Summer cabinet reshuffle shock

Dunlop: "quietly confident"

Blair: Denies all knowledge of IRSG

from our political correspondent

In a hastily arranged AGM, Prime Minister Dunlop today announced his new team. A shock resignation from Chancellor Jonathan Furner (see page 8), has propelled rising new star Margaret Graham into control of IRSG fiscal policy. The question remained of how long Dunlop would remain in overall control of his party. Having successfully led the IRSG for some six years and having long expressed a desire to spend more time with his research, sources close to Dunlop have advised that a resignation may be in the offing sometime in the spring. Deputy Prime Minister, John Lindsay, takes on the additional responsibility of heading the BCS technical committee on the Internet and Clare Harvey, member for Sunderland, also departs the cabinet.

Newly appointed member for Strathclyde, Monica Landoni, was charged with heading the Programme Committee for the forthcoming IRSG99 to be held in her constituency (page 9) while Ian Ruthven's power base at the Department for the Informer was extended to include the party's internet information pages. Boundary changes result in Mounia Lalmas representing QMW and she has been given the added responsibility for monitoring the Opposition's dirty tricks department. Prime Minister Dunlop opened the process of nominations for representation at the next cabinet reshuffle planned for 10 September. It was also announced that there would be no new tax increase this year, i.e. no membership fees. Read his lips.

Who's who

IRSG Committee Contact List 1997 - 1998

B C S

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
Margaret Graham
Institute for Image Data Research
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Tel: 0191 227 4646. Fax: 0191 227 4637
Email: margaret.graham@unn.ac.uk

Colloquium 99
Monica Landoni
Department of Information Science. University of Strathclyde
Email: monica@dis.strath.ac.uk

One-day events
Mounia Lalmas
Department of Computing Science. University of Dortmund
Email: mounia@ls6.informatik.uni-dortmund.de

Ordinary members
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

Ruairi O'Donnell
Department of Information Science. Strathclyde University

Tel: 0141 552 4400 ext 3700/3096
Fax: 0141 553 1393
Email: rodonnel@dis.strath.ac.uk

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

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

Informer Team
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

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contd from column 1

see any breach of the peace; after the decision of the course he will have to start again. In highly religious Bavaria, the pig had also created political waves with the Bavarian Prime Minister claiming that the blasphemy provisions of the law should be strengthened.

MacRoberts Solicitors for further info: David Flint df@macroberts.co.uk

German Courts Move Against Internet (again)

Web sites liable for contents of linked pages

We recently commented on the decision of the Bavarian Regional Court in a decision against an Internet Service Provider, one of whose customers advertised last-minute holidays which were not that. Despite the German Multimdia law of June 1997, other course seem to have reached other apparently bizarre decisions.

In the "emergency.de" Case, a Hamburg court has held that the creator of a web page is legally liable for the content of his page (this seems not unreasonable) but also for any page to which his page links. (Case 312 O 85/98 Michael Best). In that case, Best had linked from his homepage to a page that contained defamatory statements about the Plaintiff. The course stated that by including the links, Best had made those statements part of his page and therefore was liable for anything they contained. In those circumstances damages were awarded against Best.

Blasphemous material on the Internet may be criminal in Bavaria

Even more recently the Bavarian Oberlandesgericht has again set out its view of the world. In the "Shweine T-shirt case", a decision of 30 June 1998 (reported in Berliner Morgenpost of 1 July 1988), the Nunberg Oberlandesgericht (case Az: Ws 1603/97) decided that only god-fearing pictures are permitted. Therefore, a picture of a crucified pig was a criminal act. The display of the picture belittled the religious feelings of believing Christains and even on the Internet would be a breach of the peace.

