

ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2014: Secretary's Notes

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1 Opening Matters

The 2014 ACM SIG-IR Annual Business Meeting took place on Thursday July 10, 2014, at the SIGIR'14 Conference in Gold Coast, Australia.¹ The meeting proper started at 11:55 and was led by SIG-IR chair Charlie Clarke.

The ACM SIG-IR executive committee was introduced, consisting of Charles L.A. (Charlie) Clarke (chair), Yoelle Maarek (vice chair, unable to attend), Jaap Kamps (secretary), Diane Kelly (treasurer), and James Allan (past chair), see Figure 1. Charlie explained the role of the SIG-IR executive committee. First, to ensure continued high quality and reputation of SIGIR and its sponsored conferences (with new sponsored conferences announced later in the meeting). Second, to meet the needs of SIGIR's members, by staying tuned to changing needs and preferences of members, both new and experienced. Third, to ensure financial stability of SIG-IR and high-visibility presence within the ACM. On the latter point, even though SIG-IR is a mid sized SIG within the ACM, Charlie is part of the SIG Governing Board and can represent our views on important issues, such as the future of the ACM DL. Basically, we are working on the things you want to happen, so we are always interested in hearing from you.

Charlie thanked the many volunteers, including the 1,000s of volunteers running SIG-IR sponsored and co-sponsored conferences in various roles. The SIG-level volunteers were thanked: Krisztian Balog (information director), Raman Chandrasekar, Fernando Diaz (outgoing June and December issue SIGIR Forum editors), Ben Carterette (incoming fall issue SIGIR Forum editor), Claudia Hauff (SIG-IRList editor) Shlomo Geva and Fernando Diaz (outgoing an incoming awards chair), Charles Clarke (outgoing CIKM liaison), Ricardo Baeza-Yates (WSDM liaison), and Edie Rasmussen (JCDL liaison). *Secretary's note: At the time of writing also two other vacancies are filled: Craig MacDonald will be the spring issue SIGIR Forum editor and Guido Zuccon is the new social media director.*

Krisztian Balog was particularly thanked for modernizing the SIG-IR website, at <http://sigir.org/>, which is the main source of information about SIG-IR with content being updated

¹The business meeting of the ACM Special Interest Group on IR, here written as SIG-IR to distinguish the ACM SIG from its annual SIGIR conference.



Figure 1: The SIG-IR executive committee on stage during the business meeting.

and expanded in the coming year. There are many member services and benefits, including: SIGIR Forum, reduced conference fees for sponsored and “in cooperation” conferences, access to the ACM digital library, the SIG-IRList newsletter, and special events and students support. Non-members who attend the SIGIR conference receive a one-year membership with their conference registration, with the hope that they continue their membership in SIG-IR in the next year. *Secretary’s note: Signing up as member, or continuing your membership, costs only \$15 per year for students and \$30 per year for seniors, see the details at <http://sigir.org/general-information/membership/>.*

Charlie stressed the importance of student travel support that will be expanding as we go forward. There is strong support at the SIGIR conference, from the SIG-IR as well as from the Donald B. Crouch Travel Grants and Google Travel Grants, see <http://sigir.org/general-information/travel-grants/> for details. The budget for 2014 was over \$125,000, and supported 77 students from many countries to attend SIGIR’14 in Gold Coast. In addition, there is the “friends” program that supports events related to SIG-IR’s mission, see <http://sigir.org/general-information/funding-for-sigir-related-events/> for details. The budget for 2014 was over \$35,000, and current friends include: HCIR, ECIR, ADCS, MediaEval, IiX, ICMR, and FIRE.

Last, but not least, SIG-IR organizes special events, again this year the business meeting lunch, and the inaugural ACM SIGIR Student Luncheon. The luncheon is a student-only event that is open to all student attendees. There were flash talks by James Allan, Leif Azzopardi, and Sue Dumais on doing research and career trajectories, and leading members of SIGIR acted as “table captains.” The student lunch event well received and there was strong support for its continuation, and also supported the idea to organize a SIGIR student party in addition to the lunch.

2 Treasurer’s Report

SIG-IR treasurer Diane Kelly took over and reported that the SIG’s finances are very healthy, with SIG reserves of about \$1.2 million, well above the ACM requirement to have enough reserves to cover a SIGIR conference.

