
ANNUAL REPORT for SIGIR, July 2002 - June 2003

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

Submitted by: Susan Dumais and Jamie Callan, Outgoing and Incoming Chairs SIGIR

SIGIR had a busy and fruitful year in 2002-2003, sponsoring or co-sponsoring several successful conferences, and offering new member services. July 1 marks a changing of the officers. The outgoing officers are: Susan Dumais, Chair; Susan Gauch, Vice-Chair; Liz Liddy, Secretary, and Jamie Callan, Treasurer. The incoming officers are: Jamie Callan, Chair; Fabrizio Sebastiani, Vice-Chair; David Lewis, Secretary, and Justin Zobel, 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. The current regional representatives are Ross Wilkinson (CSIRO, Australia) and David Harper (The Robert Gordon University, UK). SIGIR's Information Officer, Eric Brown (IBM, USA) is responsible for SIGIR's electronic presence, most notably 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-sponsor two other ACM conferences, CIKM and JCDL.

SIGIR.

The Twenty Fifth Annual ACM SIGIR International Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval, SIGIR'02 (<http://www.info.uta.fi/sigir2002/>) was held in Tampere, Finland from Aug 11-15. Kalervo Järvelin (University of Tampere, Finland) served as the General Conference Chair, and Micheline Beaulieu, Ricardo Baeza-Yates, Sung Hyon Myaeng served as Program Co-Chairs. The meeting featured a strong technical program: 44 full papers, 48 posters, and 13 demonstrations were presented. In addition, 2 keynote addresses were given during the conference, 8 tutorials preceded the meeting, and 6 workshops on emerging topics and trends followed the meeting. There were 337 attendees for the main conference, and more than 100 each for workshops and tutorials. The conference was successful financially as well, returning \$30k to SIGIR. The awards committee selected submissions for awards -- The Best Paper Award went to Yi Zhang, Jamie Callan, and Thomas Minka (CMU) for their paper *Novelty and Redundancy Detection in Adaptive Filtering*. The lead author on this paper was a student, so there was no Best Student Paper Award this year.

SIGIR offers a Mentoring Program to assist authors who have not previously had a full length paper accepted to SIGIR. Seventeen papers were submitted for mentorship, and the program was viewed as a success by both mentors and mentee. Two mentored papers were accepted, and the program was continued in 2003. We thank Peter Anick, who chaired the mentoring 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. Twenty six students from North America, South America, Europe, Middle East and Asia received support to attend the 2002 meeting. The submissions, attendance and awards all reflect a strong international and student participation in SIGIR. To further encourage student participation and growth, SIGIR will introduce a Doctoral Forum program next year in which students explore their research interests in a workshop under the guidance of a panel of distinguished researchers.

The SIGIR'02 meeting marked the 25th Annual SIGIR Meeting. To honor that occasion we prepared CDs of the 25 years of proceedings. The CDs were distributed to all conference attendees and all SIGIR members. The annual business meeting included a pictorial history of

SIGIR through the years. The first SIGIR conference was held in Rochester, NY USA chaired by Robert Datolla, the second conference in Dallas, TX USA chaired by Robert Korfhag, and the third conference moved across the Atlantic to Cambridge, UK chaired by Keith van Rijsbergen. The Cambridge conference started the tradition of alternating between a North American and non-North American location, which continues today. The avid SIGIR attendee would have accumulated 115,359 frequent flier miles (185,697km) just going from one conference location to the next. Keith van Rijsbergen's Invited Address, *Landmarks in Information Retrieval: The Message Out of the Bottle*, reflected on key accomplishments and trends during the 25+ years of SIGIR. Alan Smeaton and colleagues prepared a bibliometric analysis of the 850+ papers and 1110+ authors, showing topical trends as well as co-authorship trends. Bruce Croft is the author with the most papers and most collaborators, and Chris Buckley has the shortest average path length to all other authors, earning him SIGIR's Christopher Lee Award. Details of Alan's presentation can be found at: <http://www.cdvp.dcu.ie/SIGIR/index.html>

SIGIR'02 was also the first conference outside of North America to be sponsored by ACM SIGIR. Prior to SIGIR'02 all conferences outside of North America were sponsored by local institutions, and profits (or losses) remained in the region; ACM SIGIR survived primarily on the profits from North American conferences. SIGIR'02 was sponsored by ACM SIGIR (50%) and the University of Tampere (50%). The financial success of SIGIR'02 allowed us to significantly increase student travel support awards for SIGIR'03. The 50/50 sponsorship model will be used again for SIGIR'04 in Sheffield, UK. After SIGIR'04 the Executive Committee and its advisors will reevaluate financing methods for conferences outside the North America.

