
BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2011: Secretary's Notes

Andrew Trotman
Department of Computer Science
University of Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand
andrew@cs.otago.ac.nz

1 Opening Matters

The 2011 ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting took place on Thursday 27th July 2011, at the SIGIR 2011 conference in Beijing, China. The meeting opened at 12:05pm and was lead by James Allan. The meeting started with a tribute to the late Efthi Efthimiadis who passed away on the 7th of April 2011. Efthi was a long time contributor to, and well know by, the IR community.

The Executive Committee was introduced as: James Allan (Chair), Ian Ruthven (Vice-Chair), Andrew Trotman (Secretary), Ian Soboroff (Treasurer), Elizabeth Liddy (Past-Chair). Thanks were then given to the many volunteers including: Djoerd Hiemstra (Information Director), Raman Chandrasekar & Diane Kelly (SIGIR Forum editors), and Mark Smucker (IRList editor). A call was made for nominations for the position of Awards Chair.

The role of the Executive Committee was outlined as were the member services including: SIGIR Forum, reduced conference registration fees for sponsored and in-cooperation conferences, access to the ACM Digital Library, and the SIGIR-IRList electronic newsletter. Non-members who attend the annual SIGIR conference become members at registration.

Finally special thanks were given to the conference supports including: Microsoft, Baidu, EMC², Google, SOSO, Yahoo!, eBay, HP Labs, IBM Research, Yandex, Université de Montréal. And student travel supporters: Google, Donald B. Crouch Grants, HP Labs, ACM-W, and SIGIR.

2 Treasurer's Report

Ian Soboroff began by stating that the SIG is in a very strong financial position. Conferences continue to run at a profit and ACM Digital Library downloads have increased. The largest expense is student travel grants (in 2011 more than US\$115,000). SIG reserves are sufficient by ACM regulations.

Finances were then reviewed starting with a graph showing 1997-2011. The annual net profit has continued to rise since 2009 leading to an increasing balance of (about) US\$1.2 Million. A graph showing the breakdown of income and expenditure showed the digital library continuing to be a substantial portion of the SIG income. In 2011 the conference income is projected to be unusually large.

A graph showing SIGIR membership numbers (2005-2011) showed a general downwards trend in all

membership types. Although not a financial concern, this is a SIG concern.

SIGIR continues to sponsor several conferences including: SIGIR (100%), CIKM (50%), WSDM (25%), and JCDL (25%). This involves underwriting the event, but also a profit share.

3 SIGIR Survey

James Allan presented preliminary results of the SIGIR Survey. The online survey ran from 21st July 2011 to 5th August 2011 and had been running for just 6 of those days (with 218 responses) when the preliminary results were given. *The Secretary only presents imprecise highlights in an effort to avoid later incorrect reporting on preliminary results.*

Participant demographics were shown first, then conference attendance patterns. More respondents believed that the SIGIR conference was too expensive than those who believed it was good value: about US\$600 ± US\$100 was considered appropriate. Opinion was evenly split on the student fee, US\$300 ± US\$100 was considered appropriate. With respect to the reducing the SIGIR conference fee, votes were strong for maintaining coffee breaks and wireless Internet – but not the boxed business meeting lunch. More believed that the banquet should be optional than believed it should be optional for students. Most believed that the paper proceedings should be dropped. Most voted to increase the number of SIGIR conference awards. Few opposed regional SIGIR conferences.

Responses to questions on how to spend the SIG surplus suggested travel grants are at about the right levels. There was generally little support for new initiatives requiring financial support. With respect to the ACM Turing celebrations, the majority believed that US\$10,000 was appropriate sponsorship.

Although the community was split on how to address the increasing problem of papers reporting non-reproducible results on propriety and non-publically released data sets, there was general support for addressing the problem with less than a third of respondents believing that nothing should be done.

3.1 Discussion

James Allan chaired a discussion on the survey. *In an effort to make this section more readable the Secretary summarizes the comments without attributing them to their original source.*

More information was requested on the ACM Turing celebrations. It is a celebration of the 100th birthday of Alan Turing. It will be held in San Francisco. Previous ACM Turing Award winners will be invited to give talks. Little more is known.

As a cost saving move the banquet might be replaced by a second poster session. *This suggestion was also made at the 2010 business meeting.* The possibility of a best oral presentation award was raised.

There were several comments on the issue of publicly available test collections. One participant asked what should be done if no publicly available data were available. Another asked what should be done if the experimental results are not reproducible on the publicly available test collections. Yet another pointed out that the survey design might affect the results to this question. James Allan responded by saying that the survey was measuring community opinion and not proposing a solution and agreed that the issue appears to warrant careful consideration.

4 Conferences

The meeting continued with presentations on ACM sponsored and in-cooperation events including SIGIR, CIKM, JCDL, and WSDM.

4.1 SIGIR 2010

James Allan presented the final report for SIGIR 2010 on behalf of Fabio Crestani & Stephane Marchand-Maillet.

