University-Industry Synergy: An Eclectic Dialog for Revised Relationships

Sumi Helal, University of Florida

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Do universities meet the needs and expectations of the computer industry and industrial R&D for new employees? And does industry take advantage of the full range of opportunities that could be leveraged from university research and education?

These and many more questions arise when we analyze the complex interdependencies between universities and industry. To answer these questions and to facilitate a dialog for increased understanding, learning, and partnership, Computer is pleased to launch this new bimonthly column to offer an interactive forum including industry experts, academicians, students, and Computer’s readership.

INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA DIALOG

The Industry Perspective column will address many of the hot issues that cross industry-academia boundaries and interests. It will provide insight, knowledge, recommendations, and analyses; communicate industry concerns; and solicit and share feedback from the academic community. For example, it will explain how companies run collaboration programs in which academic research is funded and sponsored. As another example, it will clarify to students how summer intern programs are defined and run and how interns are managed.

Industry Perspective, however, will not focus on computing and information technology itself as much as on many issues surrounding the technology. For example, why do we have so much complexity in industry when it comes to software and computer systems? How can that complexity be reduced so computer systems are closer to appliances? Another example is the use of open source in industry—the success and failure experiences—and how universities can participate more in open source projects.

Three formats will be used in this column: (1) articles contributed by one or more industry leaders, (2) interviews (questions/answers) with industry leaders, and (3) virtual roundtable discussions, which are essentially documented panel discussions. Articles will be the most frequent format, followed by interviews, and then roundtable discussions.

INDUSTRY ADVISORS

Three key industry leaders have volunteered to be the founding Industry Advisors for this column. They will play a central role in identifying and prioritizing the topics and finding the most suitable authors for those topics, inviting them to contribute articles or participate in interviews or discussions.

Ike Nassi, Executive Vice President, Americas and China, of the SAP Corporation, who is also a member of the IEEE Computer Society Industrial Advisory Board, will serve as the lead advisor for the column.

Bill Schillit, a senior researcher at Google, and Stephen Huffman, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, the MITRE Corporation, both of whom are also members of the IEEE Computer Society Industrial Advisory Board, will serve as the other two advisors.

Ike, Bill, and Stephen have already developed a list of interesting and hot issues, and they are currently work-
ing on the first article, which will be published in Computer's November 2009 issue. They are the main asset for this column. My role as editor will be to run the process and interact with the authors and Computer's editorial staff and managers.

I hope that you benefit from and enjoy this new column. I also hope that you will become engaged in the dialog and discussion. A blog dedicated to this column is being established to allow for posting and archiving commentaries, discussions, and suggestions.

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