



# INFORMER



British Computer Society  
Information Retrieval Specialist Group

Volume 8

Spring 1998

ISSN 0950-4974

## Bienvenu au....



## ....Colloquium '98

**Salut**, our leetle Breeteesh chooms and bienvenu to zee latest sexy edition of zee *Informer*! In zees issue, we preezent details of Le Colloquium '98 <<http://irsg.eu.org/colloq/>>. Why not join us een our mountain resort where zee croissants are warm and zee vin ees cold. We can watch zee sun set over zee Vercors, hold hands in zee moonlight, or we can leesten to zee sceentilating programme of talks preezented zees year.

Also, in zees edition, we have a winner for l' *Informer* competition - Stefano Mizzaro - and une profile on Mark Stairmand. Ooh la la!!!

Ian & Jean

### Don't bin me – stop getting me.

If you no longer wish to receive the *Informer* then please save the group a little money and return this form. We'll then remove you from the mailing list and save you the hassle of binning it, the cost to us and the waste of paper.

Name:.....

Membership number:.....

See the envelope for your membership number.

Send to Specialist Groups, BCS HQ,  
1 Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1HJ



### Contents

Who's who ..... 2  
Le Colloquium ..... 3

Profile ..... 4  
Conferences ..... 5

# Who's who

## IRSG Committee Contact List 1997 - 1998

*Wondering who you should contact about what? Well, here's the current list of contacts.*

### Chair

Mark Dunlop  
Department of Computing Science  
University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 6035 Fax: 0141 330 4913  
Email: mark@dcs.gla.ac.uk (or chair.irsg@bcs.org.uk)

### Vice-Chair

John Lindsay  
Kingston University  
Tel: 0181 547 2000 ext 2699 Fax: 0181 547 7887  
Email: lindsay@kingston.ac.uk

### Secretary

Jane Reid  
Department of Computing Science  
University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 5006 Fax: 0141 330 4913  
Email: jane@dcs.gla.ac.uk

### Treasurer

Jonathan Furner  
School of Information and Media  
The Robert Gordon University  
Tel: 01224 283835 Fax: 01224 492608  
Email: j.furner@rgu.ac.uk

### Colloquium 98

Yves Chiaramella  
CLIPS-IMAG Universite Joseph  
Fourier 38041 Grenoble cedex 9  
Grenoble France  
Email: chiara@imag.imag.fr

### One-day events

Mounia Lalmas  
Department of Computing Science  
University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 5323 Fax: 0141 330 4913  
Email: mounia@dcs.gla.ac.uk

### David Harper

School of Computer and Mathematical  
Sciences  
The Robert Gordon University  
Tel: 01224 262701 Fax: 01224 262727  
Email: d.harper@scms.rgu.ac.uk



## BCS

Clare Harvey  
School of Computing and Information  
Systems University of Sunderland  
Tel: 0191 515 3508 Fax: 0191 515 2781  
Email: clare.harvey@sunderland.ac.uk

Ruairi O'Donnell  
Department of Information Science  
Strathclyde University  
Tel: 0141 552 4400 ext 3700/3096  
Fax: 0141 553 1393  
Email: rodonnell@dis.strath.ac.uk

Margaret Graham  
Department of Information & Library  
Management University of  
Northumbria at Newcastle  
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 8ST  
Email: margaret.graham@unn.ac.uk

Jan J Idens  
Sharp Laboratories of Europe  
Oxford Science Park Oxford OX4  
4GA Tel: 01865 747711 Fax: 01865  
714170  
Email: jan@sharp.co.uk

### Informer Team

John Davies Information Access  
Research BT Laboratories  
Tel: 01473 605536 Fax: 01473 642459  
Email: john.davies@bt-sys.bt.co.uk

Frances Johnson  
Department of Library and Information  
Studies Manchester Metropolitan  
University  
Tel: 0161 247 6156 Fax: 0161 247 6351  
Email: F.Johnson@mmu.ac.uk

