Lecture Notes
in Business Information Processing

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Preface

In today's competitive and highly dynamic environment, analyzing data to understand how the business is performing, to predict outcomes and trends, and to improve the effectiveness of business processes underlying business operations has become critical. The traditional approach to reporting is no longer adequate, users now demand easy-to-use intelligent platforms and applications capable of analyzing real-time business data to provide insight and actionable information at the right time. The end goal is to improve the enterprise performance by better and timelier decision making, enabled by the availability of up-to-date, high-quality information.

As a response, the notion of "real-time enterprise" has emerged and is beginning to be recognized in the industry. Gartner defines it as “using up-to-date information, getting rid of delays, and using speed for competitive advantage is what the real-time enterprise is all about... Indeed, the goal of the real-time enterprise is to act on events as they happen.” Although there has been progress in this direction and many companies are introducing products toward making this vision a reality, there is still a long way to go. In particular, the whole lifecycle of business intelligence requires new techniques and methodologies capable of dealing with the new requirements imposed by the real-time enterprise. From the capturing of real-time business performance data to the injection of actionable information back into business processes, all the stages of the business intelligence (BI) cycle call for new algorithms and paradigms as the basis of new functionalities including dynamic integration of real-time data feeds from operational sources, evolution of ETL transformations and analytical models, and dynamic generation of adaptive real-time dashboards, just to name a few.

The series of BIRTE workshops aims to provide a forum for discussing topics related to this emerging field and setting research directions of business intelligence (BI) toward the vision of the real-time enterprise. Following the success of BIRTE 2006 held in Seoul, Korea in conjunction with VLDB 2006, BIRTE 2008 was held in Auckland, New Zealand, on August 24, 2008, in conjunction with VLDB 2008. It included one keynote talk and three sessions where ten papers were presented. In contrast to BIRTE 2006, on this occasion we had six invited talks given by well-known researchers from academia and industry driving major efforts in areas that are fundamental to BIRTE. The papers by the keynote speaker, four invited talks and the four accepted papers are included here.

Volker Markl (Technische Universität Berlin) gave the keynote talk on “Situational Business Intelligence.” Volker is an expert in BI and has a long research record in the area. He presented the state of the art for situational applications and the impact of Web 2.0 on these applications; he also presented examples and research challenges that the information management research community needs to address in order to arrive at a platform for situational business intelligence.

We wish to express special thanks to the Program Committee members for providing their technical expertise in reviewing the submitted papers and helping us prepare
an interesting program. To our keynote speaker and the presenters of the papers we express our appreciation for sharing their work and experiences in this workshop. We thank the VLDB 2008 organizers for their help and organizational support. Finally, we would like to extend many thanks to Alkis Simitsis for maintaining the workshop’s website, for preparing the e-proceedings and for his help in producing this volume.

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# Table of Contents

Situational Business Intelligence ....................................................... 1
   *Alexander Löser, Fabian Hueske, and Volker Markl*

On Solving Efficiently the View Selection Problem under Bag-Semantics ................................................... 12
   *Foto Afrati, Matthew Damigos, and Manolis Gergatsoulis*

QoS-Aware Publish-Subscribe Service for Real-Time Data Acquisition ............................................................ 29
   *Xinjie Lu, Xin Li, Tian Yang, Zaifei Liao, Wei Liu, and Hongan Wang*

A Near Real-Time Reporting System for Enterprises Using JavaScript Instrumentation with Inter-colo Event Replication .. 45
   *Timothy Tully*

A Hybrid Row-Column OLTP Database Architecture for Operational Reporting .................................................. 61
   *Jan Schaffner, Anja Bog, Jens Krüger, and Alexander Zeier*

The Reality of Real-Time Business Intelligence ...................... 75
   *Divyakant Agrawal*

Beyond Conventional Data Warehousing—Massively Parallel Data Processing with Greenplum Database (Invited Talk) ...................... 89
   *Florian M. Waas*

Scalable Data-Intensive Analytics ................................................. 97
   *Meichun Hsu and Qiming Chen*

Simplifying Information Integration: Object-Based Flow-of-Mappings Framework for Integration ........................... 108
   *Bogdan Alexe, Michael Gubanov, Mauricio A. Hernández, Howard Ho, Jen-Wei Huang, Yannis Katsis, Lucian Popa, Barna Saha, and Ioana Stanoi*

Author Index ................................................................................. 123