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ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2013: Secretary's Notes

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1 Opening Matters

The 2013 ACM SIG-IR Annual Business Meeting took place on Wednesday July 31, 2013, at the SIGIR'13 Conference in Dublin, Ireland.¹ The meeting started at 12:50 and was led by Charlie Clarke.

A new SIG-IR executive committee was elected for a three-year term, starting July 1st, 2013. The chair greatly thanked the outgoing executive committee: James Allan (chair), Ian Ruthven (vice-chair), Andrew Trotman (secretary), Ian Soboroff (treasurer), and Elizabeth Liddy (past chair) and introduced the incoming executive committee: Charles Clarke (chair), Yoelle Maarek (vice chair), Jaap Kamps (secretary), Diane Kelly (treasurer), and again James Allan (now as past chair).

Charlie thanked the outgoing chair James Allan for preparing the slides, and explained the role of the SIG-IR executive committee. There are many member benefits, including: SIGIR Forum, reduced conference fees for sponsored and “in cooperation” conferences, access to the ACM digital library, and the SIG-IRList newsletter (see <http://sigir.org/> for details). Non-members who attend the SIGIR conference receive a one-year membership with their conference registration.

James added that starting 2013, SIGIR conference papers will be 1 year open access as part of a 3 year trial of the ACM: that is, all SIGIR papers will be available to everyone regardless of ACM DL membership to ensure the widest possible dissemination.

Charlie thanked the many volunteers without whom running the SIG would be impossible, including: Djoerd Hiemstra, Krisztian Balog (outgoing and incoming information director), Raman Chandrasekar, Fernando Diaz (June and December issue SIGIR Forum editors), Claudia Hauff (SIG-IRList editor) Shlomo Geva (Awards), Charles Clarke (in his role as CIKM liaison), Ricardo Baeza-Yates (WSDM liaison), and Edie Rasmussen (JCDL liaison).

Charlie stressed the importance of student travel support that will be expanding as we go forward. There is strong support at the SIGIR conference, from the SIG-IR as well as from the Donald B. Crouch Travel Grants and Google Travel Grants, see <http://sigir.org/travel-support/> for

¹The business meeting of the ACM Special Interest Group on IR, here written as SIG-IR to distinguish the ACM SIG from its annual SIGIR conference.

details. In addition, there is the new “friends” program that supports events related to SIGIR’s mission, see <http://sigir.org/friends.html> for details.

The SIG-IR’s digital museum contains large collection of reports and publications from the earlier periods of IR. Currently over 500 PDFs are available from <http://sigir.org/museum/allcontents.html>.

2 Treasurer’s Report

Diane Kelly began by thanking the outgoing treasurer Ian Soboroff for preparing the slides. The SIG finances are very healthy, with SIG reserves well above what is required by the ACM—the reserves are enough to cover a SIGIR conference.

SIG-IR underwrites as a (co)sponsor four conferences: SIGIR (100%), CIKM (50%), JCDL (33%) and WSDM (25%) and shares in their profits or losses. ACM requires conferences to budget conservatively with the goal to break even—but in practice almost all conferences make a profit. There is also income from other sources: most notable is the digital library (over \$100k in 2012), and smaller amounts from dues, interest, and subscriptions. Overall, non-conference income continues to rise. Membership continues to decline, but this is no issue financially given the high digital library and conference income.

As for the SIG expenses, the ACM overhead is the largest expense (over \$100k in 2012). This is followed by the SIGIR student travel grants (nearly \$100k in 2012). The SIG is happy about the increasing number of grants, mainly given to students. There is a new initiative to of small amounts of funding to related events through the “friends” program. This allows SIG-IR to fund in-cooperation and other related conferences; HCIR and ADCS have received support thus far.