CIKM.

CIKM'02, the Eleventh International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management, was co-sponsored by SIGIR and SIGMIS and held in McLean, VA USA, Nov 4-9, 2002 (<http://cikm.org/2002/>). Charles Nicholas served as General Conference Chair, and David Grossman, Konstantinos Kalpakis, Sajda Qureshi and Han van Dissel served as Program Co-Chairs. CIKM has a focus on problems at the intersection of information retrieval, databases and knowledge management techniques. This year there was good representation of new work on web databases and search over structured data. Keynote addresses by Ophir Frieder (IIT), Christos Faloutsos (CMU) and Maria Zemankova (NSF) focused on scalable information retrieval systems and new directions in data mining and knowledge management. There were 81 papers and 17 posters, along with tutorials and workshops. Long-standing workshops on geographical information systems, document engineering, OLAP and web data management, occurred following the conference. The conference continues to improve in quality and provide a bridge between the database and information retrieval communities. The conference made a small profit, half of which (\$7,500) was returned to SIGIR.

JCDL.

The Second Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL'02) was held in Portland, OR USA from July 14-18 2001 (<http://www.jcdl.info/jcdl02/>). The conference was co-sponsored by ACM (SIGIR and SIGWEB) and IEEE (TCDL). The conference is the second merged DL conference, encompassing what had previously been two separate digital library conferences (ACM's DL conference and IEEE's ADL conference). The merged conference has proved very successful and we will continue this format moving forward. 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. William Hersh served as Conference Chair for the conference, and Gary Marchionini served as Program Chair. There was a strong program of 33 full papers, along with short papers, panels, demos, posters, tutorials. In addition a diverse set of panels covered a variety of topics including digital preservation, vertical applications and the importance of metadata. The Vannevar Bush Award for Best Paper was presented to: Barbara M. Wildemuth, Gary Marchionini, Meng Yang, Gary Geisler, Todd Wilkens, Anthony Hughes and Richard Gruss for *How fast is too fast? Evaluating fast forward surrogates for digital video*. This was a very successful conference with more than 450 conference attendees, and more than 150

involved in tutorials and workshops. A small profit was split among the sponsoring organizations, returning about \$8100 to SIGIR.

The Third Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL'03) was recently held in Houston, TX USA at the end of May. Geneva Henry was the general Conference Chair, and Catherine Marshall was the Program Chair. More details of this conference will be available in the next 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: AH'02 (International Conference on Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-based Systems), CIA'02 (Collaborative Information Agents), and ASIS&T'02 (American Society for Information Science and Technology). We are working on a cooperation agreement with the new Human Language Technology and Applied Computational Linguistics Conference HLT-NAACL'03.

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 SIGIR Forum is co-edited by Mark Sanderson and Peter Anick. The Forum is published three times a year. The summer issue is the SIGIR Proceedings, and the Spring and Fall issues cover IR conferences, workshops and symposia, as well as in depth essays based on the Salton Award Lecture and keynote addresses, and current research trends. 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. Mark and Peter worked hard this year to revitalize the Forum as an outlet for new developments in IR. The Fall 2002 Forum, for example, included four original articles on Web search, a bibliometric analysis of the first 25 years of SIGIR papers, and the JCDL keynote address. In addition, this issue included ten workshop reports, and mark the first time we published dissertation abstracts. We encourage new PhDs to take part in this new outlet for their dissertation work. Mark Sanderson will be stepping down as co-editor, so he can devote his full energies as Conference Chair for SIGIR'04. If you are interested in working on the Forum, let us know (sigir-ec@acm.org).

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 Stephen Levin and Mark Sanderson (Univ. of Sheffield) for their work in editing and archiving this important source of current awareness about a wide range of topics and opportunities in IR.

SIGIR started a Member Value Plus (MVP) program two years ago. 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-sponsored conference proceedings. The number of members taking advantage of the MVP program has increased steadily from its inception (31 first year, 84 last year, 117 this year). For more

information on joining the SIGIR MVP program, see <http://www.acm.org/sigir> .

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. They are also available in the 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 us (sigir-ec@acm.org).

Interest in information retrieval is increasing. SIGIR-sponsored conferences are seeing solid attendance, and SIGIR membership is slowly growing, from 950 in May 2001 to 1072 in May 2002, and 1192 in May 2003, 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 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.