

**Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007**  
**BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building**

**Present**

Leif Azzopardi (Chair), Andrew MacFarlane (Minutes), Dell Zhang, Iadh Ounis, Mike Tyrrell, Keith Mannock, Simon Overell, Joao Magalhaes, Joe Bullock, Sukai Qiu, Leonard Will, Zoltan Szlavik, Udo Kruschwitz, Justin Victor, John McKechnie, Yunhyong Kim, Alex Bailey, Mounia Lalmas, Keith van Rijsbergen, Michael Oakes, Terence Freedman, Richard Allen, Tony Valsamidis and J. Wilkinson.

**Apologies**

No apologies were received for the meeting.

**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 agreed. Proposed by Simon Overell, seconded by Iadh Ounis.

There was one action on the committee to discuss the issue of publishing more events to the membership, this was done in a committee meeting and the action is completed.

**3. Committee Members Reports***3.1 Chair*

Membership: The chair reported that membership is increasing year on year. As at May, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, there were 655 members, this is an increase of 265 new members from May, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

Student Survey: Ali and Simon are conducting a student survey is underway to get feedback from participants of ECIR 2007 and BCS-IRSG student members. The results will be published in an up and coming Informer.

IR Groups: The committee is looking to collaborate with various groups such as ACM SIGIR, WGI, AIR SC. We are also building links with other European groups e.g. Italian French and German professional bodies. Also, the IRSG has supported several IR events such as £5,000 in bursaries to attend SIGIR 2006, sponsored several students to attend SPIRE 2006, and supported ECIR, Asian Information Retrieval Symposium, Teaching and Learning IR workshop, Search Solutions, Dutch-Belgian IR Workshop and two summer schools on Mutlimedia (SSMS) and IR (ESSIR). The IRSG has actively tried to support, sponsor and promote IR within the UK and abroad.

Informer: The IRSG publishes a quarterly newsletter called 'Informer' and the chair thanked Tony Rose for doing fantastic job on this. The newsletter has excellent content and is of very high quality.

Website: Murat Yakici has done a sterling job on the Web site, providing and improving facilities for the group such as handling registrations for the AGM, adding content and developing the site as an important IR resource.

Publicity: The group has been very active in thinking about method to improve publicity for the group in order to recruit more members. Ali Azimi Bolourian and Simon Overell have designed and created lots of different adverts (distributed at the AGM), Polo T-shirts for student prizes etc. We have also been advertising our events in Computing and Computing Weekly.

Publication: An IR book, which has been written by committee members for the most part and Co-edited by Ayse Goker will be published later this year entitled "Information Retrieval: Searching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".

BCS-IRSG European Conference in Information Retrieval: ECIR is main event for group, and is now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year. It is a premier event, with an increase terms of quality of submissions, number of submissions, number of attendees. The chair thanked the organisers of ECIR 2006, Stefan Rueger, Mounia Lalmas and Andrew MacFarlane for their efforts. New events such as Speakers corner were run for the first time, which generated a lot of discussion and delegated found these event rewarding. ECIR 2007 was held in Rome one month ago. The chair thanked the organisers for their efforts: the number of submissions increased from last year which mean a lower acceptance rate (an increase quality), but kept the student friendly approach as many students who were first authors had their papers accepted. The conference obtained a record level of sponsorship. ECIR 2007 built on the speaker's forum idea, by including a short papers session.

A Sub-PC reviewing mechanism was used for the first time which utilised small groups of reviewers to increase consistency etc: this strategy worked well this time. This Sub-PC emanated from a reviewing workshop, which the IRSG organised. Final figures have yet to be reported, but a small profit or break event point is expected. ECIR 2008, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference will be held in Glasgow. The format will be a three day conference, with a selection of workshops on an additional day. The organisers are planning an Industry Day 2008 to be run in conjunction with the conference. This is a very successful event, similar to Search Solutions event to be held tomorrow, witch invited talks from industry. Call for ECIR 2009 bid is now out, the deadline 29<sup>th</sup> June. It is due to be held in mainland Europe. Bid documents are available on the web site.

Other Events: A number of different events have been run in the past year including: ECIR 2006, Industry day 2006, Open Source IR (with the Open Source SG), Teaching and Learning in IR (TLIR 2007), and ECIR 2007. Future events include: Search Solutions 2007, Future Directions in Information Access (FDIA 2007), ECIR 2008 (together with related workshops and Information Interaction in Context (IiX 2008). The FDIA symposium, a new event, has been proposed because the acceptance rate for ECIR and the committee wishes to support PhD students and new researchers

early in their IR career to publish and get feedback from the IR community. The IiX 2008 conference is being run in conjunction with Queen Mary, University of London.

Finally the chair thanked the committee for all their efforts over the past year, in particular Andy MacFarlane as secretary and Tony Rose as the editor of Informer for doing a fantastic job in organizing and promoting the BCS-IRSG.

### *3.2 Treasurer*

The chair reported for the treasurer who could not attend. The past year has been good in terms of profit with a surplus of approximately £20,000 with good income from ECIR 2006, TLIR 2007, ID 2006. Due to changes to budgeting rules, the group needs more detailed planning for the year. This change was done with very little notice, but the treasurer anticipated this change and we will not be adversely affected.

## **4. Election of committee**

The chair displayed a current list of committee members and invited nominations for the committee. There were no nominations at the meeting. The chair asked for a block election of the committee. The list of committee members put forward for block election were as follows:

Stefan Rueger, Tony Rose, Juan M. Fernandez-Luna, Iadh Ounis, Ayse Goker, Alex Bailey, Monica Landoni, Murat Yakici, Andrew MacFarlane, Simon Overell, Ali Azimi Bolourian, Michael Oakes, David Losada, Gianni Amati and Paul Matthews.

Proposed by Terry Freedman, seconded by Keith van Rijsbergen.

## **5. Any other business**

### *5.1 Membership fees*

The chair stated that there is no membership fee currently, and asked the meeting if we should we introduce membership fees to support more events and editorial support for informer. The chair stated that there are good reasons not to – the group is in a good financial position and that we wanted to encourage membership by having no fees. Also, the mechanism for facilitating payments, etc for membership were not in place. However, Mike Tyrrell, a committee member of another specialist group, reported that it was now possible to take payments through the BCS database/infrastructure, so it can be done. Terry Freedman reported that there is a move to charge Non-BCS members fees for specialist groups, and should therefore think about becoming affiliates. Udo Kruschwitz suggested that if you don't need to charge membership fees, there is no point.

### *5.2 ECIR Rotation/Scope*

The chair raised this issue, in order to get feedback from membership on changes to rotation and scope. Currently the strategy is to run ECIR in the UK and mainland Europe in alternate years. There are a number of choices; let it be open to any part of Europe, have a three year rotation e.g. mainland Europe for two years then the UK for one year. There have been expressions of interest from members outside Europe, we could consider making the conference international. The general consensus of the meeting was to keep the current strategy.

### *5.3 Karen Sparck Jones*

The chair reported, with regret the death of Karen Sparck Jones. He asserted that she had made a significant contribution to empirical foundations of IR, including IDF (Inverse Document Frequency), Probabilistic Models, TREC, etc. The chair asked if the group should consider an award in honour of her memory e.g. award for early career researcher who presents at ECIR for outstanding contribution to IR experimentation. This can be awarded yearly or on an Ad-hoc basis. The chair suggested that this was a good way to commemorate her life and contribution to field. He then asked for suggestions from the floor. Keith van Rijsbergen fully supported this idea and suggested creating an artefact, a good example of this being the Tony Kent Stryx award.

## **6. Closure of meeting**

Chair declared the meeting closed.