The image was in an advert by a record company on the Internet for a so-called "Pig T-shirt" on which the logo of a crucified pig with the logo of a punk band could be seen. The Regensburg (Bavaria) Prosecutor had ceased proceedings because he did not *contd on column 2*

Call for papers

Journal of Digital Information

Special Issue on Performance Issues in Digital Information Systems

Guest Editor: Ethan V. Munson. Dept. of EECS, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201 USA. Tel: +1-414-229-4438. Fax: +1-414-229-2769. E-Mail: munson@cs.uwm.edu

Keynote Articles:
Performance Considerations in Information Retrieval Systems. Ophir Frieder. Florida Institute of Technology
Characterizing Use of Digital Libraries and WWW Servers. Edward A. Fox and Ghaleb Abdulla. Virginia Polytechnic University

Scope:
Performance issues lie at the heart of computer science and these issues are pervasive in research on digital information systems. Digital libraries have tremendous potential to affect our access to information, but the management of information on such a huge scale is a daunting task. Adding information to digital libraries requires high performance tools for recognizing existing documents currently stored on analog media such as paper, microfilm and videotape. The growing use of multimedia in modern documents brings with it all the performance issues that arise with high data volume and real-time delivery requirements. The World Wide Web has transformed the way people use computers and their level of interest in them, but it has also spawned repeated complaints about delays in information delivery. Even document authoring and browsing systems, which are generally quite fast, must address performance issues because of their many features and because every end-user is affected by how they perform.

The purpose of this special issue of the Journal of Digital Information is to present articles which together show the range and depth of research in performance issues for digital information systems. These articles may survey broad areas of research or may focus on new developments and experimental results. The research areas that are appropriate include studies of performance issues in any of the following areas:
-- Digital libraries
-- Hypermedia systems
-- Document databases
-- Document analysis systems
-- Hypertext and Hypermedia systems
-- The World Wide Web and other distributed information resources
-- Document authoring and browsing systems

Authors are invited to submit their papers electronically to the Guest Editor, Ethan Munson, at the e-mail address above. If electronic submission is not possible, then four hardcopies of the article should be sent to the US postal address above. There is no formal length limit for articles, but authors who wish to submit a long article should contact the guest editor prior to submission.

Schedule:
* Submission deadline:
August 31, 1998
* Acceptance notification:
November 16, 1998
* Final manuscripts due:
December 18, 1998
* Publication date: January 1999

The Journal of Digital Information (JoDI) is an electronic journal that is primarily published via the WWW. Submission guidelines for JoDI are available at: *http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/jodi/submit.html*

Lycos awarded patent

Shares of Lycos Inc.climbed after the Internet company was awarded a patent for its Web search technology. How this victory will impact other companies that offer Internet search features, however, remains to be seen. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued Lycos a patent late Tuesday for its "spider" technology, which sends out automated software robots to collect and prioritize information from Web sites. Lycos shares rose 1-7/8 to 55-7/16 in late-afternoon trading. Its shares had climbed nearly three points earlier in the day. Most Internet search engines use some form of spider technology. A Lycos spokeswoman said the company is still evaluating how it wants to enforce the patent. The company could license the technology to other companies or opt to prohibit competitors from using it.

Andrea Williams, an analyst at Volpe Brown Whelan, said Lycos would be better off collecting licensing fees. "It's a much larger battle to prevent others from using it," she said. "My understanding is the patent is fairly broad -- broad enough that it encompasses anyone who uses search. If Lycos is successful [in collecting fees from other companies], it could be a tremendous windfall for them." Others see no reason to fear Williams said the wording of the patent award suggests other companies could be at risk of infringing on Lycos' patent. Lycos itself has indicated that other companies are using their technology in varying degrees. Other search engine companies, however, are feeling secure for the time being. Excite Inc. , in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, mentioned the possibility of a lawsuit regarding "a patent with respect to certain aspects of its search technology." Nonetheless, an Excite spokeswoman said the company is still reviewing the patent and it does not believe it is infringing on Lycos' intellectual property.

Call for papers

Knowledge and Information Systems

http://kais.mines.edu/~kais/

Aims and Scope:

Knowledge and Information Systems (KAIS) provides an international forum for researchers and professionals to share their knowledge and report new advances on all topics related to knowledge systems and advanced information systems. This quarterly peer-reviewed journal publishes state-of-the-art research reports on emerging topics in KAIS, reviews of important techniques in related areas, and application papers of interest to a general readership.

