

# INTRODUCTION

by Justin Solomon, *Managing Editor*

Welcome to the latest issue of ACM *Crossroads*. We have prepared another exciting set of articles revealing the depth and breadth of research led by computer science students and professionals over a wide span of applications and interests.

Before giving you a quick preview of this issue's contents, I first would like to extend a warm welcome to the latest group of associate editors to join the ACM *Crossroads* staff as of our next issue:

- Malay Bhattacharyya, Indian Statistical Institute
- Aris Gkoulalas-Divanis, University of Thessaly
- Ryan K.L. Ko, Nanyang Technological University
- Sumit Narayan, University of Connecticut
- Anna Ritchie, University of Cambridge

We continue to welcome applications for volunteer staff members to contribute to *Crossroads* as associate editors, copy editors, and web editors.

More importantly, however, we encourage you to continue submitting content for future issues. All of the articles that you see in this and other issues of *Crossroads* come from our readers. If you have completed research in computer science, have an opinion that you want to express through an editorial, or can teach a computer-related skill through a tutorial or other column, *Crossroads* can be a great opportunity to share your ideas with a community of students, professors, hobbyists, and professionals. Check our website, at <http://www.acm.org/crossroads>, for details on how to apply for staff positions or submit articles.

Returning to the contents of this issue, we are excited to present three new articles that certainly reveal the breadth of interests shared by our readership. First, in his article entitled "HCI and Theology: Chalk and Cheese?," Steve Clough discusses the links he finds between the fields of human-computer interaction and theology. Clough's observations from his study of religion provide valuable insight into how we can design more effective user interfaces for computer applications. This article reveals the huge range of new ideas that can be discovered from truly interdisciplinary research combining computer science with not just mathematics or other sciences but also the humanities and other far-reaching disciplines.

Next, *Crossroads* associate editor Daniel Goldberg presents his research in an article entitled "State Considerations in Distributed Systems." Goldberg's paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of the soft state and leasing state management protocols for use in distributed computing. The choice of which protocol to use can make a large difference in the overall behavior and performance of a distributed system.

Finally, Amit Sawant of NetApp and Christopher Healey, Dongfeng Chen, and Rada Chirkova of North Carolina State University explain how they designed a system for visualizing purchase data from Amazon.com in their article "AmazonViz: Visualizing Amazon.com Purchase Orders." Their visualizations, several samples of which are provided in the article, allow viewers quickly to make fairly sophisticated conclusions about the data without having to process tables of

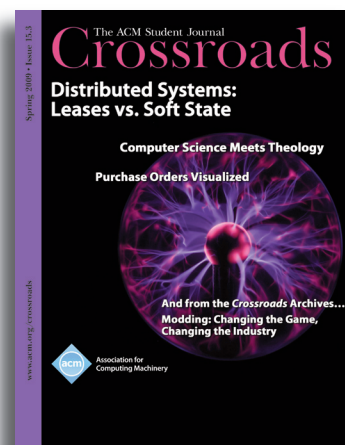
numbers. As computers become more efficient, techniques for visualizing increasingly complex information will become only more valuable; the approach taken by Sawant and his colleagues easily could be applied to visualizing data from other sources within and outside of e-commerce.

We also continue to bring you some content from the ACM *Crossroads* archives. In particular, Caio Camargo's article entitled "Modding: Changing the Game, Changing the Industry" reveals how efforts by gamers to modify the games they play actually can have an effect on the gaming industry. Camargo's perspective holds true now more than ever as internet technologies enable the gaming community to become even more connected.

As usual, feel free to contact us at [crossroads@acm.org](mailto:crossroads@acm.org) if you have any questions about submitting content to future issues of *Crossroads* or have ideas for how we can better improve the magazine. With several new staff members and continued contributions from our readership, we are excited to bring more relevant and interesting content in this issue and issues to come.

## Biography

Justin Solomon is an undergraduate at Stanford University double majoring in Computer Science and Mathematics. Along with his work as the managing editor for ACM *Crossroads*, he participates in computer graphics research in collaboration with the Stanford Department of Computer Science and Pixar Animation Studios, competes in programming contests, and plays cello and piano.



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