The total number of registrants was 553. 280 participated in the tutorials and 241 in workshops. 35% were ACM members, 32% were not, 23% were students, 4% were sponsors, 6% were staff and volunteers. Registrants came from 45 countries, 41% coming from Europe, 31% coming from North America, 22% from Asia Pacific, 3% from Africa, 2% from the Middle East, and 1% from South America. *New Zealand was represented, but not well.*

The paper acceptance rate was 16.7%, posters was 30.7%, demos was 50%, Tutorials was 52.4% and Workshops was 50%.

Registration fees did not increase from the 2009 price yet the conference returned an about US\$100,000 profit (*c.f. US\$23,000 in 2009*)

4.2 SIGIR 2011 Preliminary Report

Jian-Yun Nie outlined the logistics of the conference (location, etc.) and thanked Racemind and Microsoft Research Asia for their help with the conference management.

There were 543 papers submitted of which 108 were accepted (19.9%). 89 of 274 short papers were accepted (32.5%). 8 workshops, 15 demonstrations, and 11 tutorials were accepted (but only 8 ran). There were about 800 participants, of which 52% were from Asia-Australia, 31% from North America, 14% from Europe. *Attendance from New Zealand appeared to have doubled since 2010!*

Tutorials were attended by 236 participants and 200 attended workshops. 358 attended the Microsoft Research Asia reception and 228 attended the industry tour. *The secretary notes that 800 participants is a substantial increase in attendees from the 553 seen in 2010.*

Beijing costs are high, but nonetheless it remained within budget and is expected to will return a small surplus. Sponsorship was strong due to the efforts of Jimmy Huang who was personally thanked.

The organizing committee was again thanked was were the sponsors: Microsoft, Baidu, EMC², Google, Soso, Yahoo!, ebay Research Labs, HP Labs, IBM Research, and Yandex, CPIS, Université de Montréal. And the exhibitors: Morgan and Claypool Publishers, Springers, and Now.

SIGIR 2011 saw changes to previous conferences. A double meta-reviewer system was introduced as was the ability for the reviewers to ask questions of the authors. The papers were extended to 10 pages because the paper proceedings became optional. Industry visits were introduced. Honorable mention was added to the awards.

4.3 SIGIR 2012

Bill Hersh outlined the location of the conference, Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront (Portland, Oregon, USA). Statistics on the climate were given along with suggestions for recreational activities.

~~The conference will take place 22nd–26th July 2012. Paper abstracts are due 16th January 2012. Further dates were presented, they are available on the SIGIR 2012 web site (<http://www.sigir.org/sigir2012/>).~~

[Secretary/Editor's Correction: Following SIGIR 2011, it was determined that the conference dates would shift based on hotel availability. SIGIR 2012 will take place on 12th-16th August 2012. The location is the same, Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront (Portland, Oregon, USA). Paper abstracts are now due 06th February 2012. Full papers are due on 13th February 2012.]

The conference will be chaired by Bill Hersh, the PC chairs will be: Jamie Callan, Yoelle Maarek, & Mark Sanderson. Poster and Demo Chairs will be: Falk Scholer, Mark Smucker, & Andrew Turpin. The tutorial chair will be Henning Muller. Workshops Chair will be: Eugene Agichtein & Vanessa Murdock. Other members of the organizing committee include: Udo Kruschwitz & Su-Lin Wu (Industry Track Chairs), Marteen de Rijke & Mounia Lalmas (Doctoral Consortium Chairs). *The Secretary notes that the Doctoral Consortium Chairs are likely to change as it is convention to include a graduate of the Doctoral Consortium as a co-chair.* Doug Oard (Mentoring Chair), ChengXiang Zhai (Best Papers Chair), Javed Mostafa (Treasurer), Elmer Bernstam (Publications Chair), Justin Fletcher (Local Arrangements Chair), Jayashree Kalpathy-Cramer (Publicity Chair), Aaron Cohen (Sponsorships Chair), Chris Weldon (Webmaster).

4.4 SIGIR 2013

Páraic Sheridan presented SIGIR 2013 to be held at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland with Plenary Sessions at The Mansion House, the welcome reception at the Guinness Brewery and the banquet at Croke Park Stadium. *Secretaries note: general chairs are: Páraic Sheridan, & Gareth Jones.*

4.5 SIGIR 2014

The 37th Annual ACM SIGIR Conference will be held at Australia's Gold Coast and co-chaired by Shlomo Geva & Andrew Trotman. Shlomo Geva presented details on the location including climate, environs, and accommodation. Andrew Trotman presented details on access including flight times from most of the previous 7 SIGIR conferences. It was noted that Google Maps suggests the travel time from Amherst (Massachusetts, USA) to Gold Coast (Australia) is 56 days and 5 hours due to a requirement to Kayak across the Pacific – this is likely only to affect Bruce Croft.

