

2003

Report on the Third ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL)

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Repository Citation

Nelson, Michael L., "Report on the Third ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL)" (2003). *Computer Science Faculty Publications*. 32.
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/computerscience_fac_pubs/32

Original Publication Citation

Nelson, M.L. (2003). Report on the third ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL). *D-Lib Magazine*, 9(7/8), 1-3.
doi: 10.1045/july2003-nelson

D-Lib Magazine July/August 2003

Volume 9 Number 7/8

ISSN 1082-9873

Report on the Third ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL)

27 - 31 May 2003, Houston, Texas

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The Third ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL 2003) was held on the campus of Rice University in Houston, Texas, May 27 - 31. Regarding the merging of the ACM and IEEE conference series, in the JCDL 2002 conference report published last year in *D-Lib Magazine* Edie Rasmussen noted, "Perhaps by next year...no one will remember that it wasn't always so" [1]. Judging by the number of participants I met who did not know that the ACM and IEEE used to hold separate digital library conferences, Rasmussen's prediction has come to pass.

Conference Chair Geneva Henry reported that there were 321 attendees at JCDL 2003, representing 19 countries. This is a decrease from JCDL 2001 (450 people, 20 countries) [2] and JCDL 2002 (479 people, 21 countries) [1]. Economic factors surely contributed to the attendance downturn, along with the SARS epidemic and heightened security warnings from the US government at the time of JCDL 2003. Another factor may have been that hosting the conference at the end of May (to avoid the infamous Houston summer heat) also overlapped with exams in some European countries.

This JCDL followed the same format as the preceding JCDL conferences. Several tutorials were offered on the first day, followed by three days of regular conference sessions, and JCDL 2003 closed with a day offering four workshops (see the [In Brief](#) column of this issue of *D-Lib* for workshop summaries) and two more tutorials. (The number of tutorials offered at JCDL this year grew to 14.) Tutorials included a repeat of the popular topics from previous years, such as "Overview of Digital Libraries", "Thesauri and Ontologies in Digital Libraries", "How to Build a Digital Library Using Open-Source Software" and introductory and advanced tutorials on the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting. Two new tutorials for JCDL 2003 were "SRW: Z39.50 Next Generation" and "Audio/Video Digital Libraries".

Cathy Marshall, Microsoft Corporation, chaired the Program Committee. Paper selection was very competitive: 23 of 91 full papers (25%) and 31 of 77 short papers (40%) were accepted. In addition to the papers, 41 posters presentations and project demonstrations rounded out the JCDL 2003 program. The popular "1-minute madness" format of previous JCDLs was continued. During the "1-minute madness" presentations, each organization participating in the posters and demonstrations was given one minute in which to promote their concept or innovation in order to entice visitors to stop by during the reception later that evening.

The technical program consisted of a mix of full papers (30 minute presentations) and short papers (15 minute presentations), split in two parallel sessions. The papers covered many topics, including audio/visual digital libraries, protocols and formats, educational and scientific digital libraries, user interaction and design, and metadata extraction. Also featured were panel discussions on digital library sustainability, hybrid physical/digital libraries, and digital library accessibility. Previous JCDL panels frequently focused on formats, protocols and techniques; this year's panels offered insight into the arguably more challenging areas of sustained use, operation and impact of digital libraries.

A fascinating and entertaining opening keynote address was given by James Boyle, Duke University Law School professor and co-director of the Center for the Study of the Public Domain. Boyle's talk addressed the current state of intellectual property laws, and some of the points made in the talk are discussed in [3, 4]. He began with the observation that "the entire pudding of 20th century work is locked up because of the raisin." In other words, nearly all intellectual works covered by copyright exhaust their commercial potential within the span of a few years after publication. While only the smallest percentage of works (the "raisin") retain long-term economic viability, intellectual property laws apply universally to all works ("the pudding"). He also argued that while intellectual property laws address losses due to "piracy", the laws also create losses (calculable in the same manner as piracy losses) due to failed information-sharing. Boyles also briefly discussed the Creative Commons [5], a resource for authors wishing to utilize rights licenses that suit their needs rather than choosing traditional copyright for their intellectual property.

Tom Moritz, Director of Library Services at the American Museum of Natural History, gave the closing keynote address which proved to be the perfect bookend to the opening address. Tom began his talk with a discussion of his personal experience regarding the culture of sharing copies of the *New York Times* on commuter trains to and from New York City. He related the "arms race" for used newspapers that involved the city government (which desired to recycle the papers), commuter train passengers (who desired to reuse the papers), and the *Times* (which desired to prevent reuse in order to sell more copies of the newspaper). Quoting heavily from various historical and contemporary sources, Tom went on to extrapolate this anecdote on sharing of physical media to the idea of information sharing and "fairness" in the digital world.

The JCDL 2003 conference banquet was held at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Attendees were treated to a planetarium show about the sinking of the Titanic and were able to take part in several interactive exhibits and games. A delicious buffet was served with food and drink tables located throughout the museum's many exhibits, including the very impressive Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals. This created an informal atmosphere for enjoying the exhibits as well as visiting with colleagues.

During the banquet, the Vannevar Bush Award for Best Conference Paper was presented to Gary Marchionini for his paper (joint with Barbara Wildemuth, Meng Yang, Gary Geisler, Todd Wilkens, Anthony Hughes and Richard Gruss) "How fast is too fast? Evaluating fast forward surrogates for digital video". This paper described the results of a user evaluation study that examined user preferences and performance after viewing "fast-forward" video surrogates. (Based on the study results, the new Open Video digital library [6] will adopt the speed of 1:64 as the default fast-forward rate.)

JCDL 2004 will be held in Tucson, Arizona June 7-11. The focus for JCDL 2004 will be "Global Reach and Diverse Impact", in recognition of the emerging themes from previous conferences in the areas of international collaboration and applications [7]. The Call for Papers for JCDL 2004 has already been issued, and the submission deadline for full papers is 15 January 2004. (See the conference web site [7] for more information.)

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- [7] Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL) 2004 web site, <<http://www.jcdl2004.org>>.

(On September 11, 2003 a correction was made to reorder references 6 and 7 of the report.)

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