

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting

11 May 2021

Zoom Video Conference convened at 17:00 (London)

Present

Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Chair), Martin White [MW], Steven Zimmerman [SZ] (Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Andrew MacFarlane [AM], Haiming Liu [HL], Frank Hopfgartner [FH], Jochen Leidner [JL], Yashar Moshfeghi [YM], Krisztian Balog [KB], Stefan Ruger [SR], Dyaa Albakour [DA]

1. Apologies Minutes of Previous IRSG Committee Meeting

Fabrizio Sebastiani [FS]

The minutes of the meeting of the 27 January were accepted as a true record.

2. Action arising (covered under appropriate agenda item where possible)

Actions for the previous meeting:

Action Number	Action	Action on
Jan 26.01	[UK] to query Signal AI about research impact award	Done
Jan 26.02	[UK] Udo to follow-up on meeting frequency	Done
Jan 26.03	[UK] to discuss IRJ agreement status w/ [FS]	Done
Jan 26.04	[SZ] To send IRJ agreement to [KB]	Done
Jan 26.05	[MW/SZ] To set up repository with IRJ agreement and other documents that should be readily accessible to IRSG committee members Action May 11.01 [MW, SZ] - Carry this forward	MW, SZ
Jan 26.06	[MW] Organise a strategy group for the IRSG Website / Informer Discussed under point 5	MW
Jan 26.07	[UK] To write a support letter for ESSIR, [JM] to determine what to include in this letter Action May 11.02 [UK] - Carry this forward	UK, JM
Jan 26.08	[HL, IF] To sort out what to do with the recordings from the conference	Done
Jan 26.09	[MW] To hand off slides/presentations to [IF] to get them posted on SS2020 site	Done

Jan 26.10	[MW] To setup Search Solutions sub-committee	Done
Jan 26.11	[JL] Update Wiki page for the KSJ Award	Done
Jan 26.12	[MW] Informer article to explain the difference between KSJ Award vs KSJ lecture Action May 11.03 [MW] - Carry this forward	MW
Jan 26.13	[JL] To ask for an update from ACL on association with the award Action May 11.04 [JL] - Carry this forward (ACL thinks EACL is more appropriate venue. Considering doing this on rotation with ECIR. JL to follow-up via email	JL
Jan 26.14	[JL] Will follow-up on the cheque matter and sort this out	Done
Jan 26.15	[HL/SZ] to come up with action plan regarding IRSG committee list to BCS and IR JISC list Agreed to stick with JISC mailing lists	Done
Jan 26.16	[IF] will contact BCS to see about available funding to support this event.	Done
Jan 26.17	[AM] will contact Strix committee to schedule presentation so as not to conflict with Search Solutions days. With an expressed desire to occur the day before/after Search Solutions 2021 [scheduled 23rd/24th].	Done
Jan 26.18	[IF] will compose a budget and send around via email to be agreed upon before the deadline submission.	Done
Jan 26.19	[UK] requested that [ALL] committee members create a contribution for informer. Action May 11.16 – [ALL] Carried forward	ALL
Jan 26.20	[SZ] will contact BCS for recommendations/requirements around document retention. Agreed to retain for 7 years	Done

3. Other Matters Agreed by email

None

4. Chair's report

@UDO add anything else here

Udo will have a catch-up session with Kerry Weir

Action May 11.05 [ALL] Send Udo any things you wish to discuss.

5. IRSG Web site

SEE PROPOSED WEBSITE STRATEGY IN APPENDICES

[MW] Noted the following

Compliment to the BCS staff for the competence and assistance with process and strategy development.

Recommends that

- A devolved model for content where the are roles and responsibilities for committee members, with a webmaster role to coordinate and oversee everything
- IRSG site hosted by BCS
- IRSG Informer hosted on BCS wordpress
- Everything in migrated by end of June 2021

Discussion points by committee members

- [IF] – Likes devolved model, concerned about process to make changes as we will lose control. [MW] suggests content strategy handled by web manager to handle corrections
- [UK] – We need to ensure Twitter Feed is still embedded
- [UK] – Keep search solutions presentation archive
- [DA] – Have we considered Medium for Informer? – [MW] – It does not provide the functionality we need (e.g. extensive set of tags)

6. Informer

[MW] See Appendix 2 for Informer Flat Plan

7. Search Solutions 2021

[MW] Sub-committee has been formed. More to follow.

