ACM SIG IR Annual Business Meeting 2022: Secretary's Notes

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1   Opening Matters

The 2022 ACM SIG IR Annual Business Meeting took place as a hybrid event during the 45th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval in Madrid, Spain on July 14, 2022. The business meeting was led by the chair of the SIG IR Executive Committee (EC), Vanessa Murdock.

The chair is thanking the conference organizers of SIGIR 2022 for planning this fantastic event. The general chairs are Enrique Amigó, Pablo Castells, Julio Gonzalo. The program chairs are Ben Carterette, Shane Culpepper, Gabriella Kazai. Special thanks is directed to the Student volunteers.

This SIGIR conference was held as a hybrid event, with 1049 registered attendees from 47 countries overall, and 564 attendees on site. Acceptance rates were 20% for full research papers, and 25% across all tracks. For the second time, it was co-located with the ACM International Conference on Theory in Information Retrieval (ICTIR). Several firsts from the previous conferences were continued, such as Perspective, resource, and industry (SIRIP) tracks, presentations of papers from the TOIS journal. For the first time, SIGIR is offering a track for reproducibility papers.

2   Best Paper Awards

The best papers at SIGIR 2022, the co-located ICTIR 2022 conference, and the test-of-time awards were announced at the SIGIR 2022 banquet.

2.1   Best Paper Awards for ICTIR 2022

At ICTIR 2022, the **Best Paper Award** went to *Reaching the End of Unbiasedness: Uncovering Implicit Limitations of Click-Based Learning to Rank* by Harrie Oosterhuis.

The **Best Student/Short Paper Award** was awarded to *Evaluating the Cranfield Paradigm for Conversational Search Systems* by Xiao Fu, Emine Yilmaz and Aldo Lipani.

2.2 Best Paper Awards for SIGIR 2022

At SIGIR, the **Best Paper Award** went to the work *A Non-Factoid Question-Answering Taxonomy* by Valeriia Bolotova, Vladislav Blinov, Falk Scholer, Bruce Croft and Mark Sanderson.

The **Best Paper Honorable Mention** went to *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Green Information Retrieval Research* by Harrisen Scells, Shengyao Zhuang and Guido Zuccon.

The **Best Short Paper Award** was awarded to *Curriculum Learning for Dense Retrieval Distillation* by Hansi Zeng, Hamed Zamani and Vishwa Vinay.

With honorable mention to *Towards Validating Long-Term User Feedbacks in Interactive Recommendation Systems* by Hojoon Lee, Dongyoon Hwang, Kyushik Min and Jaegul Choo.

2.3 SIGIR Test of Time

At SIGIR, the Test of Time Award recognizes research that has had long-lasting influence, including impact on a subarea of information retrieval research, across subareas of information retrieval research, and outside of the information retrieval research community. The winning paper is selected from the set of full papers presented at the main SIGIR conference 10–12 years before.

The 2022 ACM SIGIR **Test of Time Award** went to the SIGIR 2012 paper *Modeling the impact of short- and long-term behavior on search personalization* by Paul Bennett, Ryen White, Wei Chu, Susan Dumais, Peter Bailey, Fedor Borisyuk, Xiaoyuan Cui.[1]

The 2022 ACM SIGIR **Test of Time Honorable Mention** went to the SIGIR 2010 paper on *Uncovering social spammers: social honeypots + machine learning* by Kyumin Lee, James Caverlee, Steve Webb.[2]

The active members of the selection committee were, in alphabetical order: Hannah Bast (chair), Pablo Castells, Yiqun Liu, Alistair Moffat, Berthier Ribeiro-Neto, Tetsuya Sakai, and Emine Yilmaz.

3   SIG IR Executive Committee

Further appreciation is expressed towards the SIG IR volunteers, which are:

Awards Chairs: Hannah Bast, Gianluca DeMartini, and Ryen White

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Chairs: Barbara Poblete, Hussein Suleman, and Suzan Verberne

Women in IR Chair: Nazli Goharian

SIG IR Historian: Donna Harman

Information Directors: Nattiya Kanhabua and Guido Zuccon

SIG IR Forum Editors: Josiane Mothe, Tirthankar Ghosal, and Julián Urbano

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[1] https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2348283.2348312
[2] https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/1835449.1835522

Student Affairs Chair: Jiaxin Mao

Student Travel Grant Chair: Jaime Arguello

Since several roles are nearing the end of their term, we are looking to fill the roles of SIGIR Forum editor and Student Affairs Chair soon. Nominations and self-nominations will be possible; questions can be directed to the executive committee. More details will be announced soon.

