

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting

25 September 2023

Zoom Video Conference Scheduled 17:00 (London)

Present

Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Chair), Tony Russell–Rose [TRR] (Vice-Chair), Steven Zimmerman [SZ] (Secretary/Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Haiming Liu [HL], Graham McDonald [GM], David Rau [DR], Iadh Ounis [IO]

1. Apologies and Minutes of Previous IRSG Committee Meeting

Annalina Caputo [AC], Sean MacAvaney [SM], Frank Hopfgartner [FH], Jochen Leidner [JL], Yashar Moshfeghi [YM], Monica Paramita [MP]

Minutes approved

2. Actions arising from May 2023

Action Number	Action	Action on
May 22.01	Set up document repository for committee documents on BCS O365 <b>Sep 25.01</b> - [SZ] - Follow-up BCS Web on Finalising O365 Doc repository access for entire committee	SZ - Waiting on BCS
May 22.02	Contact Kerry to get numbers from other BCS groups to run a comparison with above numbers <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	HL
May 22.03	Message to Kerry to update the website with a message that you do not have to be a member of BCS to join our group.	DONE
May 22.04	work with GM and MP to develop the questionnaire for a better understanding our members' preferences. This subject to JISCMail and BCS's ethical approval. <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	HL
May 22.05	Include in the Call for ECIR 2025 bids a statement about how to mitigate inclusionary issues such as religious holidays (e.g. virtual presentation)	DONE
May 22.06	Explore options to find solutions for comms and Informer. Consider all points/options in today's discussion and report from Martin White + Michael Upsulla's report earlier this year. <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	IO, GM, JL, DR, MP

<b>May 22.07</b>	Add MP as Admin on Informer website to look at analytics of articles	DONE
<b>May 22.08</b>	Look at Informer analytics on articles and find possible themes. <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	MP
<b>May 22.09</b>	Share / admin of IRSG Twitter account <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	IF/IO
<b>May 22.10</b>	contact Elsevier and let them know no change currently, and they are welcome to have booth again at ECIR 2024	DONE
<b>May 22.11</b>	confirm remaining money will not be reclaimed by Microsoft if we have co-sponsorship for award	DONE
<b>May 22.12</b>	speak with BCS about possibility for £700 for additional coverage of travel expenses	DONE
<b>May 22.13</b>	confirm with EAEL that conference fees will be waived for the award winner. This is assumed, as EAEL gets a keynote, but does need confirmation. <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	HL
<b>May 22.14</b>	Finalise and send out KSJ call based on outcomes of above actions <b>CARRY FORWARD</b> <b>Additional Sub-action</b> - Update Call + Send Call October 1st NOTE: [IF] said "Be careful what we promise w.r.t. sponsored travel"	HL/UK
<b>May 22.15</b>	use task-force strategy in resolution to Informer and IRSG comms <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	IO, GM, JL, DR, MP
<b>May 22.16</b>	send out draft ECIR 2025 call to IRSG for review	DONE
<b>May 22.17</b>	send out final call for ECIR 2025 to appropriate channels (e.g. SIGIR forum)	DONE
<b>May 22.18</b>	send out poll to determine best option: 1) Fully virtual on non-SS day OR 2) Hybrid option on day of tutorial	DONE
<b>May 22.19</b>	complete draft SS call and send to committee for approval	DONE
<b>May 22.20</b>	work with MW and IF to work specifics of schedule with proposed location at BCS London office	DONE
<b>May 22.21</b>	work with MW to fine-tune one day proposal	DONE

### 3. Chair's report

The main issues raised in the Chair's report were covered under different agenda items:

- Discussion with BCS ongoing regarding the remaining money for the KSJ award, the prize money has now been secured (from our own budget) but the remaining unspent money paid to the BCS by Microsoft Research is still being discussed and a special request has been put forward by IF as treasurer (outcome expected this week)
- A big thank you to SM for efforts to SM for leading the submission to rain the ECIR A Core rating (which has been successful)
- Elections coming up (see later action point)
- An email was received (sent by the BCS to chairs and vice-chairs of specialist groups) advising groups that events with at least 3 speakers are to be forbidden if no female speaker is present.

