

Greetings SIGIR members and friends. Since the publication of the June 2017 *SIGIR Forum* issue, the SIGIR community has continued to grow. In August, we observed the 40th Anniversary of the *SIGIR Conference*, and also saw the largest conference in history with 911 participants! The SIGIR Executive Committee is grateful to all the volunteers who made *SIGIR '17* in Tokyo, Japan, a success, including general chairs **Noriko Kando**, **Tetsuya Sakai**, **Hideo Joho**, and all those who worked on the local arrangements committee. In case you missed the conference, there are several photo collections at the *SIGIR '17* website (<http://sigir.org/sigir2017/program/photos/>), including a link to a special *SIGIR Anniversary Photo Album* assembled by **Alistair Moffat** and **Falk Scholer**, which includes photos from the first 40 years of the conference (<http://people.eng.unimelb.edu.au/ammoffat/sigir40pix/>). Next year's SIGIR Conference will take place in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA and *SIGIR '19* will take place in Paris, France. At the business meeting, we announced the location of *SIGIR 2020*, which will be held in Xi'an, China.

SIGIR '17 featured many special events, including an awards ceremony to recognize the *SIGIR Test of Time Award* recipients from the years 1978 to 2001. A special issue of *SIGIR Forum* was published in July that announced and summarized these papers, and also included reprints of most papers. This special issue can also be viewed online (<http://sigir.org/forum/issues/july-special-issue-2017/>). The conference also featured a presentation by the 40th *Anniversary Awards Committee*, where temporal trends in topics, authorship and reviewing were presented, as well as several special authorships awards, including most connected author. Highlights include:

- *Most Prolific Author*: **Bruce Croft**, with 87 papers.
- *Most Single Authored Papers*: **Ellen Voorhees**, with nine single-authored papers.
- *Most Connected Author*: **Ryen White**, who is 3.75 authors away on average from all other authors in the main cluster of 3,275 authors. (**Nick Craswell** was a close second with a score of 3.76.)
- *Reviewer Award*: **Gianni Amati**, **Norbert Fuhr**, **Edie Rasmussen**, **Nivio Ziviani** and **Mandar Mitra** were recognized for having served the greatest number of times as reviewers for SIGIR.

This year's *SIGIR Best Paper Award* went to:

BitFunnel: Revisiting Signatures for Search by Bob Goodwin, Michael Hopcroft, Dan Luu, Alex Clemmer, Mihaela Curmei, Sameh Elnikety, and Yuxiong He

There was also a *Best Student Paper Award*:

Evaluating Web Search with a Bejeweled Player Model by Fan Zhang, Yiqun Liu, Xin Li, Min Zhang, Yinghui Xu, and Shaoping Ma

SIGIR '17 also saw the introduction of a new award, *Best Short Paper*, whose charter was written by Doug Oard (*SIGIR '17 Paper Awards Chair*) and Falk Scholer (*SIGIR Awards Chair*). This year's recipient was:

LiveMaps Converting Map Images into Interactive Maps by Michael R. Evans, Dragomir Yankov, Pavel Berkhin, Pavel Yudin, Florin Teodorescu, and Wei Wu

Finally, this year's SIGIR Test of Time Award went to:

Personalizing Search via Automated analysis of Interests and Activities by Jaime Teevan, Susan T. Dumais, and Eric Horvitz

This paper was published at *SIGIR '05* and was one of the first studies to focus on how personalization could be incorporated into large-scale search systems. The authors used signals from Web interactions, as well as signals from other applications such as email. The paper can be admired not only for its innovation and clarity, but also for its elegant application of classic approaches to IR evaluation to Web search. As is customary, this paper is reprinted in this edition of the Forum.

Many other innovations and new programming were introduced at *SIGIR '17*. A huge thanks goes out again to Noriko, Tetsuya and Hideo, who worked closely with the SIGIR Executive Committee to reduce conference registration fees and plan several SIGIR-sponsored events, including the *SIGIR Student Lunch*, the *SIGIR Student Party* and our first event focused on diversity and inclusion, the *Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon*. The organizers also found a great space for the *Women in IR* event, which was organized by **Laura Dietz** and **Maram Hasanain**. This event was also blogged about by **Mei Kobayashi** in BLOG@CACM (<https://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/220151-sigir-2017-diversity-and-inclusion/fulltext>).

