

ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2010: Secretary's Notes

Andrew Trotman

Department of Computer Science
University of Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand
andrew@cs.otago.ac.nz

1 Opening Matters

The 2010 ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting took place on Thursday 22 July 2010, at the SIGIR 2010 conference in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting opened at 12:18pm and was lead by James Allan. The incoming Executive Committee was introduced: James Allan (Chair), Ian Ruthven (Vice-Chair), Andrew Trotman (Secretary), Ian Soboroff (Treasurer), and Liz Liddy (Past Chair). This committee will serve a 3 year term starting 1st July 2010.

Thanks were given to the outgoing Executive Committee (Liz Liddy (Chair), Mounia Lalmas (Vice-Chair), Dave Lewis (Secretary), Alistair Moffat (Treasurer), and Jamie Callan (Past Chair)). Thanks were also given to the many volunteers including: Tetsuya Sakai (Asia Rep), Alistair Moffat (Awards Chair), Djoerd Hiemstra (Information Director), Ian Ruthven (outgoing Forum editor), Raman Chandrasekar (incoming Forum editor), Diane Kelly (Forum editor), and Mark Smucker (IRList editor).

The role of the Executive Committee was outlined as were the member services including: SIGIR Forum, reduced conference registration fees for sponsored and in-cooperation conferences, access to the ACM Digital Library, optional proceedings and DiSC Packages, and the SIGIR-IRList electronic newsletter. Non-members who attend the annual SIGIR conference become members at registration.

Finally special thanks were given to the conference supports including: Baidu, Microsoft Research, Yahoo!, Google, The Information Retrieval Facility, Yandex, IBM Research, DBTASI (Swiss Informatics Society), FNSNF (Swiss National Science Foundation), Univesité de Genève, University of Lugono, University of Neuchate. Student travel supporters: Google and SIGIR. As well as other supporters: Wolfram Research and Elsevier.

2 Treasurer's Report

Ian Soboroff began by showing a graph (1997-2009) of SIGIR member numbers, those subscribing to the Proceedings package, and those subscribing to the DiSC package. Ongoing professional memberships remain stable at about 850. Dues last increased in 2005.

Finances were then reviewed starting with a graph showing 1997-2009. SIGIR has a likely surplus of \$133,000 for the fiscal year 2009/2010. SIGIR 2009 returned a surplus of \$23,000 while CIKM 2009 returned \$22,000 (50% of profit), WSDM 2010 returned \$7,000 (25% of profit), and JCDL 2009 returned \$1,000 (34% of profit). SIGIR paid \$101,000 back to the ACM for conference support.

Income from the ACM Digital Library for 331,000 downloads was \$89,000. Income from membership was \$35,000. The SIGIR 2010 conference is on budget with respect to registration numbers.

Reserves continue to be greater than the total budget for the annual conference. SIGIR's biggest expense is the student travel, which was \$60,000. The Singhal Family Trust also contributed \$10,000 towards student travel. This expenditure is likely to increase for SIGIR 2011 in Beijing.

3 Conferences

This phase of the meeting saw presentations on those events in which ACM SIGIR is (or did) sponsoring including SIGIR, CIKM, JCDL, and WSDM.

3.1 SIGIR 2009

James Allan presented the final report for SIGIR 2009. He started by presenting a graph showing the t-shirt size of participants against their food choice at the banquet, however no conclusion were presented.

The total number of registrants was 610 of which 570 were at the main conference of which 186 were students and 43 were industry-track only. 286 of these (47%) were first time attendees. 276 participated in the workshops of which 32 took a whole-day tutorial, 36 took a single half-day tutorial and 81 took two half-day tutorials. The chair received an inordinate number of emails, approximately 10,000 (excluding automatically generated reviewing software emails).

Registrants came from 30 countries, with the largest proportion coming from North America (61%), then Europe (22%), East Asia and Pacific (15%), followed by the Middle East and South America (1% each).

Income was \$495,785, expenses were \$472,778 returning a surplus of \$23,007. The return was lower than expected because attendance was lower than hoped, and food and venue costs were substantially higher than expected.

3.2 SIGIR 2010 Preliminary Report

Fabio Crestani started by outlining the innovations seen at SIGIR 2010 starting with the reduced use of air conditioning. The conference registration fee did not increase in 2010. The industry track is now integrated with the main conference. And the paper presentation time was decreased to 25 minutes (to accommodate more papers).

There were 553 registrations, 280 participants in tutorials, and 241 in the workshops. 35% were ACM members, 32% non-members, 23% students, 6% staff (including volunteers), 4% sponsors. Most participants were from Europe (41%), the USA (31%), Asia and Pacific (22%), Africa (3%), Middle East (2%), and South America (1%).

