

VLDB2014

40th International Conference on Very Large Data Bases, Hangzhou, China



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**Proceedings of the 40th International Conference on
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INNOVATIONS IN THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

A conference program should be designed to maximize the value to participants, in useful information gained, and in enjoyment of the experience. Towards this end, the conference organizing team has developed several new ideas, some small, some not. In this piece, I will discuss some of these. (See previous issue for a discussion of innovation in the session structure).

Let me begin by discussing keynotes. As a community, we have the potential to learn much more by inviting speakers external to our community, rather than one of our own. On the other hand, a member of our community knows exactly what is of interest to our community, so we get a good speech with high probability. In contrast, speakers from outside our community are often not able to pitch their speech correctly for the audience, and we can all recall memorable flops from much anticipated speakers. We could, as conference organizers, guide speakers in pitching their speech correctly, but this is awkward to do: having invited an eminent person, we cannot very well ask to see a draft.

To address these challenges, we are pioneering a new system of complementary keynotes this year: a lead industrial keynote followed by a closely related academic keynote. The speakers know about this set up in advance, and are encouraged to collaborate to the extent they find feasible. Through these means, not only do we get two complementary views on a topic, we also have an opportunity for the invited industrial speaker to consult with at least one trusted member of our community in preparing the speech.

A second notable feature is the plenary poster session. Many conferences have begun to have poster presentations for papers, and these have generally been well received. We will have one in a big way, beginning with an afternoon tea and ending with the banquet reception. Furthermore, we will include in the poster session, posters for papers accepted to VLDBJ in the past year that were not extensions of major conference papers. By these means, the conference benefits from having several additional strong pieces of work presented. Authors of VLDBJ benefit from getting conference exposure for their journal published work. Everybody wins.

A final innovation I would like to mention is in the social program. Often, there is some sort of entertainment associated with the conference banquet. This is not easy to execute well – the need to feed hundreds of attendees (and feed them well) limits the choice of venue and hence of the entertainment that can be offered. So, in Hangzhou, the organizing committee is separating the entertainment event from the food and drink. One evening, conference attendees will be treated to the Impressions of the West Lake, a notable performance that is itself is a major tourist draw. The following evening is the banquet, where we can focus on the sumptuous food.

I look forward to seeing you in Hangzhou.

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