

# Preface

Modern database systems enhance the capabilities of traditional database systems by their ability to handle any kind of data, including text, image, audio, and video. Today, database systems are particularly relevant to the Web, as they can provide input to content generators for Web pages, and can handle queries issued over the Internet.

The eXtensible Markup Language (XML) is used in applications running the gamut from content management through publishing to Web services and e-commerce. It is used as the universal communication language for exchanging music and graphics as well as purchase orders and technical documentation.

As database systems increasingly talk to each other over the Web, there is a fast-growing desire to use XML as the standard exchange format. As a result, many relational database systems can export data as XML documents and import data from XML documents and provide query and update capabilities for XML data. In addition, so called native XML database and integration systems are appearing on the database market, whose claim is to be especially tailored to storing, maintaining, and easily accessing XML documents.

After the huge success of the first XML Database Symposium (XSym 2003) last year in Berlin (already then in conjunction with VLDB) it was decided to establish this symposium as an annual event that is supposed to take place as an integral part of VLDB. The goal of this symposium is to provide a high-quality platform for the presentation and discussion of new research results and system developments. It is targeted at scientists, practitioners, vendors and users of XML and database technologies.

The call-for-papers attracted about 60 submissions from all over the world. After a careful reviewing process, the international program committee accepted 15 high-quality papers of particular relevance and quality. The selected contributions cover a wide range of exciting topics, in particular XQuery processing, searching, ranking, and mapping XML documents, XML constraints checking and correcting, and XML processing. An exciting highlight of the symposium was the keynote by Mary Fernandez from AT&T Research. Her talk “*Building an Extensible XQuery Engine: Experiences with Galax*” was a perfect start for this symposium.

As the editors of this volume, we would like to thank all the program committee members and external reviewers who sacrificed their valuable time to review the papers and helped in putting together a truly convincing program.

We would also like to thank the organizers of VLDB 2004 (and of XSym), especially Iluju Kiringa, and the general chair of VLDB 2004, John Mylopoulos, without whom this symposium would not have been possible. Our special thanks also go to Akmal Chaudhri. He not only was always available when a helping hand was needed but he also did an excellent job with implementing and maintaining the XSym homepage. Finally,

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