

Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM
27th November 2013
BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present

Ingo Frommholz, Charlie Hull, Udo Kruschwitz (minutes), Andrew MacFarlane, Miguel Martinez-Alvarez, Silviu Paun, Aingaran Pillei, Stefan Ruger, Tony Russell-Rose, John Tait (Chair), Nilesh Thatte (Treasurer), Max L. Wilson

Apologies

M-Dyaa Albakour, Leif Azzopardi, Ayse Goker, Dawei Song

1. Welcome from the chair

The chair welcomed everyone for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Committee Members' Reports*3.1 Chair*

The chair thanked Andrew MacFarlane for his very effective term as a chair of the IRSG committee and thanked him especially for having served 15 years on the committee in various roles. He also thanked Murat Yakici and Jun Wang, who were stepping down, for their several years of service to the committee and especially Murat as the former Web master for the IRSG.

The chair briefly outlined the events which the IRSG was involved in throughout the current year. The three main events were ECIR 2013 in Moscow, ICTIR 2013 in Copenhagen and Search Solutions 2013 in London. IRSG was also involved in ESSIR 2013 in Granada (with FDIA 2013), a joint meeting with ISKO UK, Enterprise Search Europe 2013 (both in London) as well as the 6th IRF Conference in Crete. The events have been very successful (more details on some of the conferences discussed later on).

The question was raised whether the committee would be willing to support EuroHCIR and the chair confirmed that this is possible but needs to be submitted as a proposal to a committee meeting.

Informer, the quarterly online newsletter of the IRSG, is now well-established as a Wordpress edition after its relaunch in January 2012. The chair pointed out that many people continue to be involved in this process and he invited others to contribute too. In general the change of format was seen as a good move with over 1,700 unique visitors in the past six months.

The fourth annual Karen Sparek Jones (KSJ) award will be announced soon. The winner will be invited to give a keynote talk at ECIR 2014. Diane Kelly was the 2012 award winner who gave a wonderful talk at ECIR 2013 which can be found when searching "*Diane Kelly ECIR*" on YouTube.

The key dates for the current round are:

- Announcement and deadline for nomination has passed
- 15 December 2013: notification of the prize winner
- 13-17 April 2014: winner presents keynote at ECIR in Amsterdam

The chair reported that Microsoft has agreed to renew the sponsorship of the award for a further five years. He also thanked Ayse Göker who is stepping down after seeing the award through its first five-year run.

ECIR 2013 was held in Moscow in April 2013. The conference was very well run and also scientifically very successful despite poor weather (thanks to Yandex for putting in additional resources to avoid people having to go outside for lunch!) There were over 300 participants in total many of whom new to ECIR.

The paper details are as follows:

- Full papers: 191 submitted, 30 accepted as full paper (21 of which student papers), 25 accepted as short paper (16 student papers)
- Short papers (posters): 78 submitted, 38 accepted (28 student papers)
- Short paper (demo): 18 submitted, 10 accepted (3 student papers)
- In total: 287 submissions, 108 accepted which gives an overall acceptance rate of 36%.

It was discussed whether the conference has become perhaps a bit too competitive but there were opposing opinions on this. Overall the conference was reported to have been very lively with a diverse range of topics.

ECIR 2014 will be held in Amsterdam (13-16 April 2014). ECIR 2015 will be held in Vienna. This year we received three bids, apart from Vienna there were two other strong bids from the University of Bedfordshire and the University of Padua. A call for hosting ECIR 2016 will go out in the summer.

The fourth International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval (ICTIR) was held in Copenhagen this year. The chair reported that ICTIR is now likely to become a SIGIR conference with a slightly broader appeal. The IRSG will still be involved but in a more limited way.

The chair set out his priorities for the next year. These centre around the following three points:

- Make the operation of the committee more transparent
- Improve democratic accountability
- Better mobilise the group's resources towards supporting the community.

3.2 Treasurer

The treasurer presented the finances for the financial year September 2012 - August 2013. Overall a deficit of £1,960 was reported, the first deficit ever for the IRSG.

It was suggested that the committee should not use resources for members of the committee to travel to conferences. John Tait pointed out that the aggregate figures reported are difficult to interpret and that some of the money spent would not have been available to spend on anything else.

It was noted that the income of the group came from organising Search Solutions and ECIR. However, ECIR profits are not included in the balance sheet as this goes directly to the next ECIR conference to support student travel.

The chair stressed that the figures this year are not what he would like to present at an AGM.

4. Election of new committee members

The chair displayed a current list of committee members and pointed out that there are currently two vacancies to be filled.

The list of current committee members:

Chair: John Tait

Vice Chair: Tony Russell-Rose

Secretary: Udo Kruschwitz

Treasurer: Nilesh Thatte

Membership Secretary: Leif Azzopardi

Web Coordinator: M-Dyaa Albakour

Publicity Officer: Ingo Frommholz

ECIR PC Chair Representatives: Maarten De Rijke, Andi Rauber

Other Committee Members: Ayse Göker, Michael Oakes, Stefan Rüger, Dawei Song, Murat Yakici (standing down), Andy MacFarlane (standing down), Jun Wang (standing down)

Invitations to stand as a new committee member were invited before the meeting and in total seven applications were received by the secretary which satisfied all requirements, i.e. candidate to be a member of the IRSG with two IRSG members supporting the application.

The chair noted that an electronic vote is hoped to be introduced for next year's election and a change of constitution has already been discussed in the most recent IRSG committee meeting. However, based on the current constitution the election of committee members is conducted by the AGM attendees. The chair pointed out that only BCS members can vote which made it eight eligible votes. Candidates for the two vacancies were: Ingemar Cox, Haiming Liu, Andy MacFarlane, Georgios Paltoglou, Gabriella Pasi, Henrik Strindberg, Max L. Wilson.

Andrew MacFarlane (proposed/seconded by John Tait and Stefan Rüger) and Max L. Wilson (proposed/seconded by Udo Kruschwitz and Leif Azzopardi) received the largest number of votes and were duly elected into the committee.

5. Closure of meeting

The chair declared the meeting closed.