

Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM
16th November 2011
BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present

Elham Ashoori, Aloysius Edoh, Ingo Frommholz, Charlie Hull, Frances Johnson, Gabriella Kazai, Udo Kruschwitz (minutes), Graham Land, Andrew MacFarlane (Chair), Tony Russell-Rose, John Tait, Nilesh Thatte (Treasurer),

Apologies

M-Dyaa Albakour, Ayse Göker, Dawei Song, Murat Yakici

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 briefly outlined the events which the IRSG was involved in last year, primarily ECIR 2011 in Dublin (with ECIR Industry Day), ICTIR 2011 in Bertinoro and Search Solutions 2011 in London. All events have been very successful.

The first edition of a revamped Informer, the group's quarterly newsletter, is expected to come out in January 2012. Tony Russell-Rose asked for input. Three articles are ready, and it was agreed to aim for summaries of Enterprise Search Europe and Search Solutions to be included in the January issue.

The group's Web presence will need to be completely overhauled. Tony suggested that a half-day session be organized. This session would focus on working out the details (with a focus on user experience) and invited everybody interested to take part in this. Andy MacFarlane offered to host this at City University.

The annual Karen Spärck Jones (KSJ) award has been awarded for the second time this year. The 2010 winner is Evgeniy Gabrilovich (Yahoo! Research California) who was invited to give a keynote talk at ECIR 2011. The key dates for the next round of applications are:

- Announcement out later this week
- Mid/end of December: deadline for nominations
- Mid-January 2012: notification of the prize winner
- April 2012: winner presents keynote at ECIR in Barcelona

Ayse Göker is the contact person for the award. The award winner will not be announced until ECIR but the idea was brought up to include a short teaser on the award winner in the January issue of Informer.

ECIR 2011 was held in Dublin in April 2011. It was a very well run and successful conference with an excellent number of submissions and high paper quality. The details are as follows:

- 45 papers accepted from 223 papers submitted (acceptance rate of 20%, 62% of authors of accepted papers were students)
- 17 short papers accepted from 48 submissions (rate 35%)
- 24 Posters, 6 Demonstrations from 64 submissions (acceptance rate of 46%)
- 2 well regarded keynote speakers (Thorsten Joachims and Kalervo Järvelin) as well as the KSJ Award Keynote speaker
- Sponsorship from Google, MS Research, Yahoo! Research, DCU, SFI, Bing, Failte Ireland, Clarity, CNGL, Yahoo! Labs, Meet in Ireland.
- 2nd KSJ Award

ECIR 2012 will be held in Barcelona (1-5 April 2012), organized by Yahoo! Research and Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The discussion on papers is to end soon with notifications expected shortly.

A single bid was received to host ECIR 2013. This bid was discussed in great detail and after having received a number of revisions regarding the proposed conference organization and the clarification of some issues raised during the discussion in the committee it was decided to award the 2013 conference to Yandex in Moscow. This will be the first ECIR to be held in Eastern Europe.

In the discussion that followed the concern was raised that if ECIR's acceptance rate falls below 20%, there is a risk that good papers get rejected and that it cannot be guaranteed that the right papers get accepted. A robust mechanism needs to be in place to address such issues. The chair proposed that this discussion should be taken offline and discussed in more detail at the next committee meeting.

ICTIR 2011 was held in Bertinoro (Italy) in September. According to the organisers the conference went very well with 25 full papers and 13 posters presented. The conference programme included two high-profile keynote speakers (Keith van Rijsbergen and Chengxiang Zhai). Sponsors were Almagest, Microsoft Research and Yahoo! Labs.

Another edited Springer book with Andy as editor is now available online, the hard copy will be published shortly. This book is now dedicated to the memory of IR colleague Efthi Efthimiadis who passed away during the final stages of this book.

3.2 Treasurer

IRSG is financially very healthy and has never delivered a deficit (without even charging membership fees). Over the last financial year the group has again made a small surplus with an expenditure of £4,000 and an income of £4,500.

Financial Management is now with BCS head quarters. As a result budgeting has become more difficult. The chair suggested that any surplus from ECIR should be used for next year's event.

4. Election of new committee

The chair displayed a current list of committee members and nominations for the new committee. Two AGM attendees put forward their name for the new committee:

John Tait, johntait.net Ltd
Ingo Frommholz, University of Bedfordshire

The chair asked for a block election of the committee. The list of committee members put forward for block election was as follows:

Leif Azzopardi, Stefan Rüger, Tony Russell-Rose, Ayse Göker, Monica Landoni, Murat Yakici, Andy MacFarlane, Michael Oakes, Gabriella Kazai, Dawei Song, Mike Taylor, Udo Kruschwitz, Vinay Vishwa, Nilesh Thatte, Jun Wang, M-Dyaa Albakour, John Tait, Ingo Frommholz

Proposed by Udo Kruschwitz, seconded by Tony Russell-Rose.

There was some discussion regarding potential conflicts of interest when it comes to committee members who work for companies that sponsor ECIR events. Furthermore, Charlie Hull suggested that the IRSG should seek closer links to Meetup groups such as Enterprise Search London and Cambridge. All these issues will be discussed at the next committee meeting (that is also where the exact roles of committee members will be decided).

5. Any other business

Tony was happy to report that introducing tutorials at Search Solutions was a great success. Both tutorials were fully booked. A discussion started and there was consensus in the audience that the IRSG should consider offering more tutorials, possibly several throughout the year. One suggestion was to have four tutorials at Search Solutions 2012. Other suggestions included training sessions for unemployed BCS members (with free entry), more input from academic institutions and in particular more students, a tutorial on open-source software (Tony to talk to Charlie). It was agreed that Search Solutions 2012 should be planned with two extra days for tutorials (this year there was one day for tutorials, followed by Search Solutions). The dates will be around the same time as this year.

John Tait suggested that BCS members should lobby for search skills to be included in BCS-accredited degree courses.

7. Closure of meeting

The chair declared the meeting closed.