ANNUAL REPORT for SIGIR, July 2001 - June 2002
http://www.acm.org/sigir
Submitted by: Susan Dumais, Chair SIGIR

SIGIR again had a busy and fruitful year in 2001-2002, 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. SIGIR's Information Officer, Eric Brown (IBM, USA) does a fine job publishing materials on the SIGIR home page (http://www.acm.org/sigir). The SIGIR Forum Editors, Mark Sanderson and Peter Anick, round out the SIGIR team.

Conferences:
SIGIR sponsors, co-sponsors and cooperates with other technical groups on several conferences and workshops during the year. The main conference is the annual SIGIR meeting. We also co-sponsors two other ACM conferences, CIKM and JCDL.

SIGIR.
The Twenty Fourth Annual ACM SIGIR International Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR'01, http://www2.sis.pitt.edu/~sigir01/) was held in New Orleans, LA USA. Don Kraft (Louisiana State University) served as the General Conference Chair, and Bruce Croft, David Harper and Justin Zobel served as Program Co-Chairs. The meeting was scheduled from Sept 9-12, and needless to say was disrupted by the events of Sept 11. We thank Don and his team as well as the hotel for being accommodating during this time, and the attendees for making the most of the difficult situation. This was a successful meeting in which 46 full papers, 32 posters, and 9 demonstrations were presented. In addition, there was a strong program of 8 tutorials preceding the meeting, and a varied workshop program following the meeting. There were 360 attendees for the main conference, 217 for workshops and 153 for tutorials. The conference was successful financially as well returning $28k to SIGIR. The awards committee selected two submissions for awards -- Best Paper Award: James Allan, Rahul Gupta, Vikas Khandelwal (Univ. of Massachussets), *Temporal summaries of news topics*, and Best Student Paper: Adnike Lam-Asesina, Gareth Jones (Univ. of Exeter), *Applying summarization techniques for term selection in relevance feedback*.

In order to increase the breadth of perspectives and approaches represented at SIGIR, a mentoring program was introduced, keynote speakers from related disciplines chosen, and student travel support was increased. Three keynote speakers, Tom Mitchell (Whizbang Labs), Tomasz Imielinski (Rutgers University) and Eduard Hovy (USC), gave insightful overviews of work in three fields closely related to information retrieval. In another effort to increase the breadth of work represented in SIGIR, we offered a Mentoring Program to assist authors who have not previously had a full length paper accepted to SIGIR. The program was great success with 16 participants during its first year and will be repeated in 2002. We thank Dave Lewis, who chaired the program, and all the mentors for their efforts in broadening the scope and quality of SIGIR papers. A growing amount of student travel to SIGIR is supported by SIGIR in its budget, by contributions from the 1998 SIGIR conference in Melbourne, and by an IBM student travel grant. Seventeen students from North America, South America, Europe, Middle East and Asia received support to attend the 2001 meeting. The submissions, attendance and awards all reflect a strong international and student participation in SIGIR.

CIKM.

CIKM'01, the Tenth International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management, was co-sponsored by SIGIR and SIGMIS (http://www.cikm.org/2001). The 2001 meeting was held in Atlanta, GA USA. Carlton Pu served as General Conference Chair, and David Grossman and Ling Liu 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 new work on web databases and structured data.   Keynote addresses by Alfred Spector (IBM), Mike Stonebraker (MIT), and panels the Web and Database Functionality and Security of Data and Documents focused on these new directions. There were 60 papers, 10 industry session papers, and 15 posters. The conference continues to improve in quality and provide a bridge between the database and information retrieval communities. In spite of restricted travel schedules last fall, the conference was well-managed and made a $15k profit, half of which was returned to SIGIR.

JCDL.
The First Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL'01) was held in Roanoke, VA USA from June 24-28, 2001 (http://www.jcdl.org/). 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). 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 for discussions of research, practice, systems and policy issues surrounding digital libraries. Ed Fox served as Conference Chair for the inaugural conference, with Christine Borgman serving as Program Chair. 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".* This was a very successful inaugural conference with more than 425 conference attendees, and more than 150 involved in tutorials and workshops. A small $3k net was split among the sponsoring organizations. The Second JCDL conference (JCDL'02) is being held in Portland OR USA from July 14-18, 2002, with Bill Hersh serving as the General Conference Chair. Details about this meeting will be reported in next years Annual Report.

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, adaptive systems, etc. As a cooperating society, SIGIR members obtained reduced registration fees and other member benefits at these conferences. This past year, SIGIR had "in cooperation" agreements with: RCDL'01 (Russian Conference on Digital Libraries), AH'02 (International Conference on Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-based Systems), CIA'02 (Collaborative Information Agents), and ASIS&T'01 (American Society for Information Science and Technology).

Other Activities - Publications, Member Programs:
SIGIR's Information Officer, Eric Brown, 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. In addition to providing information about the organization, the SIGIR web site also hosts the SIGIR Forum and SIG-IRList sites.

The Forum presents current coverage of IR conferences, workshops and symposia, as well as reflections like the Salton Award Lecture and keynote addresses and current research. The Forum appears both online (http://www.acm.org/sigir/forum/) 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. Fazli has recently stepped down as Forum editor, and is being replaced by Peter Anick. We thank Fazli for his many years of hard work on the Forum, Mark for his ongoing work, and look forward to working with Peter.

The *SIG-IRList* is a SIGIR-sponsored electronic newsletter, (http://www.acm.org/sigir/sigirlist/). The IRList 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. of 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 last year. The package offers the basic benefits of SIGIR membership, including the SIGIR Forum and SIGIR Proceedings. In addition the conference proceedings from the two co-sponsored meetings, three ACM conferences, CIKM and JCDL, are included. It's a great value and an easy way to get all the SIGIR conference proceedings. The number of members taking advantage of the MVP program increased from 31 last year to 84 this year. For more information on joining the MVP program, see http://www.acm.org/sigir/forum/S2000/Member_Plus.pdf

SIGIR has been active in digitizing content so member can easily access materials from the SIGIR Proceedings and Forum. The Proceedings of all SIGIR conference from 1978 to present are available electronically in the ACM Digital Library. The will also soon be available in a 25th Anniversary SIGIR CD. 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.

Interest in information retrieval is growing rapidly, SIGIR-sponsored conferences are seeing solid attendance, and SIGIR membership is up from 950 in May 2001 to 1072 in May 2002, all of which are good signs.   Some new membership services have been developed to attract new members and to provide better service to our continuing members. We developed the Membership Value Plus (MVP) options. SIGIR-sponsored conference proceedings are available on the SIGMOD Anthology CDs and will be part of a 25th anniversary SIGIR CD next year, both of which increase our visibility and the availability of our publications. We continue to look for other ways to enhance our membership benefits, including a more active publicity campaign, offering new online membership services, and developing stronger ties with related organizations including more joint meetings.

SIGIR had a productive and successful year, with important intellectual and social contributions. Our conferences have been successful in all senses (with 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 meetings.