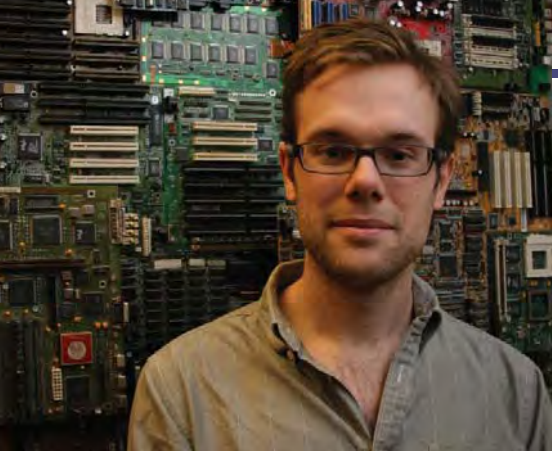

Letter from the Editor

Introduction: Metamorphosis

by Chris Harrison, *Editor-in-Chief*

Big changes are coming to *Crossroads*!

Over the next few months, you'll begin to see sweeping changes to ACM's student magazine. Jumpstarting this effort is a brand new editorial team from all over the globe. I am very excited to be starting as ACM *Crossroads* new editor-in-chief. Some background on myself: I'm a third year PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University working on novel input and interaction techniques. You can read about many of my research projects at **www.chrisharrison.net**.

I'm also honored to introduce an amazing lineup of senior staff. We are privileged to be working with a professional advisor at ACM headquarters, Jill Duffy, who was with *Game Developer* magazine for many years before coming to ACM full-time as a senior editor.

Tom Bartindale, a human-computer interaction PhD student at Newcastle University, is our new departments editor. Tom will be spearheading the development of several new and exciting sections in *Crossroads*, content that will enhance the exciting feature articles tied to hot topics—more on that in future issues.

A veteran to the magazine, Justin Solomon, soon to finish his degree in computer science at Stanford University, will continue in his current and indispensible role as managing editor. Ryan K. L. Ko of Nanyang Technical University in Singapore, who has also been on the *Crossroads*' masthead in the past, has been promoted to deputy editor.

I'm also pleased to recognize Malay Bhattacharyya of Indian Statistical Institute, who has been named an assistant editor, and to welcome another assistant editor, James Stanier of the University of Sussex, alongside all the other contributing editors who help with content development and assist authors in readying text for publication.

The Social Web

In coming issues of *Crossroads*, the publication will increasingly focus on specific topic areas, ones of interest, importance, and with open problems in a variety of technical fields. This issue is dedicated to the social Web, an unknown entity a decade ago that now pervades our lives.

Facebook has in excess of 300 million users, making it the fourth largest "nation" on the planet by population. Social Web sites are also among the most trafficked destinations on the World Wide Web, responsible for millions of photos, posts, tweets, winks and pokes every day. Communities on Digg, StumbleUpon, Yahoo! Answers, Twitter, Wikipedia, Mechanical Turk, LinkedIn, and scores more are just as vibrant and constitute millions of hours of work and play.

Many view this democratization and communication transformation as one of the key components of the Web 2.0 movement. In this issue, you'll find several feature articles that look at different aspects of the social Web movement and technologies.

The next issue of *Crossroads*, due out in Spring 2010, will investigate different aspects of cloud computing. In the meantime, please sent letters to the editor with feedback and ideas about *Crossroads* to **crossroads@acm.org**.

Biography

Editor-in-chief Chris Harrison is a PhD student in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute at Carnegie Mellon University. His research interests primarily focus on novel input methods and interaction technologies, especially those that leverage hardware and the environment in new and compelling ways. Over the past four years, he has worked on several projects in the area of social computing and input methods at IBM Research, AT&T Labs, and most recently, Microsoft Research.

About the Cover

The image on the cover of the magazine is a section of a visualization of a Twitter StreamGraph created by Jeff Clark at Neoformix. Twitter Stream Graphs allow a person to enter a query of interest, retrieve the latest 1,000 tweets (or messages sent on Twitter) matching the query using the Twitter Search API, analyze the text in those tweets to find the most common non-trivial words, and output a StreamGraph visualization of the results.

The cover image was generated using the term "data visualization" as the query.

"I find this type of graphic appealing," says Clark, "because it gives visual prominence to the larger series. It has weaknesses as well. It's harder to tell which series is larger at a given location than it would be with a simple line chart."

The application was created in a Java-based processing development environment. The Porter Stemming algorithm was used to count all the various forms of a word together, but the most common form used in the data is shown as the label.

Clark says he has also experimented with creating StreamGraphs for narrative or continuous text, such a speech given by U.S. President Barack Obama at Kettering University in Flint, Michigan. "The graph does a reasonable job of illustrating the primary themes of the speech, which words were used together, and at what point during the delivery," Clark says.