

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting

21 February 2018

BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present

Stefan Ruger [SR] (Chair), John Tait [JT] (Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Udo Kruschwitz [UK], Dyaa Albakour [DA], Steven Zimmerman [SZ], Jochen Leidner [JL].

Via Open Meeting Video Conference/Dial in

Craig McDonald [CM], Ayse Goker [AG], Haiming Liu [HL], Phillip Mayr-Schlegel [PMS], Frank Hopfgartner [FH].

1. Apologies

Lorraine Goeriot [LG], Andrew MacFarlane [AM]. Received after meeting: Michael Oakes [MO].

2. Minutes of Previous IRSG Committee Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017 were approved as a true record subject to UK advising separately of a couple of typos.

3. Matter arising (covered under appropriate agenda item where possible)

Actions for the previous meeting:

Action Number	Action	Status
Nov 17.01	Ensure KSJ Award is signed by all parties	Continues as Feb 18.04
Nov 17.02	LG to keep and pass on a record of what worked well and what did not in organising ECIR 2018.	Continues as Feb 18.14
Nov 17.03	Include short talk on IRSG in Search Solutions 2017 programme.	Done
Nov 17.04	Propose organising a Spring Meeting in Glasgow in 2018 or 2019.	Done
Nov 17.05	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	Continuing as Feb 18.15
Nov 17.06	Get ECIR.INFO to point to the ECIR2018 Web site.	Done

4. Matters agreed by email

None

5. Chair's Report

The chair noted an approach had been made by RUSSIR for funding which would be discussed under Item 6.

6. RUSSIR

RUSSIR is a summer school event which has been run for a number of years in Russia, with which several of the committee were familiar, and indeed at which the chair had presented.

A request had been received to provide £2000 of support for students to attend the summer school. This would be used to provide grants of €500 per student towards travel, accommodation etc. A suitable selection mechanism to ensure fair and appropriate allocation of grants for recipients had been provided by the organisers.

The Secretary had checked with BCS HQ there were no issues arising from continued UK Sanction against Russia in relation to this request.

Following a general discussion of the group's overall 2017/18 commitments and financial position, the request was **approved** unanimously, on the understanding the organisers would invoice no later than 31 August 2018.

Action: JT (as secretary) to advise RUSSIR Organisers, outline reporting mechanisms, and put them in touch with IF to make payment arrangements.

7. Search Solutions 2017

The Tutorial Day had been more successful than ever, with all tutorials proceeding and high attendance.

Over 70 attendees had attended the main day.

The Industry Awards had gone well, generating significant interest, including a request from KPMG for a testimonial.

Action: JT to ask Tony Russell-Rose for results of the feedback collected on the day.

8. Organisation of Search Solutions 2018

The chair noted the need for: a continued close relationship with the organisation of this event; to ensure it was clearly an IRSG event (although joint with ISKO); and for clear reporting to the IRSG Committee.

UK, IF, DA, JL and SZ and FH volunteered to be members of the organising group, and this was agreed.

Action: the secretary was asked to invite Tony Russell-Rose to be a member of the organising committee.

Action: the secretary was asked to confirm AM wished to continue as Tutorial organiser, with HL if she was willing.

9. May Glasgow Meeting

CM had been progressing with arrangements to hold a one day meeting in Glasgow with the topic of "Explainability in IR". An IRSG committee meeting would be held before or after the event.

The University (of Glasgow) is willing to host such an event for free, but there was a short discussion of the possibility of holding the meeting in the IET Teachers Building. CM agreed to explore this option.

The date was set as either w/c 14 May 2018 or w/c 21 May 2018, but could not be finalised until the IET had been approached.

It was **agreed** to provide some funding to support the travel of a key note speaker, subject to budgetary constraints.

10. September? One Day Meeting

There was a short discussion of organising a meeting in September or October 2018, which would incorporate the AGM. A day time, one day meeting or an evening meeting were consider possible.

It was noted that including a modest registration fee tends to increase attendance for registered delegates.

Action: it was agreed the secretary should draft a call for proposals and circulate this for comment.

11. Making ECIR a Stronger Conference

11.1 ECIR IRJ Partnership Proposal

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting describing a proposed working arrangement which would allow selected papers published in the Information Retrieval Journal to be presented at ECIR and also allow the authors of selected ECIR papers to produce revised papers which would be fast-tracked into a special issue of IRJ.

Although the committee were broadly supportive of the proposed arrangement, members had a number of issues with the current proposal:

- 1) It needs to be clear that the arrangement does not commit BCS-IRSG and ECIR to work exclusively and permanently with the Information Retrieval Journal.
- 2) That the process of selecting papers from the IRJ needs to take account of the recency of the work and the relevance to the themes of the conference.
- 3) That the process of selection of papers from both the IRJ and ECIR needs to be fair, transparent and there needs to be clear feedback on why papers were selected.
- 4) Members considered the IRJ a theoretically focussed journal, whereas the focus of ECIR is broad including more empirical and practical work; committee members needed reassurance that the IRJ selection would not be such as to change the character of ECIR.