The new SIG IR executive committee started its term on July 1st, 2022. We thank the outgoing executive committee, i.e., Ben Carterette (Chair), Tetsuya Sakai (Vice Chair), Claudia Hauff (Secretary), Min Zhang (Treasurer), and Diane Kelley (Past Chair).

The new committee is comprised of Vanessa Murdock (Chair), Ryen White (Vice Chair), Laura Dietz (Secretary), Carsten Eickhoff (Treasurer), and Ben Carterette (Past Chair). The new committee will place particular emphasis on three themes:

- To increase the diversity among attendees and leadership across topical areas as well as ethnicity, gender, and geography.
- To make participation in conferences more accessible to anyone who cannot travel to be there in person. This also requires to improve hybrid conferences with the goal to provide a great experience to all participants.
- To further the field of information retrieval as a FUN(damental) core for human experience ranging from information literacy to societal change. This includes to further IR's interdisciplinary aspects and reach out to complementary research fields.

The SIG IR Executive committee will hold a town hall at a later date to be determined, to hear from the SIG IR community. SIG IR members are welcome to attend, and the meeting will be announced via IRList. Join SIG IR at https://sigir.org/general-information/membership/, and sign up to IRList via https://sigir.org/sig-irlist/. The Executive committee can be reached by email sigir-ec@acm.org, and will also monitor the ACM SIG IR slack instance[3] channel #talk-to-sigir-executive-committee.

4 Treasurer's Report

SIG IR treasurer Carsten Eickhoff presented SIG IR's finances. Overall, the previous treasurer Min Zhang has ensured that our finances are in a healthy state. The available funds fluctuate as sponsored events need to be financially supported and profits are returned. This is especially true for larger conferences. The income is relatively constant since 2017, but expenses have dropped during the pandemic years. In the years before the pandemic, a big part of the yearly expenses were student travel grants (more than USD 200,000 across a number of sponsored conferences). With less travel and with more conferences being held online, there was less spending, but we believe this will return soon to pre-pandemic levels.

There are currently USD 1.36M available in the account to underwrite conferences and support community endeavors (See Figure 1).

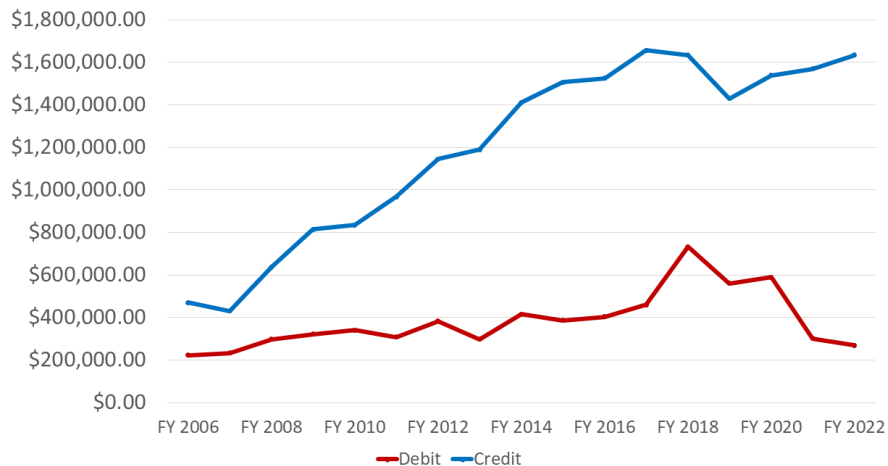[3]acmsigir.slack.com. Get access to slack by emailing Laura Dietz, dietz@cs.unh.edu.

Figure 1: SIG IR's finances over recent years. Debit indicates current expenses such as travel grants and conference underwriting. Credit indicates the available funds reflecting income growth.

4.1 Expenses

The fiscal year 2022 covers the period from July 1st, 2021 till June 30th, 2022.[4] The major contributor to expenses are travel grants. While these were reduced during the pandemic, with USD 125,000 projected for 2022, we expect these expenses to sharply incline now that students are travelling to conferences in-person.

There are several other posts, such as volunteer meetings and travel, costs for online conferences, publication expenses (e.g. proceedings of the SIGIR conference), awards, and special projects (more below). Somewhat new is the post for professional services, which includes the professional rebranding of the SIGIR website.