Summarizing, the SIG-IR has healthy reserves of over a million dollar, so we can return conference profits back into the community. The travel grants are a huge cost (around \$ 100k) but really make an impact: about 90 students were funded to attend SIGIR 2013 in Dublin. So the SIG’s strategy is to budget conservatively (as the ACM demands), and push back money in terms of student grants in the next year.

3 Conferences

This part of the business meeting had a stream of presentations of conferences that are sponsored or organized in cooperation with SIG-IR.

3.1 SIGIR 2012 Report

Charlie took over again for his favorite part: finding out what his travel is going to be for the next five years. He presented a final report of SIGIR’12 in Portland, Oregon, USA, on behalf of general chair Bill Hersh. The total number of registrations was 505 attendees, with 239 for the tutorials and 156 for the workshops. A breakdown by country shows that almost half of the attendees (223) were from the US, followed by China (49), UK (23), Canada (21), Germany (18), Spain (14), South Korea (13), The Netherlands (12), Japan (10), and 23 countries with less than 10 participants. Thanks were extended to the organization committee led by PC Chairs Jamie

Callan, Yoelle Maarek, and Mark Sanderson, as well as to the sponsors. A choice of SIGIR'12 paraphernalia is still available at discount prices (contact Bill Hersh, who also apologized for not taking this slide out).

3.2 SIGIR 2013 Interim Report

The SIGIR'13 chairs were thanked for including a night of irish music into the social program, and it was suggested to make this a new SIGIR tradition.

Gareth Jones, one of the SIGIR'13 general chairs, gave a preliminary report on the ongoing SIGIR'13 conference. At the time of the meeting a total of 575 attendees had registered at the conference. There were in total 176 attendees registered at the tutorials, and 245 at the workshops held at the following day. Financially the figures looked very healthy, so there will be no loss and a conference surplus will be turned over to the SIG-IR.

3.3 SIGIR 2014 Update

Shlomo Geva and Andrew Trotman presented SIGIR'14 to be held from July 6–11, 2014 in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. The organization committee includes the two presenters as general chairs, Alastair Moffat as treasurer, and Peter Bruza, Charlie Clarke and Kal Järvelin as program chairs. Those interested in sponsoring the conference were ask to contact the sponsoring chair Jimmy Huang.

The deadlines are as usual: full paper abstracts are due on January 20th, 2014 and the papers themselves a week later, workshop proposals are due on February 3rd, and short papers to be presented as poster or demo are due on February 17th, as are tutorial proposals. Workshops will notify early March, and the other submissions on April 18th. Note that SIGIR'14 is much earlier than in recent years: July 6th to 11th. The doctoral consortium (Sunday) is held on the preceding the tutorials (Monday), followed by the main conference (Tuesday through Thursday), and the workshops (Friday)—hence a Sunday to Friday SIGIR.

The venue is the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. A video was shown to highlight the attractions of the region that lives up to its name, as well as other “nearby” attractions in the rest of Australasia. A social program centered on Australian style football was promised.

3.4 SIGIR 2015 Update

Ricardo Baeza Yates presented SIGIR'15 to be held in Santiago de Chile, the second time on a row that SIGIR is on the southern hemisphere (hence in winter). The organization committee includes the presenter as general chair, and Berthier Ribeiro-Neto, Mounia Lalmas, and Alistair Moffat as program chairs, and Mauricio Marín as local chair. The venue will be the conference center of the Catholic University of Chili, situated downtown with hotels and attractions at walking distance.

There was a lively discussion on the timing of the conference. Three options were presented: 1) the last week of July, 2) the last week of August, or 3) the second week of September—with July being colder and rainy, and September being warmer and more spring-like. Charlie chimed in and stressed that we want SIGIR to be as close to spring as possible, but also avoid holidays, and weeks in which academic term starts (which vary from mid August to end August or the

beginning of September), and emphasized that we need good feedback. There was an audience vote and over (or rather against) the three options, the third (second week of September) got the highest number of negative votes and was clearly voted down. There was mixed support for the first (last week of July) and second option (last week of August), leaving the weather-wise more desirable second option (end of August) as the best compromise.

