Lecture Notes in Computer Science

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Data Security and Security Data

27th British National Conference on Databases, BNCOD 27
Dundee, UK, June 29 – July 1, 2010
Revised Selected Papers
Preface

The BNCOD 2010 Conference was held at the University of Abertay Dundee during June 28–30, 2010. The conference theme was “Data Security—Security Data,” and, as well as the usual broad range of papers we would expect at BNCOD, authors were encouraged to submit papers addressing, or at least considering, the conference theme.

Whether this had an influence above and beyond that expected is difficult to tell, but the conference did receive a very large number of non-standard submissions and enquiries, predominantly from authors in Asia. Considerable effort was required on the part of the conference organizers to address all of these inputs, and to attempt to determine genuine inputs from those that were mischievous, sought funding for attendance or even paper production, or saw conference proceedings as some form of vanity publishing.

Although we were eventually able to cut these papers down to a manageable number, we reviewed 42 (mostly through the EasyChair system, which was a boon in producing these proceedings) and accepted 10 full papers and 6 short papers, we were not convinced we had trapped all the problem cases and so changed the publication model to a post-conference one. This proved to be the right decision, as we had a further three no-shows at the conference itself, where the authors advised us at the last minute of their non-attendance for various reasons, but we were aware that they would have required visas for attendance and they had not approached us for letters of support. On that basis, those papers were also withdrawn from the proceedings, so we can say with complete confidence that all the papers contained within these proceedings were presented by one or more of their authors in their prescribed slot in the conference programme in Dundee.

Unfortunately, it does now seem to be necessary to take this approach to maintain the viability of the conference as an academic research event in our discipline. While we would not wish to penalize genuine research authors from any part of the world who wish to engage in dialogue with the community and present and share their work, we do need to discourage those who see the conference fee as a price to pay for a publication, with no intention of attendance or engagement.

Moving away from the problems of identifying genuine authors, once we had done so we had a varied and interesting set of full and short papers, combined with good keynotes and a varied social programme. As in previous years, the conference was preceded by the “Teaching, Learning & Assessment in Databases” workshop, aimed at those researching and reporting novel and high-quality pedagogic activities in the database curriculum, and the Best Paper from that workshop appears later in these proceedings. The conference was also preceded by a PhD Doctoral Consortium, where PhD students at various stages of their studies
in a wide variety of data and information systems topics presented short papers on their work. The two Best Papers from that forum also appear at the end of these proceedings.

The conference proper kicked off with a keynote address from Ken Barker of the University of Calgary on the theme of “Valuing Data Privacy While Exposing Data Utility.” Ken was provocative, as ever, in proposing that privacy, and more recently data privacy, is more of a desired than achievable goal, and for many users there would be a willingness to trade some measure of data privacy for a value in economic or service terms.

A varied and enjoyable set of conference presentations followed, as can be seen from the contents of these proceedings. The final keynote panel debated the future of the BNCOD conference itself, considering various models in which the database community, particularly in the UK, might become more engaged with the conference, and whether a workshop and symposium model or other forms of model might work more effectively. There was a lively debate and a commitment on the part of the organizers to think about this further for the upcoming conferences in 2011 and 2012.

The conference closed with a short presentation from Alvaro Fernandes, encouraging delegates to attend BNCOD 2011 in Manchester.

Despite the problems in determining genuine submissions, and the failure of some delegates to attend, BNCOD 2010 was a successful and enjoyable event, and I would wish to record my thanks to the conference team, in particular Petra Leimich and Les Ball, for their hard work in making it so.

July 2010

Lachlan MacKinnon
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