**Action Sep 25.10** - [UK] Forward BCS message on inclusivity issue for event

#### 4. Vice-Chair's report

Vice chair's report: current focus is SIA and SS 2023. SIA progress is documented here in the TODO list:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yep7zQJZpVTg6UtpC7jCq099bv2D3yslOcY4kAhXFK8/e/dit?usp=sharing>

Items that have been ticked are done, items unticked are yet to be done. As you can see a lot of the prep work has been done and we are on schedule. Submissions form is open and accepting proposals. Judges are now recruited. There is a final publicity blast scheduled for October. I am happy for a 3rd party to present the awards if a volunteer steps forward to do the leg work to make this happen. Perhaps that individual might also want to design and print the certificates on suitable card/cartridge paper, select and procure matching frames, mount the certificates in the frames, select and procure sparkling wine, liaise with the winners to try to persuade them to attend, commiserate and explain to the other applicants and encourage them to apply again next year, ensure that the judges have completed their due diligence fairly and feel appreciated for their efforts, persuade them also to attend on the day, decide what to do where there are insufficient submissions for a given category, prepare a ppt presentation that summarises all the above, then bring all the certificates, bottles, laptops and materials to the venue on the day and find a suitable place to store them while the event is taking place? Oh, and while they are doing that, if they could plan and prepare all the materials, flyers, todo lists, forms and email templates for next year's awards that would be nice too.

Working closely with Martin and Michael on SS 2023 (see their report for updates).

#### 5. Search Solutions 2023

MW reports:

The programme has now been finalized though there is still room for one more presentation. The overall theme is to assess the intersections of IR, AI and LLMs in what might be termed a 'production' environment, ranging from systematic reviews to enterprise search.

Michael and I will be updating the Google spreadsheet (make sure you are looking at the Programme 2023 tab) over the next few weeks as we finalise the schedule.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11JMFP4oCGv99MyYIHQxkUrn3TFmv0zh8XYk-cDKRv\\_w/edit#gid=1638977832](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11JMFP4oCGv99MyYIHQxkUrn3TFmv0zh8XYk-cDKRv_w/edit#gid=1638977832)

#### **Key discussion points for meeting**

1. A decision needs to be taken on the ticket price for SS2023 that also reflects the Tutorial Day. Until the ticket price is confirmed there is no point in marketing SS2023 through the web site and through mailing lists.

2. A decision also needs to be taken on whether the marketing of SS2023 should start before all the details of the Tutorial Day are agreed.
3. The on-the-day arrangements with BCS London need to be confirmed and we are unclear who has the responsibility for doing this.

**Discussion** on conference fees

- BCS member rates vs non-member rates
- Some discussion around student rates
- However, it is noted these rates could be high for some students

It was **agreed** the fees for the SS 2023 Conference were (including VAT)

Member £92

Non-Member £110

Student £80

**Discussion** to the point raised that ISKO members should be offered a discount as in some years past.

It was **agreed** that ISKO UK members would be offered a discounted fee to the event.

It was **agreed** via email that the rate would be consistent with BCS Member discount.

**Action Sep 25.11** - [MW] to liaise with ISKO UK on the marketing and member attendance at SS2023

**Discussion** on Tutorials.

- There is currently commitment to run one full day and one ½ day tutorial
- There was some discussion on price differences for full day vs half day attendance given we do not currently have two ½ day sessions
- It is noted the Committee did not consider the situation where further tutorials were accepted.
- However, it is noted these rates could be high for some students, and no student rate is offered

It was **agreed** the fees for the SS 2023 Tutorial Day (not per tutorial) were

Member £80

Non-Member £95

It was **agreed** that the Tutorial Day was going ahead and would be co-promoted with the Conference Day.