As for the SIG expenses, the ACM overhead is no longer largest expense (\$97,000 in 2013), given the increase in SIGIR student travel grants (\$116,000 in 2013, over \$125,000 budgeted for 2014). Although an expense, the SIG is very happy about the increasing number of grants. In addition SIG-IR sponsors related events with a small amounts of funding (max. \$5,000) through the “friends” program. This allows SIG-IR to fund in-cooperation and other related conferences.

SIG-IR underwrites as a (co)sponsor four conferences in 2014: SIGIR (100%), CIKM (50%), JCDL (33%) and WSDM (25%) and shares in their profits or losses. ACM requires conferences to budget conservatively with the goal to break even—but in practice almost all conferences make a profit. There is also income from other sources: most notable is the digital library (\$117,000 in 2013), and smaller amounts from dues, interest, and subscriptions. Diane asked everyone to encourage their family members to download content from the ACM DL. Overall, non-conference income continues to rise. Income from dues is low (about \$7,000) with membership of around 800, but this is no issue financially given the high digital library and conference income. Leif Azzopardi noted that the number of student members has increased in 2014, and asks whether SIG-IR student travel support was restricted to SIG-IR student members only. Diane confirmed that we asked students to become SIG-IR member starting this year, costing only \$15, and that all students who applied got substantial support in return.

Summarizing, the SIG-IR has healthy reserves of 1.2 million dollar, so we can return conference profits back into the community. The SIG’s strategy is to budget conservatively (as the ACM demands) and push back money in terms of student grants in the next year. Jaime Teevan raised the issue of the co-sponsored conferences (CIKM, JCDL, and JCDL) not receiving back the SIGIR part of their profits. Charlie acknowledged the complexity in pushing back money in these cases, but is a strong supporter of a scheme where the extra income directly profits the student attendees (rather than be just extra income).

3 Awards

SIG-IR award chair Fernando Diaz continued and introduced the new “Test of Time” award. For the 2014 ACM SIG-IR Test of Time award, papers from 2002–2004 qualified and a committee consisting of PC Chair from SIGIRs 2007, 2011, and 2013 (with Fernando as non-voting chair) selected the paper that had the most impact. In addition to the certificate, the winning paper is republished in SIGIR Forum. The exact procedures are being finalized and will published in SIGIR Forum (this issue), and all members are asked to think of excellent papers at SIGIR 2003–2005, and nominate them for next year’s test of time award. Charlie Clarke added that there is a separate project for the years up to 2002.

Secretary’s note: This year the Test of Time Award went to Cheng Xiang Zhai, William W. Cohen, and John Lafferty for their paper Beyond independent relevance: Methods and evaluation metrics for subtopic retrieval from SIGIR 2003. Given that 2002 only qualified in 2014, three further papers from SIGIR 2002 received received a honorable mention: Predicting query per-

formance by *Steve Cronen-Townsend, Yun Zhou, and W. Bruce Croft*; The importance of prior probabilities for entry page search by *Wessel Kraaij, Thijs Westerveld, and Djoerd Hiemstra*; Methods and metrics for cold-start recommendations by *Andrew I. Schein, Alexandrin Popescul, Lyle H. Ungar, and David M. Pennock*.

In addition to the new ACM SIG-IR Test of Time award, many honors and awards were bestowed upon SIG-IR members. Sue Dumais received the ACM-W Athena Lecturer Award for 2014-2015, and her Athena lectures took place at SIGIR'14 (Putting Searchers into Search) and at CHI'15. Jaime Teevan received the CRA-W Anita Borg Early Career Award 2014, which presented to her at the SIGIR'14 banquet. Bruce Croft received the Tony Kent Strix Award 2013. And many members became ACM Fellow, including Christine L. Borgman, Ingemar J. Cox, Marti A. Hearst, Yoelle Maarek, Christopher D. Manning, and Stephen E. Robertson. *Secretary's note: It is indeed an Annus Mirabilis for IR: Bruce also received the IEEE Computer Society Technical Achievement Award 2014, and Sue Dumais receives the Tony Kent Strix Award 2014.*

4 Conferences

This part of the business meeting had a stream of presentations of conferences that are sponsored or organized in cooperation with SIG-IR.

