

Minutes of the BCS-IRSG AGM Imperial College London, 12th April 2006

Present

Margaret Graham (Chair), Andrew MacFarlane (Minutes), Leif Azzopardi, Alex Bailey, Iadh Ounis, Stephen Robertson, Gianni Amati, Claudio Carpineto, Fabio Crestani, David Hawking, Fabio Crestani, Mounia Lalmas, Craig MacDonald, Michelle Fisher, Stefan Reuger, Michael Oakes, Simon Overell and Ali Azimi Bolourian.

Apologies

No apologies were received for the meeting.

1. Welcome from the chair

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Margaret Graham reported that Page 1, Item 3.1, paragraph BCS IRSG, BCS and SIGIR04; 2nd sentence should be corrected to: "BCS agreed to underwrite SIGIR 2004 to the sum of £10,000."

Leif Azzopardi reported a minor error in Page 3, Item 4, 1st paragraph, 11th Line; 'tacking' should be replaced by 'taking'.

The minutes were approved with these changes. Proposed by Stephen Robertson, seconded by Iadh Ounis.

3. Matter Arising

Item 3.1 - Margaret Graham reported that income from SIGIR 2004 for the BCS was around £30,000; which, on the recommendation of the Sheffield organisers was split 50:50 with IRSG.

Item 4 - Andrew MacFarlane reported that the BCS do indeed provide secretarial support and free credit card bookings for the groups activities. The organisers of Industry Day 2006 had used this service for registrations and the process had worked very well indeed.

Item 6 – Andrew MacFarlane reported that the committee had not discussed this issue during the year, but there has been considerable discussion in the past about it. ECIR and its precursors have always been held around Easter.

4. Committee Members Reports

3.1 Chair

Margaret Graham (Chair) reported on a number of areas of the committee's activities during the year as follows:

Sponsorship: The committee had sponsored 10 UK based students to attend SIGIR 2005 using profit from SIGIR 2004 proceeds – the expenditure was approximately £5,000. This sponsorship will be repeated this year to allow UK students to attend SIGIR 2006. The committee also sponsored COLIS5 – this was a successful event which benefited IRSG members individually via reduced registration fee and gave the group some useful publicity.

Informer: The group's quarterly newsletter, the Informer, goes from strength to strength, largely thanks to the efforts of the Editor, Tony Rose. The chair reported that we would value input from members in the following areas:

- Informative articles
- Reviews
- Summaries of research
- Profiles
- Event advertising and event reporting.

Events: ECIR 2006 has proved to be very successful so far with a record number of submissions, acceptances and registrants. The profit from ECIR 2005 for the IRSG was approximately £4,000.

One-day events: Our access to BCS London offices at Covent Garden means we have an excellent venue at no cost with administration support provided from BCS. The committee is actively looking to run more one-day events, keeping prices low for members. Alex Bailey reported on progress for Industry Day 2006; this has been very successful so far with around 45 people registered with a good balance between members from both academia and industry.

Plans for 2006/07: The group has a number events planned for the next calendar year. We plan to run another Industry Day (possibly at the end of April, as ECIR 2007 is being held in Rome). A reviewing workshop is being planned for the middle of June. Leif Azzopardi gave an overview of this workshop. It was proposed at the last committee meeting to examine some issues that have arisen during the reviewing process. ECIR has always had a student focus and it is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure quality given the increase in submissions and keep the student focused ethos. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss how the reviewing should be conducted in the light of this, by looking at such issues as bringing in Meta-Reviewers, Quantity vs. Quality and training of reviewers. An IR teaching workshop (TLIR 2007) will be held in January 2007, a call for papers has already gone out and a web site (<http://tlir07 soi.city.ac.uk/>) has been set up.

2007 - 50th anniversary of BCS: A series of events being planned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the BCS, as well as engaging in a major recruitment drive. All BCS branches and SGs have been invited to participate. The group is proposing to hold a series of talks/seminars on the history of IR in the UK, using some theme such as 'IR, past present and future'. Members should look out for more information about this and other events to be held in this calendar year.

IRSG Membership: The Current membership level is approximately 350 people. To become a member is a very simple and free process from our web site – the chair encouraged colleagues and students interested in IR to join the group.