There were 520 papers submitted (87 accepted (16.7%)), 293 posters (90 accepted (30.7%)), 20 demos (10 accepted), 21 tutorials (11 accepted) and 18 workshops (9 accepted).

The conference sponsors were thanked.

3.3 SIGIR 2011

Jian-Yun Nie gave a brief presentation on SIGIR 2011 (Beijing) which will be held 24-28 July 2011. The tentative venue is Beijing Hotel, a 5-star hotel located in the centre of Beijing near the Forbidden City. Beijing is a historical and modern city with about 22 million people. It is the capital of China, contains the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, Great Wall, and Ming Tombs. The modern infrastructure hosted the 2009 Olympic Games. It has convenient flights from all major cities. The hotel costs range from US\$70 to US\$200 per night. The average temperature during the conference period is 23C to 32C.

The conference will be chaired by Wei-Ying Ma and Jian-Yun Nie. The Program Committee chairs will be Ricardo Baeza-Yates, Tat-Seng Chua and Bruce Croft. Important dates were outlined; however those interested are encouraged to see www.sigir2011.org for more details.

3.4 SIGIR 2012

James Allan presented on behalf of Bill Hersch who was unable to attend SIGIR 2010. The conference will be held in Portland (Oregon, USA) 22-26 July 2012 at a yet to be determined central Portland hotel. Those interested were encouraged to extend their trip to include near-by sightseeing.

3.5 SIGIR 2013

Páraic Sheridan presented SIGIR 2013 to be held at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. The organizing committee is: Páraic Sheridan(Co-Chair), Gareth Jones (Co-Chair), Cathal Gurrin, Seamus Lawless, Vincent Wade, Alan Smeaton.

3.6 SIGIR 2014

Two groups expressed interest in hosting SIGIR2014 and presented. Others were encouraged to express interest (but none did). Participants were encouraged to send reactions to the SIGIR Executive. Bids are due in the (Northern Hemisphere) autumn and the final decision is made by the SIGIR executive.

Shlomo Geva presented Brisbane (Australia), a joint bid from universities across Australasia including: Queensland University of Technology (Aus), University of Otago (NZ), University of Melbourne (Aus), and RMIT University (Aus). Brisbane Airport has direct connections from most major cities and is the second largest international airport in Australia. A video was shown.

Joemon Jose presented India, a joint bid by Pushpak Bhattacharyya (IIT Bombay) and A. Kumaran (MSR India, Bangalore). India has experience in conference management including IJCAI 2007, IJCNLP 2007, Global Wordnet Conference 2010, PAKDD 2010, and WWW 2011. It has excellent human resources and reasonable costs with hotels and conference facilities meeting international standards. There is a growing research presence in IR and especially CLIR. The CLIR consortium being established in 2006. NLP/IR groups are present in IIT Bombay, ISI Kolkata, IIT Kharagpur; there is the Multilingual Systems group in MSR India, Bangalore; There is also the Yahoo! Research Labs, Bangalore, and the IIIT institute, Hyderabad; recently the Forum for IR Evaluation (FIRE) was established. There are nearly 200 universities and over 200 research institutes in India, and it has the 13th largest industrial economy in the world (growing 7.4% annually for the last 10 years). The proposed chairs hold administrative positions at ACL, COLING, and are on the editorial board of prestigious journals including ACM TALIP, have been active in these fields for many years, and have played major roles in organizing conferences in India. Support will be available from: Ministry of Information Technology (IT) of the Government of India; NLP Association of India (NLP AI); Major

IT companies (Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, IBM); Researchers in India and abroad; and IITs. Three locations were proposed: Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad.

3.7 Sponsored and In-Cooperation Conferences

James Allan presented details on the sponsored and in-cooperation conferences including past conferences (WSDM 2010, JCDL 2010) and upcoming conferences.

CIKM 2010 (Toronto, Canada) saw 1382 abstracts then 945 full papers: 168 in DB; 387 in IR; 351 in KM; and 39 Industry. There demo track saw 38 and there will be 9 workshops. The acceptance rate has been steadily falling since 2007 (17%) to a 2010 acceptance rate of 13.4% (127 papers were accepted). A two-tier review system was used in which the first tier read and reviewed papers, a SPC member then initiated discussions were necessary to reach consensus. There were 3500 reviews and over 3000 discussions. All papers (except 5) received between 3 and 5 reviews, the others getting 2 reviews (including meta-review). CIKM 2011 will be in Glasgow.