The inaugural class of *SIGIR Student Liaisons* was also introduced at *SIGIR '17*. **Mei Kobayashi** blogged about the new program as well (<https://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/221569-student-liaison-program-debuts-at-sigir-2017/fulltext>), which was initiated by the recently appointed *SIGIR Student Affairs Chair*, **Laura Dietz**. The goals of the *SIGIR Student Liaison* program are to make sure every student conference attendee is improving his or her network, and to ensure ideal conditions for all students to thrive. Liaisons are the voice of students, advising the *SIGIR Executive Committee* on potential programming and concerns. Applications were solicited for the inaugural class of liaisons and six students were selected to serve: **Mohammad Aliannejadi** (Universit della Svizzera italiana (USI), Lugano, Switzerland); **Maram Hasanain** (Qatar University, Qatar); **Jiaxin Mao** (Tsinghua University, Beijing, China); **Jaspreet Singh** (L3S Research Center at Leibniz University, Hannover, Germany); **Johanne Trippas** (RMIT University, Australia) and **Hamed Zamani** (University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA). The *Student Liaisons* have already begun their work to make the community better by launching the *PhD Buddy Program* at *SIGIR '17*. We look forward to working with them to create additional opportunities for student involvement.

Another new addition to the SIGIR Conference was presentations made by authors of papers appearing in *ACM Transactions on Information Systems* (TOIS). One of the main goals of this initiative is to promote greater integration of the conference and journal. The first TOIS presentation was made at CHIIR 2017 in Oslo, Norway (authors can choose to present at CHIIR, ICTIR or SIGIR). More information about this program is online at: <http://sigir.org/conferences/tois-presentation/>.

During the past year, the SIGIR Executive Committee has continued to support ongoing programs. As part of the *Student Travel Grant* program, we awarded approximately \$250,000

USD in travel support to students all around the world to attend SIGIR sponsored and co-sponsored conferences. In the past, we have funded all students who met the criteria of having a paper accepted (full, short, or doctoral consortium) and being the primary presenter. An increasing number of students who qualify and apply has created a situation where many students receive small amounts, which in turn, can make it difficult for them to attend. This year, we have changed the award model. Starting with conferences that occur in the 2018 calendar year, students will be selected to receive either \$1,000 USD or \$2,000 USD travel grants depending on their proximity to the conference. One important implication of this new model is that not all students will receive grants. More information about the new procedure can be found at: <http://sigir.org/general-information/travel-grants/>. In addition to the *Student Travel Grant* program, we also supported students through sponsorship of CRA-W, and we sent ten students to ACM's *50 Years of Turing Celebration*.

One new initiative we plan to launch this year is the *SIGIR Diversity Scholars* program, which is a new student travel grant program open to any student who will increase the diversity of our community. The application will allow students to indicate how they will increase diversity, rather than have specified criteria. This program will be open to all students regardless of whether they have a paper appearing at the conference. There will be three application cycles and students can elect to attend any SIGIR-sponsored conference (SIGIR, CHIIR, ICTIR, CIKM, JCDL, and WSDM). The award amounts will be the same as for the regular student travel grants. Look for an announcement commencing this program early 2018.

We created a new volunteer position, *SIGIR Industry Liaison Chair*, in which **Yoelle Maarek** agreed to serve. Together with SIGIR Secretary, **Emine Yilmaz**, the pair are formulating a plan for the *SIGIR Industry Liaison* program as a way to better connect SIGIR to those working in industry so we can learn more about how SIGIR can be of greater service and benefit to this community. We also awarded approximately \$40,000 USD in support of local IR events through our *Friends of SIGIR* program.

Before closing, I want to thank other members of the SIGIR Executive Committee for working so hard this past year to implement our new programs: **Jaap Kamps** (Vice Chair), **Emine Yilmaz** (Secretary), **Ben Carterette** (Treasurer) and **Charlie Clarke** (Past Chair). I also want to recognize all of our volunteers who continue to add value for members: **Jaime Arguello**, Student Travel Awards Chair, **Laura Dietz**, Student Affairs Chair, **Falk Scholer**, Awards Chair, **Craig Macdonald**, June Forum editor, **Claudia Hauff**, December Forum editor, and **Nattiya Kanhabua** and **Guido Zuccon**, Information Co-Directors. I would also like to recognize our conference liaisons: **Susan Dumais** (WSDM), **Jimmy Lin** (CIKM) and **Edie Rasmussen** (JCDL), and our Asia/Pacific Regional Representative, **Tetsuya Sakai**.

It has been a busy and productive year for the SIGIR Executive Committee and all the other SIGIR volunteers, including those who have organized SIGIR sponsored and co-sponsored conferences. As we continue to move our organization forward, we rely on you, the members of SIGIR, to send us your feedback and ideas, and even volunteer to lead initiatives or activities that you believe are missing and would make our community more valuable. The strength and significance of this professional society is everyone's responsibility.

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