

▼ **CASE 90 TRIES TO UNITE AND DEFINE CASE COMMUNITIES**

RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS in computer-aided software engineering often work isolated from each other, which has led to differing definitions of and approaches to CASE. To help unite the CASE community and define what CASE is, the organizers of the International Workshop on CASE set up several tracks based on position papers that relied heavily on audience participation to discuss issues and help engender a consensus. CASE 90, held Dec. 5-8 in Irvine, Calif., drew about 175 people.

"We have spent much time as a field on architecture. We're busy developing environments and dropping them into users' offices," said Elliot Chikofsky, chief scientist at Progress Software, in his opening address, "Now it is time for us to face the people problems: the economics [of implementing CASE] and how people will adapt to the technology."

Because of the conference's nature, there were no broad issues agreed to. However, one theme pervaded several sessions and ad-

resses: the chicken-and-egg dilemma that the CASE industry faces in convincing developers to adopt the technology. Managers tend to introduce technology gradually, both to minimize risk and gain confidence in the approach. But CASE is an attempt to integrate and automate components across the life cycle, so a gradual approach does not result in the benefits claimed. Because of this, "CASE has not been successful in the context of software development. Some tools may be, but not CASE per se," said Manny Lehman, head of the Computing Dept. at Imperial College in London, in his keynote address.

Furthermore, despite some vendors' claims of immediate rewards for investing in CASE tools, "there is a long lead time to visible benefit," Lehman said. Users must wait until after they have overcome the learning costs and then, once experienced with the technology, wait until after product deployment to see what savings result, he said.

— *Galen Gruman, Editor*