Action: JT to resolve issues with Springer and the IRJ editors

11.2 Making ECIR a Stronger Conference

There was a more general discussion of how to strengthen the reputation of ECIR. CM suggested more prominence of the CORE ranking. In the end it was agreed to continue the discussion by email.

Action: secretary to circulate current call for proposals for ECIR to committee for comment.

12. BCS Council Elections

After a short discussion, the committee agreed to support the candidacy of Soheir Ghallab.

Action: Chair to cast Group's vote for Soheir Ghallab.

13. KSJ Award

As noted in the previous meeting, the Chair has successfully negotiated a further five years of sponsorship from Microsoft Research.

Unfortunately the chair had not been able to confirm that all parties had signed the contract, and will pursue this action again.

Action: SR to ensure contract is signed.

14. ECIR 2018

In LG's absence the secretary presented a brief written report.

Everything is on track, people are registering (there were 110 registrants earlier on 21 Feb 2018).

Proceedings are with Springer. Venue, meals, social events are all booked.

Program and registration have been advertised, keynotes are confirmed.

Unfortunately the report didn't cover action Nov.04 which is carried forward as Feb 18.14.

Action: the secretary was asked to obtain confirmation of the financial position of the conference.

UK noted that he believed the lack of financial support was preventing some invited Micros/SMEs from attending. After a short discussion it was agreed that the IRSG should provide £2000 of funding for travel/accommodation for this group.

Action: JT to inform The Industry Day Chairs (Gabiella Kazai and Miguel Martinez) of the availability of this funding and agree a mechanism with them and the ECIR 2019 General Chairs to disburse it.

The chair noted that it was pleasing everything was running smoothly.

15. ECIR 2019

PMS reported everything is proceeding satisfactorily.

The logo will be finalised by 2 March 2018.

The web site should be available shortly, certainly in time for ECIR 2018.

PMS will attend and speak at ECIR 2019 and will point out travel arrangements etc.

There was a short discussion of possibly changing the schedule, and running Industry Day in parallel with the final day of the academic programme. The committee pointed out the problems which had been experienced with this arrangement in the past, and that the Friday of the week of the conference is an official and religious holiday in many European Countries, making it unsuitable for Industry Day. The committee made clear their preference was for Workshops on Sunday, Main Programme on Monday to Wednesday, and Industry Day on Thursday, possibly with an early close to facilitate travel.

Action: PMS agreed to convey this meeting to his fellow chairs who were meeting on Monday 26 February 2018.

16. ICTIR report

The call for ICTIR 2020 had been issued. More once proposal are received.

17. Finance

The treasurer noted that the group had about £5,500 to spend on student support, conferences, etc. The meeting committed £4000 of this, subject to meeting organisers satisfying various conditions plus some support for the May Glasgow meeting.

JT reminded the committee if this money was not spent it could not be carried forward to be spent in future years.

Action: the treasurer asked members to get in touch with him if there were unpaid expense claims

18. Informer

The Winter issue had eventually come out in early February.

As ever there was an appeal for contributions from members.

19. Any Other Business

None.

20. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in Glasgow on either the week commencing 14 May or week commencing 21 May 2018. The precise date and time will be advised by email shortly.

21. Actions Arising From Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
Feb 18.01	Advise RUSSIR Organisers of Students Awards and necessary arrangements.	JT
Feb 18.02	Request further information about the financial position of the conference.	JT
Feb 18.03	Inform the ECIR 2019 Industry Day Chairs (Gabriella Kazai and Miguel Martinez) of the availability of this funding and agree a mechanism to disburse it.	JT
Feb 18.04	Ensure KSJ Award is signed by all parties	SR
Feb 18.05	Ask Tony Russell-Rose (Search Solutions Organiser) for results of feedback collected on the day.	JT
Feb 18.06	Invite Tony Russell-Rose to be an Organiser of Search Solutions 2018.	JT
Feb 18.07	Invite AM and HL to be Tutorial Organisers for Search Solutions 2018.	JT
Feb 18.08	Draft Call for proposals for a one day meeting in September/October 2018 to include AGM.	JT
Feb 18.09	Resolve issues raised by committee with IRJ Editors and Springer.	JT
Feb 18.10	Circulate current Call for proposal for ECIR to the committee	JT
Feb 18.11	Cast Group's vote in BCS Council Elections for Soheir Ghallab	SR
Feb 18.12	Convey committee views on scheduling to ECIR 2018 Chairs.	PMS
Feb 18.13	Advise IF of unpaid expense claims.	Everyone
Feb 18.14	LG to keep and pass on a record of what worked well and what did not in organising ECIR 2018.	LG
Feb 18.15	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	Everyone