The journal focuses on knowledge systems and advanced information systems, including their theoretical foundations, infrastructure and enabling technologies. We solicit submissions of original research, and experience and vision papers that address this theme. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

Knowledge and Information Processing: Theory, Techniques and Systems

o knowledge and data engineering
o decision support
o active and dynamic systems
o data sharing and warehousing
o temporal and spatial database processing
o intelligent information retrieval
o learning and adaptation
o knowledge discovery and data mining
o artificial life
o modelling and object orientation
o software re-engineering
o co-operativeness, interoperability and software re-usability
o human-computer interaction
o hypertext, hypermedia and multimedia
o data and knowledge visualization

Underlying Computational Techniques

o soft computing (including neural nets, fuzzy logic,
o probabilistic reasoning, and rough set theory)
o evolutionary computing
o hybrid computing
o uncertainty management
o agent architectures and systems (including multi-agent scenarios)

Platforms

o high performance computing systems
o distributed intelligent systems
o mobile systems

Application to Specific Problem Domains

o biomedical systems
o geographical systems
o software information systems
o emerging applications (such as Internet technologies and digital libraries)

We publish critical review papers in each issue of the journal to discuss the state of the art in particular areas, as well as state-of-the-art research reports. Accepted papers are grouped for publication so that individual issues focus on a small number of theme areas. In addition to archival papers, the journal also publishes significant on-going research in the form of Short Papers (limited to 3000 words), and very short papers on "visions and directions" (no more than 1000 words, excluding bibliography). We conduct reviews in a timely fashion and inform authors of decisions with a target turnaround time of three months (4 to 6 weeks for short papers).

Special issues devoted to relevant conferences are welcome. Good papers with high quality reviews from relevant conferences can be accepted after the expansion and revision is verified by an Associate Editor of the Editorial Board. Conference organizers are invited to contact the Executive Editor for further information.

Editorial Structure:

Honorary Editor-in-Chief

Benjamin W. Wah. Coordinated Science Laboratory, MC228. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1308 West Main Street, Urbana, IL 61801-2307, USA. Phone: +1-217-333-3516. Fax: +1-217-244-7175. Email: b-wah@uiuc.edu

Executive Editor

Xindong Wu. School of Computer Science and Software Engineering, Monash University, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East, Melbourne 3145, Australia. Phone: +61-3-9903-1025. Fax: +61-3-9903-1077. Email: xindong@computer.org

Editors

Nabil R. Adam.
adam@adam.rutgers.edu
John A. Barnden.
J.A.Barnden@cs.bham.ac.uk
Ning Zhong.
zhong@ai.csse.yamaguchi-u.ac.jp

Information for Authors:

Authors are invited to submit complete and original papers, which have not been published elsewhere and are not currently under consideration for another journal or conference. All submitted papers are thoroughly reviewed for originality, soundness, significance, presentation, and relevance. Manuscripts must include an abstract and a list of keywords, and should be limited to 8000 words (3000 words for short papers).

The journal emphasizes timely processing of submissions and minimal backlogs in publication time. We review papers and advise authors of their paper status with a target turnaround time of three months (4 to 6 weeks for short papers). We strongly encourage electronic submissions in the form of postscript files. Submission information is available at the journal's web site.

CIR '99

The Challenge of Image Retrieval

Second UK Conference on Image Retrieval

February 25-26, 1999, Forte Post House Hotel. Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.

http://www.unn.ac.uk/iidr/ conference.html

Image Storage and Retrieval is one of the most exciting and fastest-growing research areas in the field of multimedia technology However, opportunities within the UK for the exchange of ideas between different groups of researchers, and between researchers and potential users of image retrieval systems, are still limited. The Challenge of Image Retrieval conference held in February 1998 was the first UK forum set up specifically to bridge the gap between the different communities with an interest in image retrieval. Building on the success of this first conference, the 1999 event again aims to bring together researchers and practitioners in the fast-growing area of image retrieval, to exchange information and gain some idea of the significance of developments in related disciplines. It should be of interest to researchers in fields as diverse as information retrieval, database, computer vision and image processing, human visual perception and interface design, as well as users and managers of image and video libraries.

Programme details

The two-day event will consist of a mixture of submitted and invited papers. Our keynote speaker will be Dr Michael Swain from the Alta Vista development team at Digital Equipment Corporation, who will talk on Image searching on the Web. Invited papers, aimed mainly at the practitioner, will cover two main themes: CBIR technology - can we make it deliver? and Emerging standards for image retrieval - how will they affect me? There will also be a poster session, demonstrations of prototype image retrieval systems and a small trade exhibition. The Conference Dinner will be held at the hotel on the evening of Thursday February 25.