Others organizers were presented as: Alistair Moffat (Treasurer), Laurianne Sitbon (Local Arrangements Chair), and Peter Bruza as one of the Program Committee Chairs.

4.6 SIGIR 2015

James Allan called for bids for SIGIR 2015 (to be located in the Americas); formal bids are due 15th September 2011. Ian Soboroff somewhat humorously suggested Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA.

Ricardo Baeza-Yates asked for a general show of hands for a Chile for which there was a positive response (*the Secretary notes that Chile claims 1,250,000 square kilometers of Antarctica and that SIGIR has never been run anywhere on that continent (and for him it is close to home)*).

Charlie Clarke presented Vancouver (Canada) which received a positive show of hands. Somewhere “mid-west”, perhaps near Chicago was also suggested by another. During discussion Nick Belkin suggested that the Executive Committee make the details of bid chairs and bid locations available for expressions (or votes) by the SIGIR community.

4.7 Sponsored and In-Cooperation Conferences

James Allan presented details on the SIGIR sponsored and in-cooperation conferences

JCDL 2011 was held at the University of Ottawa and chaired by Glen Newton. Attendance was up from 220 in 2010 to 260 in 2011. A small surplus is anticipated (of which SIGIR will receive 34%). JCDL 2012 will be held at the George Washington University in Washington DC, with Barrie Howard & Karim Boughida co-chairing. In 2013 the conference will be in Indianapolis.

CIKM 2010 was held at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto (Canada) and had about 600 attendees. The acceptance rate for full papers was 13.3% and for short papers it was 17.5%. Finances are not complete but the conference is expected to return a large surplus. CIKM 2011 will be held in Glasgow (Scotland) and chaired by Iadh Ounis & Ian Ruthven (who presented the event). CIKM 2012 will be held in Maui (Hawaii, USA) and chaired by Xue-Wen Chen (however the location was presented by James Allan).

WSDM conferences were presented by Ricardo Baeza-Yates. WSDM 2011 was chaired by Irwing King, held in Hong Kong, and attended by 238 split 120 academic and 118 industry. A breakdown of the budget was given: income US\$140,000, expenditure: US\$130,000, surplus: US\$10,000. WSDM 2012 will be held in Seattle (Washington, USA) between the 8th and 12th of February. The general chairs will be Eytan Adar & Jaime Teevan. WSDM 2013 will be in Rome, Italy.

Recent in-cooperation events included: NLP-IR-SS 2011 (Beijing), IRFC 2011 (Vienna, Austria), ECIR 2011 (Dublin, Ireland) and CVIR 2010 (Xi’an, China). Upcoming events include RecSys 2011 (Chicago in October), AIRS 2011 (Dubai, UAE in December), ECIR 2012 (Barcelona, Spain, in April).

Attention was also drawn to the Australasian Document Computing Symposium (ADCS) which is currently working through the in-cooperation process and is likely to be such an even in 2012 *when it will (in all likelihood) be held in Dunedin, New Zealand*.

5 Broad Issues

James Allan chaired a discussion (from the floor) on broad issues. He started by discussing issues from the survey including reducing the CIKM conference fee and maintaining the current SIGIR conference fee (perhaps through changes to the banquet). More SIGIR conference awards are likely, and some funds will be contributed to the ACM Turing Celebration.

Discussion from the floor is summarized below. *In an effort to make this section more readable the Secretary summarizes the comments without attributing the comments to their source.*

5.1 SIGIR Conference Issues

Questions about the organization of the conference included a suggestion that the talks be recorded and put online for download. There was criticism that attendees did not know the printed proceedings was an optional add-on, James Allan responded by noting that it was listed as such on the conference

registration form. The change from 8 to 10 full conference papers was raised – there is no general policy on this and for 2012 the decision is to be made by the Program Chairs (who are considering returning to 8 pages). It was suggested that 8 pages plus one for references might be better. A show of hands suggested that attendees prefer 8 pages. Although full papers as posters was proposed for SIGIR 2011 it did not happen.

A request was made for more information on parameter settings in conference papers. The asker pointed out that experiments are not reproducible without this information.

5.2 Other Issues

It was suggested that SIGIR provide seed funding for a data repository (or an algorithm checker) so that all publicly available data could be found in one place and ongoing.

The status of the SIGIR Literature Repository was questioned – James Allan responded by saying that Donna Harman continues to work on the project, has many of the historical document digitized, and is currently considering what to do about software.

Questions finished with a member of the Executive Committee noting that the only reason ADCS was not an in-cooperation event in 2011 was that the ACM required the organizers to legally be a not-for-profit organization, ADCS is currently organized by an ad hoc committee with no legal status. The process of legally becoming a not for profit organization is complex and time consuming. This complication should be considered by all conferences trying to achieve in-cooperation status.

6 Conclusion

James Allan concluded the meeting with thanks at 1:52pm.