8. ECIR 2021

[FS] Provided a report which will be published in forthcoming SIGIR forum. See excerpt in Appendix 3. Overall it was regarded as a very successful event.

9. ECIR 2022

[KB] Plan is to still run a physical conference. Everything is on schedule. Website is live.

Discussed guidelines for industry and best paper awards.

[SR] Suggests keeping criteria general. 3 criteria for a good paper are novelty, rigor and significance

Action May 11.06 [DA] Will provide [KB] with some guidance for the industry awards.

10. ECIR 2023

Action May 11.07 [UK] will ask Annalina Caputo to be committee chair (To be co-opted early 2022)

11. Call for Bids ECIR 2024

Action May 11.08 [UK/SZ] discuss and resolve draft online and distribute to channels.

12. KSJ Award

[JL] Has updated the KSJ Award call to highlight diversity as an important factor

Action May 11.09 [JL] will send out call, [ALL] please send him any suggestions for draft

13. ICTIR report

[FH] Several changes have been proposed to the by-laws

- Steering committee would appoint general chair
- General chair would appoint PC committee
- Steering committee would approve the PC committee

14. Publication strategy group

[UK] Suggest we should start a small committee for strategy. Some options to consider are ACL anthology, better terms with Springer, etc.

Action May 11.10 [HL/YM/IF/JL] to come up with recommendations for publication strategy

15. Budget

[IF] Nothing to report other than emails sent before budget was sent off

16. Collaboration with UKeiG

Action May 11.11 [UK] to connect [MW] via email with Ralph Samuels from UKeiG

Action May 11.12 [AM] to forward related emails from previous years (e.g. related to ISKO) to [MW] for other possible collaborations.

17. AOB

[SZ] Raised the matter of marketing/timeline of next committee elections.

[UK/SR] – Our constitution dictates when (timelines) for advertising + BCS states when we have to have elections completed

Action May 11.13 [SZ/UK] to organize elections for AGM

Action May 11.14 [SZ/YM] to have discussion about how best to include diversity in nomination call

18. Next meeting

Action May 11.15 [UK] will send off a doodle to find dates / times in September

19. Actions Arising From Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
May 11.01	[MW/SZ] To set up repository with IRJ agreement and other documents that should be readily accessible to IRSG committee members	MW, SZ
May 11.02	[UK] To write a support letter for ESSIR, [JM] to determine what to include in this letter	UK
May 11.03	[MW] - Informer article to explain the difference between KSJ Award vs KSJ lecture	MW
May 11.04	[JL] - to follow-up via email on topic of KSJ award with EACL	JL
May 11.05	[ALL] Send Udo any things you wish to discuss for his meeting with Kerry Weir.	ALL
May 11.06	[DA] Will provide [KB] with some guidance for the industry awards	DA
May 11.07	[UK] will ask Annalina Caputo to be ECIR 2023 committee chair	UK
May 11.08	[UK/SZ] discuss and resolve ECIR 2024 bid call draft online and distribute to channels.	UK, SZ
May 11.09	[JL] will send out KSJ call, [ALL] please send him any suggestions for draft	JL
May 11.10	[HL/YM/IF/JL] to come up with recommendations for publication strategy	HL, YM, IF, JL
May 11.11	[UK] to connect [MW] via email with Ralph Samuels from UKeIG	UK, MW
May 11.12	[AM] to forward related emails from previous years (e.g. related to ISKO) to [MW] for other possible collaborations	AM, MW
May 11.13	[SZ/UK] to organize elections for AGM	SZ, UK
May 11.14	[SZ/YM] to have discussion about how best to include diversity in nomination call	SZ, YM
May 11.15	[UK] will send off a doodle to find dates / times in September for next meeting	UK

May 11.16	[UK] requested that [ALL] committee members create a contribution for informer	ALL
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Meeting Closed 19:05

APPENDICES

1 – Website Strategy Plane

BCS IRSG Web Strategy

Briefing paper for the IRSG Committee Meeting, 11 May 2021

Martin White 29 April 2021 martin.white@intranetfocus.com

1. Introduction

Just how the IRSG web site reached its current nadir is not worth reviewing. Nadir? The Groups and Resources pages were last updated in 2011! IRSG is categorized in the Information Management section of the BCS corporate web site and yet in my opinion fails to display any element of good practice in either web site or information management.