One of the special projects is the financial support via the "SIG IR & Friends" funding for workshops, local research gatherings, etc. Interested parties can apply for financial support online.[5] For fiscal year 2022, USD 9,000 were issued.

Similarly, SIG IR Chapters can be established whenever there is a strong local base of IR researchers that would benefit from local organization. Interested groups can apply to the ACM to become a local SIG IR Chapter.

Additional special projects are DEI grants to increase the diversity among attendees and funding for DEI and student socials at conferences.

4.2 Income

Several conferences contribute to our budget as income. For the fiscal year 2022, we gained 85,000 USD, which is a muted result as the period was dominated by online conferences. Our publication incomes via the ACM Digital Library are stable at 138,000 USD. Smaller posts are the kick-back

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[4]Numbers being based on projections from March 2022, some conferences have not yet closed their budgets.

[5]SIG IR & Friends: https://sigir.org/general-information/funding-for-sigir-related-events

obtained from sold subscriptions, membership dues from our 850 ACM SIG IR members, and interest on the bank account.

4.3 Conferences co-funded by SIG IR

The ACM SIG IR special interest group has a stake in several related conferences. This includes SIGIR (the conference), CIIR, ICTIR, CIKM (50%, co-funded by SIG WEB), AFIRM (50%, co-funded with SIG KDD), JCDL (34%), and WSDM (25%, co-funded by SIG KDD, SIG WEB, and SIG MOD).

Having a stake in a conference means to both financially support/underwrite it, but also to obtain a share of the profits. Usually the SIGIR conference obtains the highest profits, with CIKM being second.

Overall there is a slight decline in SIG IR memberships, but the conference stakes, chapters, and events funded via SIG IR & Friends is increasing. Feedback about where more (or less) funds should be allocated should be communicated to the treasurer.

5 SIGIR Conferences

Reports from past, future, and potential future conferences are presented.

5.1 SIGIR '21 recap: Virtual/Montreal

Despite (or because) of being virtual SIGIR '21 was attended by 973 participants from 46 countries. This conference was organized by general chairs Fernando Diaz, Chirag Shah, and Thorsten Suel, with program chairs Pablo Castells, Rosie Jones, and Tetsuya Sakai. The conference was run with support from Underline, using Zoom and Gather.Town.

The conference was switched to an online format in the last moment, as the organizers had sincerely hoped to offer an in-person conference. The SIGIR 21 conference has several firsts, including resource papers and perspectives papers, where the latter are designed to discuss topical areas that deserve more attention. An increased amount of DEI efforts were dedicated to financially enabling wide-spread participation, including the provision of family care grants. The first Queer in AI meeting was held at SIGIR '21. The inaugural class of the SIGIR Academy was presented here. It was that for the first time, SIGIR was co-located with ICTIR.

The conference yielded as much surplus as its expenses. About the same amount was obtained from sponsors.

5.2 SIGIR '23: Hybrid/Taipei

The next SIGIR conference will be held in Taipei on July 23-27, 2023. General chairs are Hsin-Hsi Chen, Wei-Jou Duh, and Hen-Hsen Huang. Program chairs will be Makoto P. Kato, Josiane Mothe, and Barbara Poblete.

The conference will be held in the Taipei International Convention Center, and is planned to be operated in hybrid mode (i.e., in-person and virtual). The conference is supported by the Joint

Research Center for AI Technology and All Vista Healthcare, National Taiwan University and the Association for Computational Linguistics and Chinese Language Processing.

5.3   SIGIR '24: Washington

The conference location for 2024 was revealed to be in Washington, DC with General Chairs Sam Han, Hongning Wang, and Grace Yang.

5.4   Bids for SIGIR '25

Bids were encouraged from Europe, the Middle East, or Africa. The following bids were presented:

- Berlin with chairs Carsten Eickhoff, Robert Jaeschke, and Hannah Bast.
- Amsterdam with chairs Jaap Kamps, Claudia Hauff, Suzan Verberne, Faegheh Hasibi, and Maarten de Rijke.
- Padua with chairs Nicola Ferro, Maria Maistro, and Gabriella Pasi.

The bid from Padua was most popular with the audience.

5.5   Sponsored Events

A brief announcement of upcoming sponsored conferences was made.

- ICTIR 2023 co-located with SIGIR in Taipei.
- CIKM 2022 Atlanta.
- CIKM 2023 Berlin.
- CHIIR 2023 in Boston.
- WSDM 2023 in Singapore.

5.6   New Conference: SIGIR Asia-Pacific

A new conference will be started with focus on the Asia-Pacific region. The first conference will be held in Fall of 2023 in Beijing by chairs Alistair Moffat and Yiqun Liu.