Call for papers

Original papers are solicited for the conference describing research or innovation in any area related to image or video storage and retrieval. Accounts of work in progress are acceptable provided at least some results are reported. Preliminary research ideas may be submitted as poster presentations - see below. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

o Studies of information-seeking behaviour among image users
o HCI issues in image retrieval
o Evaluation of image retrieval systems
o Novel image data management systems and applications
o Query models, paradigms and languages for image retrieval
o Content-based indexing, search and retrieval of images
o Feature extraction and representation
o Visual perception and image retrieval
o Image search and browsing on the Web
o Semantic retrieval of images and video
o Neural network techniques for image classification and retrieval
o Database architectures for image retrieval
o Image data management for multimedia systems

The programme committee are aiming to ensure a balance between technical and user orientation in the submitted papers presented at the conference. To achieve this, we particularly welcome submissions which deal with user issues. In response to a query we received from Japan last year - we are happy to receive submissions from anywhere in the world.

Submission details

Authors are asked to submit full papers (no longer than 5000 words), in English, to the Programme Chair, Professor David Harper. Electronic submission is strongly encouraged. Submissions should follow the style laid down for Springer-Verlag's electronic Workshops in Computing, which can be found at http:// ewic.springer.co.uk/submitting/ guidelines/#papers. Authors are asked to follow the electronic submission guidelines set out at http:// www.scms.rgu.ac.uk/research/ir/ sub.html. Authors who are unable to submit electronically are asked to send three papers copies of their article, together with a covering letter containing contact information, to:

Professor David Harper, The Challenge of Image Retrieval, School of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen AB25 1HG.

The closing date for both electronic and paper submissions is Friday 30 October 1998.

Authors whose contributions are accepted for presentation will be notified by Friday 11 December 1998. They will be required to submit final versions of their papers, for inclusion in the conference proceedings, by Friday, January 29, 1999. It is intended that all accepted papers will be published in Springer-Verlag's electronic Workshops in Computing series.

Posters and demos

Authors from bona fide not-for-profit organisations who wish to present posters outlining preliminary research ideas or innovative practice in any area related to the main theme of the conference - or who wish to demonstrate prototype image retrieval systems they have developed - are invited to send a summary (not exceeding 1000 words) of their proposed contribution to Dr John Eakins, preferably by email to

john.eakins@unn.ac.uk; failing this, by post (three copies) to:
Dr John Eakins, Institute for Image Data Research, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST

The closing date for submissions is Friday 30 October 1998. All proposals will be reviewed by the Programme Committee before acceptance.

Trade exhibition
Space will be available for commercial exhibitors who wish to demonstrate their products or services. Enquiries should be made to:
Mrs Margaret Graham, Institute for Image Data Research, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST

Programme Committee:
o John Eakins (co-chair), University of Northumbria at Newcastle
o David Harper (co-chair), Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
o Mark Dunlop, University of Glasgow
o Peter Enser, University of Brighton
o Margaret Graham, University of Northumbria at Newcastle
o Martin Nail, British Library Research and Innovation Centre

The Challenge of Image Retrieval conference is organized by the Institute for Image Data Research, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, on behalf of its sponsors:
* The British Computer Society Information Retrieval Specialist Group
* The British Library Research & Innovation Centre
* The Institute of Information Scientists
* Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

The conference is also supported by: The British Machine Vision Association and The Institution of Electrical Engineers

Important dates:
Deadline for Submission: 30 October 1998
Notification of Acceptance: 11 December 1998
Final version due: 29 January 1999

Internet sales of Viagra put people at unnecessary risk warn health lawyers

News that the male impotence drug Viagra may have the same effect on women together with the predicted unprecedented demand for the drug to be supplied on the NHS, means that people in Britain may use the internet to buy the drug.

Viagra is currently unlicensed in the UK, but a UK-based organisation Health Direct, has set-up a web site on the internet to promote and sell the drug around the world - including to people in Britain. This means that patients can obtain Viagra without consultation from a doctor.