The issues are much wider than the choice of technology or template. As far as I am aware no one proactively manages the web communications strategy of the Group and takes ultimate responsibility for the quality of the content displayed. It is unclear from the current site as to whether the objective is

- to be a source of resources for academics and practitioners
- to publicise the awards that the IRSG makes
- to act as a repository for governance documents, in particular for Committee minutes
- to act as an archive for Informer going back to 1994

The aim of this document is to suggest a mission statement for the IRSG web site and for Informer, propose a governance structure and outline effective content management responsibilities and procedures.

I've kept it short as a starting point rather than trying to write the definitive strategy.

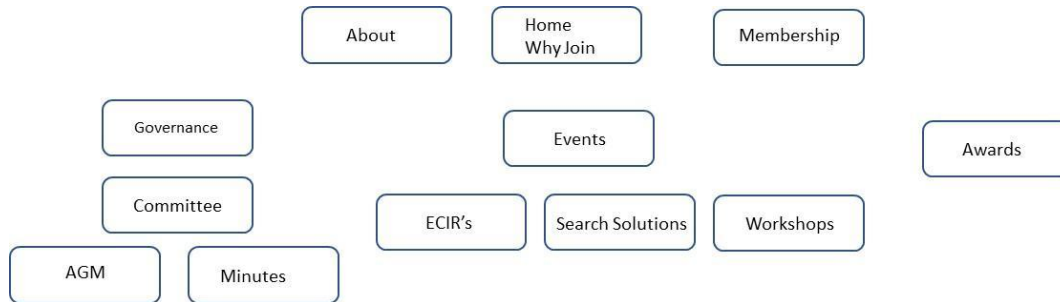
2. Mission

I would propose the following mission statement;

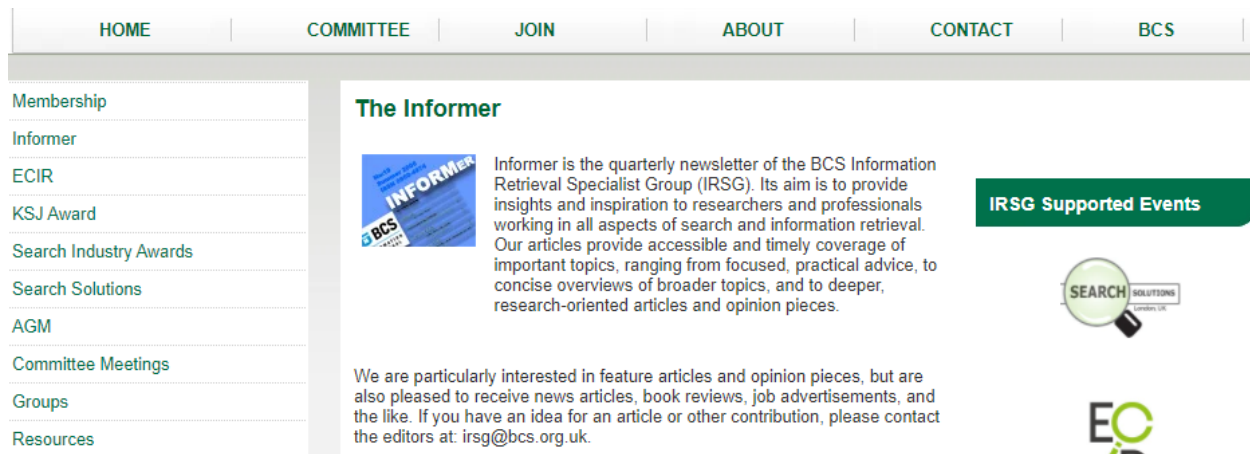
To attract BCS members to join IRSG by offering events and resources that would further their expertise in information retrieval and support their career development.

