Chair's Annual Report 2018

Specialist Group in Software Testing
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Overview

The SIGiST has had a challenging, but successful year. As usual, we have run conferences and workshops, and attendees have enjoyed varied and interesting speakers and we continue to attract a mix of new faces and existing members. As planned, we reduced the number of conferences this year, running one in London and one in Leeds. We also ran an afternoon workshop in London.

Programme

What We Did Last Year

As planned, we reduced the number of conferences this year, running one conference in London at the BCS offices in Covent Garden (June 2018) and one conference in Leeds (October 2017) in a hotel. We also ran an afternoon workshop on risk-based testing in London at the BCS offices in Covent Garden (December 2017).

Making IT Good for Society

How We are Making IT Good for Society as a Member Group

The SIGiST has brought its membership from all walks of life together, both through the BCS website and through the conferences and workshops. In the forthcoming year, we shall continue to try and fulfil the mission of the SIG, which is to be a "leading forum for promoting excellence in systems and software testing".

Community

Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

Our community is anyone involved in (or interested in becoming involved in) systems and software testing. Although nominally restricted to the UK, we also include several overseas members who attend our events.

We engage with our community through conferences, workshops and the BCS website.

We rely on feedback from the members and are always very keen to hear what they have to say. Although feedback over the last year has been very positive, we were disappointed by our attendance numbers for the events in London in 2017. We particularly welcome views on how we might better

serve our members. This year we surveyed all our members to find out what topics they were most interested in and responded by providing topics in the June conference specifically targeted at the most popular topics.

Leadership

How we provide Leadership to Our Community

Apart from providing technical leadership through our conferences and workshops, we also respond to individual requests for information from BCS members, other BCS groups and individuals external to the BCS on the topic of systems and software testing.

We will also continue our leadership of the work being done on software testing standards, which is now at the level of worldwide ISO standards.

Excellence

How We Excel

The SIGiST events are considered to provide a balance of technical excellence and value for money, providing practitioners with the opportunity to listen to, and network with, internationally-recognized experts in the field of system and software testing.

Objectives for Next Year

Our Plan

In the forthcoming year, we shall continue to try and fulfil the mission of the SIG, which is to be a "leading forum for promoting excellence in systems and software testing". Due to the low booking numbers for events in London, we will now provide more practically-based afternoon workshops in London plus one conference in London (planned for June 2019) and one outside of London (e.g. in Leeds or Manchester). We would like to hear from anyone who feels they could host a SIGiST event outside London (we can arrange speakers and manage the event if you provide a suitable venue). We will also continue our support of the work being done on software testing standards, which is now at the level of worldwide ISO standards.

We will continue our work in leading the ISO Software Testing standard work.

Achievements

Our Successes

Despite continued commercial competition in the area of software testing conferences, we have still

managed two successful events in London and one in Leeds.

We continue to publish 'The Tester' magazine. This excellent publication continues in its purely soft format, is downloadable from our website (www.sigist.org.uk) and is well worth a read – it contains SIGiST and other testing news, alongside great articles.

Challenges

The Barriers We Face

We face three major challenges.

Since the foundation of the group in 1989, when there were no other events in the UK (or Europe) that covered the topic of software testing, we are now faced with several competing commercial and non-commercial ventures in this area. Although this expansion of coverage in the area of software testing can be considered a success of the group (several other schemes are run by former members of the group), it means that we now must compete with others who have both more time and money.

Marketing has traditionally been a secondary activity for the SIGiST committee, who have typically been more technically-oriented. Despite approaching BCS and being promised support in this area, none has been forthcoming. This is probably the most important area where we need to improve.

Finding committee members who can give their time to the SIGiST has become an increasing problem over the years. As we have reduced the number of events, we have been able to manage with a reduced committee size, although this means the remaining committee members often feel overworked. We would be very happy to hear from anyone who would like to contribute.

Inclusion and Diversity

How We Are Working for Everyone

The SIGiST operates an equal opportunity approach that means we are open to accepting new committee members from a wide variety of backgrounds and try to make our events open to everyone (both as attendees and speakers).

Committee

About the Committee

The SIGIST is run on a voluntary basis by its committee members, so thanks to all of you for all the hard work you have put in over the last year.

Many thanks go to Jen Wheeler, Hiedi Homan and Mo Shannon, who have all left the committee in the

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last year after many years of excellent service.

Thanks are also due to the remaining committee, which includes Stephen Hill, who continues to organise our social media and Phil Isles, who continues to successfully put together our award-winning magazine, 'The Tester'. Phil has also now has taken over the role of Secretary. Thanks also to Geoff Thompson, who, despite a busy year in his other voluntary roles, performs the dual roles of Vice Chair and Treasurer – and in a very difficult year he has still managed to balance the books.

Due to the reduced number of planned events, we have been able to operate with a smaller committee, although we would be very happy to recruit new members. For instance, in the last year we have had no Programme Secretary, and it would be very good if we could fill this role. We hold both face-to-face and online committee meetings (last year there were five meetings).

Assisting the committee, we have administrative support from the BCS, and thanks go to Sallyann Cossey for all the hard work she puts in behind the scenes.

Stuart Reid

September 3rd, 2018