Jon Ritchie (co-editor)  
Department of Computing Science  
University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 6854 Fax: 0141 330 4913  
Email: jon@dcs.gla.ac.uk

Ian Ruthven (co-editor)  
Department of Computing Science  
University of Glasgow  
Tel: 0141 330 6292 Fax: 0141 330 4913  
Email: igr@dcs.gla.ac.uk

## Research Position

**in Agent-Based Information  
Filtering**

**Computing Science Department,  
University of Dortmund, Germany**

For the EU-funded Telematics project EUROgatherer, the Information Retrieval group at the University of Dortmund is looking for a research staff member, starting 1 April 1998.

EUROgatherer involves three commercial European Web search engines and four research institutes from six countries. The project aims at the development and pilot application of agent-based methods for information gathering from Web-based information sources. Starting from user-defined interest profiles, the system will monitor relevant Web sites as well as Web databases and forward new, relevant documents to the user as soon as they become available. The major responsibility of our group will be the development of the filtering component.

We are looking for applicants owning a degree in computer science who have knowledge in at least one of the following areas: - Web-based information systems, - Information Retrieval, - Agent systems.

Due to the short duration of the project, the initial contract will be limited to 15 months. However, there may be possibilities for working in other projects afterwards. Our research group is involved in a number of other national and European research projects on digital libraries, Web-based information systems and multimedia information systems. Further details are available at <http://ls6-www.informatik.uni-dortmund.de/ir/>.

Payment will be according to German BAT IIa (approx. 70000 DM p.a.).

Please send your resume to: Prof. Dr. Norbert Fuhr, Informatik VI, University of Dortmund, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany

---

# Colloquium '98

## Discovering new worlds of IR



<http://irsg.eu.org/colloq>

Grenoble, France  
25-27 March 1998



[colloq@irsg.eu.org](mailto:colloq@irsg.eu.org)

### Wednesday

#### Session 1 (1400 - 1545)

##### Introduction

Chiararamella, CLIPS IMAG

*NHS: A tool for the automatic construction of news hypertext*

Dalamagas, University of Athens

*Agents in cyberspace - towards a framework for multi-agent systems in information discovery*

Wondergem, Van Brommel, Huibers and Van der Weide, University of Nijmegen

*An architecture for efficient document clustering and retrieval on a dynamic collection of newspaper texts*

Smeaton, Burnett, Crimmins and Quinn, Dublin City University

#### Session 2 (1615 - 1745)

*A Dempster-Shafer model for document retrieval using noun phrases*

Theophylactou and Lalmas, University of Glasgow

*Modeling information retrieval with probabilistic augmentation systems*

Picard and Haenni, University of Neuchatel

*Efficient query processing using conceptual graphs*

Ounis and Pasca, CLIPS-IMAG

**Evening:** Conference Dinner

### Thursday

#### Session 3 (0900 - 0945)

**Keynote:** *The logical approach to IR: models, applications and knowledge representation issues.*

Amati, Fondazione Ugo Bordoni.

#### Session 4 (0945 - 1115)

*Content based annotation and retrieval in RAIDER*

Fountain and Tan, University of Reading

*Text-image interaction for image retrieval and semi-automatic indexing*

Duffing, CRIN-CNRS

*German indexing and retrieval test database: some results of the pre-test*

Kluck, Social Sciences Information Centre of Bonn

#### Session 5 (1145 - 1315)

*User-chosen phrases in interactive query formulation for information retrieval*

Smeaton and Kelledy, Dublin City Uni. & Broadcom Eireann Research  
*Evaluation of interfaces for IRS: modelling end-user searching behaviour*

Manglano, Beaulieu and Robertson, City University

*Social and cognitive factors in the design and evaluation multimedia systems*

Gabrielli, University of Padova

**Evening:** Conference Social Afternoon

### Friday

#### Session 6 (0930 - 1130)

*Combining information retrieval with information extraction for efficient retrieval of calls for papers*

