

ANNUAL REPORT for SIGIR, July 2000 - June 2001

<http://www.acm.org/sigir>

Submitted by: Susan Dumais, Chair SIGIR

SIGIR again had a busy and fruitful year in 2000-2001, sponsoring or co-sponsoring several successful conferences, and offering new member services. The current officers are: Susan Dumais, Chair; Susan Gauch, Vice-Chair; Liz Liddy, Secretary, and Jamie Callan, Treasurer. In our continuing effort to make SIGIR a truly international organization, two regional representatives are appointed by the executive committee and serve as part of the SIGIR-EC. Ross Wilkinson (CSIRO, Australia) and David Harper (The Robert Gordon University, UK) are the regional representatives. David replaces Peter Schaeuble (ETH Zurich, Switzerland) who had served as the European representative for several years. We thank Peter for his hard work. SIGIR's Information Officer, Eric Brown (IBM, USA) does a fine job in maintaining and expanding the SIGIR home page (<http://www.acm.org/sigir>). Eric recently replaced Charles Viles (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA) who had served as SIGIR's Information Officer for several years. We thank Charlie for many years of hard work and enthusiasm in moving SIGIR's resources to the web.

SIGIR sponsors, co-sponsors and cooperates with other technical groups on several conferences and workshops during the year. The main conference this year was the Twenty Third Annual ACM SIGIR International Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR). <http://sigir2000.aueb.gr>. The 2000 meeting was held in Athens (Greece). Emmanuel Yannakoudakis (Athens University) served as the General Conference Chair, and Nick Belkin, Peter Ingwersen and Mun-Kew Leong served as Program Co-Chairs. This was a successful meeting with 38 full papers, 30 posters, and 7 demonstrations were presented. There was a strong program of 8 tutorials preceding the meeting, and a varied workshop program following the meeting. A growing amount of student travel to SIGIR is supported by a SIGIR budget item and by contributions from the 1998 conference in Melbourne. Fourteen students from North America, South America, Europe, Middle East and Asia received support to attend the 2000 meeting. The awards committee selected two submissions for awards -- Best Paper Award: Kalervo Jarvelin and Janna Kekalainen, "*IR evaluation methods for retrieving highly relevant documents*", and Best Student Paper Award: Ilmerio Reis da Silva, Berthier Ribeiro-Neto, Pavel Calado, Sdleno Moura and Nivio Ziviani, "*Link-based and content-based evidential information in a belief network more*". The Local Conference Organizing Committee also recognized Noam Slonim for best presentation. The submissions, attendance and awards all reflect a strong international and student participation in SIGIR. In addition to the strong technical program, Emmanuel Yannakoudakis and his colleagues put together a fine social program including a banquet by the sea, a new IR Conference Trophy to be passed from chair to chair, all while dealing with a change in location resulting from earthquake damage to the original location. We thank Emmanuel, Athens University of Economics and Business, the British Computer Society-IRSG and the Greek Computer Society for their hard work and support in putting together a successful SIGIR conference.

During the past year the Salton Award Committee selected the sixth recipient of the Gerard Salton Award. This award is SIGIR's highest technical award and *honors significant, sustained and continuing contributions to research in information retrieval*. The award was first presented in 1983 (to Gerard Salton) and has been presented every three years starting in 1988. The 2000 recipient is Stephen Robertson (Microsoft Research Ltd.). Stephen was recognized for "*Thirty years of significant, sustained and continuing contributions to research in information retrieval. Of special importance are the theoretical and empirical contributions to the development, refinement, and evaluation of probabilistic models of information retrieval.*" <http://www.sigir.org/awards/awards.html>. Stephen delivered a thought-provoking Salton Award

Lecture at the SIGIR'2000 Annual Meeting. "*On theoretical argument in information retrieval*", the full text of his talk, is published in the SIGIR Forum, Spring 2000, 34(1).

SIGIR is also involved in the sponsorship of two other ACM conferences, CIKM and JCDL. CIKM'00, the Ninth International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management, was co-sponsored by SIGIR (40%), SIGMIS (40%), and SIGMIS (20%) (<http://www.cikm.org/2000>). The 2000 meeting was held in McLean, VA. Susan Gauch served as General Conference Chair, and Jamie Callan and Elke Rundensteiner served as Program Co-Chairs. CIKM has a strong focus on databases in combination with information retrieval and management techniques. This year there was good representation of work on web databases and data warehousing techniques. Keynote addresses by Erik Thomsen (Dimensional System), Ed Fox (U Virginia), and a panel on Industry Perspectives on Information and Knowledge Management focused on these new directions. There were 54 papers, 4 tutorials, and 3 workshops. The conference continues to improve in quality and provide a bridge between the database and information retrieval communities.