Web Site: A great deal of effort has been expended in getting the IRSG web site up and running using the BCS web site hosting service. Members can upload content dynamically, and the chair asked members to consider advertising their research groups, events and activities.

Committee: We have had three committee meetings over the year and have used email to carry out business. We also have set up a committee space on the web site for sharing and archiving material, such as committee meeting and AGM minutes etc. The chair reported some changes in roles since the last AGM. Margaret Graham has taken over the committee chair from Ayse Goker. Stefan Rueger took over the Treasurers role from Margaret Graham in November 2005. The chair reported some resignations from the committee: John Davies (Industry Rep) and Zia Syed (Student rep). The chair thanked them both for their contributions to the committee activities over the years. The chair encouraged new people (young and not so young) to become active in the IR community through membership of the Committee. Finally, the chair reported that she was standing down from the role with immediate effect, as she only agreed to undertake the role for a year. The Chair is also resigning from the Committee although will be around as immediate Past Chair for the next calendar year.

3.2 Secretary

The secretary (Andrew MacFarlane) reported that he has been very busy with ECIR 2006 this year, but had not been deflected by this activity from undertaking committee work. The committee had run very smoothly this year, given a number of important changes to it.

3.2 Treasurer

The treasurer (Stefan Rueger) reported that the committee was in a very good financial position with a balance of around £25k. There has been very little expenditure for committee meetings with some significant income being received. BCS HQ now conducts the financial business for the group; statements for the financial year are due in around one months time.

5. IRSG Constitution

The BCS is a charity. As a consequence, all branches and specialist groups – including IRSG – are now required to have their own constitution. The Chair has used a model constitution available from BCS and incorporated some of the IRSG's previous customs and practices to make it relevant to the group and its activities. The SG Executive Committee have had to approve it – hence the delays in getting our proposed constitution out to membership in advance of this AGM. The chair discussed the draft and its details with members present and noted some changes (the final approved version is included in an appendix at the end of these minutes). Proposed by Alex Bailey, seconded by Stephen Robertson and passed unanimously by all present.

6. Election of new committee

The following table show nominations for the new committee together with any roles to be undertaken:

Name	Role	1 st Nomination	2 nd Nomination
Stefan Rueger	Treasurer	Iadh Ounis	Leif Azzopardi
Tony Rose	Vice-Chair	Alex Bailey	Stefan Rueger
Juan M. Fernandez-Luna		Iadh Ounis	Alex Bailey
Iadh Ounis	ECIR Conference co-ordinator	Leif Azzopardi	Stephen Robertson
Ayse Goker	IR Book/Past Chair	Stephen Robertson	Iadh Ounis
Alex Bailey	One Day event co-ordinator	Andrew MacFarlane	Margaret Graham
Monica Landoni		Stephen Robertson	Stefan Rueger
Murat Yakici	Web Master	Leif Azzopardi	Mark Ballie
Margaret Graham	Immediate Past Chair	Alex Bailey	Andrew MacFarlane
Andrew MacFarlane	Secretary	Alex Bailey	Margaret Graham
Simon Overell	Student Rep	Stefan Rueger	Leif Azzopardi
Ali Azimi Bolourian	Student Rep	Iadh Ounis	Stefan Rueger
Michael Oakes		Alex Bailey	Stefan Rueger
Leif Azzopardi	Chair	Margaret Graham	Andrew MacFarlane

The chair declared the candidates to be elected to the committee.

7. Any other business

Alex Bailey suggested that the committee needs to publise more events to the membership, in order to let them know what we do. This will be discussed in the committee. ACTION: item to be put on agenda of next committee meeting.

8. Closure of meeting

The chair declared the meeting closed.

Appendix – Approved Constitution

BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SPECIALIST GROUP

CONSTITUTION

1. TITLE

The name shall be the BCS Information Retrieval Specialist Group (BCS IRSG) of the British Computer Society.

2. INTERPRETATION

In this constitution, except where otherwise required:

"Group" shall mean BCS Information Retrieval Specialist Group.

"BCS" shall mean British Computer Society.

"Member" or "Members" shall mean a person or persons qualified under article 4 of this constitution.