Lazarinis, University of Glasgow

*The relationship between IR and multimedia databases*

De Vries and Blanken, University of Twente

*Independence of contributing retrieval strategies in data fusion for effective information retrieval*

Smeaton, Dublin City University,

*Coupled hierarchical IR and stochastic models for surface information extraction*

Zaragoza and Gallinari, University Pierre and Marie Currie

#### Session 7 (1200 - 1300)

**Keynote:** IRSG Best Student Paper in IR competition winner

*How many relevances in information retrieval?*

Mizzaro, University of Udine.

*Close*

Dunlop, University of Glasgow

---

## Winner

As you can see from the IRSG programme, the winner of this year's Springer-Informer prize for best student paper in IR has been won by Stefano Mizzaro from the University of Udine. The judges were impressed by all the entries to the competition this year but were particularly keen on Stefano's paper "How many relevances in information retrieval?". Thanks to all who entered the competition and especially to all the judges!

---

# Profile

---

**Name:** Mark Stairmand

**Contact details:** Parallel Applications Centre, 2, Venture Road, Chilworth, Southampton SO16 7NP. Tel: 01703 760834 Email: mas@pac.soton.ac.uk <http://www.pac.soton.ac.uk>

**Supervisor:** Ex-supervisor is Bill Black, Department of Language Engineering, UMIST, Manchester M60 1QD

**Title of thesis:**

A Computational Analysis of Lexical Cohesion with Applications in Information Retrieval

**What my research is about:**

Implementation of a generic textual analysis based on lexical cohesion analysis to identify topical themes and three IR-related applications: a context-based IR system, a process for recognising topic boundaries in text, and automatic production of a domain-dependent lexical resource.

**How I got into this:**

The language engineering department at UMIST is involved with a wide range of application areas, and my supervisor had a specific interest in Language Processing techniques applied to information retrieval. Whilst following an MSc. in Cognitive Science I had come across a paper in the "Computational Linguistics" journal describing a computational means of identifying topics in text based on an analysis of lexical cohesion relations. At the time the paper was written a suitable on-line lexical resource was not available to the authors, and their hypothesis was based on a manual thesaurus-based analysis. At the time of reading the article I knew two on-line resources were available, namely the GNU Roget Thesaurus and Princeton University's WordNet, yet I could find no reference to work in more recent literature which followed up the method described in the paper. This sounded like a good project to me, and it seemed that any

system which purports to identify topical themes should be put to the test in the notoriously unforgiving IR domain!

**My contribution to IR:**

The thesis describes the design and implementation of a system I chose to call QUESCOT (after too long spent acronym searching). This stands for "Quantification and Encapsulation of Semantic Context in Text". The system takes raw ascii text as input and from this produces a set of weighted topics which it thinks are most pertinent in the text. Several resources are required in this process: a fast part of speech tagging program, a morphological analyser, a means of recognising collocational terms, and a lexical resource which describes semantic relations between concepts. This latter resource came in the shape of WordNet, the lexical resource freely available from Princeton University. Although influenced by Morris and Hirst's original paper published in "The Journal of Computational Linguistics" the algorithm used to identify topics was different to that reported in the paper. Lacking a suitable on-line Morris and Hirst did not have the benefit of applying their proposed analysis to a large number of texts and addressing any problems this revealed. QUESCOT incorporated a variety of heuristics which addressed problems revealed through testing the process.

The motivation behind producing such a tool was that automatic topic identification which accounts for the context in which key terms appear had the potential to substantially improve IR performance. The next phase of the PhD work involved producing an IR system which would accept natural language queries, pick out and weight concepts in queries, and match these queries against a pre-specified document set. Prior to this, the entire document set must have been analysed with the QUESCOT to produce

'semantic indexes' which detailed the pertinent concepts in a document, and weighted these according to their significance in the document in which they occur. Having processed the entire document set (90 000 documents which required over 1 week of computing time), it was possible to produce an 'idf of topics', that is to produce inverse document frequency weights for topics rather than simply for keywords. These figures could then be used when determining the significance of query items. The hypothesis was that accounting for context of occurrence when indexing documents would improve IR precision performance.

