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El Fin

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EI Fin

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What can happen in four years? I've been pondering this question a great deal as my time in the editor-in-chief role draws to a close.

When I stepped in as EIC, it goes without saying that storm clouds were gathering. As a smaller title within the IEEE Computer Society—and in our co-publishing society, the American Institute of Physics—we were in one of those situations where business as usual couldn't scale. We faced a declining number of individual subscribers combined with the ever escalating costs of publishing—and printing (and mailing)—a magazine. Yet the interest among institutional subscribers for our digital content was healthy, if not increasing. As I mentioned earlier this year, creating a magazine is an expensive proposition, especially for a small title like *CiSE*, and it requires many dedicated resources, not to mention a network of dedicated volunteers. When I found myself as one of many editors working on the transition to digital-only distribution, suffice it to say, many cycles were expended to ensure that our individual subscribers and institutional readers would continue to be well served in this brave new world. Much like what the end of Moore's law (a subject covered in one of our upcoming special issues) tells us, I found myself having to put my head to the ground to ensure that we executed solidly as a magazine, without packing any additional computational power into myself with all I had to do, not to mention my "day job." This resulted in a great focus on building an editorial calendar that addressed timely and important topics in computational science and engineering.

For the record, despite the bumps in the road, I'm pleased with how The Process is shaping up. We're much better positioned today than ever to continue delivering quality content to our readers. The focus on digital now means that you can download and view *CiSE* in just about any format of interest. You can read it as a webpage. You can read it on a tablet. You can read it as a layout PDF document. You can even opt to get it in print again (without paying $149/year). And for the most part, this ability happens immediately for all users, which wasn't the case earlier in my tenure. As one of the more vocal editors in chief, I worked with the Publications Board and staff to ensure that this and other important issues (such as a proper website) were done to the fullest extent possible using best practices as opposed to ad hoc ones. Although we might not use all the best practices, we've reached a point where we have what I would term effective practices that amount to a stable baseline (a term we often use in software engineering) for future improvements and efficiencies.

As the great Forrest Gump reminds us, "Life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're gonna get," and my time at *CiSE* has reminded me just how much this rings true. When I first arrived on the scene, I was surprised at how random the submissions we received (outside of special or theme issues) were. More than any other publication with which I've been associated, *CiSE* is much like an assortment of chocolates, especially for those who submit articles blindly to us. I'm sure everyone knows the ritual: I'll have the dark chocolate with chocolate cream filling. Someone else wants the coconut creme. Yet another person wants one with a berry filling. For the first year, I found myself addressing the general submission queue, wondering to myself what type of chocolate it was. How did it end up in my box? Is it a flavor that has the right mix of computational content but also addresses a scientific and/or engineering domain? Often, I bit into the articles and found out that authors had no idea what chocolates we prefer for *CiSE*. Even after writing an editorial about what we publish in this magazine, we continued to receive articles that were mostly a mix of pure computer science and mathematics articles. Then I went back and looked at our

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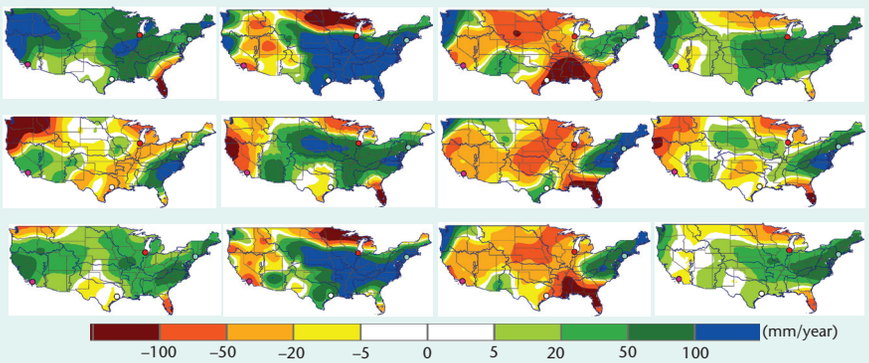
Erratum

