

Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting

3 June 2024

Zoom Meeting 17:00 (London)

Present

Udo Kruschwitz [UK] (Chair), Graham McDonald [GM] (Vice Chair), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Monica Paramita [MP] (Secretary), Yashar Mohfeghi [YM] (Inclusion Officer), Tony Russell-Rose [TRR] (Events Coordinator), Haiming Liu [HL] (Membership Secretary), Andy Hind [AH] (Early Careers Advocate), Nicola Tonelloto [NT], Gregor Donabauer [GD], Iadh Ounis [IO], Sean MacAvaney [SM], David Rau [DR]

1. Apologies and Minutes of Previous IRSG Committee Meeting

No apologies.

Minutes approved.

2. Actions arising from Jan 2024

| Action Number | Action | Action on |
|---------------|--|------------------------|
| JAN 24.01 | Address Informer and external communications issues | GM, UK On-going |
| JAN 24.02 | Share / admin of IRSG Twitter account | IF/IO DONE |
| JAN 24.03 | Raise awareness about Procedures for BCS | IF DONE |
| JAN 24.04 | To handover files to new secretary + handover status of BCS file share | UK On-going |
| JAN 24.05 | New Informer manager: to work on Actions SEP 25.04/SEP 25.05/SEP 25.09 | GD DONE |
| JAN 24.06 | Inform BCS about new Careers Advocate to update the group's Web site accordingly | UK DONE |
| JAN 24.07 | Add AH to IRSG committee mailing list | UK DONE |
| JAN 24.08 | Find a candidate to fill the secretary position and (once successful) inform the committee via email | UK DONE |
| JAN 24.09 | Inform BCS about IF being the new IRSG ICTIR representative and get in touch with the ICTIR Steering Committee | UK + IF DONE |
| JAN 24.10 | Inform ECIR 2024 and 2025 General Chairs about one-year ban of author in breach of ECIR 2024 harassment policy | UK DONE |
| JAN 24.11 | Arrange meeting with TRR, GD and UK to get Informer up and | UK DONE |

| | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------|
| | running again with a target issue in April 2024 | |
| JAN 24.12 | Contact GD with contributions to Informer no later than first week of April | ALL DONE |
| JAN 24.13 | Connect with Search network and get requirements for one-day event (dates, rooms, possible sponsorship), contact BCS, and feed back to committee | TRR DONE |
| JAN 24.14 | Prepare call for one-day events and agree with committee via email | TRR On-going |
| JAN 24.15 | Confirm budget for one-day event support, i.e. whether we can promise support or not (or submit supplementary fund request) | IF On-going |
| JAN 24.16 | Contact authors of two previously arranged pieces for Informer about Search Solutions 2024 (one review and one post on Industry Awards 2024). | UK DONE |
| JAN 24.17 | Continue effort to sort out future funding for KSJ award | IF + UK DONE |
| JAN 24.18 | Confirm updates to IRSG Web site with KSJ Award winner 2023 have been done | HL DONE |
| JAN 24.19 | Vote for Alexander Robinson on behalf of the committee. | GM DONE |
| JAN 24.20 | Send out draft of bid to host ECIR 2026 to committee with timeline as in past year | UK On-going |
| JAN 24.21 | Prepare a plan for Search Solutions 2024 and inform the committee | TRR DONE |
| JAN 24.22 | Anyone who wants to be involved in organising Search Solutions 2024 should talk to TRR | ALL DONE |
| JAN 24.23 | Send around Doodle for the next meeting (planned to be towards end of May) | UK DONE |

3. Items Agreed by email

- Appointment of new secretary: Monica Paramita (term ending in November 2024)
- Confirmation to not continue agreement with IRJ (now Discover Computing). **Action GM & UK: Explore possible agreements with IP&M journal.**

4. Chair's report

Four points were raised in the Chair's report:

1. Annalina Caputo [AC] (ECIR 2023 Committee Member) has left the committee. Nicola Tonellotto [NT] is representing ECIR 2025.
2. KSJ Awards 2024: Bloomberg has confirmed funding for this year (£3,000). **Action HM: Keep in touch with Bloomberg to explore future funding.**
3. Informer website has been taken down. UK has contacted BCS to get access to Informer Archives but has not had any reply. **Action UK: Chase BCS re: getting access to informer Archives.**
4. ECIR 2026: at least 3 potential bidders. **Action UK: Circulate a draft for call to host ECIR 2026 to**

the committee.