4.1 SIGIR Co-Sponsored Conferences

Charlie presented co-sponsored (JCDL, CIKM, WSDM) and in-cooperation conferences.

Joint Conference on Digital Libraries JCDL'14 will be a joint TPDFL/JCDL conference to be held from September 8–12, 2014 in London, UK. The organization committee included George Buchanan as program chair and Sally Jo Cunningham, Martin Klein, and Andreas Rauber as program chairs. *Secretary's note: DL'14 accepted 31 full papers, 24 short papers, and 12 demo papers. IEEE is in charge of the proceedings in 2014, which will appear in both the IEEE Explore as the ACM DL at some point in time.* JCDL'15 will be held from June 23–27, 2015 in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA. Further information about JCDL are at <http://jcdl.org/> or contact JCDL liaison Edie Rasmussen.

Conference on Information and Knowledge Management CIKM'14 will be held from November 3–7 in Shanghai, China. The organization committee includes Jianzhong Li and X. Sean Wang as general chairs and Ian Soboroff and Torsten Suel as IR track chairs. CIKM'15 will be held from October 19–23, 2015 in Melbourne, Australia. The organization committee includes James Bailey and Alistair Moffat as general chairs and Maarten de Rijke as IR track chair. CIKM'16 will be held from October 23–28, 2016 (tentative dates) in Indianapolis, USA. The organization committee includes Snehasis Mukhopadhyay and ChengXiang Zhai as general chairs, and Luo Si as IR track chair. The CIKM steering committee is soliciting bids to organize CIKM'17 and beyond, see <http://www.cikmconference.org/> for details and contact David Grossman (CIKM SC chair).

Web Search and Data Mining WSDM'14 was held from February 24–28, 2014 in New York City, New York, USA. The organizing committee included Ben Carterette and Fernando Diaz as general chairs, and Carlos Castillo and Donald Metzler as program chairs. WSDM'14 received 355 full paper submissions and accepted 64 (acceptance rate of 18%) in a single-track model with 19 long and 45 short presentations. WSDM'15 will be held in from February 2–6 in Shanghai, China. The WSDM steering committee is soliciting bids to organize WSDM'16 and beyond, see <http://www.wsdm-conference.org/> and contact Ricardo Baeza-Yates (WSDM SC chair).

In Cooperation Conferences In 2014, the “in cooperation” conferences were: the 19th ADCS held from November 27–28, 2014 in Melbourne, Australia; the 10th AIRS held from December 3–5, 2014 in Kuching, Malaysia; the 8th RecSys held from October 6–10, 2014 in Foster City, USA; and the 6th FIRE held in December 5–7, 2014 in Bangalore, India. See <http://sigir.org/general-information/sponsorship/> on details and privileges of becoming an “in cooperation” conference with SIG-IR.

4.2 ACM ICTIR

Up to now, SIG-IR had only a single fully sponsored conference, but this is about to change: Charlie formally announced a second fully SIG-IR sponsored conference: the ACM International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval (ICTIR).

Oren Kurland (ICTIR SC chair) took the stage and explained that ICTIR focuses on foundational aspects of information retrieval. The conference grew from a series of SIGIR workshops on mathematical and formal methods for IR (2000 to 2005), and was held as biennial conference in 2007 (Budapest, Hungary), 2009 (Cambridge, UK), 2011 (Bertinoro, Italy) and 2013 (Copenhagen, Denmark). ICTIR has been supported by the BCS-IRSG, and grows into an annual, fully SIG-IR sponsored conference in 2015. Oren thanked James Allan, Bruce Croft, John Tait, BCS-IRSG, and SIGIR for their help in realizing this new ACM SIG-IR conference. The ICTIR steering committee is soliciting bids to organize ICTIR'16 and beyond, see <http://sigir.org/general-information/hosting-ictir/> and contact Oren Kurland (ICTIR SC chair).

4.2.1 ICTIR 2015 Announcement

James Allan took over to announce ICTIR'15 to be held from September 27-30, 2015 in Northampton, Massachusetts, USA. The organization committee includes James Allan and Bruce Croft as general chairs and Arjen de Vries and Chengxiang Zhai as program chairs. The call for papers will address topics similar to SIGIR, with an emphasis on theory and shared data. Deadlines are May 4 (long papers) and May 11 (short papers and tutorial proposals) 2015. James also stressed that your ICTIR'15 paper will be eligible to win the new Test of Time award in 2024.

