

Call for Nominations: The Microsoft BCS/BCS IRSG Karen Spärck Jones Award 2020

Closing date: 16 September 2020

~ An award to commemorate Karen Spärck Jones ~

A pioneer of information retrieval, the computer science sub-discipline that also underpins the technology of modern Web search engines, Karen Spärck Jones was the Professor of Computers and Information at the University of Cambridge in England. Her contributions to the fields of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Information Retrieval (IR), especially with regard to experimentation, have been outstanding, highly influential and lasting, and include the introduction of [Inverse Document Frequency](#) for relevance ranking. Her achievements resulted in her receiving a number of prestigious accolades such as the BCS Lovelace medal for her advancement of Information Systems, and the ACM Salton Award for her significant, sustained and continuing contributions to research in information retrieval. Karen was also an outspoken advocate for women in computing.

To learn more about Karen and her work, see:

- * https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Sp%C3%A4rck_Jones
- * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8FecRxSiUM>
- * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fYeKiebpuo>

In order to honour Karen's achievements, the BCS Information Retrieval Specialist Group (BCS IRSG) in conjunction with the BCS has established an annual award to encourage and promote talented researchers who have endeavoured to advance our understanding of Natural Language Processing or Information Retrieval with significant experimental contributions.

To celebrate the commemorative event, the recipient of the 2020 award will be invited to present a keynote lecture at BCS IRSG's annual conference — the European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR) next year. This forum provides an excellent venue to present and announce the award as the conference attracts many new and young researchers.

Eligibility. Open to all NLP/IR researchers, who have no more than 10 years post doctoral or equivalent experience at the closing date for nominations (non-research times, e.g. parental leave or career breaks, will be taken into account).

Criterion. To have endeavoured to advance our understanding of NLP and/or IR through experimentation.

Nominations. The following should be provided:

- Name of nominee, position, affiliation, years since completion of the Ph.D.;
- Name of person proposing the nominee, position, and affiliation;
- Short case for the award, not to exceed 2500 words, highlighting the contributions the individual has made;
- List of the individual's top five publications reflecting the relevant contributions, and role within these; and
- Exactly two supporting letters from people who would like to encourage/support the nomination.

Nominations should be emailed to the panel chair below. The support letters can be emailed separately by the referees. It is possible for individuals to nominate themselves, in which case they should provide three support letters. Please note, that we anticipate that people who provide support letters will do so only for a single candidate.

Award Panel. The Award Panel Chair, appointed by the BCS IRSG Committee, will invite panel members from amongst representatives of the BCS main council, the BCS IRSG Committee, sponsoring organisation(s), as well as at least two experts appointed by the BCS IRSG committee.

Prize. The recipient of the award will receive a certificate, a trophy, a cash prize of £1000 plus expenses for the awardee to travel to ECIR.

Timeline for the 2020 Award to be presented at ECIR 2021:

- 16 September 2020 — closing date for nominations;
- 23 September 2020 — deadline for support letters;
- 16 December 2020 — notification of the prize recipient;
- 28 March-1 April 2021 — recipient presents keynote at [ECIR 2021 in Lucca](#), Italy.

The Karen Spärck Jones Award is sponsored by [Microsoft Research Cambridge](#).

Award Chair: Jochen L. Leidner <leidner AT acm.org>, Refinitiv Labs and University of Sheffield.

For a list of previous recipients of the award, cf. <http://irsg.bcs.org/ksjaward.php>