Managing Innovation at Microsoft Research

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Abstract:
Since its founding in 1991, Microsoft Research has grown to become the premier corporate computer science research organization in the world. More than 800 Microsoft researchers worldwide advance the frontiers of computer science while contributing to the company’s products and services. As a result, technologies created in Microsoft Research labs are used directly or indirectly in nearly every Microsoft offering.

How is this engine of innovation managed? Where does the research agenda come from? How are short- and long-term investments balanced? What makes technology transfer work in Microsoft? How is Microsoft Research able to contribute to the company’s products while publishing nearly all of its work? The answers to these questions, among others, are the subject of this talk.

About the Speaker:
Roy Levin is a Distinguished Engineer and Managing Director of Microsoft Research, Silicon Valley, which he co-founded in August, 2001. The lab presently numbers approximately 50 researchers working in the area of distributed computing and operates in a highly collaborative style that embraces the technical spectrum from theory to practice.

From 1996 until he joined Microsoft, Levin was Director of the Digital/Compaq Systems Research Center in Palo Alto, California. Previously, he was a senior researcher in the Center since its founding in 1984. During those years he was a primary contributor and project leader for the Vesta software configuration management system and for the Topaz multi-processor programming environment and its micro-kernel operating system. Before joining Digital, Levin was a researcher at Xerox’s Palo Alto Research Center, where he was a principal developer and project co-leader of Cedar, an experimental programming environment for high-performance workstations. He was also a developer of Grapevine, a landmark electronic mail system.

Levin received his Ph.D. in Computer Science from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1977 and his B.S. in Mathematics from Yale University. He is a Fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and a former chair of Special Interest Group on Operating Systems (SIGOPS). He is author or co-author of approximately 25 technical papers, books, and patents.