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued time and effort in the support of this publication. I look forward to working with you all.

Welcome Hsinchun!

Hsinchun Chen is the newest member of our editorial team (see the sidebar on the next page). He is the McClelland Professor of Management Information Systems at the University of Arizona (UA), and he will be our new associate editor in chief. In this ca-

A Note Regarding the Cover

Because the IEEE Computer Society is dedicated to environmental responsibility, we've asked our printer to change from a UV-coated cover stock to an aqueous coating. The ultraviolet lamps used in the UV coating process require additional energy, and the chemicals in the UV coating not only raise worker safety issues at the printing plant but also prevent efficient recycling. An aqueous coating, on the other hand, can be freely recycled and repulped without harmful byproducts. This is a modest but effective step toward minimizing the environmental impact of our publications.



Change of command. Outgoing Editor in Chief James Hendler traveled to Beijing, where he ceremonially handed over the reins of *IEEE Intelligent Systems* to incoming Editor in Chief Fei-Yue Wang of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

capacity, he will help review items for our In the News department, manage *IS* contributions to Computing Now (www.computer.org/cn), and edit the Trends & Controversies department. Hsinchun is a long-time colleague of mine; we came to UA at about the same time, where he served as the director of the Artificial Intelligence Lab and supervised many important AI projects, including the well-known Coplin (the Google for law enforcement). Besides being an excellent and accomplished researcher, he has shown outstanding leadership and service in the professional community. I believe that Hsinchun's ability, expertise, and skills will benefit our magazine greatly. Welcome aboard, Hsinchun!

The Caricature

I guess by now you are all wondering what I am doing in my caricature? Well, I decided to have some fun with the new tradition started by Jim: using a caricature instead of a real photo for the Letter from the Editor column. My own depicts me sitting on a more than 2500-year-old Chinese musical instrument called a

Welcome to the Editorial Board



Hsinchun Chen is the McClelland Professor of Management Information Systems and director of the Artificial Intelligence Lab at the University of Arizona. His research interests are Web computing; search engines; digital libraries; intelligence analysis; biomedical informatics; data, text, and Web mining; and knowledge

management. He has served as a scientific counselor and advisor for the US National Library of Medicine, the Academia Sinica, and the National Library of China. Chen was conference cochair of the 2004 ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries, has served as a conference or program cochair of the International Conference of Asian Digital Libraries for the past eight conferences, and is the (founding) conference cochair of the IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics. He received his BS from National Chiao-Tung University in Taiwan, his MBA from the State University of New York, Buffalo, and his PhD in information systems from New York University. He's a Fellow of the IEEE and AAAS and received the IEEE Computer Society 2006 Technical Achievement Award.

Fou, the same as the 2008 drums used in last summer's Beijing Olympics opening ceremony. I am wearing a traditional Chinese robe in royal yellow (a hundred years ago, I could have been sentenced to death for wearing the color—it was only allowed for emperors). Using a traditional calligraphy brush, I am writing the Chinese character for “intelligence” or “intelligent systems” on a paper scroll. However, if I had recalled Jim's inaugural declaration of making *IS* the “*Nature* of AI,” I would have written instead, “I want to make *IS* the *Science* of AI.”

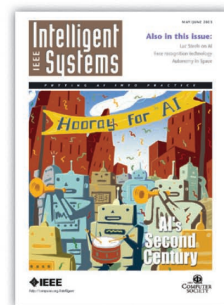
Other than the Chinese character (the very first calligraphy I ever wrote!), the rest of the artwork is by Vadim Vahrameev. I thank him for a great job well done.

Finally, the title of my letter: “Intelligent Systems in a Connected World.” Yes, that is my vision for my term. You will hear more on this in coming issues. ■

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