

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Annual General Meeting

27 November 2024

Zoom Meeting 18:00 (London)

Present

Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Chair), Graham McDonald [GM] (Vice-Chair) (online), Monica Paramita [MP] (Secretary) (online), Iadh Ounis [IO] (online), Sean MacAvaney [SM] (online), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Po-Hsuan Chang, J.M. Chanthrothayan, Gregor Donabauer [GD], Tony Russell-Rose [TRR], Andy Hind [AH], Anirban Chakraborty

The meeting opened at 18:07

1. Welcome from the Chair

The chair Udo Kruschwitz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes/Actions of Previous Annual General Meeting

The [minutes of the previous meeting](#) have been circulated to everyone and also made public on the BCS website. No changes were proposed. No matters arising. So we consider the minutes from the previous AGM to be approved.

3. Committee Member Reports

3.1. Chair's Reports

Events. We ran the following events in the past year:

- Search Solutions 2023: 50 people attending.
- Search Solutions 2024: 75 people attending. Given that the room capacity was 80, this event was close to being sold out.
- ECIR 2024 was a very successful event held in Glasgow.
- ICTIR 2024 (co-located with SIGIR 2024) was held in Washington DC.
- FDIA 2024 (integrated with ESSIR 2024) was held in Amsterdam.

Karen Spärck Jones Award. The KSJ Award 2023 was awarded to Hongning Wang, Tsinghua University. Previous awards have been sponsored by Microsoft Research. This year's award will be sponsored by Bloomberg. A new agreement with EACL to alternate the keynote speakers between ECIR and EACL has kicked in. Therefore, this year's keynote was given at EACL 2024.

The KSJ Award winner for 2024 will be announced in December and will present in ECIR 2025. Bloomberg sponsorship is £2500.

BCS Search Industry Awards 2024 at Search Solutions. This year's awards have just been announced at Search Solutions:

- Most promising startup: deepset
- Best search project: Datafari Enterprise Search
- Search professional of the year: Jayaprakash Sundararaj (Google)
- Best paper / presentation at Search Solutions 2024: Taketomo Isazawa (Microsoft Research)

Tony Kent Strix Award. The winner of the Tony Kent Strix Award 2023 is Martin White. The winner for 2024 has not yet been announced.

Long-term service awards: No new awards announced.

Informer. BCS IRSG Newsletter has moved to Medium (<https://medium.com/@irsg>). Editor: Gregor Donabauer. The newsletters used to be published quarterly but there is more flexibility now that we have moved to Medium. People are encouraged to write articles related to Information Retrieval.

Decisions on host of ECIR 2026. Three strong bids were submitted. The chair was very pleased to announce that ECIR 2026 will be hosted in The Hague. The general chairs are Avishek Anand, Suzan Verberne and Zhaochun Ren. One of the general chairs will be co-opted to join the BCS IRSG committee. Discussions have also started regarding ECIR 2027 but will still need to be finalised.

3.2. Treasurer's Reports

3.2.1. Financial Year 2023/2024

Search Solutions 2023

- Registration fees income: £3,628.48 (last year: £3,444.30)
- Speaker expenses: £300
- Catering: £544.14

Sponsorship

- KSJ Award: £3,000 (from Bloomberg) to be spent in FY 2024/25. This sponsorship is only to be spent for the KSJ Award.

Total Income: £6,628.48.

Total Expenditure: £1,650.43.

Net Profit: £4,978.05

We are working with a very tight budget. The BCS IRSG budget can be used to support students in ECIR or for committee's project meeting (e.g., UK-based committee members travelling to London). Search Solutions speakers travelled to the events on their own expenses.

We discussed whether ECIR profits should be shared with BCS IRSG to support the activities of the groups or committees. However, if BCS IRSG takes the profit, we may also have to carry the risks, which we are not prepared to do. Therefore, we decided to keep the current arrangement as it is.

3.2.2. Financial Year 2024/2025

Income: £8,666.91

Costs: £6,140

Operational Spend: -£2,526.91.

Travel for activities in March, June and July must be submitted via Supplementary Funding Requests (SFR). So far, previous requests have been approved but the process is quite time-consuming. If you have any plans, please let the treasurer know 2 months in advance.

BCS CEO will need to approve international travels.

Speaker and committee travel is reduced based on historical spending.

Operational Spend - Day to day running costs, require no further authorisation from your coordinator.

Special Projects - 2 months in advance. Do not undertake expenditure until you receive the CBFC's decision, as it is not guaranteed that the committee will award these funds.

4. Elections to fill vacancies on the committee

The constitution on the BCS IRSG website specifies the roles that should be filled in the committee. BCS IRSG has also had additional roles in the past two years: Diversity Chair, Early Careers Advocate.

A call for nominations was sent out to the members' list in October 2024 to fill several vacancies on the IRSG committee (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and ordinary members). The following applications were received:

- Chair: Ingo Frommholz (nominated by Udo Kruschwitz, seconded by Haiming Liu)
- Secretary: Monica Paramita (nominated by Udo Kruschwitz, seconded by Haiming Liu)
- Membership Secretary: Haiming Liu (nominated by Ingo Frommholz, seconded by Tony Russell-Rose)
- Ordinary member: Udo Kruschwitz (nominated by Tony Russell-Rose, seconded by Ingo Frommholz)

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

The current committee members (with terms in brackets) are as follows:

- **Officers**

- Chair: Ingo Frommholz (2026)
- Vice Chair: Graham McDonald (2025)
- Secretary: Monica Paramita (2026)
- Treasurer: *vacant - will be co-opted*
- Membership Secretary: Haiming Liu (2026)
- Inclusion Officer: Yashar Moshfeghi (2025)
- Early Careers Advocate: Andy Hind (2025)
- Events Coordinator: Tony Russell-Rose (2025)

- **Members**

- Gregor Donabauer (2025)
- Udo Kruschwitz (2026, also immediate past chair until 2025)
- *Vacant - will be co-opted*
- Iadh Ounis (ECIR 2024)
- Nicola Tonelloto (ECIR 2025)
- *Will be confirmed in the near future* (ECIR 2026)

All outgoing members of the committee were thanked for their contribution to the IRSG (David Rau and Sean MacAvaney). Particular thanks to Sean for successfully retaining rank A for the ECIR conferences which required a lot of work.

5. AOB

As the new chair, IF thanked UK for the leadership in the past few years. IF will send an email to the committee members to co-opt the treasurer in the near future.

There was a quick round of introductions in the room to find out who attended and had not been involved in the group's activities before. Attendees at the AGM included a PhD Graduate in Computational Linguistics, researchers in IR contextual recommendations, and an international student from Staffordshire University. Attendees hoped to join BCS events to expand their network. UK recommended people to sign up to the mailing list and encourage people to reach out to the committee to suggest activities. E.g., one-day event about a particular topic that is not yet represented by the current events.

IF will publish a call for one-day events and encourage people to apply. Events will be (partially) funded by the BSC IRSG.

6. Action arising from the meeting

No actions arising from the meeting.

Meeting Closed at 18:50