"Committee" shall mean that body of members elected, appointed or co-opted under article 5 of this constitution.

"Officer" or "Officers" shall mean the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and such other appointments which the Group may make under article 5 of this constitution.

"Professional Member" or "Professional Members" shall mean a person or persons holding membership of the BCS in one of the following grades: Fellow (FBCS) or Member (MBCS)

"Chartered Member" or "Chartered Members" shall mean a person or persons holding membership of the BCS in one of the following grades: Fellow (FBCS CITP) or Member (MBCS CITP) and entitled to use the designation "Chartered Information Technology Professional."

3. OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Group include supporting communication between researchers and practitioners, promoting the use of IR methods in industry, and raising public awareness.

The Group produces a newsletter called, The Informer; organises an annual conference – European Conference on Information Retrieval Research, ECIR – and sponsors and organises other conferences, workshops and seminars.

Information Retrieval (IR) is concerned with enabling people to locate useful information in large, relatively unstructured, computer-accessible archives. Much of the technical challenge in IR is in finding ways to represent the information needs of users and to match these with the contents of an archive. In many cases, those information needs will be best met by locating suitable text documents, but in other cases it may require retrieval of other media, such as video, audio, and images. In addition, IR is also concerned with many of the wider goals of information/knowledge management, in the sense that finding suitable content may only be part of the solution - we may also need to consider issues associated with visualisation of the contents of an archive, navigation to related content, summarisation of content, extraction of tacit knowledge from the archive, etc.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Qualifications

Persons eligible for membership of the Group shall be any member of the BCS and others interested in the objectives and activities of the Group.

4.2 Admission

All applicants holding BCS membership at any level shall be admitted without charge or at an annual subscription rate to be determined by the Group (see article 7.5). Other applicants shall be admitted to membership without charge or after payment of the annual subscription in accordance with article 7.5.

4.3 Resignation

Any member of the Group may resign by giving notice in writing, or via email, at any time but shall not be entitled to a refund of any subscription paid.

4.4 BCS Membership

It shall be incumbent upon the Committee to encourage all members of the Group to apply for membership of the BCS.

5. COMMITTEE

5.1 Members

5.1.1 The business activities of the Group shall be controlled by the Committee which shall consist of a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary and such other Officer posts as may be required and seven other members who shall be elected at each AGM.

5.1.2 The Chair, Treasurer and Membership Secretary shall be professional or chartered members of the BCS.

5.1.3 In addition, it is expected that all the Committee members shall be members of the BCS.

5.1.4 The Chair shall be responsible to the BCS for the finance, policy and activities of the Group.

5.2 Eligibility of Officers for Re-Election

5.2.1 The Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary shall normally be elected for a term of two consecutive years.

5.2.2 No Officer may normally hold an office for more than a maximum of two consecutive terms each of two consecutive years.

5.2.3 The immediate past Chair shall be ex-officio a member of the Committee for a term of one year.

5.3 Nominations

The name of any member accepting nomination for election or re-election as an Officer or as a Committee member should be submitted in writing, or via email, to the Secretary 14 clear days prior to the date of the AGM by two members of the Group and with the written consent of the nominee.

5.4 Election of the Committee

5.4.1 If there is more than one nomination for any Officer positions, an election will be held at the AGM.

5.4.2 If the nominations number the same or less than the remaining vacancies for the Committee members, all shall be deemed to be duly elected.

5.4.3 In the event of there being more nominations than vacancies, the elections shall be by ballot. Each member present may vote for up to as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled and no more.

5.4.4 Committee members shall normally be elected for a term of two consecutive years.

5.5 Resignation from the Committee

5.5.1 In the event of any elected officer resigning, the Committee shall have the power to fill the vacancy.

5.5.2 In the event of a committee member resigning, their place may be filled by co-option for the residual of that individual term.

5.6 Co-option to the Committee

The Committee may normally co-opt to their number up to a maximum of three members serving at any one time. Co-opted members shall have the same voting rights as other members of the Committee.

In addition, the current Programme Chair of the Group's annual conference – European Conference on Information Retrieval Research (ECIR) – or their nominee, and the immediate past Programme Chair, shall be co-opted on to the Committee for a term of one year.