The resulting system, named COATER (Context-activated Text Retrieval) was evaluated against the SMART system. Although this is not representative of a state-of-the-art IR system, it is freely available, flexible, and referred to in many experiments so is useful for comparative purposes. Evaluating the system with a set of 12 queries, based on relevance judgements obtained from a group of 12 people for each query, indicated that COATER retrieved documents more relevant to the set of queries. However, these results had to be tempered with the fact that the queries chosen were very simple and typically could not contain proper names since these concepts were not represented in WordNet. The set of WordNet concepts should be viewed as the system's controlled vocabulary.

Other applications based on the set of indices QUESCOT produced for the document collection included an automatic text segmentation process. This is useful in IR since indexing concepts with respect to segments, rather than entire documents, has been shown to result in improved retrieval performance. However, evaluation indicated that QUESCOT only performed on a par with a much less computationally expensive alternative method for the same task. (*cont on page 7*)



---

# Conferences

---

## DEXA '98

Vienna on 24-28 Aug, 1998.

International workshop on Storage and Retrieval Issues in Image and Multimedia databases held in conjunction with DEXA'98(Ninth International Conference on Database and Expert Systems) in Vienna on 24-28 Aug, 1998. Check the workshop home page at the URL: <http://pluto.ct.monash.edu.au/~dexa98>

### About the workshop

Today's technology has made it possible for databases to include different types of media objects such as text, image, audio and video. In particular, visual information systems are getting more popular than text-based information systems. The growing use of multimedia data has introduced new challenges in storage, retrieval and communication of these diverse multimedia objects. This has increased research in the area of image retrieval and multimedia databases. Some of the issues addressed and yet to be solved completely are:

\*Appropriate and efficient representation methods for images need to be established.

\*As these images and other multimedia objects are very large in size, we need better models and techniques for compressing these objects.

\*One of the most important aspects of image communications is the quality of the image. The basic arbiter of image quality is the human visual system. Due to the complexity of the human visual system, it is hard to find an automated measure which accurately reflects human judgement. Therefore, we need to define some measures which can be used to evaluate the quality of an image more precisely.

\*Better data structures have to be defined for storing and accessing

images efficiently.

\*Proper query languages have to be designed and implemented for retrieving images.

\*Automatic object recognition techniques are needed to help in the process of feature based image extraction.

\*Images need to be classified into separate groups in order to allow for better query performance.

The workshop seeks to bring together researchers from the image processing and image retrieval communities to discuss new approaches in their fields. The workshop encourages researchers to introduce new ideas and present experimental results from their work in progress. Participants are encouraged to contribute papers on any of the above topics or related areas.

### Submission details

All papers will be refereed by at least 3 members of the DEXA'98 program committee. All accepted papers will be published by IEEE Computer Society Press in a volume of the DEXA'98 workshops.

Authors are invited to submit research contributions or practical experience reports in English. Papers should be double spaced and no longer than 5000 words. Authors should submit papers either:

\* by email as uuencoded PostScript to [dexa98@pluto.ct.monash.edu.au](mailto:dexa98@pluto.ct.monash.edu.au), or

\* by posting 4 copies of their paper to the Workshop Chairs:

Prof Bala Srinivasan, DEXA' 98 Workshop, Department of Computer Technology, Monash University, Caulfield East, VIC - 3145, Australia.