**Action Sep 25.12** - [MW] contact Kerry Wear to check on the capacity of the BCS Web Team to revise the BCS IRSG web site

1750 [IO] joins

## 6. Search Insights 2024

MW reports:

This event is scheduled for 2024 and is being run by [The Search Network](#), of which I am a member. The TSN members are working on a framework for the event that maximises the fact that everyone knows everyone else in the Network and so there will be continuity and momentum throughout the day.

The outline programme will be circulated to the Committee on 9 October for approval.

The promotion of the event should probably be initiated at SS2023. TSN has a concern that if we promote the event before SS2023 attendees may decide to miss SS2023 and wait for SI2024.

#### **Discussion points for meeting**

1. Include a brief summary of the event in the October issue of Informer (MW)
2. Committee agreement that the promotion of SI2024 should not be initiated before SS2023 takes place
3. Confirm the booking contract with the BCS, which needs to be carried out by IF as Treasurer.
4. Committee feedback on the draft programme is very important given the level of innovation that TSN is planning to bring to the event.

On discussion pt 1

**Action Sep 25.13** - [MW] to write article on Search Insights 2024 in October Informer Issue

On discussion pt 2 it was **agreed** the announcement should not be made before SS 2023 and will be announced at SS 2023

On discussion pt 3

**Action Sep 25.14** - [IF] to sign off on the contract with BCS for the room for Search Insights 2024

On discussion pt 4

**Action Sep 25.15** - [ALL] need to review draft programme and provide feedback to [TRR / MW]

## **7. IRSG Website**

MW reports:

Some significant problems have arisen over the last few months in getting the BCS web team to update the IRSG web site on a timely basis. There seems to be a degree of confusion about whether all updates have to go through Kerry Wear (who does not work full time for the BCS) or can go direct to the web team.

The content in the Resources section of the web site

<https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/member-communities/information-retrieval-specialist-group/resources/> was developed by me at the time of the redesign of the web site in September 2021 and was largely lifted from my Intranet Focus web site. The Intranet Focus web site was closed down earlier this year but the links are embedded in the IRSG web site.

Since the redevelopment no action has been taken by the Committee to consider appointing a web site

manager, whose responsibility should include updating the Resources section, which is now two years old. The section on Twitter links is an especially good example!

### Discussion points for meeting

1. In my opinion the Committee needs to consider the scope, quality and management of the web site as a matter of some urgency.
2. An SLA with the BCS regarding an acceptable latency in updating should be discussed and agreed.

On discussion pt 1

**Action Sep 25.16** - [UK/TRR] to discuss scope, quality and management of the web site in with Kerry Weir and come up with plan for committee / BCS

On discussion pt 2

**Action Sep 25.17** - [UK/TRR] - to discuss website SLA with Kerry Weir in quarterly connect

## 8. Informer

The Fall issue of Informer will be my last as Editor. The draft Flat Plan is shown below.

### Informer 2023 Fall Flat Plan Close of copy 12 October for publication 26 October

Article	Author	Comment
In this issue	MW	
IRSG Committee	SZ	AGM and nominations
The future of Informer	?	
Search Solutions 2023	MW	Programme update
ECIR 2024	?	Status report
ECIR 2025	?	If a decision has been confirmed on the location
Search Insights 2024	MW	Outline of the event
Call for One-day meetings	TRR	If still relevant
Feature 1	MW	ISKO UK conference report
Feature 2	MW	Forrester and Gartner search industry surveys
Feature 3	MW	The development of text retrieval in the UK
Events	AMcF	
And absolutely finally	MW	

I have had no contact from the Informer task force that was set up as an outcome of the last Committee Meeting.

I have put a slot into the Flat Plan for an announcement about the future of Informer but of course there is no specific need to do so at this time if no decision has been made.

## Discussion points for meeting

1. A contribution from the ECIR 2024 team would be appreciated.
2. 12 October would be the deadline for a comment from the Committee on the future of Informer

**Action Sep 25.18** - [IO] to provide a contribution to Informer for latest status of ECIR 2024

**Action Sep 25.19** - [UK] to provide a contribution for announcement of ECIR 2025 (if we have commitment from organisers by copy date)

The Informer Editor notes:

- The copy date is 12 October with a publication date no later than 26 October and hopefully earlier. The reason for this deadline is because Informer is a key marketing channel for SS2023 and should be published ideally a month before the event.
- I am expecting a contribution on ECIR 2024 to begin to encourage attendees
- Although not mentioned in the KSJ discussions it would be usual for the KSJ announcement to be included in the October issue.