Academic terms starting from mid August seemed to be the main reason against the September option, yet many terms start mid August. Some audience members including Matt Lease asked about the alternative of having it just before the start of term in the second week of August. Another round of votes on the second week of August gave strong support to this date.

Ric ended off by showing various touristic highlights “in Chili,” including Patagonia and Easter Island.

3.5 SIGIR 2016 Announcement

Charlie took the stage and announced the location of SIGIR’16: Pisa, Italy.

Fabrizio Sebastiani stepped up and presented the details of SIGIR’16. He first introduced Pisa: Tuscany, Galileo Galilei, leaning tower, historic city, but also universities (like the University of Pisa founded in 1343), and national research centers. He also showed nearby attractions (this time limited to a two hour trip by train), and the relative ease to reach Pisa by air and by train.

3.6 SIGIR 2017 Informal Bids

Charlie took the stage, and announced that the SIG-IR is asking for bids for SIGIR’17 to be held in Asia or Oceania (all the places in Shlomo’s video). He asked for “informal bids” with formal bids were due on September 15.

Noriko Kando, Tetsuya Sakai, and Hideo Joho presented a bid to host SIGIR’17 (the 40th SIGIR) in Tokyo, Japan. The proposal is to hold SIGIR’17 in the heart of Tokyo. The team has extensive experience in organizing international conferences (including 15 years of NTCIR). It was stressed how affordable Japan is nowadays, with options that suit any budget.

No other informal bid was presented.

There was early discussion on the many years that SIGIR is held outside North America, and the chair emphasized that the next “Americas” round in 2018 will have a strong preference for a North American bid.

3.7 SIGIR Co-Sponsored Conferences

Charlie presented other sponsored (JCDL, CIKM, WSDM) and in-cooperation conferences.

Joint Conference on Digital Libraries JCDL’13 was held from July 22–26, 2013 in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. The organization committee included J. Stephen Downie and Robert H. McDonald as general chairs, and Tim Cole, Frank Shipman, and Rob Sanderson as program chairs. JCDL’13 accepted 28 full papers and 22 short papers, with a 29% and 31% acceptance rate respectively. JCDL’14 will be a joint TPDL/JCDL conference to be held from September 8–12, 2014 in London, UK.

Conference on Information and Knowledge Management CIKM'12 was held from October 29 to November 2, 2012 in Maui, Hawaii, USA. The organizing committee included Xue-wen Chen as general chair, and Guy Lebanon as IR track chair. CIKM'12 attracted 1,088 submissions and accepted 146 full papers (13.4%), and an additional 157 short papers (27.8% cumulative acceptance rate).

CIKM'13 will be held in from October 27 to November 1, 2013 in San Francisco, California, USA. The venue is the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront in Burlingame. The organizing committee includes Arun Iyengar and Qi He as general chairs and Fabrizio Silvestri and Wolfgang Nejdl as IR track chairs. CIKM'13 received 893 submissions and accepted 143 full papers (16.0%), and an additional 106 short papers (27.8% cumulative acceptance rate).

CIKM'14 will be held in Shanghai, China. The organization committee includes Jianzhong Li and X. Sean Wang as general chairs and Torsten Suel as IR track chair.

CIKM'15 will be held from October 19–23, 2015 in Melbourne, Australia. The organization committee includes James Bailey and Alistair Moffat as general chairs and Maarten de Rijke as IR track chair.

The CIKM steering committee is soliciting bids to organize CIKM'16 and beyond, see <http://www.cikmconference.org/> for details.

Web Search and Data Mining WSDM'13 was held from February 6–8, 2013 in Rome, Italy. The organizing committee included Stefano Leonardi and Alessandro Panconesi as general chairs, and Paolo Ferragina and Aristides Gionis as program chairs. WSDM'13 received 387 full paper submissions and accepted 73 (acceptance rate of 18.9%) in a single-track model with 33 plenary and 40 “spotlight” presentations.

