

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting
29th November 2016
BCS Central London Office, The Davidson Building

Present

Ingo Frommholz [IF], Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Minutes), Haiming Liu [HL] (observer), Craig Macdonald [CM] (observer), Andrew MacFarlane [AM], Stefan Ruger [SR], Tony Russell-Rose [TRR], John Tait [JT].

Dial-in

Lorraine Goeuriot [LG]

Apologies

Dyaa Albakour [DA], Ingemar Cox [IC], Ayse Goker [AG], Michael Oakes [MO], Andi Rauber [AR], Emine Yilmaz [EY].

1. Minutes of the previous IRSG meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Matters arising (covered under appropriate agenda items)

- ▲ Sep 16.01 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ Sep 16.02 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ Sep 16.03 – Action ongoing, now actioned on JT.
- ▲ Sep 16.04 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ Sep 16.05 – Action completed.
- ▲ Sep 16.06 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ Sep 16.07 – Action completed.
- ▲ Sep 16.08 – Action ongoing (see agenda item 8).
- ▲ Sep 16.09 – Action completed (see agenda item 9).
- ▲ Sep 16.10 – Action ongoing.
- ▲ Sep 16.11 – Action completed.
- ▲ Sep 16.12 – Action ongoing, now actioned on JT.

3. Items agreed through email

Action Sep 16.07 (ECIR 2018 decision process) was completed via email. Apart from that there were no items agreed via email since the last committee meeting. JT reported that since stepping in as acting general chair for ECIR 2017 he was rather overwhelmed with work related to organising the conference. However, there was nothing critical that needed to be agreed via email.

4. Chair's Report

JT reported that he attended the BCS Member Groups Convention. He reported that the BCS would like to spend more money on membership groups. While nothing specific to IR came up, some issues of general interest were discussed among them the problem of implementing the new data protection guidelines, JT also noted that there is scope here for looking into personalized search, a topic relevant to the IRSG.

Unconscious bias was also discussed and as a group we need to make sure that the officers do the relevant BCS training. JT also remarked that he is an unconscious bias ambassador for the BCS.

5. Update on ECIR 2017

Reporting on action item Sep 16.09, IF confirmed that £2,500 can be spent on support for ECIR 2017. The figures might be adjusted upwards depending on the income generated by Search Solutions 2016.

JT as acting general chair provided an update on the conference preparation. In terms of funding, he observed that compared to previous years less funding is available for ECIR 2017 from sources commonly tapped into, e.g. the EU-funded ELIAS research networking programme which is coming to an end. The group had also offered £5,000 support but did not get invoiced by the end of the last financial year which is why the support had to be adjusted to this year's budget.

The committee agreed to support ECIR 2017 with £2,500.

Other confirmed sponsorship has so far all come from local Scottish sources, e.g. the Scottish Informatics and Computer Science Alliance (sicsa) is likely to sponsor students attending the conference. JT mentioned that he is to connect the sponsorship chair Andrei Petrovski (RGU) working with Nicola Ferro and Jimmy Huang to obtain more sponsorship money.

JT further reported that the selection of papers is in progress with more details to be announced at the AGM. Overall there was a small drop in full paper submissions. Two keynote speakers have been confirmed, Laura Dietz (University of New Hampshire) and Alexander Hauptmann (CMU).

Contracts for running the conference had finally been signed in September and the financial side is still looking a bit uncertain but this is a concern for the host institution (RGU) and not the IRSG.

Four workshops and one tutorial have been selected. Applications for the Doctoral Consortium are currently being processed.

The idea of running ECIR Industry Day in parallel with the last conference day was brought up and UK and TRR as Industry Day co-organisers will confirm by Friday whether they want to adjust the current schedule accordingly or not. UK reported that one speaker has already been confirmed with more in the pipeline. CM offered to connect the Industry Day organisers with the Data Lab Innovation Centre in Scotland.

Action JT: connect the ECIR 2017 sponsorship chair with Nicola Ferro and Jimmy Huang.

Action UK/TRR: confirm whether ECIR Industry Day will be on Thursday or co-located with the last day of the conference (on Wednesday).

Action CM: introduce the ECIR 2017 Industry Day organisers to the Data Lab Innovation Centre in Scotland.

6. Update on ECIR 2018

LG confirmed that the conference venue has been booked. The dates have been adjusted following the recommendations received from the IRSG. The new dates are

25-29 March 2018, i.e. the week before Easter. The publisher, Springer, has been contacted already. The PC has also been finalized and a first meeting has taken place. The next step is to explore sponsorship for student grants. JT suggested that the organisers might look at EU-funded Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) networks, in particular any current COST actions that might fit the scope of ECIR.