Janter Lofthouse, Senior Health Solicitor with Nabarro Nathanson says, "The Internet seems to be a relatively anonymous way of obtaining the drug without having to discuss personal issues with a doctor. Whilst some possible side effects are highlighted by Health Direct on its web site and a medial questionnaire has to be completed, there appears to be little way of checking the patient data and true medical history. The purchaser cannot ask questions about the product at the point of sale. If drugs are unprescribed and not monitored this could potentially lead to abuse or harm to the purchaser. In addition, there is nothing to prevent the drug from being sold on to an unregulated black market.

"Should side effects occur from taking drugs supplied in this fashion then individuals may still be able to claim compensation from supplier, importer or producer of Viagra. Health Direct recommends regular check ups with a GP, but if the patient chooses to ignore this advice and suffers harm where will the fault lie?"

Action is underway to ban the illegal sales of Viagra in this country on the Internet

Further info from Kimbeley Gray, CompanyCare Communications, Tel: 0188 958 2031

[Naturally neither of us can confirm or deny the reputed effects of Viagra, not having ever needed it. Honest. Eds]

Precision among World Wide Web Search Services (Search Engines): Alta Vista, Excite, Hotbot, Infoseek, Lycos

By H. Vernon Leighton , MS in Computer Science, Government Documents Librarian, Winona State University, and Dr. Jaideep Srivastava, Associate Professor of Computer Science, University of Minnesota.

Five search engines, Alta Vista, Excite, Hotbot, Infoseek, and Lycos, are compared for precision on the first twenty results returned for fifteen queries. All searching was done from January 31 to March 12, 1997. In the study, steps are taken to ensure that bias has not unduly influenced the evaluation. Friedmann's randomized block design is used to perform multiple comparisons for significance. Analysis shows that Alta Vista, Excite and Infoseek are the top three services, with their relative rank changing depending on how one interpreted the concept of "relevant." Correspondence analysis shows that Lycos performed better on short, unstructured queries, while Hotbot performed better on structured queries.

Full paper available at *http://www.winona.msus.edu/library/webind2/webind2.htm*

Conferences

Final Mira Conference

Glasgow.14-16 April 1999

http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/mira/ workshops/conference

Mira is a European Union funded working group looking at how information retrieval should accommodate interactivity and multimedia, and what the implications of these are for the evaluation of IR systems. This announcement forms (1) a call for papers to be published on the themes of the Mira working group and (2) an open call for attendance at the final conference of the Mira working group.

Papers

Papers describing work in progress or completed work are invited on any topic affecting the area of IR evaluation. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

o The user in the evaluation process

o The changing nature of IR tasks

o Traditional evaluation methodologies

o Field studies of (multimedia) IR in work domains

o The relationship between IR design and evaluation

o A balanced approach to evaluation (software vs. user)

o How interaction affects evaluation

o The move from static to dynamic evaluation

o The effects of new media on IR

Authors are invited to submit camera-ready copies of their paper, in English, to be received no later than 10 January 1999. Papers should contain at most 7500 words and should be formatted in accordance with Springer-Verlag's Electronic Workshop guidelines. The submission should include two copies of the paper: one anonymous copy for refereeing and one full copy for publication in the draft proceedings.

Papers will be refereed and, if accepted, will be published in the Electronic Workshops in Computing series, provided that the overall quality of papers is high enough. Accepted papers will also be included in the form submitted in a draft proceedings which will be distributed to all Mira Conference attendees. Authors will then have until 16 May 1999 to revise their paper in light of referees' comments and feedback from the workshop itself. The final version of papers will then be included in an e-WIC publication.

Authors should note that acceptance for publication in the proceedings does not guarantee presentation time at the conference. The Programme Committee will select a sub-set of papers for presentation to achieve a balance of topics discussed. However, all accepted papers will appear in both the draft and final proceedings (subject to referee comments).

Please note: papers should **not** be submitted to the electronic Workshops in Computing editors directly! Initial submission is as camera ready - not electronic.

Paper submissions should be sent to:

Mira Conference Organisation, Computing Science Department, University of Glasgow, 17 Lilybank Gardens, Glasgow G12 8RZ, Scotland

Enquiries to: mira99@dcs.gla.ac.uk. Phone: +44 141 330 4264. Fax: +44 141 330 3661

Conference

The conference will be designed to explore and exchange the best current thinking and opinion on the conference theme. With this in mind the preliminary programme plans an approximately equal mix of participatory demonstrations and exercises, discussion panels or debates on key questions, and selected invited papers.

