Editor's Introduction

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In August I have officially taken over from Yiling Chen as the editor of SIGecom Exchanges. My predecessors have done a wonderful job with Exchanges and I hope that this unusual journal-newsletter hybrid will continue to be an essential source of information for the algorithmic economics community.

Issue 11.2 of Exchanges features two small innovations. First, David Parkes—the chair of SIGecom—has kindly contributed a short summary of the SIG's current activities. Going forward, the general idea is to annually complement the June EC business meeting with another quick update in the December issue of Exchanges.

Second, in addition to six great research letters, the current issue includes a longer position paper by Eric Budish, an economist at the University of Chicago. Eric surveys work by himself and others on market design (specifically, school choice and course allocation), and highlights the tension that exists between optimizing natural objectives and designing for properties such as strategyproofness or envy-freeness. Previous work dealt with this tension by replacing objective like social welfare with weaker efficiency criteria, but Eric argues that one should not lose sight of the original objectives. This should speak to economists and computer scientists alike. In particular, computer scientists are used to quantifying the quality of constrained solutions; standard notions like worst-case approximation can prove valuable in addressing some of Eric's challenges. I hope to include one longer contributed article—a position paper or survey—in each future issue of Exchanges, and I am delighted that Eric established the best possible precedent with his wonderful, compelling article.

We also have a solution to the last puzzle from issue 10.3, Contingency Exigency. Puzzle editor Daniel Reeves offered a bounty for it, a random amount of money based on the XKCD geohashing algorithm seeded with the date of the first solution. That amount of money, luckily for Dan, turned out to be \$61.54 which was split between the fastest solution, from Arthur Breitman, and the best / most complete solution, from Robin Ryder. Dr. Ryder's write-up is included in this issue. The heart of the solution is that one should multiply the would-be wages $(r \cdot t)$ by the ratio of the actual payout to the expected payout.

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