4.3 ACM CHIIR

Charlie took over again and recalled that until a few minutes ago, we had one fully sponsored conference (SIGIR), now we have two (including ICTIR), and in a few seconds we will have three!

There was a pre-announcement of the ACM Conference on Human Information Interaction & Retrieval (CHIIR, pronounced as “cheer”). CHIIR represents merger of the HCIR and IiX conferences, and will be formally announced at IiX’14. *Secretary’s note: CHIIR SC member Nick Belkin formally announced the new ACM CHIIR conference on August 29, at the IiX’14 in Regensburg, Germany.* The first annual CHIIR conference will be held in March 2016. The CHIIR steering committee is soliciting bids to organize CHIIR’16 and beyond, see <http://chiir.org/> and <http://sigir.org/general-information/hosting-chiir/> and contact Ryen White (CHIIR SC chair).

4.4 ACM SIGIR

Next on the agenda was the SIGIR conference itself, or officially called the international ACM SIGIR conference on Research & Development in Information Retrieval.

4.4.1 SIGIR 2013 Report

Gareth Jones (general chair with Paraic Sheridan) presented a final report on SIGIR’13 held from July 28–August 1, 2013 in Dublin, Ireland. Thanks were extended to the organization committee led by PC Chairs Diane Kelly, Maarten de Rijke and Tetsuya Sakai. The total attendance was 507, excluding the army of volunteers. The total revenue was \$515,000 with total expenses of \$465,000 creating a surplus of \$49,500. SIGIR’13 received the International Client Award 2013 by the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO).

Gareth showed various photos documenting the event, including the celebration of 20 years of web search, celebrating Stephen Robertson’s many contributions at his retirement, the birth of #FancyAcademics, and the Irish dancing. Charlie commented that his favorite picture of SIGIR’13 was David Lewis dancing.

4.4.2 SIGIR 2014 Interim Report

Due to the full agenda, the report on SIGIR’14 was moved to the closing session. Charlie still found time to show his favorite picture of SIGIR’14: again #FancyAcademics with the SIG-IR secretary dressed in an orange suit to support his country in the World Cup semifinals on the night of the banquet—which didn’t help...

Secretary’s note: although presented later, this part is included here in the logical order of the business meeting notes. Shlomo Geva and Andrew Trotman presented an interim report on SIGIR’14 held from July 6–11, 2014 in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. The graphic design students at the University of Waikato were thanked for creating the SIGIR’14 logo. The 21 sponsors were thanked for their generous donations (total sponsorship of AUD 165,000) and sponsoring chair Jimmy Huang was thanked for his outstanding work.

The organization committee includes the two presenters as general chairs, Alastair Moffat as treasurer (but functioning as extra co-chair), and Peter Bruza, Charlie Clarke and Kal Järvelin as program chairs. There were 57 area chairs and 244 general program committee members. A total of 387 full papers were submitted of which 82 (21%) were accepted, 263 short papers were submitted of which 104 (40%) were accepted, and 34 demo’s were submitted of which 16 (47%) were accepted. In addition, 7 tutorials were accepted out of 16 submissions, 7 workshops were

accepted out of 11 submissions, and 8 students were accepted at the doctoral consortium out of 11 submissions.

A total of 421 delegates registered representing 32 countries, including 125 student registrations. The treasurer's report focused in particular on the cake and fruits offered during morning and afternoon tea breaks, which were indeed memorable. The treasurer noted the challenge of running a conference in Australia, which is relatively expensive in particular in a major conference center. This required a tight control over costs and finding cheaper alternatives where ever possible, such as negotiating the prize of the conference bags down using the cheapest logo-printed paper bags on offer online. With special thanks to the generous sponsorship, the conference will make a modest profit.

4.4.3 SIGIR 2015 Update

Ricardo Baeza-Yates presented SIGIR'15 to be held from August 9–13, 2015 in Santiago de Chile, the second time on a row that SIGIR is on the southern hemisphere (hence in winter). The organization committee includes the presenter as general chair, and Berthier Ribeiro-Neto, Mounia Lalmas, and Alistair Moffat as program chairs. Deadlines are the usual late January and mid February, see <http://sigir2015.org/> for details. The venue will be the conference center of the Catholic University of Chili, situated downtown with hotels and attractions at walking distance. Ric ended by showing various touristic highlights “in Chili,” including Patagonia and Easter Island.

