

Chair's Letter

Ben Carterette
Spotify
carteret@acm.org

Dear IR community,

I hope this letter finds you well. Since my last letter in December, WSDM 2021 and CHIIR 2021 have taken place as virtual events. Thanks to the organizers: for WSDM 2021, General Chairs David Carmel, Liane Lewin-Eytan, and Elad Yom-Tov, and Program Chairs Eugene Agichtein and Evgeniy Gabrilovich; and for CHIIR 2021, General Chairs Falk Scholer and Paul Thomas, and Program Chairs David Elsweiler, Hideo Joho, Noriko Kando, and Catherine Smith.

We now have one full year of virtual conferences under our belt—every one of our sponsored and co-sponsored events has run virtually at least once. We've learned a lot, and fortunately our events have continued to be successful. Although there are certainly challenges, virtual conferences present new opportunities to include people all over the world. Our aim now is to consolidate what we've learned from the last year, and ensure that when conferences go back to having in-person gatherings, we do not lose all we've gained in terms of accessibility.

The next event on our calendar is the big one: SIGIR 2021, running virtually starting July 11, by General Chairs Fernando Diaz, Chirag Shah, and Torsten Suel, and Program Chairs Pablo Castells, Rosie Jones, and Tetsuya Sakai. I've blocked out my week to participate, and I'm looking forward to connecting with many of you there! I plan to host "office hours" for anyone who would like to chat, but please feel free to reach out to me directly if you'd like to meet as well.

The Executive Committee is planning several events co-located with the conference. We will host a student social, with three time zone-appropriate informal talks about career journeys; a DEI panel hosted by our DEI chairs Barbara Poblete, Hussein Suleman, and Suzan Verberne; an awards ceremony to present the inaugural class, and the 2021 class, of the new SIGIR Academy; the yearly business meeting; and of course the Salton Award keynote!

ICTIR 2021 will be co-located with SIGIR 2021 as well, taking place on July 11. This marks a new phase for the conference, as future ICTIRs will continue to be co-located with SIGIR. Huge thank you to General Chair Faegheh Hasibi, Program Chairs Yi Fang and Akiko Aizawa, and Steering Committee Chair Tetsuya Sakai for navigating this change to the conference.

In other news, I have been elected to the ACM SIG Governing Board Executive Committee as one of three Members-at-Large, for a 2-year term starting July 1 (coinciding with my final year as SIGIR Chair). In this role I will be part of discussions and decisions around topics that are important to our community, such as open access, DEI, reviewing standards, and hybrid conferences. I will report on my participation in future letters.

As always, the SIGIR Executive Committee meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes are available publicly¹. We also continue to take suggestions from the community for agenda items for our meetings².

Best regards,

Ben Carterette
Chair, ACM SIGIR Executive Committee

¹In a Google Doc linked here: <http://bit.ly/SIGIR-EC-agenda>

²In a Google Form linked here: <http://bit.ly/SIGIR-EC-form>