# Twenty Years of *CIT:* An Interview with the first Editor-in-Chief Leo Budin

*On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of* CIT. Journal of Computing and Information Technology*, Leo Budin, Fellow of the Croatian Academy, and the first Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, was interviewed by Nataša Dobrenić, editor for* Srce Novosti. *In the following we report the interview in its entirety.*

Twenty years ago, in March 1993, a new scientific journal started its publication – *CIT. Journal of Computing and Information Technology*. Those weren't the most appropriate times for launching a professional journal, as Croatia was at war and the times were troubled and difficult. [We must recall that only] a year before Croatia got its connection to the Internet, and [in 1993] the top domain *.hr* was assigned. [Thus,] it was the right time to launch a Croatian journal which would cover the information and communication technology scene.

**How come that you took the position of the first Editor-in-Chief?**

It turned out that in a group of enthusiasts who wanted to run a journal I was the oldest one, thus I took the editorship. Because of my experience, I was somehow the best suited for this chore, but I would nonetheless like to emphasize the fact that it was a group of us – the four Editors – who were responsible for launching the Journal, and not only me as the Editor-in-Chief. Important roles were played by Professor Vlatko Ceric, Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb, who had extensive international experience, as well as Professor Branko Jeren, who was at the time politically active. He reckoned that in those difficult times Croatia had to affirm itself not only politically, but also in scientific and technical terms. Among the editors was also Professor Slobodan Ribarić, presently teaching at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (then still called Faculty of Electrical Engineering), who had a lot of international contacts and an attractive area of research interest – artificial intelligence. Then there was Professor Dean Rosenzweig, who, sadly, is no longer with us. He was a mathematician. His narrower specialty was mathematical logic, although his area of research encompassed everything related to modern theoretical computer science. At the time, we had already significant experience in computer science and information technology, from the 1970s when Srce [the University Computing Centre] was founded, through the first conference in this field in Croatia (*Computer at the University* [started 1974], which later became *Information Technology Interfaces – ITI*).

We had great support from the then Director of Srce, Professor Slavko Krajcar, who was for a number of years the Journal director, too, as this project required financial funding. We must keep in mind that those weren't easy times for Croatia – 1993 was a war year. While we had started to

discuss the *CIT* project a year earlier, those were the years when some of the mentioned colleagues were mobilized, but we felt it was our duty to contribute. Launching a journal like *CIT* was such an activity.

We wished *CIT* to be an international journal, hence our using personal relationships from the very beginning, we started to build a respectable international network of collaborators and reviewers. If you look at the composition of the Editorial Board of *CIT*'s first issue, you can see that there were colleagues from Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, the USA.

For some time we thought that, maybe, we should have published a bilingual Croatian-English journal, so in the first issue we even had a couple of papers in Croatian, which particularly discussed terminology. However, it eventually turned out that this didn't make any sense, as English is the *lingua franca* in this area; therefore we decided to continue publishing *CIT* in English only. In the end, it turned out to be a good decision.

Srce has supported us, not only financially but also technically, since journal publishing requires a lot of work. This [endeavor] is not that easy, as you must keep international correspondence, you have to establish a repository for papers, you have to organize reviewing and communicate with the authors, and all of this was being done in Srce from the very beginning.

I was honored to be the Editor-in-Chief. It was the beginning of a successful project. The merit belongs to the Editors-in-Chief, who continued not only to carry on this project, but also to improve it, hence we nowadays have a Journal that is internationally recognized – it is indexed in 12 international databases. What we originally conceived is [nowadays] realized.

**You edited three CIT volumes, i.e. 12 issues; how difficult was it at that time to attract submissions?**

At the beginning we relied on personal acquaintances and asked the colleagues we personally knew to help us, which they wholeheartedly did. Both our researchers and former employees of Srce helped with their contacts, like Mladen Vouk, the Skorin-Kapov family, along with the others. Given that the journal was still unknown, it was not easy. However, as early as after the first volume, the list of submissions was beginning to increase. The *ITI* conference was a good springboard for us, as scientists from different fields contributed there. [This] was partly the source for contributors to *CIT*, too.

We felt that our new journal must be interdisciplinary. In this respect, we tried to attract authors who were not only narrow specialists in the field of computing and information science, but also those involved in the application of information and communication technology in various application areas. I think we have fulfilled this aim, too. It is evident that information and communication technology has opened many transdisciplinary paradigms which have significantly contributed to the advancement of all branches of scientific and professional fields. Hopefully, our journal has contributed at least a little to this trend.

**How has CIT progressed? Would you change anything?**

Today, the excessive demands for citations cause an oversupply of submissions to appear in all journals. By skilful editing, an Editor-in-Chief with her/his Editorial Board can take advantage of such extensive offer to improve the journal quality. However, at the same time, the editors are facing a more difficult job, since, regretfully, certain researchers behave improperly and try to submit their papers to more than one journal. I think that *CIT*'s Editorial Board is properly handling this situation.

I have no particular new ideas for substantial changes of the editorial policy. Perhaps it would be good to think in a more articulate way about thematic orientation of individual *CIT* issues.