SIGKDD Chair's Message

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ACM SIGKDD is the Special Interest Group on Knowledge Discovery in Databases and Data Mining. It is the 37th and the newest SIG of the Association for Computing Machinery. The mission of SIGKDD is to help advance the science and to promote the rapid maturation of the KDD/DM field worldwide. SIGKDD will provide a forum for the exchange, debate, and dissemination of new ideas, results of research and development, and information among researchers, developers, vendors, and users of the technology. The KDD/DM technology consists of theories (methodologies, processes, and algorithms) and systems (software, hardware, and networked computers).

In February 1998, I initiated a move to form an international society that will provide a "home" for the KDD/DM field. The Steering Committee (SC) of the International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining (KDD Conference), consisting of 14 prominent scientists in the field who have served as the organizers of the technical programs of the conference, endorsed the initiative in March. The KDD SC agreed to have the society organized as a SIG of ACM. I prepared and submitted a formal Proposal to form a new SIG in April with formal endorsements of five members of the SC, who agreed to serve on the SIG's Executive Committee. The five members of the SC are currently serving on the Board of Directors of SIGKDD, and include Usama Fayyad, Gregory Piatetsky-Shapiro, Rakesh Agrawal, Daryl Pregibon, and Padhraic Smyth.

After obtaining endorsements from all existing related SIGs (in particular, SIGMOD, SIGART, SIGIR, and SIGCHI), ACM approved the "first year" budget and Bylaws for the new SIG in June. After a requisite number of signatures of ACM members who endorsed the formation of the new SIG has been obtained in July, ACM officially chartered SIGKDD on August 5 as a "provisionary SIG".

The SIGKDD Executive Committee (EC) is in place, consisting of Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and four Directors. After the provisionary status, an election will be held to elect the EC. Under the SIGKDD Bylaws, the positions of the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer will each be contested by at least two candidates. The Director positions will be contested by one more than the number of Directors SIGKDD wishes to have. The election takes place in an odd-numbered year.

Besides the EC, a Chair's Advisory Board is in place. The Board consists of 9 remaining members of the original KDD SC. The role of this Board is to advise the Chair on all key issues of SIGKDD and their implementations.

The two primary means of communication with SIGKDD members will be an annual international conference and a newsletter. With the gracious concurrence of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), SIGKDD has folded the KDD Conference into SIGKDD as SIGKDD's annual international conference and retained the name KDD Conference. SIGKDD has decided to hold the KDD-99 Conference in San Diego, California, on August 15-18. As with KDD-98, more than 700 attendees from around the world are expected to participate in KDD-99. The KDD-99 website is www.research.microsoft.com/datamine/kdd99.

The primary technical program of the KDD-99 Conference will be organized in two parallel tracks: one for presentations of accepted papers, and one for presentations by speakers from industry/vendors without papers. The Industry Track is patterned after the hugely successful SIGMOD Industry Track. KDD-99 will also include Tutorials, Workshops, Product Exhibits programs. The Conference plans Best Paper Awards for a small number of papers from all accepted papers.

The SIGKDD Newsletter will be published twice in 1999 in electronic form. From 2000, it may be published 3-4 times a year, and a hardcopy version may also be made available for libraries worldwide. SIGKDD plans to publish joint issues of newsletters with other SIGs, in particular, SIGMOD and SIGART, from time to time.

The SIGKDD EC has decided to create an Annual SIGKDD Awards Program. The program is patterned after the SIGMOD Awards Program. It consists of two Awards to recognize major technical and services contributions to the KDD/DM field: Innovation Award and Services Award. (The Innovation Award is not related to the "Best Paper" Awards in the KDD Conference.) The SIGKDD Awards Committee will administer the Awards Program. The Committee will receive and evaluate nominations from the field, and select recipients. The Awards, consisting of $1,000 for each award and one plaque for each recipient, will be presented at the annual KDD Conference.

Since the KDD/DM field is an inter-disciplinary one, drawing from machine learning, statistics, database systems, information retrieval, visualization, parallel processing, optimization theory, etc., SIGKDD has actively sought meaningful collaborative relationships with societies that represent these related fields. Thus far, AAAI, SIGMOD and SIGART have agreed to become minority co-sponsors of the KDD Conference. The Statistical Computing Section of the American Statistical Association and the Interface Foundation of North America (http://www.galaxy.gmu.edu/stats/IFNA.html) have agreed to provide "in-cooperation" support for the KDD Conference. Each of these collaborating societies will place a "liaison" in the SIGKDD Chair's Advisory Board to facilitate communications. Discussions are underway for comparable relationships with additional societies and conference endowments.

SIGKDD has accepted an invitation to join the SIGMOD-initiated "CD-ROM anthology of conference proceedings".

SIGKDD will have the KDD-99 Conference proceedings (and perhaps all past KDD Conference proceedings) in the SIGMOD CD-ROM anthology which will also contain all past proceedings of the SIGMOD conference, VLDB (Very Large Data Bases) conference, PODS (Principles of Database Systems) conference, and perhaps also the IEEE Data Engineering conference and the European EDBT (Extending Data Base Technology) conference. A 7 CD-ROM set will hold all the pages of all these database conference proceedings, and the KDD conference proceedings. SIGKDD plans to distribute the anthology, free of charge, to all registered attendees of KDD-99 and all SIGKDD members.

In order to bring the KDD Conference and smaller overseas conferences for the field closer together, SIGKDD has formed an International Liaisons Board. The Board consists of two prominent colleagues in Europe, and three in Asia. Discussions are underway to determine concrete means of collaboration between SIGKDD and overseas conferences.

The SIGKDD EC has appointed a webmaster to create and maintain a website for SIGKDD (www.sigkdd.org), besides the KDD Conference website. The website will be an important means of communicating key events, activities, and decisions of SIGKDD to members and the field as a whole.

SIGKDD's goal is to sign up 2,000 members and a fund balance of $200,000 by the end of 1999. The annual membership fee is $20. Membership in ACM is not a prerequisite for membership in SIGKDD. Member benefits include a subscription to the SIGKDD Newsletter, a discount in the KDD Conference registration fee, the SIGMOD anthology, and discounts in the annual conferences of all collaborating societies. Above all, members have opportunities to indirectly contribute to advancement of the KDD/DM field by making it possible for SIGKDD to implement many useful and exciting programs for its members and the field as a whole.

I find the potential of the KDD/DM technology exciting, and, with your support, help, and advice, I am ready to give my time and put to use my 8-year experiences as Chair of ACM SIGMOD to help make SIGKDD a resounding success. Won't you join SIGKDD and work with us?

Thank you.

Won Kim

April, 1999

Austin, Texas

Biographical sketch:

Ph.D. ('80) in Computer Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Founder and CEO of Cyber Database Solutions, Inc., a system integration and consulting firm specializing in data warehousing, business intelligence, and the Internet.

Current adjunct Chair Professor with the Computer Science and Engineering Department of Ewha Women's University of Seoul, Korea.

Current Editor-in-Chief of ACM Transactions on Database Systems journal (for 8 years), columnist for the Journal of Object-Oriented Programming (for 2 years). Former Chair of ACM Special Interest Group on Management of Data (SIGMOD) (for 8 years). An ACM Fellow. Former Editor-in-Chief of IEEE Data Engineering Bulletin (for 8 years).

Has published over 120 technical and research papers, and 10 books, on database system architecture, data modeling, data languages, and database applications.