

# Does ACM Support Matter to Conferences or Journals?

ACM is one of many organizations that sponsors IT conferences and journals. So, why use ACM?

**A**CM, IEEE/CS, and USENIX organize conferences and sponsor journals and magazines, and I have friends who prefer working with each organization. This column discusses what I learned about the advantages of using ACM.

My introduction to the topic came when I was trapped in an elevator at the Grace Murray Hopper conference last October. Some conference attendees in the elevator recognized me as ACM's President, so I became an instant and captive recipient of feedback regarding our organization.

I was surprised by what I learned. The first surprise was about publicity. Although we were all attending the *fifth* Grace Murray Hopper conference, one attendee had never heard of it until this year when ACM became more heavily involved. The second surprise was about endorsement. One professor said ACM's participation was critical since her university used ACM to decide whether or not an accepted conference paper counted as a peer-reviewed work for promotion. The final surprise was that ACM, because of the great amount of business

it does with the hotel industry, used its leverage to smooth operations at the conference hotel, which apparently needed smoothing.

Thus, based on a randomly selected sample of attendees, ACM helped even this established conference succeed by several measures. (Indeed, the fifth GMH conference set a new record, with over 800 attendees.) In addition to these anecdotal benefits, ACM shoulders the responsibility for the financial health of a conference, maintains the history of financial transactions, signs contracts with vendors, prints and produces promotional materials, and so forth.

The cost of such services is built into the conference budget as "administrative fees."

This is basically overhead for ACM to pay staff to support conferences. Unlike university-based overheads, which are typically fixed at about 50%, ACM's overhead is based on a sliding scale depending on the size of the conference, but it is closer to 15%.

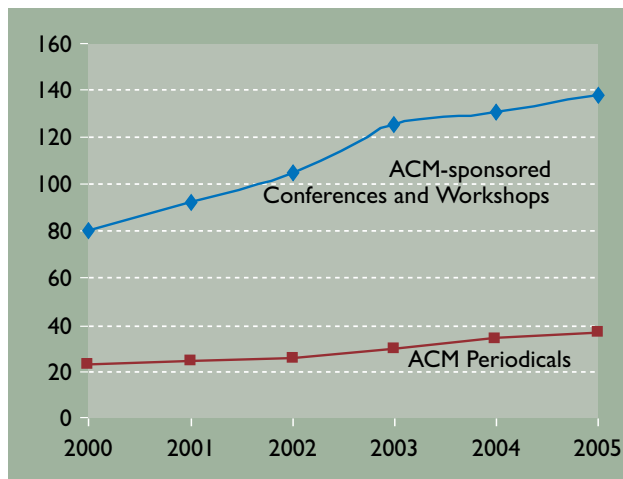


Figure 1. The number of conferences sponsored and periodicals published by ACM has nearly doubled over the last five years.

# President's Letter

## The Digital Library is one of ACM's crown jewels, and is unquestionably popular and affordable to both individuals and institutions.

ACM publishes nearly 40 periodicals in addition to sponsoring 140 conferences and workshops each year. Figure 1 shows the rapid growth of these two areas since 2000. The near doubling in both categories suggests that many IT professionals find ACM an attractive sponsor.

This combination leads to many scholarly publications, and the costly explosion of scientific publications is a major issue for nearly every research library [1, 2]. ACM is a good guy in such circles, as we offer very affordable rates, which in turn increases the readership and the impact of our publications.

For example, ACM's *Transactions on Computer Systems* costs individuals \$43 per year and libraries \$180 per year. In contrast, individual subscriptions to *Software: Practice and Experience*, published by a private company, cost \$2,290 per year. Although the latter publishes more issues per year, the cost per issue is still about 15 times higher. I would bet the lower cost increases the number of subscribers and readers to *TOCS*, and, speaking as an author, I prefer a larger audience.

Another benefit of ACM sponsorship is that all conference and periodical papers are available via ACM's Digital Library. The DL is one of ACM's

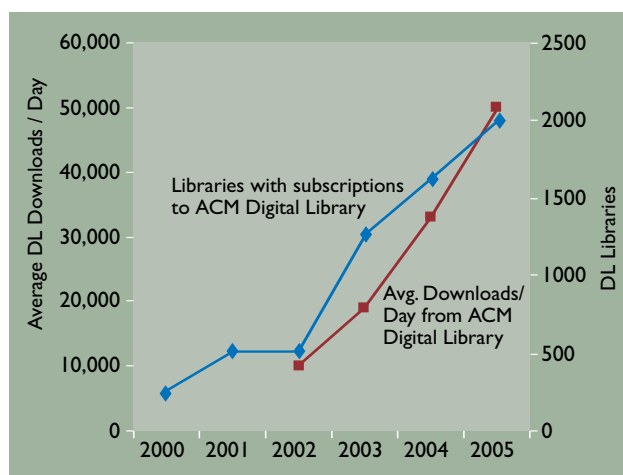


Figure 2. Tracing the sharp increase in library subscriptions to and daily downloads from ACM's Digital Library from 2000–2005.

crown jewels, and is unquestionably popular and affordable to both individuals and institutions. Figure 2 traces the increase over time in the average number of downloads per day from the DL and the number of libraries that offer the DL. In 2005, the DL recorded 46,000 downloads per day, or one every two seconds. More-

over, 1,995 libraries currently subscribe to this service. This increase reflects both the value of your papers and reasonable costs for institutional subscriptions.

You may not be surprised by the conclusion of my investigation into ACM sponsorship: If you are looking for a conference or journal sponsor, you should seriously consider ACM, as it can increase chances of success and economically spread the results of your field to a vast audience. ■

### REFERENCES

1. Candee, C. Fat cat publishers breaking the system. *Syllabus* (May 1, 2004); [www.campus-technology.com/article.asp?id=9357](http://www.campus-technology.com/article.asp?id=9357).
2. Kyrillidou, M. Serials trends reflected in the ARL statistics 2002–03. *ARL Bimonthly Report* 234 (June 2004); [www.arl.org/newsltr/234/serials.html](http://www.arl.org/newsltr/234/serials.html).

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