6   Awards

6.1   ACM's Official Recognition for SIG IR Members

ACM's most prestigious member grade (*ACM Fellow*) recognizes the top 1% of ACM members for their outstanding accomplishments in computing and information technology and/or outstanding service to ACM and the larger computing community. Recently named ACM Fellows are Evgeniy Gabrilovich, Tie-Yan Liu, Jie Tang, and Ryen White.

New *ACM Distinguished Members* are Yiqun Liu, Don Metzler, and Ingmar Weber. This members' grade recognizes those ACM members with at least 15 years of professional experience

and 5 years of continuous Professional Membership who have achieved significant accomplishments or have made a significant impact on the computing field.

6.2 SIG IR Academy

The newly formed ACM SIG IR Academy honors and recognizes individuals who have made significant, cumulative contributions to the development of the field of IR in research innovation and/or service. The 2022 inductees are: Charles L. A. Clarke, William Hersh, Jian-Yun Nie, Maarten de Rijke, Jaime Teevan, and Justin Zobel.

For the *Class of 2023* nominations are accepted until December 31, 2022. More information can be found at https://sigir.org/awards/sigir-academy/. Nominations and Questions can be sent to sigir-academy-award@acm.org.

6.3 New: ACM SIG IR Early Career Researcher (ECR) Awards

A new award is created to recognize the excellence of our early career members. Eligible awardees must be within seven years of obtaining a doctoral degree. Awards are granted in the following three categories.

Research: To honor single or cumulative research contributions to the field of IR.

Community Engagement: To honor community engagement and professional service to the community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: To honor individuals that are initiating driving, and are supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the community.

The ACM SIG IR ECR awards will be selected by a panel of five committee members. The processes will follow the ACM policy on diversity and inclusion as well as conflict of interest.

Nominations and self-nominations across multiple categories are permitted. The award is open to anyone who is a current SIG IR member and an active participant. Nomination deadline is December 31st, 2022. Details can be found online[6] and will be announced on IRList. Questions should be directed to the ACM SIG IR ECR awards committee chair via sigir-ecr-award@acm.org.

7 Audience Comments and Questions

During the last part of the business meeting the floor was opened to the audience. While several points for discussions were already debated on the SIGIR slack channel, a number of new suggestions were made and questions were raised:

- Food options and restrictions. A friendly request to designate a role to work with local arrangement/catering to convey a range of food restrictions people have and how buffets could be labeled accordingly.

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[6]SIG IR ECR Award Nominations https://sigir.org/awards/sigir-ecr-awards/

- Concerns about COVID 19 spread at conferences. Suggestions for a better communication of COVID sensitivities and to consider health as a DEI factor.
- Perspective papers. Positive comments and applause.
- Presenters missing during Q&A. Frustration was voiced about speakers with pre-recorded videos not being present (for various reasons, including time-zone confusions). There was a long discussion that online presenters may have unknown hardships that make it not possible to connect to a zoom call in real time in their time zone. We should assume good intent and find out what the reasons were so we can address them. It is on the conference organizers to reduce the friction for presenters.
- Pre-recorded videos. Questions were raised about avoiding in-person sessions comprised solely of pre-recorded videos. It is noted that some time-zones make participation difficult. A suggestion was made to collect and share information about which presentations will be pre-recorded.
- Scheduling issues with ICTIR (and other co-located events). Parallel scheduled sessions, forced attendees had to decide between keynotes and technical sessions, and leaving some technical sessions with less than desirable number of attendees. Better synchronization across co-located parallel events is desirable.
- Virtual day. The SIGIR virtual day was held the week before the in-person conference, but not many people attended. The experience should be improved and better integrated into the main event.
- Long-term vs short-term engagement. A discussion about how conferences (unlike journals) are for community building, and how long-term discussions could be further facilitated online. Second screen experiences should not be a lesser kind of engagement, and we should leverage existing online options to build a stronger online/offline integration for the SIG IR community.

Additional discussions on the Slack channel evolve around

- Review Model. Better reviewing guidelines for less frustrating reviews. Rolling Review or Journal-style review.
- What is in scope for IR? Obtaining convergence on which topics are acceptable at IR conferences and communicating this. The goal is to avoid reliance on reviewers on notions but to establish criteria with the input from program chairs.
- Encouraging a consistent manuscript page lengths across conferences.
- Suggestion to establish a self-nomination process for PC organizing positions