

Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter Established: We Solicit Contact and Assistance From the West

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The Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter has just been formed. Its goals which attempt to address the difficult situation faced by the Moscow database community, include:

- Improve scientific contacts between the Moscow and worldwide database communities.
- Collect and disseminate relevant technical publications to the Moscow database and broader computer science community.
- Contribute to technical development through support of lectures, professional development seminars and technical briefings.
- Advance database technology and improve technical interchange through conferences and workshops in Russia.

The current situation in Russia far from favorable for science and education. Following the recent major political changes, researchers gained academic freedoms lost decades ago. However, in early 1992, shortly after the Iron Curtain came down, the Economic Curtain went up. This new Curtain, resulting from recent economic reforms, promises to be more impermeable than the Iron Curtain. Just two facts. First, due to a lack of hard currency, all research institutes and universities were forced to cancel all external journal subscriptions. Second, it is now impossible for researchers to leave the country to participate in conferences or exchange programs. There is no funds for travel outside the CIS (e.g., a ticket on Aeroflot Moscow-New York-Moscow costs approximately 20 monthly salaries of a senior researcher, SIGMOD conference fees cost approximately). We have had almost no contact with you, our western scientific colleagues. The Economic Curtain threatens to continue our isolation and prolong our difficulties in contributing to science and technology and to the positive development of our country. We have no idea how long these circumstances will persist. A conventional estimate is one or more generations.

The Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter is attempting to serve as a bridge across the new barriers. Its goals are directed towards a "Technical Development Program" primarily intended on improving contacts to scientists and literature. By this letter, we ask you, the ACM SIGMOD Community, for some modest assistance which we would appreciate, possibly more than might realize. We would greatly appreciate:

1. Contributions to the Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter Library. In Russia, we have little database literature. We have begun a collection that we hope will become one of the best in the country and be available to the Moscow database and broader computer science community.

Many of you have on your shelves, books and journals that you no longer need or refer to. These publications might be valuable to scientists here.

If your university or research laboratory distributed its technical memos, could you please include the ACM SIGMOD Chapter Library on the mailing list to receive all technical reports. The address is below as is an e-mail address if you have any questions.

Our needs for the library include but is not limited to monographs in computer science, ACM periodicals (e.g., ACM Computing surveys, TODS, TOIS, TOPLAS, and Newsletters of SIGDOC, SIGIR, SIGPLAN, SIGSOFT, SIGLINK, SIGARCH, SIGCSE), related IEEE periodicals, conference and workshop proceedings, technical reports, and publications of standards bodies.

2. Assistance with an Annual ACM SIGMOD Workshop in Russia (or the former USSR).

We wish to organize a high quality event in specific research areas. We ask for volunteers from the West for the role of program committee chairman to organize together with us the ACM SIGMOD Workshop 1993 in Russia.

3. Lecturers in Russia from the West. For scientists visiting Russia we propose to organize their meetings and lectures for the database community in Moscow.
4. Technical interaction. We can help researchers willing to interact with the Russian researchers in the database area (in such directions as OODBMS, heterogeneous multidatabase interoperability, multi-media databases, persistent programming languages, database theory research and others) to establish necessary contacts.

We would greatly appreciate a small amount of your time to help the Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter activity, to scan your shelves, include us on your mailing list, to contact us, or even to consider crossing visiting our country. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please contact us using the following:

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The Moscow ACM SIGMOD Chapter Library is located at the Institute for the Problems of Informatics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. For literature contribution use, please, the same address as above.