Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM
1st April 2008
Bute Hall, University of Glasgow

Present

Leif Azzopardi (Chair), Andrew MacFarlane (Minutes), Iadh Ounis, Udo Kruschwitz, Alex Bailey, Michael Oakes, Ayse Goker, Malcolm Clark, Ian Ruthven, Nicola Ferro, Tony Rose, Mohand Boughanem, Gianluca Demartini, Stephen Robertson, Jaap Kamps, Djoerd Hiemstra, Ronald Teijiera Fernandez, Eduardo Ares, Roi Blanco, Aluaro Barreiro, Javier Parapar, Seung-Hoon Na, Neil Newbold.

Apologies

Ali Azimi Bolourian, Stefan Ruger (Treasurer).

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 Ayse Goker, seconded by Tony Rose.

3. Committee Members Reports

3.1 Chair

Membership is increasing year on year and the group recorded an increase of 25% in membership to a total of 695 members now. The chair report that a number of changes to the membership structure have been proposed which were discussed later in the meeting.

The group conducted a student survey after the last ECIR on its running which has now been published in Informer. To summarise, the results of the survey were very positive.

The IRSG is continuing to reach out to other like minded organisations and we have secured an in-cooperation agreement with SIGIR which provides reciprocal arrangements for each others conferences i.e. discounts. We are also progressing such agreements with European IRSG bodies (E-IRSG).

We have supported or are supporting many events including ECIR 2007, ECIR 2008, SIGIR 2007, SIGIR 2008, ESSIR 2007, AIRS, FDIA 2007, Search Solutions 2007, SSMS 2007, NLDB 2008.

The chair reported that due to unforeseen circumstances, ECIR 2008 couldn't offer discounts to E-IRSG members.

The informer editor, Tony Rose, is doing a great job producing another year of quality editions of the past year, four in total. This included special editions on the multimedia summer school and another on IR research in Spain.

Murat Yackici has continued to improve the website, and it is rapidly turning into a very useful resource for the IR community.

We have continued to improve our publicity for the group thanks to the efforts of Ali Azimi Bolourian and Simon Overell. We have produced both Postcard and Flyers and have a new set of these in the process of being designed. We have produced a set of T-shirts to give out at events and have also conducted a student survey on the impact of the IRSG on research students.

A book on IR edited by Ayse Goker and John Davis will be out later next year entitled 'IR: Searching in the 21st Century'. The publisher is Wiley and it is already listed on Amazon.

The chair reported on change need to ECIR due to disagreements between organisers of ECIR 2008 which led to resignations from the organising committee. The intension is to make clearer the roles and responsibilities for organizers (i.e. delineate the roles) and to make clear that the organizers are appointed on behalf of the IRSG. Explicit requirements to report on conference management will be set. A standardized template for proposed budgets will be provided to make reporting easier and to simplify the process of assessing bids. The call for bids for ECIR 2010 will be out shortly.

ECIR 2007 in Rome received a record number of submissions and sponsorship, whilst the acceptance rate was less than 20%. The conference introduced the concept of a short paper session, which involved short presentations followed by posters – this generated lots of discussion and interaction and was a great success. Another innovation introduced was Sub-PC reviewing in order to increase review consistency. This was very successful in resolving disputes over papers.

ECIR 2008 marks the 30th anniversary for the BCS IRSG's annual conference. Workshops and tutorials have been introduced for the first time, with great success – it was reported that around 100 people had attended these. A 2nd industry day was also being run, on the back of the success of this event in ECIR 2006.

ECIR 2009 will be held at the University of Toulouse. The group received three very completive bids (2 Spanish and 1 French), and it proved to be very difficult to choose between them.

The group has run a number of successful events of the past year, including ECIR 2007, Future Directions in Information Access (FDIA) 2007 and Search Solutions 2007. The focus of FDIA was to encourage research student or new researchers in the field and used a boaster and poster format to encourage feedback from senior researchers. This proved to be very successful. We managed to secure some very high profile speakers for Search Solutions 2007 including Google, Yahoo, Autonomy and Microsoft.