There is an error in one of the figures that ran in the November/December 2015 issue of *CiSE* ("Climate Adaptation Informatics: Water Stress on Power Production," vol. 17, no. 6, 2015, pp. 53–60). Specifically, Figure 2 in the published article had a minor error, and the correct figure is reproduced below. Please note that neither the original figure caption nor the conclusions in the manuscript need to change.



stated scope, and it's no wonder. Our description of *CiSE* is rather focused, but the scope basically says that we'll accept papers on any topic—as long as the topic is related to a particular scientific/engineering application domain. Needless to say, we need to continue working on this after I hand the baton to my able successor, Jim Chen. At this year's editorial board meeting, which will have occurred by the time you read this, we should have a refined scope statement that provides more direct guidance to prospective authors. I think it will also be helpful to grow the board's expertise, which still leans toward a chocolate assortment of its own, mostly computer scientist folks with a physics/chemistry background. It goes without saying that advances in the biological sciences are every bit a part of computational science today and must be represented to a greater extent on our board. Our special issue coverage also makes it clear that we aren't doing what we should be doing in this area. Mea culpa, of course.

In terms of our core mission, which is to inform the readership about developments in computer science and engineering (the magazine aspect, if you will), I'm pleased with what we've been able to accomplish. In looking at the issues since I took the helm, I find we covered core topics from simulation (three issues) to scientific software development (two issues). As part of the imprint I hoped to leave on the magazine, we also considered the social aspects of computing, with issues on citizen science and broadening participation in computing (a double issue), a topic near and dear to my heart, given the years I've spent working with other community

leaders to form the IEEE Special Technical Community in Broadening Participation. I hope readers were delighted to see that *CiSE* was a welcoming home to a community that previously had no place to publish research results aimed at understanding issues relating to (the lack of) diversity and inclusion in our field, computer science and physics (the two disciplines that came together to form this publication in the first place) having among the lowest rates of participation when it comes to women and other ethnic minority groups. I'm proud that our publication featured revised best papers from the first peer-reviewed conference on this topic ever. We'll do this once again in the coming year to ensure a sustained push to recognize research on this vital topic.

Last but not least, I'm pleased that we were able to deepen our connections to high-performance computing. We ran several issues related to this topic, including but not limited to leadership computing, NERSC, extreme data, and science as a service. While I've always been deeply conflicted by supercomputing, I'm 100 percent convinced that supercomputing is a conduit to interdisciplinary thinking in general and computational science in particular. Without supercomputing, there would be a lot less interest in everything that we're trying to do in this publication. I know from my discussions with people at national labs, including Argonne National Laboratory (where I'm visiting faculty), that there's a much greater awareness of *CiSE* today than ever, including outside the US (where I've also worked to expand international board membership).

I know that this recap is a "swan song" of sorts, even though I'm nowhere near ready to contemplate retirement in general, being now of "middle age" in a biological sense. It has been a great joy to work with my associate editors in chief, my editorial board, and the authors and reviewers who do the real work of creating actual content. Most importantly, I'm grateful to the many IEEE Computer Society staff—past and present—who have supported me during my time at the Computer Society: Jenny Stout (perhaps the one person who kept me interested in *CiSE* and who edited my very first article more than 10 years ago), Keri Schreiner, Tammi Titsworth, Kathleen Clark-Fisher, Brian Kirk, Steve Woods, Bonnie Wylie, and Cathy Martin. There are many other staff who help make *CiSE* look its best, including Monette Velasco (design) and Brandi Ortega (website). I'm sure I forgot someone, but I appreciate you all! The fact that I've worked with so many different staff members speaks to the change that I've uniquely experienced as EIC, compared to my predecessors (who pretty much had one or two people they worked with, at most). And the reason I mention all these names is that through my four-year run, these wonderful folks have taken *CiSE* under their wings and given it their all to ensure that it remains one of the best reads available. We're really blessed to have their help to focus on the written word.

I also thank you, the reader, for continuing to support us. Without you, there is no publication. On behalf of the entire editorial board, I pledge that we'll continue to serve you and always welcome your comments, suggestions, and criticisms. Please don't hesitate to contact me anytime at gkt@cisemagazine.org, even if only to say hi.