Prof A M Tjoa, DEXA' 98 Workshop, Department of Computer Science, Technical University of Vienna, Austria

### Submission deadline:

March 20, 1998

### Notification of acceptance

May 8, 1998

### Camera ready copies

June 5, 1998

---

## Second European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries

19 - 23 September, 1998

Heraklion, Crete, Greece

<http://www.csi.forth.gr/2EuroDL>  
[ecd@cc.ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ecd@cc.ucl.ac.uk)

### Objectives

This conference is the second of a series of European conferences on research and technology for digital libraries funded by the European Commission's TMR Programme. Its objectives are: to bring together researchers from multiple disciplines whose science relates to the development of digital libraries; to provide an opportunity for these scientists to form a research community in Europe specific to digital library development and to enable them to discuss issues and strategies specific to the European context; to assist young researchers in establishing relationships with senior scientists in their areas of interest; to enable review and discussion of research under way in Europe, the US, Japan and other countries on digital libraries; to stimulate researchers, especially young scientists, to explore new areas of interest in digital library development; to establish a forum for discussion of issues specific to Europe such as interoperability, multilinguality, intellectual property policy, and information commerce; to provide an opportunity for researchers in the

---

relevant enabling technologies and information sciences, to discuss issues related to interoperability between world wide distributed digital libraries.

From a technical point of view, the European Conferences series aims to contribute to the definition of those digital library parameters which especially influence issues of access, retrieval, and interaction with information; to identify key problems which must be solved to make digital library services an effective reality; to identify a general structure or framework for integrating research and solutions; and to propose and encourage specific, high priority research directions within such a framework.

### Topics

The conference organisers solicit papers on topics related to digital libraries, including but not limited to the following list:

- o Digital Library Models, Frameworks, and System Requirements
- o Metadata
- o System Integration and Architecture Issues
- o Interoperability, Scalability
- o Networked Information Discovery, Agent Technologies
- o Information Retrieval, Organisation, Navigation - Tools and Paradigms
- o Multilinguality
- o Role of Knowledge Representation Systems in Digital Library Interactions
- o Collecting, Capturing, Filtering, Cataloging, Indexing,
- o Preserving
- o Intellectual Property Rights, Terms and Conditions, Rights Management
- o Authoring, Electronic Publishing, Electronic Commerce and Information Economies
- o Economic and Social Implications and Issues

- o User Interfaces
- o Handling of Graphics, GIS, Medical Data, Multimedia Information, Experimental Data and
- o Scientific Models

### Conference Programme

The conference will be held in Heraklion, Crete, Greece. Tutorials will be organised on the 19th and 20th of September 1998. The opening session will take place at 9.00a.m. on Monday the 21th of September 1998 and the final session will take place on Wednesday afternoon, the 23th of September 1998. Full details on the scientific programme of the Conference will be published on our Web site by the 1st of July 1998.

### Important Dates

#### 15 March 1998

Proposals for tutorials, panels and demos due to the Programme Chair

#### 15 April 1998

Notification of tutorial, panel and demo acceptance

#### 15 May 1998

Papers and proposals for posters due to the Programme Chair

#### 25 June 1998

Notification of paper and poster acceptance

#### 1 July 1998

Scientific Programme on the Web

#### 25 July 1998

Final papers due

#### 19,20 September 1998

Tutorials

#### 21-23 September 1998

1998 Conference

### Panels

Suggestions for the organisation of panel sessions on one of the proposed topics or on related topics are welcomed. Proposals should include a short CV and position paper for each panelist.

### Posters

During the conference a space will be reserved for poster sessions. Research projects of any scale are invited to illustrate innovative concepts and prototype systems.

Poster proposals should include title, names of presenters and outline (max. 500 words).

### Tutorials

Tutorial days will be held before the Conference, on Saturday the 19th and Sunday the 20th of September 1998. Proposals for tutorials are solicited. Tutorials would be either half day (3 hours) or full day (6 hours). Each proposal should include a title, a summary (intentions, objectives, etc.), duration and a short CV of the instructor(s).

### Demos

Result demonstrations of on-going projects are strongly encouraged. Those interested should submit a description of the intended Demo to the Programme Chair.