With regard to future events, the group will be running the 2nd FDIA (2008) and Search Solutions 2008 back to back. The group will also be involved in the 2nd Information Interaction in Context Symposium (IIiX 2008), both sponsoring the conference and part organising it.

Reviewing our activities overall the chair stated that we are updating the ECIR Bid and organisation guidelines, have produce ECIR reviewing guidelines, increased our membership (to nearly 700) and run more IR events such FDIA and Search Solutions. The chair thanked the committee members for all their hard work over the past year.

3.2 Treasurer

As the Treasurer could not attend the AGM, the chair gave his report.

In financial terms the group did rather well last year recording a surplus of £17K, with profits recorded from ECIR 2006, Industry Day 2006 and Teaching and Learning in IR (TLIR 2007). The group fulfilled its obligation to SIGIR and provided £5K travel support for BCS-IRSG student members.

The chair reported that new changes to BCS accounting rules means that BCS no longer carries over profit – this has important implications for the management of the groups activities. This change was done with little notice to all the specialist groups. It should be said however that the BCS IRSG has a very good track record of finances, and this should put us in good stead when budgets are assessed by the BCS. FROM now on, detailed planning for every financial year is required of our expected outgoings and incomes: this we have been doing - so as long as we plan, and our budget is approved then we can carry on as usual. We have submitted our budget for the financial year for May 2007 to May 2008 but have not yet secured approval for it.

[give breakdown of profits, break evens here? –I've an earlier version of the slides]

4. Commemorative Award in Honour of Karen Sparck Jones

The group has obtained formal approval from the BCS for a [ANNUAL?] award to an early career researcher for an outstanding contribution to IR experimentation. This has been established to promote talented IR researchers. Any candidate for the award must have up to 7 years post doctorial experience. Successful candidates will be awarded prize money, be given an artefact, and have a keynote slot at a conference [ecir?]. The award will take effect in 2010. [need to put this in the bid guidelines for ECIR?]

5. Election of new committee
The chair displayed a current list of committee members and nominations for the committee. The chair asked for a block election of the committee. The list of committee members put forward for block election were as follows:

Leif Azzopardi, Stefan Rueger, Tony Rose, Juan M. Fernandez-Luna, Ayse Goker, Monica Landoni, Murat Yakici, Andrew MacFarlane, Simon

Overell, Ali Azimi Bolourian, Michael Oakes, Gabriella Gazai, Dawei Song and Udo Kruschwitz.

The list of members stepping down as members of the committee is as follow:

Iadh Ounis, Gianni Amati, David Losada, Alex Bailey and Paul Mathews.

The chair thanked the outgoing members for their efforts in supporting

Proposed by Ian Ruthven, seconded by Stephen Robertson.

5. Any other business

5.1 Membership Structure Changes

The chair reported that the BCS had requested changes to SG membership i.e. that SG members be BCS members. This entails a revision of the current constitution to change the membership structure to comply with the new BCS regulations. The proposed change will entail a two level structure: full BCS members and Affiliate IRSG members. The later is designed to maintain the current IRSG membership and audience. Only full IRSG (BCS?) members will be able to serve on the committee. Discounts and offers will be extended to all IRSG members. It is possible that this situation could change in future, as IRSG funding may be linked directly to membership. The BCS is offering one year's free membershp non-BCS members. The chair took a vote on the changes to the membership structure. The results were as follows:

Those in favour: 14
Those against: 0
Abstentions: 9

The chair therefore declared the motion passed.

5.2 Questions from the floor

Tony Rose asked (sorry I can't read my writing…. ☹). The chair answered in the affirmative.

Tony Rose asked if we have a feel for how many of the 695 members are actually full BCS members, the chair reported that the figure is around 50%.

Ayse Goker asked about ECIR 2007 breaking event, when the past 7 years of the conference had shown a profit. The chair reported that the template will help budgeting and that money can be used to support students. [sorry I missed a bit here]

7. Closure of meeting
Chair declared the meeting closed.