4.4.4 SIGIR 2016 Update

Raffaele Perego presented SIGIR'16 to be held from July 17–21, 2016 in Pisa, Italy. SIGIR returns to Pisa, 30 years after SIGIR'86. He first introduced Pisa: Tuscany, Galileo Galilei, leaning tower, historic city, but also universities (like the University of Pisa founded in 1343), and national research centers. The organization committee includes Fabrizio Sebastiani and Raffaele Perego as conference chairs, and Javed Aslam, Ian Ruthven, and Justin Zobel as program chairs. The venue will be the conference center “palazzo dei congressi” in Pisa, located just 2 kilometers from Pisa airport, hence everything is walking distance in 2016.

4.4.5 SIGIR 2017 Announcement

Charlie took the stage and officially announced the location of SIGIR'17: Tokyo, Japan.

Noriko Kando presented details of the SIGIR'17 conference, while Tetsuya Sakai started tweeting the news and promoting @SIGIR17. After highlighting the many attractions of Tokyo and Japan, such as direct flights from almost everywhere; wonderful food, traditions, and culture; and a strong industry. There are two options for the venue, both located in the heart of Tokyo, and both opening in 2014. Option one is the JP Tower located at Tokyo station, with tutorials and workshop at NII, option two is the Toranomom Hills conference center for the entire conference. It was stressed how affordable Japan is nowadays, with options that suit any budget. Dates are still under discussion, also considering the hot summer in late July, early August in Tokyo. The discussion made clear that moving later than mid August is no option, but moving SIGIR'17 earlier, even into late June, may work.

4.4.6 SIGIR 2018 Informal Bids

Charlie took the stage, and announced that the SIG-IR is asking for bids for SIGIR'18 to be held in the Americas, with a preference for North America. He asked for “informal bids” with formal bids were due on September 15, as stipulated on <http://sigir.org/general-information/hosting-sigir/>. No less than five informal bids were made.

Jimmy Lin presented a bid to host SIGIR'18 in Washington DC, with him and Ben Carterette as conference chairs. The proposal is to hold the conference in downtown Washington Hilton, with direct access to all the great museums and national institutions, and student housing in the George Washington University dorms.

Kevyn Collins-Thompson presented a bid to host SIGIR'18 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with him and Qiaozhu Mei as conference chairs backed up by Dragomir Radev. Ann Arbor is the home of the University of Michigan, with all the attractions of a lively student town, and the proposal is to hold the conference on campus in the Michigan League conference center.

Yi Zhang and Luo Si presented a bid to host SIGIR'18 in Silicon Valley. The location is easy to reach, and profits from having all the major search industry labs at the conference's doorsteps.

Fernando Diaz presented a bid to host SIGIR'18 in New York, with him and Chirag Shah and Torsten Suel as conference chairs. There are two options for the venue: either midtown Manhattan, such as the Crowne Plaza hotel at Times Square, or the cheaper alternative of Brooklyn, such as the New York Marriot at the Brooklyn Bridge. The impressive pitch consisted of a video based on the opening of Woody Allen's Manhattan (1979) with George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, showcasing the many attractions of NYC.

Finally, if only as fall back option, Jaime Teevan generously offered to host SIGIR'18 in her own back yard (#JaimesBackyard). The bid boosted the location's intimate and personal character, its high reputation amongst the many leading IR researchers who visited, and stressed hands-on activities, such as pony riding, jumping on bouncing castles, and barbecuing bugs.

Charlie continued and asked the audience for their preferences: NYC got about about 1/3 of the raised hands, Silicon Valley got slightly more than 1/3, Michigan and DC got slightly less than 1/3, and Jaime's house got positive support. There was no clear preference in favor of, or against, any of the informal bids.

5 Conclusion

As sessions were about to start again, the “open floor” for questions, or general complains section, remained limited to those raised during the earlier part of the agenda, and the audience was asked to approach members of the executive committee with questions and comments.

Charlie Clarke concluded the business meeting with thanks to all attendees at 13:40.