



Regenstrief Institute

02 December 2003

Bharat Bhargava, Ph.D.
Purdue University
Department of Computer Sciences
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

Dear Dr. Bhargava:

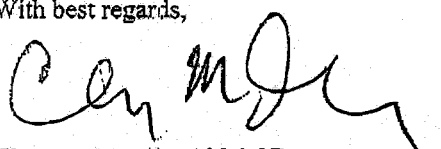
We are pleased to add our enthusiastic support to you and your team for your proposal to the National Science Foundation Distributed Systems Program, entitled "A Middleware for Peer-to-Peer Streaming."

The Regenstrief Institute is a non-profit research institute located in Wishard Hospital on the IU Medical Center campus. It has roughly 18 faculty members and 120 employees. As you know, the Regenstrief Institute has had a long-term interest in the management of electronic medical record data and the use of such data to improve health care. We published the first paper reporting an important effect of computer reminder systems on physician behavior in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1976 when you were associated with the Regenstrief Institute, and have continued to expand the size and the reach of the electronic medical record systems in Indianapolis. Indeed, the Regenstrief Medical Record System at two hospital systems on the IU Medical Center campus now carries 300 million records for more than two million patients. We have also entered into collaborations with the other major hospitals in Indianapolis for the purpose of delivering information needed for emergency care and for cancer research. So the problem of data sharing among peers, while maintaining both efficiency and privacy in many circumstances, is crucial to us. Indeed, most of the problems you are examining, including peer-to-peer streaming data distribution, collective and anonymous access of data from peers, and verification of shared data integrity, are of great interest to us.

We should point out that though the Regenstrief Institute has its offices in a hospital facility on the Medical Center campus, it is not a care provider and does not own or control clinical data. The data that is stored on its systems is owned and controlled by one or another of its hospital collaborators, not the Regenstrief Institute. The hospitals that collect and control this data have geared up for the HIPAA privacy regulations that took effect in April of this year; so they have especially heightened concerns about patient privacy and confidentiality. This makes your work all the more important. To the degree that you can develop technologies that the health care institutions can be confident will protect patient confidentiality and privacy, the easier it will be to develop community-wide collaborations among multiple health care units.

We look forward to the success of your grant application, and the opportunity to explore collaborations as you develop technologies to deal with these important problems.

With best regards,



Clement J. McDonald, M.D.
Regenstrief Professor of Medical Informatics
Distinguished Professor of Medicine
Indiana University School of Medicine