3. Core structure

Just to begin somewhere



To remind you, this is the current structure.



4. Content management responsibilities

At present responsibility for content management, quality, uploading and review is not well defined, and this has been a contributory factor to the poor quality of the web site. A lot of good intentions but not enough time given the day job!

I would like to suggest that the content of the new web site is limited to the resources available to prepare the content and keep it under review, especially over a change of membership of the Committee.

The responsibilities could be along the following lines

Membership – Membership Secretary (currently Haiming)

Governance – Secretary (currently Steve)

Events – Events Coordinator (currently Jochen)

Awards – we have no Awards Coordinator. Perhaps we need one!

Overall the web site should be the responsibility of a Web Manager with the responsibility for

- liaison with the BCS team
- monitoring usage and content status, reporting to the Committee at each meeting

There is no specific reason why the web manager need be a member of the Committee.

I'm not suggesting that all the content is written by the people listed above but they are responsible to making sure that the content is a) forwarded to the BCS team and checked when added to the site and b) that it is kept under review on a timely basis.

5. Hosting and branding

The BCS web sites, including those of most of the Groups, are managed with a customized version

of [Umbraco](#) which is a widely used and respected CMS. The site is hosted on Amazon AWS and is supported by a very strong array of security management services.

I recommend that the IRSG site is hosted and managed by the BCS web team, who will be responsible for taking content created by the Committee and publishing it onto the IRSG web site under a Service Level Agreement.

The BCS web team does have a Service Level Agreement schedule regarding uploads and corrections, and feedback from the Consultancy Group (of which I am a member) suggests that the BCS team is very responsive.

The BCS will not make any charge for developing the web site or for migrating content, with the proviso that the web site should not be seen as an archive, and that only immediately relevant content is migrated.

6. Informer

Informer is currently managed on WordPress site with a theme dating back to 2008. It is hosted by the BCS. As mentioned above the content for the main IRSG website would be added by the BCS web team. Because of the volume of content and the need to create a readable (in terms of structure) newsletter it is not feasible to adopt this process for Informer.

There are many technical issues with the version of WordPress we currently use as well as a very poor visual template that (for example) does not render on a smartphone. The template dates from 2008 and was developed by Simon Curd, who is a lead member of the BCS web team.

In the initial version of this strategy I was proposing we chose an external (to BCS) host for Informer but given the level of interest and support from the BCS team there are no benefits to doing so.

At a very productive meeting hosted by [Simon Curd](#) with his colleagues Ionet Bochis and Alan Hilton, with Tony Russell-Rose and myself, on 26 April the way forward would seem to be for BCS to provide a current version of WordPress that Tony, Steve and I could use to test out the functionality. Although there is technical support from BCS for WordPress we would need to arrange support for some elements of BCS branding to be applied to the WordPress site.

The extent to which this could be carried out jointly between IRSG and the BCS has yet to be discussed.

BCS will make a test WordPress site available to Tony and Steve, probably by the middle of the week of 3 May to explore template options

The benefit of having Informer hosted on the BCS platform is that there is a single point of contact to discuss enhancements and problems. It also comes free-of-charge.

Simon has pointed out that [Irsg.bcs.org](#) will be redirected to [bcs.org/member-communities/information-retrieval-specialist-group](#) and BCS will likely need a new domain for Informer... perhaps something like [irsg-informer.bcs.org](#). Then [irsg.bcs.org/informer](#) will be redirected to the new domain.

7. Archives

We do need to make a decision on archiving!

IRSG Committe Meetings

- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 22 Sep 2020](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 10 June 2020](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 28 Jan 2020](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 25 Nov 2019](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 17 Sep 2019](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 14 May 2019](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 26 Feb 2019](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 26 Nov 2018](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 04 Sep 2018](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 23 May 2018](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 21 February 2018](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 28 November 2017](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 19 September 2017](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 30 May 2017](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 25 January 2017](#)
- ▶ [Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting - 29 November 2016](#)

Steve had asked Kerry Weir about that in a meeting earlier this year. There is no official guidance regarding minutes from BCS. The only requirement for BCS is that financial information be retained for 7 years. Based on discussion with his discussions with John in the hand-off, 2 years would be too short.