## 9. AGM 2023

### Discussion points for meeting [SZ]

- Where and when do we want to hold this? Do not hold this the day of Search Solutions?

It was **agreed** the AGM would be held at 6PM following the tutorials for SS 2023 on November 21st 2023

It was **agreed** the committee meeting would be held immediately following the AGM

It was **agreed** the both AGM and committee meetings would be held in a hybrid format

**Action Sep 25.20** - [UK/SZ] - Get meeting invite link from Kerry Weir / BCS for teams meeting in tutorial room AND send message out to appropriate channels for AGM Udo Kruschwitz Do we need 2 links (one for AGM and one for committee meeting?)

**Action Sep 25.21** - [IF] to book a room for AGM / Committee meeting on 21st November 1800 to 2000

## 10. ECIR 2026

### Discussion points for meeting [SZ]

- Discuss possibility and actions to keep momentum going with remaining bids.

It was **agreed** that we would include in response to ECIR bids that were not accepted that they should re-submit for call for ECIR 2026

It was **agreed** call for ECIR 2026 will come in first part of 2024 to be reviewed in Spring so that we can move ahead in cycle. [SZ] Notes the call should go out after first meeting in 2024 with review in Spring meeting

[SZ] Notes the committee did not discuss when ECIR 2027 bids should be handled, but proposes the call go out after May meeting

**Action Sep 25.22** - [UK / SZ] - To compile reviews and confirm winning bid and send responses to all bidders

## 11. ECIR 2025

4 Bids were discussed, all of which were strong. Details will be included after announcement is made.

**Action Sep 25.23** - [IO, DR, JL] - Provide notes / matrix on ECIR 2025 bids to [UK / SZ] by September 30th

## 12. ECIR 2024

NO REPORT RECEIVED

## 13. ECIR 2023

NO REPORT RECEIVED

## 14. ECIR Core Ranking

[SA] reports:

ECIR retained its "CORE A" grade

[http://portal.core.edu.au/core/media/2023/justification/483\\_ECIR.pdf](http://portal.core.edu.au/core/media/2023/justification/483_ECIR.pdf).

The grade is especially important for ensuring continued strong submissions to the conference.

The decision notes are very matter-of-fact, but one of the committee members told me that the application was particularly strong.

## 15. ELECTIONS

SZ Reminds everyone that call for IRSG committee elections will go out soon. If you wish to stand or know anyone who would please keep that in mind. The following are current members and end of term year.

### **Officers**



Chair: Udo Kruschwitz (2024)  
Vice Chair: Tony Russell-Rose (2023)  
Secretary : Steven Zimmerman (2023)  
Treasurer: Ingo Frommholz (2024)  
Membership Secretary: Haiming Liu (2024)  
Inclusion Officer: Yashar Moshfeghi (2023)  
Early Careers Advocate: Graham McDonald (2023)  
Events Coordinator: Jochen Leidner (2023)

### Members

- Frank Hopfgartner (2023)
- Monica Paramita (2024)
- Sean MacAvaney (2024)
- David Rau (2024)
- Annalina Caputo (ECIR 2023)
- Iadh Ounis (ECIR 2024)

**Action Sep 25.24** - [SZ] - Send notice to Kerry Weir / BCS to update website for elections

**Action Sep 25.25** - [SZ] - Send announcement to IR channels about elections

### 16. Retirement of MW

MW reports:

At present I am an ex-Officio member of the Committee and I need to give notice that I will be standing down from the Committee at the AGM as this position is tied into Informer.

I will be continuing to work with TSN on the development and management of SI2024 but will then be taking a complete retirement from the search business and my current web site will be taken down in March 2024. I started using online search services in 1977 and it's time to move out and on.