The First Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL'01) was held in Roanoke, VA at the end of June (<http://www.jcdl.org/>). Ed Fox served as Conference Chair, with Christine Borgman serving as Program Chair. This year the conference was co-sponsored by ACM (SIGIR and SIGWEB) and IEEE (TCDL), and represents the merging of what had previously been two separate digital library conferences (ACM's DL conference and IEEE's ADL conference). For the last several years, the ACM DL Steering Committee worked hard to merge of ACM DL and IEEE ADL conferences, and final merger documents were approved by both ACM and IEEE in 2000. The first meeting signals the broad appeal of the joint conference, capitalizing on its strengths in research, practice, systems and policy issues surrounding digital libraries. We thank the ACM DL Steering Committee (in particular our SIGIR representative, Nick Belkin) for its very hard and careful work in creating a new, richer DL forum. SIGIR and SIGWEB will continue to be equal co-sponsors of the series, along with IEEE's technical committee on digital libraries (TCDL). There was a strong program of 40 full papers, 36 short papers, 9 panels, 10 demos, 16 posters, 6 tutorials, and 3 workshops plus the NSF DLI PI meeting. The Vannevar Bush Award for Best Paper was presented to: Gregry Crane, Clifford Wulfman and David Smith for their paper "*Building a hypertextual digital library in the humanities: A case study on London*". Honorable mention goes to Catherine Marshall, Morgan Price, Gene Golovchinsky and Bill Schilit for their paper "*Designing e-books for legal education*". Because the conference was just recently completed, there are no final attendance or financial figures available yet, but by informal accounts it was a successful DL conference.

In addition the three ACM conferences that SIGIR sponsors, we "cooperate" with several other IR-related conferences but have no financial stake in them. These conferences compliment the technical focus of our own conferences, and include work on hypertext, multimedia, Asian languages, etc. As a cooperating society, SIGIR members obtained reduced registration fees at these conferences. This year, SIGIR had "in cooperation" agreements with: ACM:HT'00 (Hypertext), ACM:MM'00 (MultiMedia), ACM:CUU'00 (Conference on Universal Usability), RCDL'2000 (Russian Conference on Digital Libraries), RIAO 2000 (Recherche d'Informations Assistee par Ordinateur), IRAL'00 (IR with Asian Languages), and AH'00 (International Conference on Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-based Systems).

SIGIR's Information Officer, Eric Brown (IBM, USA), did a fine job expanding the SIGIR home page, adding an archive of the IR-List, and providing support to move the SIGIR Forum online. The SIGIR Web site has become an important resource for IR researchers and practitioners, and we anticipate that its influence will continue to grow. This has become an important resource for IR researchers and practitioners, and we anticipate that its influence will continue to grow. In addition to providing information about the organization, the SIGIR web site also host the SIGIR Forum and SIG-IRList sites.

Thanks again are due to the editors of *SIGIR Forum*, Mark Sanderson and Fazli Can, who have

successfully developed this journal into both a news forum and an important scientific forum. The Forum presents new research, reflections like the Salton Award Lecture, and coverage of IR conferences, workshops and symposia. The Forum appears both online (<http://www.acm.org/sigir/forum/contents.html>) and in paper. The Online Forum provides a more timely publication avenue and we look toward developing this as a more interactive forum for IR information.

This year, SIGIR started sponsoring an electronic newsletter, *SIG-IRList* (<http://www.acm.org/sigir/sigirlist/>). This provides a regular newsletter of IR information and nicely compliments the archival publication SIGIR Forum. The SIG-IRList contains job announcements, notices of publications, conferences, workshops, calls for participation, and project announcements. Special thanks are due to Mark Sanderson and Asaad Alberair (Univ Sheffield) for their work in starting and providing ongoing energy for this important source of current awareness about a wide range of topics and opportunities in IR.

SIGIR started a Member Value Plus (MVP) program this year. The package includes the basic benefits of SIGIR membership and in addition conference proceedings from the three ACM conferences sponsored by SIGIR (SIGIR, CIKM and JCDL) at cost.

SIGIR has been active in digitizing content for inclusion in the ACM Digital Library and the ACM:SIGMOD Anthology. The Proceedings of all SIGIR conference from 1978 to present are available electronically (currently only in the Anthology, but soon in the DL). In addition, all issues of the SIGIR Forum from 1974 to the present have been digitized. This collection of materials forms a wonderful resource for new researchers in the field. We would like to thank several of our members who made personal copies of these materials to us for copying – Stephen Robertson, Donna Harman, Bruce Croft, Dagobert Soergel, Ernst Schuegraf, and Jack Minker. We are still missing some copies of the Forum from 1965-1972. If you have copies, please contact Susan Dumais (sdumais@microsoft.com) who will arrange for copying.

Although interest in information retrieval is growing and SIGIR-sponsored conferences are seeing steadily increasing attendance, membership continues to slowly decline. Some new membership services have been developed to help address this issue and to provide better service to our continuing members. We developed the Membership Value Plus (MVP) options. SIGIR-sponsored conference proceedings will soon be available on the SIGMOD Anthology CDs. This has the two fold advantage of providing added visibility for IR research, and providing database-related content to our members at low cost. We continue to look for other ways to enhance our membership, including a more active publicity campaign, offering new online membership services, and developing stronger ties with related organizations including more joint meetings. Since our problem is common to many ACM SIGs, we also look to them for collaboration in addressing this issue.

SIGIR had a productive and successful year, with important intellectual and social contributions. Our conferences have been remarkably successful in all senses (with especially strong technical content and good international participation), and our financial situation is quite healthy. We will continue to work on ways to improve membership benefits, student and international participation, and relevance to industrial members. We look forward with great anticipation to the next year, and hope to see many new faces, as well as many familiar ones, at upcoming events.