5. Report Inclusion Officer

NO REPORT

6. Report Early Careers Advocate

NO REPORT

7. Event Organiser's report

- TRR has circulated a call for [one-day event](#) to the committee members to get feedback
- Search Network event was cancelled due to various issues with finance, room booking, and time

Action TRR: Send out call to host a one-day event

8. ECIR 2024

ECIR 2024 was a great success. Over the 5 days of the conference we had about 420 attendees (the largest ever in-person ECIR). We had overwhelmingly very positive feedback about all aspects of the conference, e.g., the content, venues, food, social events etc. We introduced a number of novelties, e.g., a Findings Track, an IR4Good track, the Collab-a-thon and the KvR Award, that were all very well received by the community.

We received over 700 submissions, not including submissions to the workshops. The programme included 57 full papers (23% acceptance rate) and an additional 18 finding papers, 36 short papers (24% acceptance rate), 26 IR4Good papers (41% acceptance rate), 6 Industry Day papers (46% acceptance rate) 18 demonstration papers (56% acceptance rate), 9 reproducibility papers (39% acceptance rate), 8 doctoral consortium papers (57% acceptance rate), and 15 invited CLEF papers.

We have submitted an Event Report to ACM SIGIR Forum (we will re-work this report for Informer).

Action GM: Send a report for Informer to GD

9. ECIR 2025

NT reports that the FP and SP chairs are setting up the call for papers which will be circulated before Mid-July. NT is having discussion with previous chairs for EasyChair setup, already secured thanks to a sponsorship from the University of Pisa. All activities are in line with the proposed schedule. The conference is planned for early April. SIGIR Sponsorship has been applied to, waiting for a reply from the SIGIR ExCom.

10. ECIR 2026 (Call for Bids)

UK will circulate a draft of the call for bids for ECIR 2026. UK highlighted that attendees from some countries (e.g., China and Russia) have recently experienced more visa issues. UK will include this in the call for bids to raise potential bidders' awareness of the situation. UK will encourage potential bidders to consider and mitigate this issue in their applications. **Action UK: Circulate a draft for call to host ECIR 2026 to the committee.**

11. Search Solutions 2024

Tutorials. HL has distributed the call for SS2024 tutorials to IR, SIGIR, Corpora mailing lists and BCS Information Retrieval SG <irmemsf@lists.bcs.uk> list (Deadline: first week of September.) HL has emailed BCS (Kerry) to update the call for SS2024 tutorials web pages. The website has been updated. **Action IF & UK: Promote the call for tutorials in social media (BCS IRSG Twitter and LinkedIn account).**

Papers. TRR has circulated the call for papers (Deadline: mid June). The venue has been booked. Eventbrite is open for registration. **Action UK & TRR: send out the second call for Search Solutions 2024.**

HL raised a question regarding increasing the honorarium (£300). UK suggested leaving it this year to see how many attendees in Search Solutions, how many proposals we received, etc. This can be further discussed by email or next meeting. **Action UK, IF, HL and ALL: Discuss the possibility of increasing the honorarium for Search Solutions 2024 (and future Search Solutions).**

12. KSJ Award

Funding. UK, IF, HL have secured the £3000 sponsorship for KSJ award 2024 from Bloomberg.

Call for nominations. HL has distributed the KSJ 2024 call for nominations to IR, SIGIR, Corpora mailing lists and BCS Information Retrieval SG <irmemsf@lists.bcs.uk> list. HL has also sent the KSJ 2024 call for nominations to the ACL steering committee to be disseminated to the ACL mailing lists by Roberto Basili. HL has emailed BCS (Kerry) to update the call information on the BCS KSJ web pages, but this has not yet been updated (by 3rd June 2024). This call has been shared in BCS IRSG Twitter Account. **Action UK: to share the call on LinkedIn.**

13. ICTIR report

IF is in the mailing list but has not yet had any information about meetings/any information. IF will share any updates with the committee.

14. Strix Award

UKeiG is aiming to release the call for nominations sometime in June hopefully. We will meet early June to discuss.

Dr Samantha Pearman-Kanza (Senior Research Fellow, University of Southampton) is the new RSC/CICAG representative for the Strix Committee (replacing Doug who has retired from the role). UKeiG committee

has suggested approaching Martin White and/or perhaps another previous winner to join the panel or support for this year (there is also an aspiration to have representatives of the next generation of IR enthusiasts on the panel, but I've not heard of any plans for trying to make this happen). David Ball will be taking on the role of joint chair for this this year pending the confirmation of a new volunteer.

