

From the chair...

Jamie Callan

Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
4502 Newell Simon Hall, LTI
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-8213
chair_sigir@acm.org

I've got good news, and bad news. I will start with the bad news first....

Rates Are Going Up

SIGIR has been losing money on its members for years. The services the SIG provides cost more than the \$20 basic membership fee, and the Proceedings Package costs more than the \$30 fee. At one time the fees covered costs, but costs increase every year, while membership fees rarely change. SIGIR absorbed these losses for years, covering them from conference profits. However, we have reached the point where we must either cut services or increase fees. The new fees better represent the actual costs of services.

Category	Old Cost	New Cost
Basic membership	\$20	\$30
Student membership	\$10	\$15
Air Service option	\$3	\$14
Proceedings Package option	\$30	\$45
Digital Symposium Collection (DiSC) option	N/A	\$10

Rate increases are never popular, but keep this in mind: The last increase was so long ago that nobody seems to know when it was. ACM records suggest that the rates haven't changed since at least 1993.

SIGIR is still losing money on the Proceedings Package. JCDL and CIKM proceedings have become very expensive in recent years. We are raising the price of this package, and we will also try to reduce the costs of the proceedings. If necessary, we will raise the price of this package again in two years to cover costs. If you subscribe to this package, you may wish to consider the DiSC package, instead. The DiSC is a DVD that includes JCDL, CIKM, and many other conference proceedings and newsletters. It's a great deal.

Record Submissions to SIGIR 2005

Brazil must be a popular destination, because the number of papers submitted to the SIGIR 2005 conference was by far the highest SIGIR has ever had – 367 – which is 38% more than last year. 71 papers were accepted, which will make SIGIR 2005 the largest SIGIR conference so far (in terms of accepted papers).

Paper is Expensive!

The sizes of conference proceedings continue to grow; this year the SIGIR conference proceedings will increase in size by 50-100 pages. Larger proceedings are a sign of a healthy field – we’re getting more high quality papers than ever before – but it makes printing and shipping the Forum “Special Issue” copy of the SIGIR Proceedings more expensive. This is the single biggest cost of membership.

The EC is debating the possibility of moving the “Special Issue” to CD or DVD, to help control costs. We are interested in hearing your opinions about this possible change. Keep in mind that our options are limited: Either we continue to increase membership fees to cover costs, or we replace the paper proceedings with a CD or DVD. Which would you prefer? Or, do you have other suggestions?

Now for some better news....

Michael Lesk Elected to the U.S. National Academy of Engineering

In February Michael Lesk was elected to the U.S. National Academy of Engineering. Michael was an early contributor to SMART, made significant contributions to Unix, was Chair of SIGIR, and is a Fellow of the ACM. Michael was elected “in recognition of his contributions to UNIX applications, information systems, and digital libraries”. Congratulations Michael!

Sue Dumais Appointed to the CHI Academy

Susan Dumais was recently appointed to the SIGCHI CHI Academy. The CHI Academy is “an honorary group of individuals who have made extensive contributions to the study of HCI and who have led the shaping of the field.” Sue is the past Chair of SIGIR, and is well-known for her work on latent semantic analysis, user interfaces, and *Stuff I’ve Seen*. Congratulations Sue!

Where Are Our Members?

Do you ever wonder about the regional distribution of SIGIR members? SIGIR has a reputation as having a more diverse international membership than most ACM SIGs, but...is it deserved? I decided to look. The tables below summarize what I discovered.

In February 2005 SIGIR had 1287 members distributed across 56 countries on 6 continents. Although this data has a significant skew towards US members, it *is* more international than most other ACM SIGs and ACM as a whole. We don’t yet have historical data from ACM, so we don’t know how it has changed in recent years. We will be looking into that so that we can better understand how SIGIR is evolving.

Region	Count	%
N. America	784	61
Europe	294	23
Asia	164	13
AU/NZ	29	2
S. America	9	1
Africa	7	1
Total	1287	100

Country	Count	%
USA	738	57
Japan	85	7
Great Britain	61	5
Canada	46	4
Germany	40	3
S. Korea	27	2
Australia	26	2
Italy	17	1
Switzerland	16	1
Netherlands	16	1
China	15	1
Finland	14	1
Taiwan ROC	14	1
Spain	13	1
Norway	12	1
India	11	1
Sweden	11	1
France	11	1
Israel	11	1
Other	104	8
Total	1287	100

As always, we value your opinion. If you have ideas about how SIGIR can be improved, please let me know by email.

I look forward to seeing you in Brazil!

Jamie Callan
chair_sigir@acm.org