

SIGIR 2014 Test of Time Award

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SIGIR 2014 introduced the first Test of Time Award, recognizing research that has had long-lasting influence, including impact on a subarea of information retrieval research, across subareas of information retrieval research, and outside of the information retrieval research community (e.g. non-information retrieval research or industry). This article describes the decision-making process used for the 2014 award. The process was based on discussions with the SIGIR Executive Committee as well as procedures used at other ACM Special Interest Groups.

The set of candidates for the award included full papers presented at SIGIR 10-12 years prior. A decade provides sufficient context for evaluating long-lasting impact. At the same time, in order limit the research under consideration, only three years were considered. Papers presented at SIGIR conferences before 2002 may be recognized in a separate collection.

The selection committee consisted of past program chairs from SIGIR 2013 (Diane Kelly, Maarten de Rijke, Tetsuya Sakai), SIGIR 2010 (Hsin-Hsi Chen, Jacques Savoy), and SIGIR 2007 (Charlie Clarke, Norbert Fuhr, Noriko Kando). The SIGIR Executive Committee selected Fernando Diaz to supervise the decision-making.

The decision-making process consisted of four phases. The first phase involved selecting a short list of nominees. The top five most cited publications for each of the candidate SIGIR conferences were automatically nominated. Committee members could nominate additional papers. In the second phase, committee members ranked the nominated papers in order of impact. The merged rankings were presented to the committee for discussion during the third phase. Following the discussion, committee members ranked the papers again. The top-ranked paper in the second merged list was recognized as the Test of Time Award winner. For SIGIR 2014, the committee voted for,

‘Beyond independent relevance: methods and evaluation metrics for subtopic retrieval’
Cheng Xiang Zhai, William W. Cohen, and John Lafferty
SIGIR 2003

The three top-ranked papers from SIGIR 2002 were recognized as Test of Time Honorable Mentions. For SIGIR 2014, the committee selected,

‘Predicting query performance’

*with the assistance of the SIGIR Executive Committee: Charlie Clarke, Jaap Kaamps, Diane Kelly, and Yoelle Maarek.

Steve Cronen-Townsend, Yun Zhou, and W. Bruce Croft

‘The importance of prior probabilities for entry page search’
Wessel Kraaij, Thijs Westerveld, and Djoerd Hiemstra

‘Methods and metrics for cold-start recommendations’
Andrew I. Schein, Alexandrin Popescul, Lyle H. Ungar, and David M. Pennock.

The process used in 2014 provided feedback to the SIGIR Awards Chair and will serve as a basis for a formal ACM award in future SIGIR conferences. Subsequent Test of Time awards will include a process for SIGIR community members to nominate papers as well as an extension to all SIGIR sole-sponsored conferences (e.g. CHIIR, ICTIR). We encourage the SIGIR community to reach out to the Awards Chair with additional feedback. Details of the formal process will be published on the SIGIR website and in the June 2015 SIGIR Forum.