

Minutes for the BCS-IRSG AGM
1st October 2009
BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present

Andrew MacFarlane (Chair and minutes), Chirag Ghandi, Udo Kruschwitz, Tony Russell-Rose, Olaf Spinkel, Mike Taylor, Rob Handycott, Yevgeniya Kovalchuk.

Apologies

Stefan Rueger (Treasurer), Dawei Song, Leif Azzopardi, Ayse Goker, 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 outlined the various events which the IRSG is now involved in, which include student focused events, standard conferences; practitioner focused events and theoretically focused events. Apart from the group's annual conference (ECIR), we were also involved in other conferences such as SIGIR and the Asian Information Retrieval Conference (AIRS). The group provided the local organisation for the 2nd Symposium on Information Interaction in Context (IiX 2008). Search Solutions has become an important event on the calendar and we have run two successful instances since the last AGM. We continue to recruit good speakers for this event, and the event attracts many different types of participant. We also have a more student focused event in the FDIA (Future Directions in Information Access) which is co-located with the European Summer School in Information Retrieval (ESSIR – we were also involved in the 2009 running of this summer school) or Search Solutions. It has become a valuable addition to our schedule and enhanced our focus on students. Members of the committee also ran the 2nd International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval.

Tony Russell-Rose has continued to do a fantastic job on the group's quarterly newsletter *Informer*. This newsletter continues to provide very useful reviews on conferences, workshops books as well as providing news on upcoming events and research updates. One special edition of *Informer* was focused on IR research in Switzerland, edited by Monica Landoni, an IRSG committee member. The chair thanked Tony for the hard work he has put into producing the *Informer*.

Murat Yakici has continued his sterling work on the website. The site is now a very useful resource for the IR community. Murat also helped with other web related issues such as the logos for FDIA and IiX 2008. The chair thanked Murat for the hard work he has put into improving the website and updating it content.

The BCS recently send portable banner (which was use at search solutions 2009 for the first time) and also sent new IRSG logo's with the BCS's new brand. Ali and Simon have continued their work on publicising the group, we have postcard, flyers, polo T-shirts and are planning to produce mugs.

The chair was happy to report that the book 'Information Retrieval: Searching in the 21st Century' will be published later this October by Wiley. The effort needed to produce this book has been considerable, and needed significant leadership from the editors, particularly Ayse Goker. The chair thanked Ayse for all the hard work she had put in to getting the book to publication.

ECIR 2009 was held in Toulouse, and was a very successful and very well run conference. There were very good number of submissions, and the quality continued to be high. Statistics for the conference were reported:

- 185 papers submitted
- 42 full papers
- 18 short papers
- 25 posters
- 3 well regarded keynote speakers

Sponsorship was obtained from Google, Microsoft Research, Yahoo Research, the Information Retrieval facility and Exalead. The KSJ award was announced at the conference – this is targeted at up and coming researchers who have completed their PhD in the last 10 years. The award allows the winner to give a keynote speech at future ECIR'S – this will be a permanent fixture of the conference from now on.

ECIR 2010 will be held at the Open University in Milton Keynes, and is being co-run with the University of Essex and Dublin City University. The workshop and tutorial proposals were currently being assessed and the deadline for papers was the date of the AGM. Posters, demonstration proposals are due on 22nd October 2009.

The competition to hold ECIR 2011 was very high this year with 6 competitive bids, including 2 from Spain, 1 from France, 1 from Ireland, 2 from Germany and 1 from Italy. After a lot of debate, it was agreed to award the conference to Dublin City University in Ireland.

The future of ECIR conferences was reviewed. In the recent committee meeting it was agreed that old model of hold the conference in the UK bi-annually is to be replaced by a new policy of allowing bids from any European country every year. The rationale for this new policy is that the AGM must to take place in September/October, given the BCS's new financial year (the AGM used to take place at ECIR in and around Easter), and while there is very little interest in holding ECIR in the UK, there is substantial interest from Europe in holding the conference. The committee discussed several issues which relate to this new policy. The committee agreed that the conference should stay in Europe, and not go international (becoming the International Conference on IR – ICIR). This mantle is taken by SIGIR. The committee needs a clear definition as to what qualifies as a European country – this can be quite ambiguous around the edges of the continent. The committee also needs

to examine the issue of countries – like Israel – who have close links with Europe e.g. fund and get involved in European projects.

The committee has agreed to take over the conference management and act as the steering committee for the International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval (ICTIR). The committee has been heavily involved in this years conference. The next ICTIR is due to be held in 2011. Expressions of interest have been received from groups in Nijmegen and Stockholm. Final bids are due on the 31st March 2010.

The group has been heavily involved in Teaching and Learning workshops in IR, which resulted in the best papers for the first workshop being published in a Special issue of the Information Retrieval journal in April 2009. Committee members are also involved in editing a book on Teaching and Learning workshops in IR, to be published by Springer-Verlag.

The IRSG plans to move its membership list to the new BCS systems.

The new IRLIST owners are the chair and Murat Yakici.

The chair recently created a Members Network Group for the IRSG.

The chair thanked all the committee members for their hard work during the year.

3.2 Treasurer

As the Treasurer could not attend the AGM, the chair gave his report. In financial terms the group did well last year recording a surplus of £11K, with profits recorded from various events such as ECIR 2009, Search Solutions 2008 and IiX 2008. The BCS requires us to do meticulous planning and this is nearly impossible to do, give all the uncertainties in managing various events. There is clear evidence of a tightening of fiscal policy – we had a request for funding proofreading of the book to be published by Wiley (see above) refused. This is the first time the BCS has refused an item of expenditure for the group, and it is an unwelcome development. The chair will be taking the issue to the next IRSG committee meeting.

4. Election of new committee

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

Mike Taylor, Microsoft Research
Chirag Gandhi, Mphasis
Yevgeniya Kovalchuk, University of Essex

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 Russell-Rose, Juan M. Fernandez-Luna, Ayse Goker, Monica Landoni, Murat Yakici, Andrew MacFarlane, Simon Overell, Ali Azimi Bolourian, Michael Oakes, Gabriella Gazai, Dawei Song Mike Taylor, Yevgeniya Kovalchuk, Chirag Gandhi and Udo Kruschwitz.

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

Exact rolls will be decided at the next committee meeting.

5. Any other business

No other business was brought forward at the meeting.

7. Closure of meeting

Chair declared the meeting closed.