If you want to see the direction I will then be taking look at <https://martinwhite.substack.com/>

### 17. BCS Search Industry Day Awards

MW reports:

The Awards are being managed by Tony, and Michael and I are working closely with Tony to give the Awards more prominence during the course of the day at SS2023.

### 18. Report Early Careers Advocate

GM reports:

Haiming and Monica produced a survey to distribute to IRSG members. Collecting membership details will enable us to tell the membership about the ECA role, find out about EC related events and publicise them to the membership.

#### 19. Report Inclusion Officer

NO REPORT RECEIVED

#### 20. KSJ Award

Some ad-hoc discussion as no report was received before the meeting. See actions at bottom.

#### 21. ICTIR report

FH reports

The SIGIR 2024 organisers have expressed support to have ICTIR run co-located with the main conference again. One option is to schedule ICTIR to take place prior to the SIGIR tutorial day. Details will be determined by the SIGIR organising committee.

We are currently discussing names as potential conference organisers.

Yi Fang will step down as chair of our steering committee effective 1 January 2024. We are still discussing who will take over.

Masaharu Yoshioka as last year's ICTIR General Chair will be invited to join the SC.

#### 22. Strix Award

GM reports:

This year there was a joint call for the Jason Farradane Award (Library and information services) and the UKeiG Open Science Award along with the Tony Kent Strix Award. The deadline for nominations for the each of the awards is 6 pm GMT on Friday 29 September 2023. Gary Horrocks said there has been extensive publication by UKeiG. I circulated to IR@JISCMail and SIGIR@LISTSERV, and have sent a reminder to both lists now. No news so far about submissions.

#### 23. Budget

## IF reports

Two main items to report: The budget for the now running financial year (FY) and the KSJ Award sponsorship.

Budget:

We received a notification about our budget for the FY 2023-24. The budget allocation is broken down into two sections from the information you supplied in your budget submission for 2023/2024

Operational Spend: £2,500

Income: £2,500

The finance committee (FC) have assumed that the SG will receive the £2,500 sponsorship income to be spent against the KSJ Award this year. This is a bit confusing, and Kerry was also not quite sure, as this year's KSJ monies are subject to rollover funding and a Supplementary Funding Request (more below). In any case, we actually don't have anything allocated. We will need to use SFRs to release funding. SFRs need to be submitted around 6 weeks in advance of an event as they need to be approved at the monthly meetings of the FC. I spoke to Kerry Wear about what we do for travel expenses, e.g. to committee meetings, which occur quite ad hoc. She recommended submitting an SFR for operational money. It also seems no income from Search Solutions was considered. Any surplus here can be used to fund our activities.

Regarding this year's KSJ Award:

The prize money of £1,000 is secured, so an award can happen! The question is whether we can release money for supporting awardee's travel (and potentially support our KSJ coordinator as well).

According to my calculations, we spent the KSJ monies we received from Microsoft as follows:

2022-2023 = £3639.92

2021-2022 = £2350.13

2020-2021 = £1076.23

2019-2020 = £1095.08

2018-2019 = £2431.37

We spent £10,592.73 from the £12,500 total sponsoring during the last 5-year period, which would leave £1,907.27. An SFR has been submitted to request this amount and a decision is due 26 or 27 of September.

The FDIA SFR was cancelled as it was not required this year.

Potential Bloomberg KSJ Sponsoring:

Bloomberg have indicated they could sponsor the KSJ Award for 1-2-3 years, which is to be decided. BCS offered to create a contract template, and I enquired with Bloomberg if this procedure is acceptable for them. A response from Bloomberg is pending. They will decide about the amount and duration of the sponsorship, but are aware of the previous arrangement with Microsoft. We need to include a passage in the contract that the KSJ sponsorship can exclusively be used for the KSJ Award, also in case of over- or underspent, and not be used by BCS for different purposes.