Steve's view is to keep minutes online only for a brief time (e.g. 2 years). Then we keep a file share such as Dropbox to keep things retained longer. Steve would not keep documents any longer than 7 years.

2012 [Spring \(Edition 34\)](#), [Winter \(Edition 33\)](#).
2009 [Autumn \(Edition 32\)](#), [Summer \(Edition 31\)](#), [Spring \(Edition 30\)](#),
[Winter \(Edition 29\)](#).
2008 [Autumn \(Edition 28\)](#), [Summer \(Edition 27\)](#), [Spring \(Edition 26\)](#),
[Winter \(Edition 25\)](#).
2007 [Autumn \(Edition 24\)](#), [Summer \(Edition 23\)](#), [Spring \(Edition 22\)](#),
[Winter \(Edition 21\)](#).
2006 [Autumn \(Edition 20\)](#), [Summer \(Edition 19\)](#), [Spring \(Edition 18\)](#),
[Winter \(Edition 17\)](#).
2005 [Autumn \(Edition 16\)](#), [Summer \(Edition 15\)](#), [Spring \(Edition 14\)](#),
[Winter \(Edition 13\)](#).
2003 [Article - Panel Session ECIR 2003](#)
2002 [Article - Review of SIGIR 2002](#), [Spring Edition 12](#)
2001 [Winter Edition 11](#)
2000 [Winter Edition 10](#)
1999 [Winter Edition](#), [Spring Edition](#), [Summer Edition](#), [Autumn Edition](#).
1998 [Winter Edition](#), [Spring Edition](#), [Summer Edition](#).
1997 [Winter Edition](#), [Autumn Edition](#).
1995 [Spring Edition](#), [Summer Edition](#).
1994 [Winter Edition](#)

We also have issues of Informer going back to 2012.

I don't immediately have a solution to the archiving issue, but I am sure that the BCS won't want this content cluttering up their server.

I can see no point in archiving the Groups and Resources sections as they are now over a decade old.

8. Timeline and actions

5 May The BCS team is meeting to consider the resources they can make available to design the new IRSG website in the style of other Group web sites. An outcome of that meeting will be an indication of when work on the migration can begin.

By this date it is anticipated that BCS will be able to make a WordPress test site available for Tony, Steve and I to evaluate in terms of its functionality and ease of use.

11 May The recommendations in this paper will be discussed and agreed.

Late July It should be possible (indeed desirable!) to get Informer transferred to the new WordPress site ready for the Summer 2021 issue of Informer.

There needs to be a further discussion with the BCS team about the schedule and actions that need to be taken by IRSG Committee for the migration of the web site.

Before decisions are made on the migration schedule the IRSG Committee needs to agree (not necessarily at the 11 May meeting) on the overall architecture, the content that needs to be revised and rewritten (and who is going to undertake this work) and the content that needs to be either deleted or archived.

I am happy to act as project manager for the transition but would not wish to take on the Web Manager role as well as Informer and Search Solutions 2021. As mentioned earlier the Web Manager does not need to be a member of the Committee and perhaps we could invite an IRSG member to undertake this role.

I would suggest that we aim to have the new website released in time for the active promotion of Search Solutions in mid-August, but this depends on the availability of the BCS web team to undertake this work and the availability of the IRSG Committee to work on content creation etc.

8. For consideration at the IRSG Committee meeting

We should discuss and confirm;

- a. The mission statement.
- b. The recommendation to migrate the IRSG website into the BCS group style.
- c. The recommendation to use the BCS to host an updated version of WordPress for Informer.
- d. The overall schedule of the project subject to BCS confirmation of resource availability
- e. The outline information architecture, which will be kept under review as the work on content creation proceeds.
- f. The governance structure proposed in para 4 above including agreement to review the current content, recommend deletion/archiving and preparing new/revised content.
- g. The appointment of a Web Manager, and in particular whether that should be a Committee position.
- h. Consider in outline the issue around the extent of archiving.
- i. My role as Project Manager.

