Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM
27th November 2014
BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present
M-Dyaa Albakour, Ingo Frommholz, Katja Hofmann, Udo Kruschwitz (minutes), Craig Macdonald, Andrew MacFarlane, Iadh Ounis, Tony Russell-Rose, Christopher Semturs, John Tait (Chair), Nilesh Thatte (Treasurer), Martin White

Apologies
Leif Azzopardi, Ayse Göker, Michael Oakes, Max L. Wilson

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 Nilesh Thatte who stepped down as Treasurer. He also thanked Leif Azzopardi, stepping down after many years of service in various roles, most recently as Membership Secretary. Finally he also thanked Dawei Song who stepped down from the committee as well.

The chair briefly outlined the events which the IRSG was involved in throughout the current year. The two main events were ECIR 2014 in Amsterdam and Search Solutions 2014 in London. IRSG was also involved in EuroHCIR 2014, Making Metadata work - a one-day event jointly organised with ISKO UK, Enterprise Search Europe 2014 (all in London) as well as IRFC 2014 (jointly with MUMIA) in Copenhagen (which was a success with over 60 attendees).

Informer, the quarterly online newsletter of the IRSG, is now well-established. The chair pointed out that many people continue to be involved in producing the newsletter, in particular Cathal Gurrin, Tony Russell-Rose, Tyler Tate, Andy MacFarlane and Udo Kruschwitz. There have been almost 1000 unique visitors to the site in the past month alone.

The fifth annual Karen Spärck Jones (KSJ) award will be announced next week. The winner will be invited to give a keynote talk at ECIR 2015. Eugene Agichtein (Emory University) was the 2013 award winner who gave a well-received talk at ECIR 2014.

The chair thanked Microsoft Research for continuing sponsorship of the award.

The IRSG is also represented on the panel of the prestigious Tony Kent Strix award and the 2014 winner is Susan Dumais (Microsoft).

ECIR 2014 was held in Amsterdam. The conference was very successful with over 270 participants in total many of whom new to ECIR.

There were 288 submissions in total, the details are as follows:

- ⚔ 142 full papers submitted (acceptance rate 23%)
- ⚔ 120 short papers submitted (acceptance rate 50%)
- ⚔ 26 demonstrations submitted (acceptance rate 58%)
- ⚔ 58% of the submissions were from Europe (8% from the Netherlands), 18% from Asia, 19% from North and South America, 6% from North Africa and the Middle East.

ECIR 2015 will be held in Vienna (29 March - 2 April 2015). ECIR 2016 will be held in Padua. A strong bid was also received from the University of Bedfordshire. A call for hosting ECIR 2017 will go out in the summer.

The International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval (ICTIR) has now been made a SIGIR conference and the next one will be held in 2015 in Northampton, Massachusetts. The IRSG keeps being involved and appoints a member to the ICTIR Steering Committee.

Elections were held electronically for the first time this year and the chair suggested that in future years candidates should provide a bio and a short statement.

The chair set out his priorities for the next year in line with last year's priorities. These centre around the following three points:
- ⚔ Make the operation of the committee more transparent (he still wants to progress on this)
- ⚔ Improve democratic accountability (electronic elections introduced this year are part of this process)
- ⚔ Better mobilise the group's resources towards supporting the community.

3.2 Treasurer

The treasurer presented the finances for the financial year September 2013 - August 2014. Overall a profit of £2,592 was reported (based on an income of £7,802 and expenses of £5,210). Roll-over funds of £5,903 were reported (on top of the group's budget).

The income was the profit made by organising Search Solutions 2013 (£5,302) and Microsoft's sponsorship of the KSJ award (£2,500). Expenses were broken down as KSJ award expenses (£1,920), sponsorship of events (£1,020), travel expenses (£724) and catering (£677). Sponsored events included ECIR 2014 and the Autumn School on Information Foraging.

It was discussed whether any income was generated from organising ECIR. The chair pointed out that as a UK-registered charity the BCS cannot underwrite activities such as ECIR and therefore any profits made from the conference would be better used to

support students directly rather than generate income for the group and pass through the accounts of the BCS. Andy MacFarlane reported that most recent ECIRs made modest profits which were then passed on to support students at the next conference. The discussion concluded with the members' request to the committee to make sure that future ECIR organisers provide more detailed financial reporting, more specifically a pro-forma report after hosting the conference including information about the budget (with income and expenditure) was requested.

The chair pointed out that the group now has a significant amount of money to initiate things as there is now some money for sponsorship available.

Finally, it was confirmed that tutorials at Search Solutions 2014 were reimbursed exactly like in the previous year.

4. Changes to the constitution

The proposed changes to the constitution were handed out by the chair. The suggestions were mainly aimed at addressing three issues: (1) the current constitution does not follow current BCS rules and best practice, (2) the current rules do not reflect how the group was working, (3) there are contradictory rules. One of the main proposed changes is the introduction of electronic voting in the constitution, an idea that is supported by the BCS. The changes were originally discussed and approved in the committee meeting in January 2014.

One question was raised in regards to the requirement to be a member of the BCS to vote for the committee members but committee members of the IRSG would not be required to join the BCS. The chair explained that the voting rule was a BCS requirement that could not be changed but it was considered unreasonable to ask all committee members to join the BCS.

The suggested changes were accepted unanimously.

5. Elections to fill vacancies on the committee

The chair reminded the group that nominations to stand for official officer roles or to join the committee as ordinary members went out on 13th October 2014 and closed on 29th October 2014.

Following the nomination period the following candidates for officer positions were elected unopposed for the term ending in 2016:

Chair: John Tait
Treasurer: Ingo Frommholz
Secretary: Udo Kruschwitz
Membership Secretary: Michael Oakes

Continuing members on the committee are as follows:

- ⚖ Elected members to 2015: Andy MacFarlane, Max Wilson

⚞ ECIR PC chair representatives: Maarten De Rijke (2014), Andi Rauber (2015), ex officio: Nicola Ferro (2016)

There were six vacancies for the committee and eight nominations were received. IRSG members and BCS members were eligible to stand and nominate but only BCS members who joined the IRSG were eligible to cast their vote. An online voting process was implemented and emails sent out via the BCS. Voting started on 31st October and closed on 25th November 2014.

No additional votes were received from BCS members attending the AGM. The six elected committee members are M-Dyaa Albakour, Maarten De Rijke, Ayse Göker, Stefan Rüger, Tony Rusell-Rose and Emine Yilmaz (Martin White withdrew his candidacy).

6. AOB
There was no "any other business".

7. Closure of meeting
The chair declared the meeting closed.