

From the Chair....

Greetings SIGIR Members! I am pleased to report that things are going well for SIGIR.

SIGIR is Healthy

SIGIR membership increased 4.8% last year, to 1,363 members. SIGIR had income of US \$422K and expenses of US \$395K, for a profit of US \$27K during the last fiscal year. Our fund balance is US \$482K. As in recent years, the profit this year was due to the financial success of our conferences, particularly the SIGIR 2004 conference in Sheffield.

SIGIR tries to maintain a level fund balance from year to year. The profits from the last fiscal year are being recycled into increased student travel support and other activities during the next year or two. Our goal is to maintain the general fund in the US \$430-450K range (where it has been since 2000). Expect SIGIR to run small deficits during the next couple of years while we bring the fund balance back down to its target levels.

SIGIR 2005 Was a Success

SIGIR 2005 was the first SIGIR conference held in South America, and also one of the largest SIGIR conferences ever held: Attendance was 341 (including workshops and tutorials), and there were 71 papers, 53 posters, 12 refereed demonstrations, 7 tutorials, 7 workshops, and a doctoral consortium. We thank General Chairs Nivio Ziviani and Ricardo Baeza-Yates, and Treasurer José Nagib Cotrim Árabe for their hard work.

We also thank the Program Chairs Gary Marchionini, Alistair Moffat, and John Tait; Poster Chairs Diane Kelly, Mounia Lalmas, and Gonzalo Navarro; Workshops Chair Doug Oard; Tutorials Chair Berthier Ribeiro-Neto; Demos Chair Javed Mostafa; Mentoring Chair Justin Zobel; and Best Papers Chair Alan Smeaton for putting together an excellent technical program. Special thanks goes to David Harper for organizing a very successful Doctoral Consortium.

SIGIR 2008 in Singapore

Singapore has been selected as the location for the SIGIR 2008 conference. This will be SIGIR's first conference in Asia. Mun-Kew Leong and Tat-Seng Chua will be General Chairs.

SIGIR 2009 in the US

At the SIGIR Business Meeting groups from **Chicago, Washington, DC, and Boston** initiated bids to host SIGIR 2009. A straw poll indicated about equal support for each of the three locations. The SIGIR Executive Committee is currently considering their written bids. A decision will be announced in the next issue of Forum.

Volunteers in Transition

When we compare ourselves to other ACM SIGs, one of our distinguishing features is our active membership and large community of volunteers. Most ACM SIGs have a good Executive Committee. Few ACM SIGs have a membership and associated research communities that are as large, active, and willing to help out as you are.

Mounia Lalmas has volunteered to serve as the new SIGIR Information Director, replacing **Eric Brown** who held the position for four or five years. Thank you Eric – we sincerely appreciate your effort! **Alistair Moffat** has volunteered to serve as the Awards Chair.

Preserving Our History

Although IR is a young field, it is already losing its memory. Important early IR papers and reports are becoming increasingly difficult to find. SIGIR has begun collecting and making plans for preserving early IR research, in English, and in other languages. We need two types of help: i) ideas about what to save, how to organize it, and how to preserve it; and ii) volunteers to help with the work. Donna Harman is coordinating this effort. Contact her at donna.harman@nist.gov if you want to get involved.

Paper is Expensive!

As mentioned in the last issue for Forum, the growing size of the SIGIR conference proceedings has made the “Special Issue” of SIGIR Forum (the conference proceedings that is mailed to you) extremely expensive. It is the single biggest cost of membership. It is the reason for the recent increase in membership fees. If we continue our current practice, we will need to raise membership fees again in a couple of years.

The SIGIR Executive Committee is seriously considering moving the Forum “Special Issue” to CD or DVD, to help control costs. One option is to make the “Special Issue” of Forum a copy of the Digital Symposium Collection (DiSC) DVD, which contains SIGIR, JCDL, CIKM, and many other conference proceedings. When this subject was presented at the SIGIR Business Meeting, most attendees supported making this change.

We are interested in hearing your opinions about this possible change. Keep in mind that our options are limited: Either we continue to increase membership fees to cover costs, or we make the “Special Issue” a CD or DVD. Which would you prefer? Or, do you have other suggestions?

As always, we value your opinion. If you have ideas about how SIGIR can be improved, please contact me or any member of the Executive Committee.

Best wishes for the new year!

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