### Papers

Papers (max 20 pages, double spaced) should be submitted electronically in HTML format, either by e-mail to the Conference Secretariat, [ecdl@cc.uch.gr](mailto:ecdl@cc.uch.gr), or to our ftp site, <ftp://ftp.ics.forth.gr/2EuroDL>.

### Proceedings

The Proceedings will be published by Springer as a volume in their Lecture Notes in Computer Science series and will be distributed at the Conference. Fellowship for Young Researchers

A limited number of fellowships for the Conference and also for Tutorials are available for young researchers who are citizens of European Union countries or Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland. The fellowship offers free registration for the participants and, in special cases where necessary and appropriately justified, may pay for or reimburse travel and lodging expenses.

---

## Programme Chair

Christos Nikolaou, University of Crete & ICS-FORTH, Leoforos Knossou, GR-71110 Heraklion, Crete, Greece Tel: +30 81 393199, Fax: +30 81 210106 E-mail: nikolau@cc.ucl.ac.uk

## Contact Info

For more information regarding this conference contact the conference secretariat,

Rena Kalaitzaki and Maria Stavrakaki, University of Crete, Computer Science Department, Tel: +30 81 393504, Fax: +30 81 393501 E-mail: ecdl@cc.ucl.ac.uk

---

## CoLIS3

**Third international conference on concepts in library and information science**

**Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik (IUC) Dubrovnik, Croatia, 23 - 26 May 1999**

<http://www.ffzg.hr/infoz/colis3>  
<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/colis3>  
[colis3@ffzg.hr](mailto:colis3@ffzg.hr)

The general aim of CoLIS conferences is to provide a broad forum for critically exploring and analyzing library and information science as a discipline and as a field of research from historical, theoretical, and empirical perspectives.

## Theme for CoLIS3

The goal is to critically explore the evolving concepts, research, and development related to digital libraries from the perspective of a number of approaches and disciplines. The conference aims to focus on fundamental and integrating issues and problems that reflect efforts and thinking from a number of disciplines and countries. Contributions are invited that address the topics listed below. They are further elaborated at conference web sites: Fundamental and theoretical aspects and questions underlying digital libraries. Nature of

digital library collections. Organization of digital libraries. Access to digital libraries. Use of digital libraries. Technical infrastructure. Evaluation of digital libraries. Social issues. Economics of digital libraries. Integration of various kinds of information resources. Relations to traditional libraries - roots, comparisons, complements, integration.

**Research papers.** Full length papers (4 copies) of up to 12 pages covering any of the topics should be submitted to the Program Chair responsible for the geographic region. A Best Paper Award and a Best Student Paper Award are planned.

**Poster presentations.** Presentation of a work in progress that is best communicated in an interactive way. A synopsis (4 copies) of up to 3 pages should be submitted to the Poster Chair.

**Panels.** Proposals for panel sessions on issues and problems of general interest that will stimulate a lively debate should be sent to the Panels Chair.

**Tutorials.** Proposals for half or full day tutorials held before the opening of the conference should be submitted to the Tutorial Chair.

**Workshops.** Proposals for one day workshops held at the conclusion of the conference should be submitted to the Workshops Chair. Both, tutorials and workshops are designed to be self-sustaining economically to cover expenses of presenters.

**Demonstrations and exhibits.** Proposals for demonstrations of digital library projects or for exhibit of related materials should be submitted to Demonstration & Exhibit Chair.

## Important dates and deadlines

**Research papers deadline.** 15 September 1998:

**Deadline for posters, tutorials, workshops, panels, demonstrations and exhibits.** 15

October 1998:

1 December 1998: notifications on selections.

1 February 1999: Final camera ready copy.

---

*(contd from page 4)* Finally, a domain-dependent lexical resource was produced based on post-processing of QUESCOT indices. This resource could automatically deduce clusters of related concepts in a corpus, useful for topic identification purposes. The novelty of this approach lay in the fact that the process produced clusters of related concepts, as opposed to potentially ambiguous terms. Early work was presented at BCS-IRSG colloquium held at Manchester in 1996, and a later presentation at SIGIR-97 ("Textual Context Analysis for Information Retrieval") referred to all the work carried out in the course of the ERSC-funded thesis work.