WSDM 2011 (Hong Kong, China) will be held in the Sheraton Hotel Towers, TST, Hong Kong. Paper deadline was 1 August with about 300-400 papers expected. All papers will require poster presentation, but some will be invited for oral presentation. Harry Shum (Microsoft Research) will give the keynote. The organizing committee was outlined, as was the remaining work.

JCDL 2011 (Ottawa Canada) will be held June 13-17th 2011 at the University of Ottawa campus. It is being supported by the University of Ottawa. The organizing committee was outlined and sponsors (ACM, SIGWEB, IEEE, TCDL) thanked.

The in-cooperation conferences included: ECIR 2010, RIAO 2010, CVIR 2010, and ECIR 2011.

4 Broad Issues

James Allan chaired a discussion (from the floor) on broad issues. He first thanked those who stood for election for SIGIR Executive Office. There followed a discussion on SIGIR reviewing, the cost of SIGIR registration, and the location of IR conferences. Those present were encouraged to contact the SIGIR Executive with any additional feedback. *In an effort to make this section more readable the Secretary summarizes the comments without (generally) attributing the comments to their original source.*

4.1 SIGIR Reviewing

James Allan suggested adding author feedback to the review process and increasing the acceptance rate. There might be two types of full paper: Oral and Poster. Both would be full papers, and the current 2-page poster format would be kept. The paper proceedings might be dropped to avoid additional cost of accepting more (and possibly longer) papers. SIGIR might also return to an in-person senior program committee meeting for final decisions.

Discussion started with the suggestion that the SIGIR Executive appoint a subcommittee to investigate (and publish a public report on) the general issue of SIGIR reviewing.

The general issue of the quality of the reviews was raised. This included comment on posters – in particular whether a poster without IR-style evaluations should be rejected outright. In a 2 page poster it is difficult to include a thorough evaluation and analysis simply because of the lack of space.

Similar issues to those of 2009 were raised including the possibility of having some full papers presented as posters and the inevitable difficulty of differentiating between the two. It was suggested that the author might state a preference at submission time. The possibility of no longer printing the full proceedings was again raised.

A best reviewer award was suggested as a method of addressing the quality of reviews. The distribution of overall scores on a manuscript might be examined by the PC as a measure of the certainty of the reviews. A suggestion of a first pass over the manuscripts to remove un-publishable material was given. Others reminded those present that the due diligence should result in good feedback to the authors, regardless of the quality of the original manuscript.

Ian Soboroff advertised his online Not Relevant publication.

4.2 Cost of SIGIR Registration

James Allan outlined the participation cost of SIGIR. In 2009 this was \$745 and \$445 for students (with \$150 per tutorial or workshop). In 2010 this was \$575 and \$430 for students (with \$140 per workshop or tutorial). To this participants must add travel and hotel. He suggested that this might be a problem for some, and so we might drop the banquet, make it optional, or change it to a reception.

The banquet is a substantial cost and savings could be made if this was made optional, however doing so might create a SIGIR class system in which those from wealthy institutes attended the banquet while others might not. An alternative to the banquet is to have a second poster session. This would increase networking and discussion between authors and participants.

The possibility of recording the presentations and distributing online was raised. This way those unable to attend the conference could participate virtually.

Use of university facilities for conference events was raised but it was quickly rebutted. Universities are now charging for use of their facilities, and often expect bookings in the same year as the conference whereas SIGIR organizes its venues years in advance. Universities are, however, cheaper than hotels (James Allan interjected with a comment that hotel facilities were free for SIGIR 2009).

4.3 Location of IR Conferences

James Allan outlined the current process. SIGIR rotates between the Americas, Europe/Africa, and Asia Pacific. Two out of three years it is not near your institute. Other conferences (CIKM, WSDM, RIAO) also rotate. There are also regional conferences; Europe has ECIR, DIR, CLEF, Asia has NTCIR and AIR, the Americas have NLT/NAACL, and TREC. The question of regional SIGIRs was raised (perhaps: NASIGIR, ESIGIR, and ASIGIR).

The question of how regional SIGIRs would differentiate from existing regional conferences was raised. It was suggested that SIGIR might merge with existing local conferences. However this might lead to confusion with respect to planning and publication.

The possibility that the three top conferences rotate around each other was raised. In this case there would always be a conference in each region, but which conference would vary by year. The importance of the conferences having freedom to choose city (even if not region) was stated.

5 Conclusion

James Allan concluded the meeting by thanking everyone. The meeting was closed in time for participants to attend the afternoon sessions.