The videos of last year's memorial lecture are not available yet. Gary says "The video files are huge and I'm trying to upload them to You Tube and explore better ways of doing this in future."

15. Budget

Supplementary Funding Request (SFR) have been submitted:

- ESSIR: 1K funded
- FDIA: Travel for IF, HL, YM accepted.
- SFR for CLEF needs to be prepared. IF may require some input.

Action IF: Prepare and submit SFR to support CLEF 2024

16. IRSG Membership Survey

HL has sent a questionnaire to JISC & BCS mailing list. However, the engagement was low - only fifteen responses have been received. The survey responses have been circulated by email. HL enquired about recirculating the questionnaire to get more responses. However, it was decided that it was best not to do this given the changes to the Informer site, and also to avoid annoying the mailing list members. UK reckoned that interested members would have participated, and those who did not would be unlikely to participate even after the reminder.

17. Informer

GD has set up the new Informer as a blog/publication on Medium:

<https://medium.com/bcs-irsg-informer>

We are currently collecting contributions for the kick-off of the new format which will include:

- Information about the new format
- Search Solutions 2023 report (by Meg Gordon)
- ECIR 2024 conference report (by Graham McDonald)
- BCS Search Industry awards 2024 application
- KSJ award's new sponsoring

Kick off is planned to happen as soon as possible. Any other contributions are welcome! We will check how we can include suggestions from the IRSG membership survey for future posts.

DR asked if users may have any limitations in viewing Medium sites as Medium often grants users access to view only a limited number of articles. GD mentioned that Informer is a paid account, so there shouldn't be a limitation for the readers but will check. **Action GD: Check if Medium has any view limitations for readers.**

18. Search Industry Awards

TRR reported that the call for Search Industry Awards has gone out. BCS (Kerry) has also put Search Industry Awards on the website.

19. AOB

UK discussed that few positions are coming up in the next elections. More details will be sent in August. Elections will be at the AGM in November.

20. Next meeting

The next meeting will be in September. IF enquired the possibility for a face-to-face (and hybrid) meeting in London. Non-excessive travels can be covered by the budget. **Action UK: Arrange a Doodle for the next meeting. IF: Find an available meeting room once the meeting date has been set.**

21. Action arising from the meeting

| Action Number | Action | Action on |
|---------------|---|--------------------|
| JUN 24.01 | Address Informer and external communications issues | GM, UK |
| JUN 24.02 | To handover files to new secretary + handover status of BCS file share | UK |
| JUN 24.03 | Prepare call for one-day events and agree with committee via email | TRR |
| JUN 24.04 | Confirm budget for one-day event support, i.e. whether we can promise support or not (or submit supplementary fund request) | IF |
| JUN 24.05 | Send out draft of bid to host ECIR 2026 to committee with timeline as in past year | UK |
| JUN 24.06 | Explore possible agreements with IP&M Journal | UK & GM |
| JUN 24.07 | Keep in touch with Bloomberg to explore future funding | HL |
| JUN 24.08 | Chase BCS to get access to Informer Archives. | UK |
| JUN 24.09 | Circulate a draft for call to host ECIR 2026 to the committee | UK |
| JUN 24.10 | Send out call to host a one-day event | TRR |
| JUN 24.11 | Send a report for Informer to GD | GM |
| JUN 24.12 | Promote the call for Search Solutions 2024 tutorials in social media (BCS IRSG Twitter and LinkedIn account) | IF & UK |
| JUN 24.13 | Send out the second call for Search Solutions 2024. | UK & TRR |
| JUN 24.14 | Discuss the possibility of increasing the honorarium for Search Solutions 2024 (and future Search Solutions) | UK, IF, HL and ALL |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| JUN 24.15 | Share the call for nominations to the KSJ Award on LinkedIn | UK |
| JUN 24.16 | Prepare and submit SFR to support CLEF 2024 | IF |
| JUN 24.17 | Check if Medium has any view limitations for readers. | GD |
| JUN 24.18 | UK to arrange a Doodle for the next meeting in September. IF will find an available meeting room once the meeting date has been set. | UK & IF |
| JUN 24.19 | UK to check with SZ re: the status of BCS file share to share with MP | UK |

Meeting Closed at 18:15