

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting  
**19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 5pm-7pm**  
**BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building**

**Present**

Ingo Frommholz [IF], Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Minutes), Andrew MacFarlane [AM], Stefan Ruger [SR]

**Dial-in**

Ingemar Cox [IC], Ayse Goker [AG] (from 5:40pm), Lorraine Goeuriot [LG], Haiming Liu [HL], Craig Macdonald [CM], Tony Russell-Rose [TRR].

**1. Apologies**

Dyaa Albakour [DA], Nicola Ferro [NF], Michael Oakes [MO], John Tait [JT].

**2. Minutes of the previous IRSG meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with a single correction: UK was present at the meeting.

*Action DA:* upload the corrected minutes to the IRSG Web site.

**3. Matters arising (covered under appropriate agenda items)**

- ▲ May 17.01 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.02 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.03 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.04 – Action ongoing.  
CM suggested that with CHIIR 2019 in Glasgow a committee meeting could be co-located.
- ▲ May 17.05 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.06 – Action completed.  
SR has distributed changes to the constitution that are to be voted on (see agenda item 14).
- ▲ May 17.07 – Action completed (see previous point).
- ▲ May 17.08 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.09 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.10 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.11 – Action ongoing (see agenda item 8).
- ▲ May 17.12 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.13 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.14 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.15 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.16 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.17 – Action completed.  
TRR was contacted but never regarded himself as deputy web master. HL is now deputy web master.
- ▲ May 17.18 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ May 17.19 – Action completed.
- ▲ May 17.20 – Action completed.  
TRR will attend Taxonomy Bootcamp London on the IRSG fee waiver.
- ▲ May 17.21 – Same as 17.8.

#### **4. Consideration of Bids to host ECIR 2019**

SR reported that two bids to host ECIR 2019 were received by the deadline and that both looked generally ok. He proposed to start the discussion of the bids by first pointing out strong and weak points of each bid without presenting individual preferences.

IF was the only committee member present who declared a conflict of interest and as such did not take part in the discussion.

The specific strengths and weaknesses of each bid identified by the committee members were noted so that the bidders would receive detailed feedback in a letter. Overall the Cologne bid was judged to be stronger than the Cyprus bid. It was agreed that they should be chosen as preferred hosts but that they would need to address a number of open issues before they could be awarded the conference.

As part of the consideration of bids there was a broader discussion of how to make ECIR stronger in future. CM had spent considerable time in preparing a proposal to upgrade the CORE conference ranking of ECIR from grade B to grade A. He pointed out that one of the key criteria in the CORE conference ranking scheme is the h-index of conference PC chairs and their standing in the community noting that the average h-index of the PC chairs of the last three ECIR conferences stands at around 31. Other ideas about how to make ECIR stronger were brought forward but it was decided that this should be discussed in more detail at a future committee meeting.

*Action SR:* compile notes and draft a letter to be sent to the consortium bidding to host ECIR 2019 in Cologne and draft another letter with feedback for the Cyprus consortium.

*Action JT:* include an agenda item for a future committee meeting that discusses ways to make ECIR stronger.

#### **5. Arrangements for 2017 AGM and elections**

JT had prepared a document with background information and a timetable. He identified AM and IC as the only two committee members whose terms are coming to an end. In addition to these two vacancies there remains one that has been unfilled since 2016.

JT proposed that, assuming the AGM will, as previously discussed, take place on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (Search Solutions Tutorial Day), that the timetable should be as follows:

- Call for nominations: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Close of nominations: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Opening of remote voting: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017
- Close of remote voting: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017
- AGM: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

This timetable was agreed. Candidate statements should be obtained together with the nominations.

SR raised a point previously discussed, namely that of making the AGM more attractive. As an example, the idea of having a keynote speaker was brought up. It was agreed that for future AGMs this should be considered but that this year the AGM will simply be moved to the day before the main Search Solutions event as previously discussed.

*Action UK:* confirm the BCS rules in regards to who is allowed to vote and whether online voting and voting at the AGM can be combined.

*Action JT:* organise the IRSG committee elections according to the agreed timetable.

## **6. Items agreed through email**

CM has researched and submitted an extensive case to get ECIR's CORE conference ranking upgraded from grade B to grade A. He kept the committee updated throughout the process via email. The committee thanked CM for this effort.

## **7. Chair's Report**

SR reported that ESSIR 2017 took place in Barcelona which also included FDIA as a forum for young researchers in IR that was established once ECIR became more prestigious. IF, HL and Leif Azzopardi organised this year's FDIA, and SR recorded his thanks to all three of them. IF reported that there were about 15 submissions this year, one got withdrawn, one was accepted as a poster and the rest as full papers. A problem identified this year was the lack of senior IR community members and that efforts need to be put in place to involve more senior researchers and academics in future. The proceedings of FDIA 2017 will soon appear in the BCS eWiC online workshop series.