Demonstrations or exercises are currently planned on the following topics:

o Photographic retrieval for journalists

o How much consensus is found for relevance judgements?

o Exploring the possibility of a multimedia test collection

o Applying a multi-level evaluation framework to IR

Panels are currently planned on the following topics:

o The worth of the TREC programme

o What kind of relevance should we measure?

o Interactive system performance depends on work context so standard test-beds are of no use

o Many levels of evaluation are essential

Programme Chair: Prof Keith van Rijsbergen <keith@dcs.gla.ac.uk>

Programme Committee: Dr Stephen Draper, Dr Mark Dunlop <steve, mark@dcs.gla.ac.uk>

Local Organiser: Fiona Nixon <fiona@dcs.gla.ac.uk>

This conference is organised and underwritten by the Mira working group on evaluation in information retrieval. Unlike previous meetings of Mira this conference is open to attendees without invitation, but a small registration fee will be charged. The conference will be held in Glasgow City Centre with a range of accommodation being available throughout the City See web pages for more details.

CoLIS3

Third international conference on concepts in library and information science

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

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

Notifications on selections.
1 December 1998

Final camera ready copy.
1 February 1999

On the move

The Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield is delighted to announce that Dr Mark Sanderson will be moving to Sheffield in April 1999 after spending a year with Bruce Croft's Center for Intelligent Information Retrieval in Massachusetts.

Dr Mounia Lalmas will be relocating from Glasgow, via Dortmund, to a new position at Queen Mary and Westfield College in London to take up a new position as lecturer in information retrieval.

Dr Jonathan Furner departs from sunny Aberdeen to even sunnier Los Angeles to take up a position in the department of information science at UCLA.

Inktomi Corp.'s brand of spider technology is used by such engines as Wired Digital's HotBot and CNET Inc.'s Snap!.

Kevin Brown, an Inktomi spokesman, said differences in the technology come down to how engines fetch and prioritize information. "Our belief is that the patent covers a narrow method of Web crawling that's specific to Lycos," Brown said. "We believe our method is different." An Infoseek Corp. spokeswoman echoed Brown's sentiments. A spokeswoman for Internet leader Yahoo! Inc. said the company has nothing to worry about because Yahoo! is technically a directory, not a search engine, and doesn't use spider technology. Whatever long-term effects develop out of the patent award, the timing may be off a little more than Lycos would have hoped. As Williams pointed out, Web searching is becoming less central to companies such as Lycos, Excite and Infoseek as they move into what is now being called the "portal" business -- offering collected content and personalized services such as free e-mail. "Search will always be important," she said, "but it's becoming less important as time goes on." -- by CNN staff writer John Frederick Moore http://cnnfn.com/digitaljam/9806/10/lycos

IRSG membership ++

News reaches us that Frances Johnson has been safely delivered of a baby boy. Mother and new IR researcher are both well, and rumours that the baby's first words were 'vector space' are strongly denied.

Colloquium '99

21st Annual Colloquium on IR Research

19-10 April 1999, Glasgow, Scotland

The Annual Colloquium on IR Research provides an opportunity for both new and established researchers to present papers describing work in progress or final results. Submissions from students are particularly welcome and these can be considered for the Best Student Paper Award. Papers are invited on any topic related to Information Retrieval including:

Evaluation and testing of information retrieval systems

Networked information retrieval

IR and the Web

Hypermedia/Multimedia indexing and retrieval

Natural language processing for information retrieval

Logic and information retrieval

User interfaces for information retrieval

Information retrieval in library systems

Voice processing and retrieval

Database and IR integration

Data mining and information extraction

Commercial applications of information retrieval systems

Image processing and retrieval

Knowledge-based information retrieval

Submissions

Authors are invited to submit a camera-ready copy of their paper, in English, to be received no later than 18 December 1998. Papers should contain at most 7500 words and should be double-spaced. The submission should include two copies of the paper: one anonymous copy for refereeing and one full copy for publication in the draft proceedings. The first page must contain the title of the paper and an abstract of not more than 100 words. Please indicate if the paper is to be considered for the Best Student Paper Award. This Award requires that the first and primary author be a full-time student at time of submission.

