

GUEST EDITORIAL

Good books, well conceived, well written, and well presented, can do much to promote the science of AI and the AAAI organization. The AAAI Press edited collections, from which the articles of this issue are excerpted, are designed to reach out to an audience that wants to learn more about AAAI and AI. Now in its third year, the Press is a joint venture with MIT Press, which distributes the books. The general manager and editor-in-chief of the AAAI Press select and help shape book proposals, and guide authors through the production process. The collections are generally derived from one or more AAAI workshops or symposia. Each collection has an introduction that makes the material accessible to non-specialists, and sometimes reprints additional, historically relevant material.

Four books have been published recently, several more are in preparation. The topics of the four books illustrate the breadth, practicality, and rigor of AI research. These particular books serendipitously exemplify the methods and impact of AI in the arts, science, engineering, and industry. Their enthusiastic, futuristic orientation reflects the excitement and fervor of the workshops at which this material was first presented. Strikingly, these books are not about language, vision, or representations in isolation, but about models, complex engineering, scientific discovery, and creative human experience.

These articles reflect also the knowledge-based revolution, which began with DENDRAL in the 1960s (clearly the progenitor of Piatetsky-Shapiro's *Knowledge Discovery in Databases*), spread to engineering with expert systems (Famili's *Applications in Manufacturing*), and inspired the knowledge-based approach to program synthesis (Lowry's *Automating Software Design*). Balaban's *Understanding Music with AI* continues this tradition of striving for the limit of human capability in a specialized domain.

Searching through a recent conference proceedings or text book, we probably couldn't find a better blend of techniques and range of applications to demonstrate the aspirations and accomplishments of AI. These books show the scientific community that we are building something of great value and generality.

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AI magazine

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