## **8. KSJ Award**

(This agenda item was actually discussed after item 9)

UK reported that flyers were included in the delegate packs of SIGIR and that flyers were also distributed at ACL. The nomination deadline had just passed and UK confirmed that a healthy number of nominations was received. There is still some time left for the submission of support letters. He also reported that he intended to form the panel once all support letters are in to avoid any conflicts of interest as part of this process. Apart from the panel chair (UK), the immediate past chair (SR), a Microsoft Research representative and other experts in NLP and IR will be the panel members. Katja Hofmann will not be available to represent Microsoft Research this year as she has moved away from working in IR.

Looking at the future of the award, SR confirmed that there is still a budget for this year's award and that SR and JT have started exploring ways to continue running the award. They have tried to reach out to Chris Bishop (MS Research) but have so far not heard back. They have also explored alternative industrial partners. The idea is to know by March 2018 what the continued funding arrangements will be.

*Action UK/SR/JT:* approach Chris Bishop again to explore continued funding of the KSJ Award by Microsoft.

**9. ECIR 2018 Report**

LG gave an update on ECIR 2018. The Call for Papers had been issued, the submission system works fine. The deadline for workshops and tutorials had already passed and 6 workshop proposals and 3 tutorial proposals had been received. The extension of the tutorial submission deadline is currently being considered.

The process of obtaining sponsorship has now started. The conference was advertised at CLEF 2017.

**10 . ICTIR Report**

CM attended the ICTIR steering committee meeting at SIGIR 2017. Of the issues discussed the most relevant for the IRSG committee was that of timing of future ICTIRs in the calendar. There are various constraints to be considered to avoid clashes with, e.g., CIKM, ECIR etc. The next business meeting will be at ICTIR 2017 in Amsterdam, and CM will attend. SR stressed that a timing clash with ECIR should be avoided, and this is in line with the IRSG committee's position expressed in the past.

**11. Search Solutions 2017**

The organisation of Search Solutions 2017 is coming along nicely. AM had received 5 tutorial suggestions of which 3 were accepted. UK reported that we now have about 10 confirmed speakers (i.e. a full programme). IF is working with the BCS to get the registration set up, and as soon as that has happened, advertising will start. It was agreed that the student fee waiver scheme of previous years should again be adopted.

**12. Finance**

IF reported that the group's budget has now been approved. The annual allocation is £5,825 (about £2,500 more than usual which reflects the expected increased travel costs with a potential meeting in Glasgow for example).

The problem with the KSJ Award money has been resolved and the remaining money has been rolled over.

**13. Informer**

UK reported that the latest issue of Informer (Summer 2017) has come out. A review of SIGIR is in the pipeline for the next issue, and as always, it was stressed that we need content for future issues.

**14. AOB**

There have been some strong candidates put forward for the Tony Kent Strix award, and AM pointed out that the winner will be announced at the end of October.

SR proposed to clean up the constitution and had circulated suggested changes prior to the meeting. There was some discussion of the proposed changes and SR will send around an updated version which is then put to the IRSG members to be voted on at the AGM.

IF will present the IRSG at a STEM event to be held at the University of Bedfordshire.

**15. Next meeting**

The chair declared the meeting closed. The next committee meeting will be at the BCS on Tuesday, 28 November 2017 after the AGM.

**16. Actions arising from the Meeting**

Action Number	Action	Action on
Sep 17.01	Upload the corrected minutes to the IRSG Web site.	DA
Sep 17.02	LG to keep and pass on a record of what worked well and what did not in organising ECIR 2018.	LG
Sep 17.03	Include short talk on IRSG in Search Solutions 2017 programme.	UK/TRR/IF/DA
Sep 17.04	Propose organising a Spring Meeting in Glasgow in 2018 or 2019.	CM
Sep 17.05	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	Everyone
Sep 17.06	Circulate call for one day workshops.	IF
Sep 17.07	Suggest other routes to progress KSJ Award Sponsorship.	JT
Sep 17.08	Modify Attendance Policy as agreed by the meeting and publish on web site.	JT
Sep 17.09	Get ECIR.INFO to point to the ECIR2018 Web site.	JT
Sep 17.10	Review submission dates for ECIR 2018 in the light of Springer Schedule.	EQ/LG
Sep 17.11	Investigate using new BCS London office Video Conferencing facilities.	IF
Sep 17.12	Compile notes and draft a letter to be sent to the consortium bidding to host ECIR 2019 in Cologne and draft another letter with feedback for the Cyprus consortium.	SR
Sep 17.13	Include an agenda item for a future committee meeting that discusses ways to make ECIR stronger.	JT
Sep 17.14	Confirm the BCS rules in regards to who is allowed to vote and whether online voting and voting at the AGM can be combined.	UK
Sep 17.15	Organise the IRSG committee elections according to the agreed timetable.	JT
Sep 17.16	Approach Chris Bishop again to explore continued funding of the KSJ Award by Microsoft.	UK/SR/JT