5.7 Committee Meetings

5.7.1 The Committee shall meet at such times and in such places as the Committee may determine and in so far as is practicable they shall meet at least four times per year.

5.7.2 All Committee members shall normally attend at least one Committee meeting per year.

5.8 Quorum

Three Committee members, including at least one Officer, shall constitute a quorum.

5.9 Voting

At any Committee meeting each member of the Committee present, save the Chair, shall be entitled to one vote but, in the event of equality, the Chair will use his/her casting vote.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

6.1 The AGM of the Group shall normally be held in the UK at the annual conference of the Group, European Conference on Information Retrieval Research (ECIR), when this is located in the UK, or as soon as possible after the last day of April, at the direction of the Committee, for transacting the following business:

- a. To receive the Annual Report of the Chair
- b. To receive a financial statement of accounts.
- c. To elect the Officers and Committee for the ensuing year.
- d. To consider any other business relevant to the AGM.

6.2 Notice of General Meetings

6.2.1 The notice shall be conveyed in writing or by email to every member of the Group.

6.2.2 The notice shall be issued at least 28 clear days before the date of the meeting and shall indicate the business to be transacted.

6.2.3 In the case of the AGM, the notice shall include a request for nominations of Officers, where applicable, and Committee members.

6.2.4 The accidental omission to give notice of any meeting or non-receipt of such notice by any person entitled to receive notice shall not invalidate any resolution passed.

6.3 Chair

At all General Meetings and meetings of the Committee the Chair of the Group, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair, shall be Chair. If both are absent, the members present shall appoint one of their number to be Chair.

6.4 Voting

At any General Meeting each bona fide member shall be entitled to one vote per motion. Voting at any meeting shall be determined by a show of hands unless a ballot be demanded by at least one third of the members present.

6.5 Quorum

At any General Meeting of the Group, ten members shall constitute a quorum. A list of members present at the general meeting will be kept.

6.6 Absence of Quorum

At the discretion of the Chair, any meeting may proceed with its business, but all resolutions passed must be confirmed at the first subsequent, quorate General Meeting.

6.7 Extraordinary General Meetings

Extraordinary General Meetings of the Group shall be convened by the Secretary by direction of the Committee or on the request of ten members.

7. FINANCES

7.1 All finances of the Group will be managed by BCS Accounting Service.

7.2 The Treasurer shall monitor and keep Records of Account as provided by the BCS Accounting Service and shall present as complete a statement of accounts as possible each year to the corresponding AGM.

7.3 The financial year of the Group shall commence on the first day of May each year.

7.4 The funds of the Group shall be under the control of the Committee.

7.5 The annual subscription rate shall be such amount as the Committee may from time to time decide. Currently the subscription rate is set at zero.

7.6 The annual subscription, where levied, shall normally become due on 1 January.

7.7 All membership fees and any surplus arising from the activities of the Group shall be managed in accordance with the financial guidelines agreed by the BCS.

8. RECORDS

8.1 A correct record of the proceedings of all Committee and General Meetings of the Group shall be kept by the Secretary.

8.2 The Membership Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a correct record of members of the Group.

9. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public announcements concerning the Group shall be made only by or with the consent of the Chair.

10. LOCAL MEETINGS

Local meetings of the Group may only be held with the consent of the Committee and the organiser shall notify local BCS branches and other relevant specialist groups.

11. BCS

The Group shall be subject to the BCS Charter, Byelaws, Members' Regulations and Trustee Board Regulations.

12. BCS SPECIALIST GROUPS ASSEMBLY & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12.1 The Group shall appoint two of its number, who shall hold professional or chartered membership of the BCS, to attend meetings of the BCS Specialist Groups Assembly as the Group's representatives.

12.2 The Group shall be required to submit an annual report to the BCS Specialist Groups' Executive Committee describing the Group's activities and budget projections.

13. WINDING UP

If upon winding up or dissolution of the Group, there remain, after the satisfaction of all its liabilities, any assets, they shall be vested in the BCS.

14. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution may be altered at any time by a two-thirds majority of the members present at a General Meeting.

[Approved 12 April 2006]