## 24. On Analytics

**MP reports** There is also an action for me (May 22.08) to identify themes of popular WordPress articles. This is still pending. I have issues accessing ExactMetrics (to access the page views) as they require reauthenticating (connection to Google Analytics) but I don't know which Google account it needs to use. Is there anyone who can reauthenticate this? Many thanks.

**Action Sep 25.26** - [SZ/TRR] - to investigate reauthentication on Informer website for [MP] account

[SZ] notes all of the analytics actions is not necessary without commitment on Informer

## 25. AOB

None

## 26. Next meeting

Tuesday November 21st - AGM at 6PM / Committee Meeting at 7PM

## 27. Actions Arising From Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
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Sep 25.01	[SZ] - Follow-up BCS Web on Finalising O365 Doc repository access for entire committee (continuation of <b>May 22.01 action</b> )	SZ
Sep 25.02	Contact Kerry to get numbers from other BCS groups to run a comparison with above numbers <b>CARRY FORWARD of MAY 22.02</b>	HL
Sep 25.03	Work with GM and MP to develop the questionnaire for a better understanding our members' preferences. This subject to JISCmail and BCS's ethical approval. <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.04</b>	HL
Sep 25.04	Explore options to find solutions for comms and Informer. Consider all points/options in today's discussion and report from Martin White + Michael Upsulla's report earlier this year. <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.06</b>	IO, GM, JL, DR, MP
Sep 25.05	Look at Informer analytics on articles and find possible themes. <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.08</b>	MP
Sep 25.06	Share / admin of IRSG Twitter account <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.09</b>	IF/IO
Sep 25.07	Confirm with EACL that conference fees will be waived for the award winner. This is assumed, as EACL gets a keynote, but does need confirmation. <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.13</b>	HL
Sep 25.08	Finalise and send out KSJ call based on outcomes of above actions <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.14</b> Additional <b>Sub-action</b> - Update Call + Send Call October 1st NOTE: IF said "Be careful what we promise w.r.t. sponsored travel"	HL/UK
Sep 25.09	Use task-force strategy in resolution to Informer and IRSG comms <b>CARRY FORWARD of May 22.15</b>	IO, GM, JL, DR, MP
Sep 25.10	Forward BCS message on inclusivity issue for event	UK
Sep 25.11	Liaise with ISKO UK on the marketing and member attendance at SS2023	MW
Sep 25.12	Contact Kerry Weir to check on the capacity of the BCS Web Team to revise the BCS IRSG web site	MW
Sep 25.13	Write article on Search Insights 2024 in October Informer Issue	MW
Sep 25.14	[IF] to sign off on the contract with BCS for the room for Search Insights 2024	IF
Sep 25.15	Need to review draft programme and provide feedback to [TRR / MW]	ALL
Sep 25.16	Discuss scope, quality and management of the web site in with Kerry Weir and come up with plan for committee / BCS	UK / TRR
Sep 25.17	Discuss website SLA with Kerry Weir in quarterly connect	UK / TRR
Sep 25.18	Provide a contribution to Informer for latest status of ECIR 2024	IO
Sep 25.19	Provide a contribution for announcement of ECIR 2025 (if we have commitment from organisers by copy date)	UK

<b>Sep 25.20</b>	Get meeting invite link from Kerry Weir / BCS for teams meeting in tutorial room AND send message out to appropriate channels for AGM Udo Kruschwitz Do we need 2 links (one for AGM and one for committee meeting?)	UK / SZ
<b>Sep 25.21</b>	Book a room for AGM / Committee meeting on 21st November 1800 to 2000	IF
<b>Sep 25.22</b>	To compile reviews and confirm winning bid and send responses to all bidders	UK / SZ
<b>Sep 25.23</b>	Provide notes / matrix on ECIR 2025 bids to [UK / SZ] by September 30th	JL, IO, DR
<b>Sep 25.24</b>	Send notice to Kerry Weir / BCS to update website for elections	SZ
<b>Sep 25.25</b>	Send announcement to IR channels about elections	SZ
<b>Sep 25.26</b>	Investigate reauthentication on Informer website for [MP] account	SZ / TRR

Meeting Closed 20:03