

Do You Queue?

Created for computing professionals, *Queue* is an innovative, successful magazine available free to ACM members. If you are a professional and don't subscribe, what are you waiting for?

ACM recently surveyed its members, and found that 61% were professionals/managers and 32% were academic/educators/researchers. Clearly, both the science and profession of computing matter to ACM members. Our new motto is:

"ACM and its members advance computing as a science and as a profession."

Given this duality, the Association has long tried to provide services for both the science and the profession. Computer science has received the most attention, and so ACM Council just spent a beautiful spring weekend inside a Portland hotel brainstorming on how to better serve its professional membership. You'll see the results in a series of

new initiatives for professionals (watch this space), but there are valuable services currently available that some professionals are not using, perhaps because they're not aware those resources exist. *Queue*, for example.

ACM launched this new magazine for professionals in 2003. It has a different editorial orientation than other magazines aimed at the computing profession. First, rather than present supposed solutions, as is conventional, *Queue* describes *problems*. More importantly, as opposed to talking about the "here-and-now," it tries to help decision makers plan *future* projects by examining the challenges and problems they are most likely to face in the next year or two.

How could a magazine accurately predict the future? The solution was to attract an all-star advisory board of senior industrial luminaries and rising young stars to guide the content of the magazine. *Queue's*

Editorial Advisory Board lists:

Eric Allman	Ben Fried
Charles Beeler	Jim Gray
Steve Bourne	Randy Harr
David J. Brown	Wendy A. Kellogg
Terry Coatta	Marshall Kirk McKusick
Mark Compton	George Neville-Neil
Stu Feldman	Telle Whitney

I've known and respected many of the professionals on this board for decades; and it's a testament to *Queue's* success that these very busy people are willing to help.

Queue Issue	Topic	This Issue Helps Readers To
May 2005	Enterprise Unwired: Mobile Devices	Build mobile apps that provide security, data integrity, compatibility, and so on.
June 2005	Security: Systems, Policies and Cryptography	Explore whether cryptographic support is trustworthy, which security policies are sound, and so on.
July/Aug. 2005	Understanding Service-Oriented Architectures	Re-architect their software to improve integration and utilize on-demand services.
Sept. 2005	Performance Tuning Meets Multiprocessing	Tune application performance when multi-core chips turn formerly single-processor systems into multiprocessing environments.
Oct. 2005	Leveraging Semi-Structured Data	Understand how to access and leverage semi-structured data in their apps and enterprises given that traditional database approaches just won't cut it.
Nov. 2005	Scalable Architectures	Build software that can scale effectively and efficiently for multiple processors.

Table 1. A sampling of topics *Queue* has—and is planning to—examine.

But they are much more than venerable names on a masthead. The entire board meets every month for a long meeting, which I've attended. They'll also invite outside experts to help flesh out editorial ideas. Meetings start with wide-ranging discussions of problems for future issues, and later drill down to specific topics for articles and the best authors to tackle them.

President's Letter

Table 1 lists the board's topic selections from recent and upcoming issues of *Queue*.

My favorite monthly feature is the in-depth interview. You get to hear the inside story from the pioneers, what happened when the first products hit the market, and their view of future direction. Apparently, I am not the only one who loves them, for two of the top five *Queue* downloads are interviews (see Table 2.)

Since *Queue* is an unconventional magazine, it was not obvious how to evaluate its success. Its founders decided upfront to use coverage by Slashdot (<http://slashdot.org/>) as a test of whether they were hitting their intended market. By this difficult measure, *Queue* is an overwhelming success. Slashdot covers *Queue* articles almost every month. (For readers unfamiliar with Slashdot, it's a Web site subtitled

catates the rapid increase in the number of unique visitors per month to the site from March 2003 to March 2005.

A third measure of the relevance of *Queue*'s articles comes from our clipping service for ACM publications from the second half of 2004. Only two ACM articles were quoted in the major media, and both were from *Queue* [2, 3]. The stature of the publications that cited *Queue* is equally impressive: *Business Week* [4] and *The Economist* [1]. This record suggests that influential reporters of IT have started to read *Queue*.

Although an editorial success, it took a little while to make it a financial success. *Queue* moved from a subscription-based model, where subscribers largely pay the bills, to a qualified reader model, where advertising covers the cost of *Queue*, based on having the right number and type of readers.

To subscribe to *Queue*, you simply go to www.acmqueue.org/iwantq, click on "free subscription" in the upper left corner, and fill out the application. You also must check the seemingly redundant box that you want to subscribe—

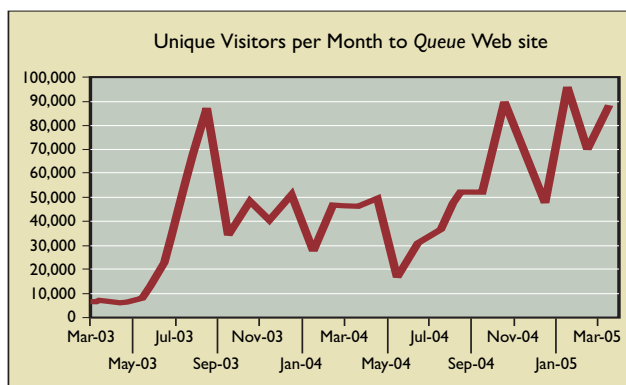
as opposed to just filling out the form for fun—as this acts as your signature on this online application.

ACM has about 60,000 regular members and about 36,000 members are professionals, according to the previously mentioned survey. *Queue* currently has about 17,000 ACM members as subscribers. Hence, almost 20,000 ACM members whom I believe would benefit directly from *Queue* don't yet subscribe. (And many researchers and educators might enjoy it too, as I do!)

Since it's excellent, enhances your career, and is free; what are you waiting for? **C**

Top 5 Downloads	Queue Issue	Title	Author / Interviewer
1	Feb. 2004	Game Development: Harder Than You Think	Jonathan Blow, games consultant
2	June 2003	You Don't Know Jack about Disks	Dave Anderson, Seagate
3	Mar. 2004	Death by UML Fever	Alex E. Bell, Boeing
4	Dec. 2004	A Conversation with Alan Kay	Stu Feldman, IBM
5	Oct. 2003	A Conversation with Dan Dobberpuhl	Dave Ditzel, Transmeta

Table 2. The top five downloads of *Queue* articles.



Tracking the increase of unique visitors per month to *Queue*'s Web site.

"News for Nerds." It gets 2,500,000 page views per day and is likely the most popular Web site for computing professionals. It even has its own verb: being "Slashdotted" means your article was the object of discussion on slashdot.org.)

Another indication of success is the popularity of the *Queue* Web site. The accompanying figure indi-

REFERENCES

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2. LaPlante, P.A., and Neill, C.J. 'The demise of the Waterfall model is imminent' and other urban myths. *ACM Queue* 1, 10 (Feb. 2004).
3. Michaelson, J. There is no such thing as a free (software) lunch. *ACM Queue* 2, 3 (May 2004).
4. Wildstrom, S.H. A big fly in the open-source soup. *Business Week* (Aug. 13, 2004).

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