

Recognizing Individual Excellence Helps Us All

In addition to honoring individuals who have advanced our field, recognizing technical excellence enhances the image of our profession and helps attract the best and brightest to our field.

Among the many ACM activities supported by your membership is the awards program. ACM announces about a dozen awards plus its newly inducted Fellows early in the year, and we hold a special banquet in June to honor the winners.

Our most prestigious technical award is the ACM A.M. Turing Award, given annually since 1966. To qualify for this award, an individual's contributions to the computing field should be of lasting and major technical importance. The award includes a prize of \$100,000 that is currently sponsored by Intel. Many call it the "Nobel Prize of Computer Science," in part because there are no Nobel Prizes celebrating IT achievements.

There are many reasons to recognize technical excellence, but I believe honoring individuals not only brings recognition to their contributions, but also gives the world a positive image of the members of a field. Certainly, the publicity surrounding the annual Nobel Prizes highlights such contributions by chemists, physicists, and so on.

Such stories can be inspirational to everyone, but particularly to young people who are deciding upon

their careers. For example, the stories of Madame Curie and Albert Einstein surely have affected the career paths of some people we know. Wouldn't it be great if IT luminaries could inspire some of the next generation?

Hence, I was delighted on February 16, 2005 to see the story "Laurels for Giving the Internet its Language" on the front page of the business section of the *New York Times* [1]. The article announced Vinton Cerf and Robert Kahn the winners of the ACM Turing Award for their contributions to TCP/IP. I enjoyed how the article captured the contrasting personalities of these long-time research partners as well as explaining in general how TCP/IP works and why it was such an important contribution.

Happily, it also contained the phrase "the Nobel Prize of Computer Science," and it quoted David Tennenhouse of Intel. The article ran approximately 1,500 words—a major piece of real estate for a newspaper. In addition, more than 600 media outlets carried an Associated Press story entitled "Two Honored for TCP/IP Technology," noting ACM as "one of the leading organizations for computing professionals."

The next phase of ACM's awards is in June. In



President's Letter

ACM Award	Corporate Sponsor	2004 Winners	Contribution(s)
A.M. Turing	Intel (\$100k)	Vinton G. Cerf and Robert E. Kahn	TCP/IP: Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol
Grace Murray Hopper	Google (\$15k)	Jennifer Rexford	Stable and efficient Internet routing without global coordination
Software System	IBM (\$10k)	Raghuram Bindignavle, Simon S. Lam, Shaowen Su, and Thomas Y.C. Woo	SNP: Secure Network Programming
Allen Newell (joint with AAAI)	(\$10k)	Richard P. Gabriel	To Common Lisp, Smalltalk, ...
Computational Science and Engineering (joint with SIAM)	SIAM (\$5k)	Achi Brandt	Multilevel Methods, such as multigrid PDE solvers.
Karlstrom Educator	Prentice-Hall (\$5k)	(Not awarded)	—
Doctoral Dissertation	Springer (\$5k)	Boaz Barak	Non-black-box techniques in cryptography
Kanellakis Theory and Practice	(None - \$5k)	Yoav Freund and Robert Schapire	Boosting and its applications to machine learning
Eckert-Mauchly (joint with IEEE)	(None - \$5k)	Fred Brooks, Jr.	Defining computer architecture, IBM 360, ...
Lawler Humanitarian	(None - \$5k)	(Biennial—not awarded)	—
Distinguished Service	(None)	Edward G. Coffman, Jr.	Co-founded ACM SIGMETRICS, the ACM SIGOPS conference...
Outstanding Contribution to ACM	(None)	Richard T. Snodgrass	Leading SIGs to broaden the Digital Library into a portal...

ACM awards honor outstanding contributions in a variety of disciplines within IT.

In addition to our traditional Awards Banquet on June 11 in San Francisco, we are planning an Awards Reception on Thursday, June 9, at the Computer Museum in Silicon Valley. We are inviting all past Turing Award winners as well as recipients of many other ACM awards. The table here lists the various ACM awards, the awards' sponsors, the current winners, and their contributions to the computing field.

Cerf and Kahn will give their Turing Lecture on Monday, Aug. 22. If you're in the Philadelphia area, perhaps attending the SIGCOMM conference, please come to the public lecture at the Irvine Auditorium on the University of Pennsylvania campus at 6 PM. Those who cannot attend can still hear the talks, as they will be streamed live onto the Net by SIGCOMM. Don't miss it!


I encourage you to spread the word about this year's winners, should you have the opportunity. Next month's award ceremony and reception will be a natural occasion to tell others about what our colleagues have done. Press releases about the award winners can

be found at www.acm.org/announcements/homepage.html. Virginia Gold (v_gold@hq.acm.org), ACM's Public Relations Coordinator, would be happy to offer assistance. I'd like to thank all the individual award committees for helping to make the contributions of the winners meaningful to the general public.

If you wish to nominate colleagues for these awards, please visit the ACM awards Web site to learn how (www.acm.org/awards/). One example of an award that could use more nominations is the Karlstrom Outstanding Educator award, which wasn't awarded this year.

If you or your company would like to help sponsor cur-

rent ACM awards, please contact Kelly Godlieb (ccg@cs.toronto.edu) or Jim Horning (horning@acm.org), who co-chair the awards committee. One example of an award that could use more financial support is the Lawler Humanitarian award, which is given every other year due to lack of sponsorship.

If you or your company have ideas for new awards, please send your ideas along. In my view, more awards give us the chance to honor more of our members and more opportunities to tell outsiders stories about what we do and thereby improve our image in society. Once again, these stories also serve us all by helping attract the best and brightest to IT. 

REFERENCE

1. Hafner, K. Laurels for giving the Internet its language. *New York Times* (Feb. 16, 2005), C1-C2.

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