For ideas to get more sponsorship it was also suggested that the ECIR 2018 chairs talk to previous ECIR organisers.

A logo and Web site has not been prepared yet but will be ready by ECIR 2017.

CM urged LG to make good use of use social media to publicise the event.

7. Search Solutions 2016

AM reported that this year's Search Solutions tutorial day was the best ever in that we had a strong set of tutorials and all proposed tutorials went ahead with solid enrolment numbers (between six and ten attendees).

JT was somewhat disappointed by the registration numbers for the main event with 57 registered attendees (compared to about 80 last year). TRR pointed out that attendance used to always be in the region of 50-60 so that this year's number is in still line with previous years. It appears that less engagement by ISKO this year might have led to a drop as last year there was a substantial number of ISKO members registered (unlike this year). JT pointed out that marketing the event could be improved and he will liaise with DA, the group's Web coordinator.

UK reported that only two students applied for a fee waiver this year and both of them were considered strong enough to be supported.

JT pointed out that the co-located workshop on the evaluation of information access systems was organized very last-minute but enrolment numbers are good.

TRR updated the committee on the newly introduced Search Practitioner Awards, the certificates are all ready and the winners will be announced at Search Solutions.

Action JT: liaise with DA to identify improvements in marketing of future IRSG events.

8. Update on Budget

IF reported that he has repeatedly asked the BCS about the rollover budget but has still not received a satisfactory response. The rollover from the last financial year is likely to be £1,445 but this still needs to be confirmed by the BCS.

The KSJ award money issue is continuing to be an unresolved problem (as explained in the minutes of the September meeting). The BCS appears to interpret the budget differently to the IRSG. From the IRSG's perspective it is clear that any money allocated for the KSJ award must only be spent on the award and nothing else, and any underspent must be carried over to the new financial year.

The two actions on IF in the September meeting (Sep 16.08 and Sep 16.10) are being carried forward.

9. KSJ Award

SR updated the committee on the process for this year's KSJ award. Four fantastic nominations were received and he further reported that despite the strength of all candidates there was almost unanimous agreement in who should be the winner. The winner has been informed via email and SR is awaiting confirmation that he or she will accept the award. The official announcement will be made on the 14th of December.

10. Tony Kent Strix Award

AM informed the committee that the lecture of the 2015 winner of the Tony Kent Strix Award (Peter Ingwersen) is now available online. The lecture was given in October in the Geological Society and the recording includes an introduction by Stephen Robertson as well as the talk by Peter Ingwersen. Maristella Agosti, the winner of the 2016 award, will give her speech on the 20th of October 2017.

11. Informer

TRR reported that the latest issue of Informer (Autumn 2016) has come out a few weeks ago. He also reported that more could be done to promote Informer. He suggested to look into adding a spam filter to the Wordpress site so that comments can be activated again (the massive number of spam comments received were the reason to deactivate this feature).

Action TRR: add spam filter to the Informer site and then re-activate comments.

12. AOB

CM informed the committee that he is the June editor of SIGIR Forum and he would be very happy if he received a write-up of ECIR 2017 including a summary of the workshops for the June 2017 Forum issue but pointed out that this a very tight deadline.

13. Closure of meeting

The chair declared the meeting closed. The next committee meeting will be at the BCS on Wednesday, 25 January 2017 at 5:30pm.

14. Actions arising from the Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
Nov 16.01	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	Everyone
Nov 16.02	Write an article for Informer about the Italian national IR workshop.	NF
Nov 16.03	Provide a rewording that will replace the current description of ECIR on the IRSG Web site.	JT
Nov 16.04	Plan a joint one-day event with ISKO in May 2017.	AM
Nov 16.05	Submit a request for sponsoring students at ECIR 2017 to IF and invoice the IRSG.	JT
Nov 16.06	Check and confirm the 2015/16 rollover budget.	IF
Nov 16.07	Continue the discussion with the BCS regarding KSJ award money that has not been rolled over to the new financial year.	IF
Nov 16.08	Add IRSG representation on the ICTIR steering committee to the agenda of the January 2017 committee meeting.	JT
Nov 16.09	Connect the ECIR 2017 sponsorship chair with Nicola Ferro and Jimmy Huang.	JT
Nov 16.10	Confirm whether ECIR Industry Day will be on Thursday or co-located with the last day of the conference (on Wednesday).	UK/TRR
Nov 16.11	Introduce the ECIR 2017 Industry Day organisers to the Data Lab Innovation Centre in Scotland.	CM
Nov 16.12	Liaise with DA to identify improvements in marketing of future IRSG events.	JT
Nov 16.13	Add spam filter to the Informer site and then re-activate comments.	TRR