Minutes of the BCS IRSG Annual General Meeting

5 September 2018
Regent's Court, University of Sheffield

Present
Stefan Rüger [SR] (Chair), John Tait [JT] (Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Udo Kruschwitz [UK], Steve Zimmerman (SZ), Dyaa Albakour Andrew MacFarlane [AM], Frank Hopfgartner [FH], Cathal Gurrin, Michael Oakes [MO], Paula Goodale, David Stillmall, Mathew Williams, Antonio de la Vega de Leon, Ansgar Koene, Ruth Beresford, Paul Clough, Monica Lestan Paramita, Irini Katsiree, David Walsh.

The meeting opened at 12:40 following a short delay to allow video access.

1. Welcome from the Chair
The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting
The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017 were approved unanimously.

3. Matter arising from the 2017 AGM
The only action from the 2017 Meeting was to find better ways to interact with the practitioner community. The Chair noted the current new event, concerning Ethics, and Search Solutions, which continues to evolve, are intended to address the practitioner community. It had been hoped to run an additional practitioner orientated event by collaborating with a Haystack Search Relevance in London. However this had been abortive in the end.

4. Committee Member Reports

4.1 Chairs report
The chair reported that the group had been involved with the following events in 2018: the European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR), held in Grenoble this year and to be held in Cologne in 2019; the International Conference on the Theory of Information Retrieval (ICTIR) to be held in Tianjin, China in 2018, which incorporates another group event Future Directions in Information Access (FDIA), Search Solutions in London in November, and of course the Workshop on Ethics, Privacy, Transparency and Bias in Information Retrieval (Sheffield 2018) which included the AGM. The group had also supported a number of students to attend RUSSiR in Kazan, Russia.

The group continues to organise the award of the Microsoft BCS/BCS IRSG Karen Spärck Jones Award. The 2017 winner was Fernando Diaz, Director of Research at Spotify. The 2018 winner will be announced in December. The chair thanked Microsoft, Cambridge for their continuing support for the award.

The group is also one of the partners in the Tony Kent Strix Award which is organised by The UK eInformation Group (UKeiG), part of the CILIP, the Charted Institute of Library and Information Professionals. The 2017 winner was Prof. Maarten De Rijke of the University of Amsterdam. Google was thanked for sponsoring the 2018 Lecture which Prof De Rijke will present.

4.2 Treasurers Report
The treasurer reported the group had the following funds available
Rollover: £5,481.00 (i.e. profits from past activities which was are allowed to spend in the following couple of years)
Budget: £5,825.00 (funds from the BCS central funds to support the operation of the group).

Most of the rollover derives from Search Solutions.

Search Solutions 2017 :
       Registration Fees Search Solutions : £7,591.00
       Expenditure (catering, speakers, travel): £1,911.53
       Net profit/loss: £5,679.47

As noted by the chair the group also sponsored the following events:
       RUSSIR: £2,000 (student support)
       ECIR: £1,000 (student support)
       BCS workshop on Ethics, Privacy, Transparency and Bias in Information Retrieval:
              £1,200 (speaker support)
       KSJ Award*:*   ~£2234.33 (incl awardee's expenses) (Accounted separately)

Final figures for operation of the group are yet to be confirmed due to proximity of the AGM to the end of the BCS financial year, but it was thought the group made a surplus of about £600 in the course of the year.

4. Elections

This year the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership Secretary were up for re-election, as were four ordinary members of the committee. One proper nomination by the deadline was received for the Chair (Stefan Rueger: nominated by John Tait and Haiming Liu) and for the Secretary (John Tait: nominated by Andy Macfarlane and Stefan Rueger) were received, and as a result they were elected unopposed. According to the constitution Ingo Frommholz, who had completed his second two year term as Treasurer, was not "normally" eligible for re-election. However, in the absence of another candidate for the role, his nomination (by Stefan Rueger and Haiming Liu) was accepted as valid, and he was elected unopposed.

Three valid nominations to serve on the committee were received by the deadline as follows (nominators in brackets):

      Udo Kruschwitz   (Jochen Leidner, Stefan Rueger)
      Haiming Liu   (Ingo Frommholz, Stefan Rueger)
      Yashar Moshfeghi   (Leif Azzopardi, Iadh Ounis)

Since there were four vacancies they were elected unopposed. The chair congratulated them.

The chair thanked Dyaa Albakour, Ayse Goker, Craig Macdonald, Michael Oakes and Steven Zimmerman who were stepping down, in some cases after long and distinguished service.

This meant the committee (with terms in brackets) was now:

      Officers

          Chair – Stefan Rüger (2020)
          Secretary – John Tait (2020)
          Treasurer – Ingo Frommholz (2020)
          Membership – tbc

Members

- Udo Kruschwitz (2020)
- Haiming Liu (2020)
- Frank Hopfgartner (2019)
- Andy MacFarlane (2019)
- Jochen Leidner (2019)
- Yashar Moshfeghi (2020)
- Lorraine Goeuriot (ECIR 2019)[1]
- Philipp Mayr-Schlegel (ECIR 2020)[2]

5. Constitution

As discussed at the 2017 AGM it had become apparent there were a number of problems with the current Group constitution and it was therefore proposed to make several changes, which required the approval of the AGM. The proposed new constitution was therefore tabled, having previously been circulated electronically, and the chair outlined the rational for the changes.

1. Clarify role of Vice-Chair

The group has traditionally had a vice chair, whose role is to chair meetings in the absence of the chair. This, and the existence of the role, is now clarified in Sections 2, 5.1, 5.2.1 and 5.8.1.

2. Changes to the Admission

Section 4.2 is now easier to read. It also introduces a difference between BCS members and non-members. The group have traditionally not charged for IRSG membership and has no plans to charge members; we intend to continue to run the group and its activities from event income and from a budget provided by BCS centrally, who also provide other support for the group.

3. BCS membership of officers

In accordance to BCS rules (http://www.volunteer.bcs.org/Rules_committees) only the chair, the Treasurer and one more member of the committee need to be BCS members. This is now reflected in 5.1.3.

4. Clarified the election of committee members

Section 5.4 clarifies that electronic elections are carried out through BCS HQ.

5. Clarified co-opting around ECIR chairs

The current constitution wrongly identifies ECIR programme chairs as co-opted members in Section 5.6. It is also not clear about the start date of co-opted membership of ECIR chairs. The new formulation replaces programme chairs with general chairs and clarifies that the end of the ECIR conferences starts (and ends) the co-opted ECIR members. The change also clarifies that future ECIR chairs are observers (and not co-opted).

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[1] Automatically co-opted.
[2] Automatically co-opted.

6. Be more flexible about date of the AGM

The current constitution prescribes the AGM to normally happen at the first IRSG event after the end of October; a less stringent formulation "in the autumn" would allow for a more flexible schedule of the AGM.

After a short discussion the changes to the constitution were put to the vote and carried unanimously.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed just before 14:00.