Papers will be refereed and, if accepted, will be published in the draft proceedings which will be circulated to all delegates for use during the Colloquium. Authors will then have until 31st May 1999 to revise their paper for the formal Colloquium Proceedings in the light of referee's comments and feedback from delegates. Guidelines for the submission of papers for the formal proceedings will be circulated to the authors on acceptance for the Colloquium.

Contacts

If you have any queries or problems concerning submitting a paper, please contact the programme chair:

Dr Monica Landoni, Department of Information Science, University of Strathclyde, 26 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XH, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 (0) 141 548 4949. Fax: +44 (0) 141 553 1393. E-mail: bcs-irsg99@dis.strath.ac.uk

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Information Retrieval Journal Special issue:

Evaluation methods in information retrieval

Special issue editors: Stephen Robertson and David Hull

http://www.soi.city.ac.uk/~ser/eval_meth.html

Information retrieval systems have been the subject of evaluation experiments since the first Cranfield experiments began approximately four decades ago. A substantial body of knowledge about the methods which may be used for this purpose has been built up. Nevertheless, there are continuing arguments about the appropriateness and validity of these methods, and about possible extensions or alternative methods. Also, it is rare to see a paper devoted to method -- most methods are described only in papers devoted to the content of specific experiments. An exception was provided by the book Information Retrieval Experiment, edited by Sparck Jones and published in 1981. But current interest in methodological issues is great, with the TREC experiments revitalising the Cranfield tradition, while at the same time more researchers are finding it necessary to seek inspiration outside that tradition. The evaluation of highly interactive systems is seen as a particular problem area at present.

The object of this special issue is to bring to the fore discussion about all aspects of methods, and about the issues arising from attempts to devise valid, informative experiments. "Methods" in this context may cover many different activities, ranging from the qualitative observation of user searching behaviour to the analysis of statistical significance.

We are particularly interested in papers which compare methods, discuss or report some form of validation of a method or methods, or analyse what information may be obtained from particular methods. It may be that experiments which have already been analysed from the point of view of their substantive results, could be re-analysed from the point of view of the light they shed on method. We seek original papers -- theoretical, experimental or practical, as these words may be applied to methodology. We also want to encourage the transfer of ideas from fields with a strong history in experimental design (such as psychology and statistics) to information retrieval.

Prospective authors are invited to contact one of the editors at an early stage to discuss possible submissions. Stephen Robertson, *<ser@microsoft.com>* David Hull, *<David.Hull@xrce.xerox.com>*. The tentative publication date is May 1999. Papers should be submitted by October 31 1998. Authors should submit six hard copies of their final manuscript to: Karen S. Cullen, Information Retrieval - Editorial Office, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 101 Philip Drive, Assinippi Park, Norwell, Massachusetts 02061, U.S.A. Phone: 781-871-6600 Fax: 781-878-0449 E-mail: Karen@wkap.com

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Prize for best student paper in IR '97-'98

The Informer in collaboration with Springer-Verlag are pleased to announce the launch of the second annual competition for the best student paper in Information Retrieval. This is an open competition for any student in a European academic institution who has published a paper in a refereed journal/conference/workshop in the period 1st November 1997 - 1st November 1998. Springer-Verlag have kindly donated a prize of £200 worth of Springer-Verlag books (full catalogue at <http://www.springer.de/cgi-bin/SFgate?bookdealer=Springer>).

The winner of the competition will be invited to present their paper at the 21st Annual BCSIRSG Colloquium to be held in Glasgow, hosted by Strathclyde University, and will receive a maximum of £200 towards their travel.

To enter

1. Send a postscript copy of your paper to *informer@dcs.gla.ac.uk*, including publication details (conference name and dates/journal name, volume and number)

Rules

1. The paper must have been **published** or **accepted for publication** in the period 1st Nov 97 - 1st Nov 98 .
2. The paper must have appeared in a *refereed* journal, conference or workshop proceedings and should have a significant information retrieval content.
3. The entrant must have been a student at a European institution (university, college, etc) at the time the paper was *written*.
4. The entrant must be the main or only author of the paper.
5. Each entrant can only submit one paper for consideration.

Closing Date: November 13 1998

PS Apologies for the late arrival of the last issue of the Informer which arose due to a delay in distribution at BCS HQ.

Ian & Jon

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