I do not see any significant budget requirements at present. All the set-up costs will be met by the BCS. There could be a requirement to commission a style sheet for Informer. I suggested to Ingo in March that it might be wise to allocate £500 for Informer development but this included substantial design and hosting costs if IRSG decided not to continue with the BCS hosting.

I will update the Committee with the outcomes of the internal meeting of the BCS web team as soon as I have them from Simon.

Tony Russell-Rose is not a member of the Committee but has all the technical expertise needed to assess the WordPress options. I would recommend that we invite Tony to attend the meeting for this item.

Set out below is a draft flat plan for the remaining issues in 2021.

Informer 2021 Summer Flat Plan Close copy date 16 July Publish 30 July

Article	Author	Comment
In this issue	MW	
IRSG Committee	SZ	Summary
Search Solutions 2021	MW	Programme status
ECIR 2021 Industry Day	MW	
ECIR 2022	KB	Update on status
ECIR 2023	??	Initial plans
Web site changes	MW/SZ/TRR	Also to include Informer
Update on Awards	JL et al	KSJ/Strix/Search Industry etc
Feature 1	Tim Gollins	Summary of his paper on archives to Fairer2021
Feature 2	Frank H?	The work of CyCat, Cyprus (TBC)
Feature 3		
Book Review 1	MW	Edmund Tufte Seeing with Fresh Eyes
Book Review 2 (TBC)	Frank H	
And finally	MW	
Events	AMcF	Standing content

Informer 2021 Autumn Flat Plan Close copy date 17 September Publish 1 October

Article	Author	Comment
In this issue	MW	
IRSG Committee	SZ	Summary
Search Solutions 2021	MW	Programme
ECIR 2022	KB	Update on status/programme
ECIR 2023	??	Update on status
Strix Lecture	MW	Advance information
Feature 1		
Feature 2		
Feature 3		
Book Review 1		
Book Review 2		
And finally	MW	The early days
Events	AMcF	Standing content

3 – ECIR 2021 Report (Excerpt to be included in SIGIR forum)

Report on the 43rd European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR 2021)

Raffaele Perego and Fabrizio Sebastiani
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The 43rd European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR 2021 – <https://www.ecir2021.eu/>), organized under the auspices of the Information Retrieval Specialist Group of the British Computer Society (BCS IRSG), took place between March 28 and April 1, 2021. As sadly customary in these dark times, the conference was held entirely online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the original plans, it should have instead taken place in Lucca, a small Italian town in Tuscany, Italy, which enjoys a beautiful, extremely well-preserved historic centre.

1 Structure of the Conference

ECIR 2021 had the traditional structure of previous ECIR conferences, i.e. its program consisted of five days, with the first day (March 28) devoted to tutorials and the Doctoral Consortium, the three days that followed (March 29 to 31) occupied by the main conference, and the last day (April 1) devoted to satellite workshops and the industry day.

On the first day, two full-day (FD) tutorials and six half-day (HD) tutorials were offered, on themes ranging from “Reinforcement Learning for Information Retrieval” (FD – by Alexander Kuhlé, Miguel Aroca-Ouellete, Murat Sensoy, John Reid, and Dell Zhang), “IR From Bag-of-words to BERT and Beyond through Practical Experiments” (FD – by Sean MacAvaney, Craig Macdonald, and Nicola Tonello), “Fake News, Disinformation, Propaganda, Media Bias, and Flattening the Curve of the COVID-19 Infodemic” (HD – by Preslav Nakov and Giovanni Da San Martino), “Operationalizing Treatments against Bias” (HD – by Ludovico Boratto and Mirko Marras), “Large-Scale Information Extraction under Privacy-Aware Constraints” (HD – by Rajeev Gupta and Ranganath Kondapally), “Search Among Sensitive Content” (HD – by Graham McDonald and Douglas Gard), “Adversarial Learning for Recommendation” (HD – by Vito Walter Anelli, Yashar Deldjoo, Tommaso Di Noia, and Felice Antonio Merra), to “Biomedical Data, Text
