

# SIGIR PROGRAM REVIEW

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with help from Nick Belkin (Past-Chair, SIGIR)

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# Recent Elections

- **New Officers - elections summer 1999**
  - Chair: Susan Dumais
  - Vice-Chair: Susan Gauch
  - Secretary: Liz Liddy
  - Treasurer: Jamie Callan
  - International Reps: Peter Schauble & Ross Wilkinson
- **Outgoing Officers**
  - Chair: Nick Belkin
  - Vice-Chair: Howard Turtle
  - Secretary: Elke Mittendorff
  - Treasurer: Susan Gauch

# Mission Statement

- The mission of ACM SIGIR is to foster excellence in research, development and education in information retrieval and to serve the community of individuals and organizations interested in this field.
- As the information superhighway has become a reality, the mission of SIGIR has expanded to cover new fundamental research topics, such as locating information in the global computer network, digital libraries, and issues which arise when information retrieval software is embedded in other applications or when IR models or techniques are applied in them.

# Addressing Our Mission

- Conferences
- Publications
- Informative Web site
- Joint activities with other SIGs and other groups
- Initiatives to support student involvement in SIGIR

# Publications

- Main membership benefits are the publications, conference discounts, and the Web site
- SIGIR Annual Conference Proceedings
  - Special issue of the SIGIR Forum
  - About 350 pages (390 in 1998)

# Publications

- SIGIR Forum
  - Two regular issues per year, refereed papers, lab reports, news-like comment
  - Will move online beginning Fall 1999
- SIGIR Web site
  - Online Forum
  - More community focus and timeliness

# Conferences

- **SIGIR 'nn - sole sponsor**
  - '95 - Seattle; '96 - Zurich; '97 - Philadelphia; '98 - Melbourne; '99 - Berkeley; '00 - Athens; '01 - New Orleans; '02 - Tampere; '03 - in process
- **DL 'nn - co-sponsor**
  - '96 - Bethesda; '97 - Philadelphia; '98 - Pittsburgh; '99 - Berkeley; '00 - San Antonio
- **CIKM 'nn - co-sponsor**
  - '96 - Rockville; '97 - Las Vegas; '98 - Bethesda; '99 - Kansas City

# SIGIR 'nn

- The major international conference in IR
- One year in North America, the next elsewhere
- North American conferences are sponsored solely by SIGIR, those elsewhere are sponsored and funded by local organizations, in cooperation with SIGIR

