Minutes of the BCS IRSG Annual General Meeting

24 November 2021
By Zoom Video Conference

Present
Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Chair), Martin White [MW] (Vice-Chair), Stefan Rüger [SR] (Immediate Past Chair), Steve Zimmerman [SZ] (Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Andrew MacFarlane, Haiming Liu, Tony Russell-Rose, Charlie Hull, Iadh Ounis, Annalina Coputo, Enrico Corello, Dyaa Albakour, Graham McDonald, Scott Parker, Lee Giles, Jochen Leidner, Mahmoud Artemi

The meeting opened at 17:15

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 10 October 2020 were approved unanimously, and there were no matters arising.

3. Committee Member Reports
3.1. Chairs report

UK reported that it was another unusual year. Nevertheless, the IRSG did continue to be involved in a number of activities since the last AGM:

- Search Solutions 2020 was held online and turned out to be very successful
- ECIR 2021 was supposed to take place in Lucca (Italy) but also had to be organised as an online event in the end (well-received by the community and excellently run)
- The Workshop on Fairness and Bias in Information Retrieval (Glasgow) was originally planned for 2020 but due to the pandemic it was postponed to March 2021. The online workshop was organised by Graham McDonald and Iadh Ounis (University of Glasgow), and the IRSG was well-represented at the event.

This year also saw the launch of a new IRSG Website, now hosted by the BCS. Martin White was the driving force behind this. The chair thanked him for this highly successful project.

The organisation of the annual Karen Spärck Jones Award continues to be a key feature of our group's activity. The 2020 winner was Ahmed H. Awadallah (Microsoft Research) who gave a keynote talk at ECIR 2021. This year's winner will be announced in December. The chair thanked Microsoft Research Cambridge for continued support of the award. The current chair of the award panel (Jochen Leidner) has secured an agreement with EACL that will allow us to have more of an impact in the NLP community (e.g. by alternating the keynote talks between ECIR and EACL).

IRSG remains involved in the annual Tony Kent Strix award which is organised by the UK eInformation Group (UKeiG). The 2020 winner is Professor Ian Ruthven (University of Strathclyde) who will give a lecture on 9 December 2021 (to be held online).

Our industry awards are back this year, with 5 award categories, all announced at Search Solutions 2021 earlier today.

There was no long-time service awards this year (awarded by the BCS for 5/10/25 years of service).

This year was the second time that the Industry Impact Award (sponsored by Signal AI) has been awarded at ECIR. The winning ECIR 2021 paper was "Studying the effectiveness of conversational search refinement through user simulation" by Alexandre Salle, Shervin Malmasi, Oleg Rokhlenko, and Eugene Agichtein.

The group's quarterly Informer newsletter continues to be run under the leadership of Martin White, and the chair thanks him alongside Steve Zimmerman and Tony Russell-Rose who support Martin.

Both ECIR 2022 (Stavanger) and 2023 (Dublin) had already been announced prior to the previous AGM.

3.2. Treasurer's Report

3.2.1. Financial Year 2020/2021
Search Solutions 2020: net income £1,057.63 (last year: £3,695.87)

Sponsorship:
ECIR 2020 Industry Award:	£1001.14 (from Signal)	
KSJ Award	£1,076.23 (from KSJ sponsorship)	

Net income/spent (excluding KSJ/Signal): £1,165.80 – £158.17 = £1,007.63

3.2.2. Financial Year 2021/2022
Our operational budget allocation is £4,212.87. Like last year, sSponsorship of events this year will be through supplementary funding (requires BCS approval). Physical events might resume in 2022, requesting usual, "pre-pandemic" sponsorship. Search Solutions 2021 was mainly an online only event, which means less income compared to what was planned in the original budget. That means uncertainties remain.

4. Elections
A Call for Nominations for the Vice-Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, Inclusion officer and six ordinary members of the committee was issued in October. Tony Russell-Rose was nominated as Vice-Chair by Udo Kruschwitz and Andy MacFarlane. Steven Zimmerman was nominated as Secretary by Martin White and seconded by Udo Kruschwitz. Yashar Moshfeghi (nominated by Iadh Ounis, seconded by Craig Macdonald) was the nominated as Inclusion Officer.Three ordinary members were nominated as well, these are: Frank Hopfgartner (nominated by Udo Kruschwitz, seconded Ingo Frommholz), Jochen Leidner (nominated by Stefan Rüger, seconded by Andy MacFarlane) and Graham McDonald (nominated by Craig Macdonald, seconded by Iadh Ounis)

As all nominations were unopposed, everyone was duly elected into these roles.

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

Officers

Chair: Udo Kruschwitz (2022)
Vice Chair: Tony Russell-Rose (2023)
Secretary : Steven Zimmerman (2023)
Treasurer: Ingo Frommholz (2022)
Membership Secretary: Haiming Liu (2022)
Inclusion Officer: Yashar Moshfeghi (2023)
Early Careers Advocate - TBC

Members

- Frank Hopfgartner (2023)
- Jochen Leidner (2023)
- Graham McDonald (2023)
- Fabrizio Sebastiani (ECIR 2021)[1]
- Krisztian Balog (ECIR 2022)[2]
- Annalina Caputo (ECIR 2023)[3]

The chair thanked the outgoing members of the committee: Martin White (co-opted); Stefan Rüger (immediate past Chair); Andy MacFarlane (longest-serving committee member ever? 24 Years of continuous service); Dyaa Albakour; João Magalhaes (as ECIR 2020 rep) for their contributions.

5.   Any Other Business
There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 17:55 (London).

---

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