## What I want to do next:

Since completing the thesis I have moved to Southampton, where I am employed in the Information Management Section of the Parallel Applications Centre. The work is very interesting, and one of the projects I am working on has a strong IR theme. Having been introduced to the field through this project (the MEMOIR project) my IR interest is now in collaborative information retrieval in large corporations.

## Why you should read my thesis (in less than 10 words):

"It'll make your chosen acronyms seem positively inspired in comparison!"

If you are interested in PAC, where Mark now works and specifically to the IR-based Memoir project which he mentions, you can find more details (as well as job opportunities at: PAC home page: [www.pac.soton.ac.uk](http://www.pac.soton.ac.uk) Memoir home page: [www.pac.soton.ac.uk/memoir](http://www.pac.soton.ac.uk/memoir) Job offers: [www.pac.soton.ac.uk/employ](http://www.pac.soton.ac.uk/employ)

---

# On the move....

The Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield is delighted to announce that Prof. Micheline Beaulieu will be moving to Sheffield in May 1998 and will take over the Headship of the Department in August, at the end of Professor Willett's term as Head.

Prof. Beaulieu started her career as an Assistant Librarian, first at Manchester University and then at City University, and joined the Department of Information Science at City in 1987. She was awarded a Personal Chair for her research into interfaces for OPAC and IR systems in 1993, and has been the Head of Department there since 1996. She has extensive teaching

experience and has served on many national and international committees on various aspects of librarianship and information science.

*Peter Willet*

# ...and on the up

News reaches us that John Davies has been made manager of the Online Information Research group at BT Labs.

When asked about the post, John said, "The new group pulls together BT's work in the areas of push technology, knowledge management and WWW-based information retrieval. I'm looking forward to what should be a very interesting programme of work. In the coming months, I will be seeking to strengthen our ties with academia."

# Be a Star!

## The Really Useful Show

### Internet users offered 15 minutes of cyberspace fame on the BBC online 'Web 100'

100 users of the BBC Online Internet site are being offered fame, free games and software, in an interactive initiative for the BBC one daily consumer programme *The Really Useful Show*, presented by Ruth Langsford and Tony Morris.

The live daytime show already has a consumer panel of 100 testers around the country, conducting consumer tests and reports for the programme. Now, with an established site on the Internet, which has an estimated 50,000 hits a week, *The Really Useful Show*, is looking for 100 Web users to help them carry out a variety of consumer tests, reports and polls on technology and entertainment - including new software, PC games, and previews of big movie releases.

Online shopping, security, design software, newsgroups and connection speeds are just some of the techno-subjects that the consumer Web 100 panel will be assisting *The Really Useful Show*, with.

Signing up to the initiative couldn't be easier: users just send a simple e-mail marked 'Web 100', in which they must provide a brief review of their Internet Service Provider and why they chose them.

Internet users are invited to apply to become one of the Web 100 by accessing BBC Online's *The Really Useful Show* site at [www.bbc.co.uk/useful](http://www.bbc.co.uk/useful). Alternatively, users can call *The Really Useful Show* hotline number: 0500 500334 for further information.

---

## The INFORMER

The *Informer* is published quarterly by the British Computer Society Information Retrieval Specialist Group.

Editorial Team: Jon Ritchie/Ian Ruthven, Department of Computing Science, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ. Tel: 0141 330 6292/6854 fax: 0141 330 4913. email: [informer@dcs.gla.ac.uk](mailto:informer@dcs.gla.ac.uk)

Advertising: Mark Dunlop, BCS IRSG Chair, Department of Computing Science, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ. email [mark@dcs.gla.ac.uk](mailto:mark@dcs.gla.ac.uk)