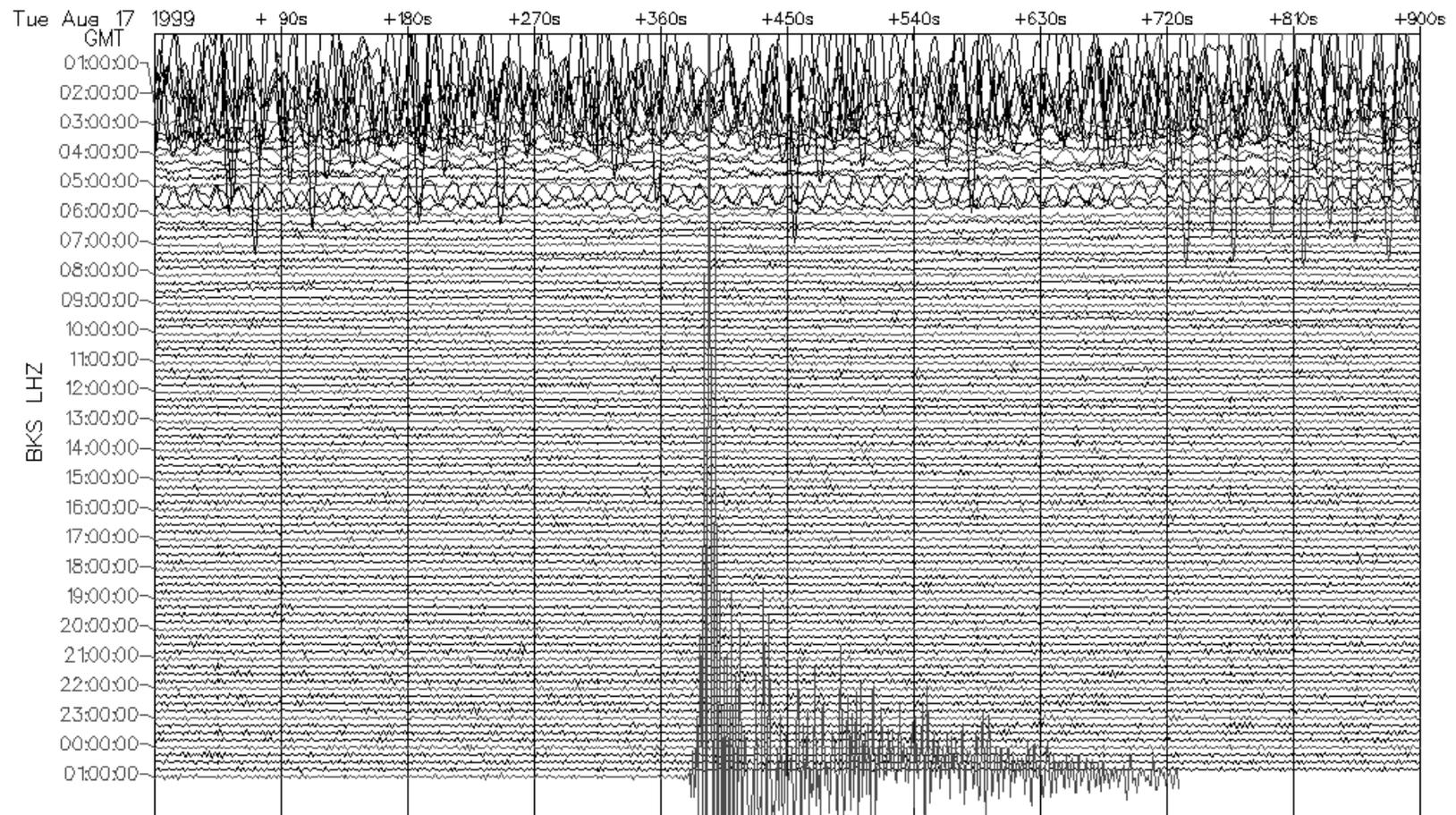
# SIGIR 'nn

- Attendance steadily growing, N.A. conferences are at about 450, overseas conferences at about 250
- Overseas conferences were always in Europe, SIGIR '98 was in Melbourne
- Conferences routinely profitable; problem for SIGIR is what to do in alternate years

# SIGIR 'nn

- Very high quality conference
  - Typically ca. 25% acceptance rate
  - Recognized as the premier publication outlet in IR (only one journal which is devoted entirely to IR, and it is in vol. 1, no. 1)
- Still manages to be primarily a single-track conference
- Successful Tutorial and Workshop programs

# SIGIR '99 - special event



## DL 'nn

- Jointly sponsored (50-50) with SIGWEB
- DL '96 began the series
- Held in collocation with HT 'nn and SIGIR 'nn in alternate years
- Supervised by a Steering Committee
  - Two from SIGIR, two from SIGWEB, past two DL Chairs, past two ADL chairs

# DL 'nn

- Popular conference
  - Oversubscribed (more than 300) for first conference, continues to be attractive
- Collocation is both advantage and problem
- Relationship to other DL conferences is a problem
- Maintaining structural continuity has been a problem

## CIKM 'nn

- Jointly sponsored with SIGMIS (used to be with SIGART)
- Organized by Charles Nicholas, more formally by a Steering Committee which has run the conference for its existence
- Increasing focus on IR concerns, example of SIGIR expanding interest (Knowledge Management)

# Membership

• Year	Membership	Retention Rate
• 1995:	1326	61%
• 1996:	1317	64%
• 1997:	1190	67%
• 1998:	1125	66%
• 1999:	1035	

# Membership

- Like everyone else, slowly declining
- Like others, lower membership accompanied by increased profitability
- Concerned with what new services need to be offered
- Concerned with how to attract new members

# Membership

- International membership and representation is a crucial issue
  - European and Asia/Pacific IR organizations nominate representatives to the EC
  - More candidates for EC offices coming from outside North America
  - Local SIGIR Chapter being formed for Asia/Pacific

# Membership Issues

- Dues-paying membership is declining slowly
  - A general ACM trend, competition from other sources ...
  - Declining membership is not a *financial* threat
- Is it a threat to the sense of “IR community”?
- Issues for SIGIR to consider:
  - How to inform and involve interested non-members
  - How to increase dissemination of high quality IR research
  - How to better serve the dues-paying members
    - >> but doing so isn't likely to increase membership much

# Informing and Involving Interested Non-Members

- The Information Director will begin maintaining a database of people likely to be interested in IR
  - Dues-paying members, and people who attend conferences sponsored by SIGIR
  - Info conferences and workshops sponsored by SIGIR
- “Value Plus” Membership Proposal
  - Usual member benefits plus copy of DL or CIKM proceedings

# Finances

- Healthy, perhaps too healthy
- Major source of income is from SIGIR 'nn, then DL 'nn and CIKM 'nn
- Major expenditure (outside conferences) is mailing the SIGIR 'nn Conference Proceedings
- Membership wants the printed version

# Finances

- Fund Balance
  - 1995: \$133,555
  - 1996: \$213,776
  - 1997: \$243,645
  - 1998: \$328,580
- Accomplished primarily through very conservative conference budgeting

# Awards

- Gerard Salton Award for Excellence in Research in Information Retrieval 3-yearly award, last to Tefko Saracevic in 1997
  - Previous winners: Cyril Cleverdon, Gerard Salton, Karen Sparck-Jones, William Cooper
- Best Student Paper, Best Non-Student Paper, Best Poster Awards at each SIGIR
  - SIGIR '98: one from Europe, one from NA, one from Asia
  - SIGIR '99: two from NA, one from Asia
- W. Bruce Croft our most recent ACM Fellow

# New (kind of ) Initiatives

- Support for students to participate in SIGIR Annual Conference
  - Each overseas conference to contribute at least a portion of its profit to a fund for this purpose
  - SIGIR to budget annually for this purpose
  - Support for students from throughout the world to attend each meeting

## Initiatives, Cntd

- Increasing number of co-sponsorship arrangements
  - To increase visibility, to move into new areas
- Continuing to work on electronic publications, in particular to digitize our old conference proceedings

# What's Coming Next

- Explore different member benefit packages
- Increase IR community development
  - Mailing lists and Web-based Forum
- Increasing internationalization
- More interaction with other organizations
- Figuring out how to spend our money without fear of going broke