

# Preface

The program committee of the 23rd International Conference on Very Large Data Bases (Athens, Greece, August 26-29, 1997) consisted of 94 members from 30 different countries. Under the overall coordination of Matthias Jarke (RWTH Aachen, Germany), the committee was structured into four partially overlapping sub-committees:

- the European-African committee coordinated by Klaus Dittrich, University of Zürich, assisted by Andreas Geppert
- the Americas committee coordinated by Mike Carey, IBM Almaden
- the Middle and Far East committee, led by Fred Lochovsky, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- the Industrial/Commercial subcommittee organized by Peri Loucopoulos, UMIST.

Reacting to a Call for Papers distributed in paper form and over electronic media, we received more than 400 abstract submissions and 355 actual papers, of which 335 were directed to the research and experience section. After program committee meetings in the three geographic regions, a final meeting at IBM Almaden on May 9, 1997, decided on 53 top-quality research and experience papers and 10 industrial/commercial papers to be presented at the conference. In addition, six tutorials and two panels were selected out of almost 30 proposals. The two keynote speakers, Ken Jacobs of Oracle and Phil Bernstein of Microsoft, represent intriguing contrasts in the product strategies of leading database vendors.

The accepted papers stem from 16 countries, reflecting the truly international flavor of VLDB. Besides the traditional leaders in the US, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France, interesting new strongholds of database research emerge in the program, most prominently India where the 1996 VLDB conference as well as the growing software industry apparently have had a positive impact on high-quality submissions.

The program committee also faced the difficult task of assigning two awards. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the senior database researchers Peter Apers, Pamela Drew, Theo Härder, and David Maier in this endeavour. Despite the many excellent candidates, the decisions in the end were made almost unanimously. The award for the VLDB '87 (Brighton, UK) paper with the highest impact on research and practice over the past ten years was given to Timos Sellis, Christos Faloutsos, and Nick Roussopoulos for their paper "The R+ Tree: A dynamic index for multi-dimensional objects" which is widely cited as kick-starting database research in geographic information systems and similar applications. Among the top-ranked submissions to VLDB '97, the paper "Integrating reliable memory in databases" by Wee Teck Ng and Peter M. Chen was selected for Best Paper Award.

I would like to thank my program co-chairs, the program committee members and additional referees, and the authors of all submitted papers for their efforts in making this conference a success. Cooperation with the General Chair Yannis Vassiliou as well as the local organizers and the VLDB Endowment representative Stefano Ceri has been excellent at all times. Particular thanks go to Manfred Jeusfeld, RWTH Aachen, who not only served as Proceedings Editor but also set up the web-based abstract submission system. Michael Ley, University of Trier, made the conference proceedings available on the World Wide Web (<http://www.informatik.uni-trier.de/ley/db/conf/vldb/vldb97.html>).

Aachen, June 1997

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VLDB '97 Program Chair