

British Computer Society Information Retrieval Specialist Group Annual General Meeting

BCS London Office

30 November 2016

The meeting was opened at 18:00.

1. Present

Andy MacFarlane; Artem Lukanin; Tony Russell-Rose (TRR); Stefan Rueger (SR); Craig Macdonald (CM); Ralph Adam; Ingo Frommholz (IF); Haiming Liu (HL); Dyaa Albakour; Thanh Vu; John Tait (JT); Udo Kruschwitz (UK); Tony Freedman.

2. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair (JT) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

4. Matters arising from the 2015 AGM

There were two actions arising from the 2015 AGM.

- 1) UK was asked to ensure the Call for Bids to host ECIR 2018 specifically asked for deadlines for short and long papers not to coincide, and this had been done.
- 2) JT had been asked to table an item at the January 2016 to discuss the inclusion of the attendance record of members at IRSG committee meetings, so that these could be provided for future election.

The second action had been omitted due to an oversight, for which the chair apologized. It was therefore carried forward as an Action for 2017.

Action: discuss recording and reporting committee attendance at the January Committee Meeting.

5. Committee Members Reports

5.1 Chair

The chair noted the group has been involved with three meetings in the course of the year (blurring for the moment the distinction between the BCS September to September Financial Year and the AGM cycle) the Autumn Summer School on Information Retrieval and Information Foraging, ECIR 2016 (about which there is more below) and Search Solutions 2016 held in conjunction with the AGM. Usually there is at least one

more meeting, in recent years a meeting in May jointly with the International Society for Knowledge Organisation (ISKO) UK Branch, but this had not taken place this year. It is hoped to organize a meeting with ISKO in May 2017.

The Chair noted that the group welcomed proposals for meetings, and from the floor CM requested that explicit information be provided on the web site to tap into funding and other support.

Action: JT to write up some guidelines on requesting funding and support from the IRSG.

Informer, the group's newsletter (published online only) continues to be published regularly. Informer continues to be widely read. There have been over 1,200 page views since the last issue came out in early November; the autumn school review and the deep learning news digest were by far the most popular items. Measures of readership were then discussed briefly, and it was agreed it would be a good idea to publish more analytics.

Action: UK/TRR to provide more detailed analytics on Informer by using Google Analytics.

Unique to 2015, the Karen Spärck Jones panel decided to make two full awards. In alphabetical order: Jordan Boyd-Graber, University of Colorado, USA, and Emine Yilmaz, University College London, UK, received both and independent of each other the Karen Spärck Jones award. Both gave excellent talks at ECIR 2016. The 2016 Award will be announced on 14 December 2016.

The Tony Kent Strix Award, which the IRSG runs jointly with UKeIG of CILIP, CICAG of the Royal Society of Chemistry and ISKO UK was awarded in 2016 to Prof. Maristella Agosti of the University of Padua. The award was presented at the lecture by the 2015 winner, Prof. Peter Ingwersen of the Royal School of Librarianship, Copenhagen. Prof. Agosti will present her lecture at the Royal Geological Society in London on the 20 October 2017.

Thanks to Google for sponsorship of the lecture.

ECIR 2016 had about 220 registrations, slightly down on Vienna.

There were over 280 submissions altogether (more or less flat): 201 full papers (slightly up) submitted, 66 short papers (down 30%), plus 17 demos (up 50% vs 2015, flat vs 2014). 22% of the full papers were accepted, 30% of the short papers. 30% of demos, (flat)

The conference is now very global and international with 15% of submitted papers coming from the US, 10% each from UK and from China, then France, Germany on the ranked list of countries with the most submissions. Papers were received from over 30 countries.

Arrangements for ECIR 2017 are progressing, but have been seriously hampered by the fact that Ayse Goker, the General Chair, is seriously ill and it is still not known when and if she will be in a position to return to work. JT had stepped in the act as General Chair (with the agreement of the IRSG Committee) in Ayse's absence and preparations continue broadly in line with the plan.

The Chair wished to thank IF and HL for their work in preparing the University of Bedfordshire as an alternative venue should RGU withdraw as had seemed possible at one point).

