Report on SIGIR 2004 Doctoral Consortium

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The Doctoral Consortium was run for the first time as part of the SIGIR 2004 in Sheffield. The purpose of the Consortium is to give Doctoral students a forum, in which to discuss their proposed PhD research with experienced IR researchers and other Doctoral students. An important motivation in establishing this Consortium was to enrich the level of interaction between students and experienced IR researchers, and especially for those students from developing research groups. The Consortium also provides an opportunity for students to establish a supportive community of other Doctoral students at the same stage as themselves.

Student participation was based on a submitted paper, which was reviewed by the Consortium Program Committee (CPC). In this first year of operation, we received 13 submissions, of which 9 were accepted. Student participants study in four countries, and present a broad range of perspectives on our field, and this portends well for the future of IR. The Committee comprised a cross-section of experienced IR researchers, who also cover a broad spectrum of research in the field.

The event took place on the Tutorials Day of the Conference. The format of the day was: short presentations of the papers with discussion in plenary session; detailed discussion between each student and two members of the CPC; and social interaction over lunch and dinner. In the post-event feedback, the student participants said how useful it was to have the undivided attention of two experts in the one-on-two sessions. And, everyone enjoyed the excellent curry available in Sheffield.

The process for submitting, selecting and publishing Consortium papers was as follows. Prospective student attendees submitted a four page technical paper, together with a one page "case for attending" prepared by the student and his/her advisor. Each submission was reviewed by two CPC members, based on technical considerations, and on the perceived benefit of attendance. Abstracts of the accepted papers are included in a fuller report published in the SIGIR Conference Proceedings. In addition, students were encouraged to submit poster or full paper versions of their Consortium papers to the main SIGIR Conference, and some students took advantage of this opportunity for wider dissemination of their work.

The student participants and paper titles were (full abstracts can be found in the SIGIR 2004 Conference Proceedings):

Razvan Stefan Bot Department of Information Systems New Jersey Institute of Technology **Improving Document Representation by Accumulating Relevance Feedback: The Relevance Feedback Accumulation algorithm**	Bicheng Liu School of Computing The Robert Gordon University **Supporting Federated Information Sharing Communities**
Jochen L. Leidner School of Informatics University of Edinburgh **Toponym Resolution in Text: "Which Sheffield is it?"**	Melanie Gnasa Institute of Computer Science III University of Bonn **Sharing Knowledge Online: a Dream or Reality?**
Melanie J. Martin Department of Computer Science New Mexico State University **Reliability and Verification of Natural Language Text on the World Wide Web**	Andrew Trotman Department of Computer Science University of Otago **An Artificial Intelligence Approach to Information Retrieval**
Paul Ogilvie School of Computer Science Carnegie Mellon University **Understanding Combination of Evidence using Generative Probabilistic Models for Information Retrieval**	Yixing Sun School of Computing The Robert Gordon University **Discovering and Representing the Contextual and Narrative Structure of E-books to Support Reading and Comprehension**
Xiaojun Yuan School of Communication Information and Library Studies Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey **Supporting Multiple Information-Seeking Strategies in a Single System Framework**	

individual paper and contribution during the Consortium, were Jochen Leidner (University of Edinburgh) and Paul Oglivie (Carnegie Mellon University)

We are sure that the Doctoral Consortium will become a permanent fixture within the annual SIGIR Conference, and that it will contribute to the development of new researchers in the field, and hence to the growth of the international IR community. The Doctoral Consortium will be offered as part of the SIGIR 2005 Conference in Brazil, and we are hoping for many more submissions.

As Chair, I would like to express my profound thanks to the members of the Consortium Programme Committee for their efforts in reviewing both papers and abstracts, and for participating in the Consortium. They are:

Nick Belkin, *Rutgers U., USA*

Bruce Croft, *U. Massachusetts, USA*

Sue Dumais, *Microsoft Research, Redmond, USA*

Liz Liddy, *Syracuse U., USA*

Yoëlle Maarek, *IBM Research, Israel*

Alistair Moffat, *U. Melbourne, Australia*

Doug Oard, *U. Maryland, USA*

Keith van Rijsbergen, *U. Glasgow, UK*

Steve Robertson, Microsoft Research, Cambridge, UK

John Tait, U. Sunderland, UK