A word of welcome

Document status and date:
Published: 01/01/1981

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:

• A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
• The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
• The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

[Link to publication](#)

A WORD OF WELCOME

Judged by the age of dedicated journals, Computing Science is now more than 25 years old. It would even be a mature science, if judged by the number of journals devoted to it: by now this number is so large that the practising computing scientist can hardly suppress a shudder at the thought of yet one more journal to browse through. Why, then, do I welcome the appearance of "Science of Computer Programming"? The shortest answer is that this one might be worth reading, but that is not the full story.

Being programmable is the automatic computer's outstanding characteristic and, accordingly, programming is computing's central activity. It is the core of the whole topic. Amazingly enough, for more than 25 years we have had no journal specifically devoted to it: no journal, no special interest group, no conference, no nothing! This absence would be defensible if programming were trivial and we could all do it well, but this is not the case. (Who doubts this statement should ask his colleagues to design a program for the Binary Search.) It is not hard to argue that the appearance of "Science of Computer Programming" is overdue.

But I don't think it could have appeared much earlier. Peter Naur was the first to complain to me about the absence of 'program literature', i.e. published programs that could be read and studied like any other scientific article and that would set a standard; Tony Hoare was the second one to voice that complaint to me. This was many years ago, but even then a program of some sophistication was such a compact deposit of its author's intellectual labour that its presentation in an enlightening manner was a major problem. Yet, mutual enlightenment is what forges scientific communities!

A decade of work under the banner of 'programming methodology' has changed the situation and justifies some confidence that we have reached the stage in which we can begin to communicate programs and their development for the enlightenment of our colleagues.

"Science of Computer Programming" also has a calling beyond the community of our closest colleagues. It should help end the current state of affairs in which managers see programming primarily as a management problem because they cannot manage it, in which electronic engineers don't see the problem and in which mathematicians ignore it. "Science of Computer Programming" faces the challenge of showing the world at large that, concerning programming, there is far more than meets the eye. All by itself, that challenge would already be worth this new journal (which, I trust, will not adopt the silly convention of switching to a smaller type font as soon as program text has to be printed).

For "Science of Computer Programming", the challenges are great; so are the opportunities. My best wishes accompany it; may it live up to our expectations!

NUENEN   Edsger W. DIJKSTRA