SR proposed that the meeting thank JT for stepping in to act as ECIR 2018 General Chair, and the meeting unanimously agreed.

ECIR 2018 will take place in Grenoble, and arrangements are progressing well.

The call for ECIR 2019 will be issued in the summer as usual.

5.2 Treasurer

The financial position of the group is:

Rollover: £7,344.00

Budget: £3,125

Income: £10,108

Events(Search Solutions 2015): £7,608

KSJ Award (MS Sponsorship): £2,500

Expense: £13,374

CERI Sponsorship: £500.00

ESSIR Sponsorship: £634.79

ECIR Sponsorship: £5,000

KSJ Award: £4,811.27

Search Solutions: £1,833

Other (travel, telephone etc): £595.96

Income – Expense: -£3,266

This loss is not a concern because we can cover a loss on this scale from rollover, and the BCS can provide extra budget if need be.

The loss occurred principally because in 2016 we had two winners of the Karen Sparck Jones Award, and there is an on going dispute with the BCS HQ about the way the under spend on the Karen Sparck Jones award for 2015 was accounted for.

Roll over for 2016/17 has yet to be confirmed.

SR asked if the group made money for the BCS or cost money.

The Chair replied that in recent years the group had made money for the BCS, but this position was clouded by the on-going dispute about the Microsoft Sponsorship money for the Karen Sparck Jones Award, and the fact we were unable to spend the rollover money from 2013/14 by the end of the 2015/16 financial year because of the problems with ECIR at RGU.

Further the BCS provide about £3000 pa of central support for the group (in addition to providing rooms etc.) and looking at the slightly longer term this has generally been spent. Also the BCS centrally have been quite generous and providing additional budget for the group (e.g. when it was discovered the expenses for the Chair to attend ECIR in Moscow had not been properly budgeted for).

So the amounts of gains or losses for the group are overall quite small.

The Treasurer agreed with the Chair's comments.

The Chair noted that groups are obviously inactive have lower budgets, but the budgetary process remains opaque.

There was a brief discussion of the BCS Membership Groups budget process from the floor. It was agreed to take this off-line.

4. Elections

The Chair noted the group has elections every year, but the term of office is 2 years.

There are two sorts of officers –“Statutory” officers which the BCS and the group's constitution requires and other officers we appoint from within the committee to undertake specific roles.

Statutory Officers are the Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary. People may normally only hold these positions for two terms, and JT and UK had completed two terms as Chair and Secretary respectively so were stepping down.

This year the positions of five Statutory Officers and five committee members were up for election.

The call for nominations went out by email originally on 24 October 2016, but due to a misunderstanding went only to BCS Members, not affiliate members of the group. It went out to affiliate members on 26 October 2016.

By the closing date, Friday 4 November 2016, only one nomination had been received for each of the four statutory officers, and only four nominations for the Committee.

Therefore the following were elected unopposed to serve until the 2018 AGM:

Chair: Stefan Rueger

Secretary: John Tait

Treasurer: Ingo Frommholz

Membership Secretary: Michael Oakes

Committee Members: Dyaa Albakour
Haiming Liu
Craig Macdonald
Udo Kruschwitz

Continuing members of the Committee are: Andy MacFarlane, Ingemar Cox, and as ECIR General Chair or their representatives Nicola Ferro (until 2017), Lorraine Goeuriot (until 2019), Ayse Goker (until 2018).

The Chair expressed surprise that there were fewer nominations than vacancies, after several years where there were very competitive elections.

The chair congratulated those elected and expressed their particular pleasure at the election of HL (at the third time of asking) and CM, since Glasgow is a major centre of IR Research which hasn't been represented on the committee in recent years.

The Chair thanked all outgoing members.

JT handed over the chair of the meeting to SR, who in turn expressed his thanks to the outgoing chair.

6. AOB

There was no AOB.

The meeting closed at approximately 18:45.

7. Actions Arising from the Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
AGM16.01	Discuss recording and reporting committee attendance at the January Committee Meeting.	JT
AGM16.02	JT to write up some guidelines on requesting funding and support from the IRSG.	JT
AGM16.03	UK/TRR to provide more detailed analytics on Informer by using Google Analytics.	UK & TRR