WSDM'14 will be held from February 24–28, 2014 in New York City, New York, USA. The organizing committee includes Ben Carterette and Fernando Diaz as general chairs, and Carlos Castillo and Donald Metzler as program chairs.

WSDM'15 will be held in China or Japan.

In Cooperation Conferences In 2013, the “in cooperation” conferences were: the 35th European Conference on IR (ECIR) held in March in Moscow, Russia; the OAIR 2013 (10th RIAO) conference held in May in Lisbon, Portugal; the 4th ICTIR held in September in Copenhagen, Denmark; the 18th ADCS held in December in Brisbane, Australia; and the 9th AIRS 2013 held in December in Singapore. See http://www.sigir.org/in_coop.html on details and privileges of becoming an “in cooperation” conference with SIG-IR.

4 Discussion

This part of the business meeting is better known at the general complains section.

Justin Zobel raised the concern that the ACM DL is not open access, while national governments and funding agencies around the world are demanding that publicly funded research to be published in open access. James Allan reiterated that SIGIR publications are available to everyone for the duration of 1 year. He also mentioned that the ACM offers authors to pay off the access fee, hence make their ACM publication open access, for the sum of US\$ 1,500. Charlie says that

the executive committee is happy to take this discussion to the ACM in case a clear statement of these problems is provided.

Editor's note: current fees to make your own publications open access in the ACM DL (the so called author-pay-option) are for a journal article: \$1,300 (at least one ACM member author) or \$1,700, and for a proceedings article: \$1,100 (at least one ACM/SIG member author) or \$1,500. See <http://authors.acm.org/> for details.

Doug Oard raised the issue of the somewhat declining membership. Is this a worry? Can we think of life membership options? Can we think about the benefits of membership, in particular to academics that have access to the ACM DL already? What are the benefits of an ACM member to join the SIG? Previous benefits were the forum and SIGIR proceedings in print, but these are now online. One suggestion was to give reduced registration fees to sponsored and in cooperation conferences. SIG-IR members are already guaranteed to register for the lowest rates, and additional member discounts may conflict with ACM's strict budgeting rules. There was wide agreement that we need to look at the membership benefits and that we need to make these benefits more tangible.

Donna Harman suggested considering a regional IR conference in North America, picking up on the earlier discussion on the (lack of) conferences in or near North America. Charlie commented that such ideas have been circulating for some time. There is no intention to compete with SIGIR when SIGIR is held outside North America (like the NAACL is held when the ACL is elsewhere). Donna suggested the old BSC model of having a conference mainly for students. Charlie commented that we are putting in much effort to bring all students to the SIGIR conference, with student grants and the new short paper format of four pages. That is, we rather have a student with a poster at SIGIR than at a workshop at, say, San Francisco Airport. Various audience members voiced support of the suggestion to have some regional IR conference in North America.

Charlie acknowledged that we have to think about the conference rotations, and try to somewhat limit traveling around the world. But conferences have independent steering committees so it is difficult to enforce a more concerted assignment. The location of conferences is an ongoing issue and will be talked about in the executive committee.

The discussion moved on to the new poster format (short papers to be presented as poster). Charlie asked for feedback on the short paper length: should we stay with the four pages, or go back to earlier two pages. There was wide support for the new four-page format. The next change was that the earlier posters were presented over food and drinks during the "poster reception", and now are part of the main conference sessions. There was again wide support for having them in the main program. The SIGIR'14 chairs took notice. Bruce Croft welcomed the increase in length to four pages, but stressed the need of clear reviewing instructions: these short papers are for late-breaking work and should not be reviewed by the full paper criteria. Charlie welcomed this suggestion: a good idea taking shape is the beauty of the poster session.

5 Conclusion

Charlie Clarke concluded the business meeting with thanks to all attendees at 13:59.