ANNUAL REPORT for SIGIR, July 1999 - June 2000

Susan Dumais, Chair SIGIR

SIGIR again had a busy and fruitful year in 1999-2000, sponsoring or co-sponsoring several successful conferences, and offering a number of new member services. Although we continued to suffer a small decline in membership, the decline was less than the ACM SIG mean, and attendance at sponsored conferences continued to increase.

New officers were installed at the SIGIR'99 Conference in August. The officers are: Susan Dumais, Chair; Susan Gauch, Vice-Chair; Liz Liddy, Secretary, and Jamie Callan, Treasurer. In our continuing effort to make SIGIR a truly international organization, Peter Schaeuble (ETH Zurich, Switzerland) and Ross Wilkinson (CSIRO, Australia) were appointed regional representatives to the SIGIR Executive Committee. The regional representatives are appointed by the executive committee to increase our international representation. SIGIR's Information Officer, Charles Viles (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA), did a fine job in maintaining and expanding the SIGIR home page (http://sigir.org). This has become an important resource for IR researchers and practitioners, and we anticipate that its influence will continue to grow.

In October 1999, ACM held its Program review of SIGIR, a process that happens once every five years to insure that SIGs are continuing to serve their technical community. SIGIR was unanimously renewed as a multi-service SIG. Slides from the Chair's presentation at the meeting are available on the SIGIR web site. In addition, during the past year the Salton Award Committee worked on selecting the sixth recipient of the Gerard Salton Award. This award is SIGIR's highest technical award and *honors significant, sustained and continuing contributions to research in information retrieval.* The award was first presented in 1983 (to Gerard Salton) and every three years starting in 1988. The 2000 award winner is Stephen Robertson. The other recipients of the award are Karen Sparck-Jones (1988), Cyril Cleverdon (1991), William Cooper (1994), and Tefko Saracevic (1997). The 2000 recipient (Steve Robertson) was announced at the SIGIR'2000 Annual Meeting.

The main conference during this period was the Twenty Second Annual ACM SIGIR International Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR), http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/conferences/sigir99/. The 1999 meeting was held in Berkeley, California (USA). Fred Gey (UC Berkeley) served as the General Conference Chair, and Marti Hearst and Richard Tong as Program Co-Chairs. As in the past, this was a quite successful meeting, both intellectually and financially. More than 430 people attended the conference. In addition to the main technical program, there was a strong program of eleven tutorials preceding the meeting with more than 300 units attended, and a varied workshop program following the meeting with more than 180 attendees. Financially the 1999 conference was very successful generating a profit of $60,000 (est). The awards committee selected three submissions for awards -- Best Paper: Jian-Yun Nie, Michel Simard, Pierre Isabelle, Richard Durand (Universite do

Montreal), "*Cross-language information retrieval based on automatic mining of parallel texts from the web*". Best Student Paper Award: Owen de Krester, Alistair Moffat (University of Melbourne), "*Efficient document presentation with a locality-based similarity heuristic*". Best Poster: Michael Witbrock, Vibhu Mittal (Just Research), "*Ultra-summarization: A statistical approach to generating highly condensed non-extractive summaries*". The submissions, attendance and awards all reflect a strong international participation in SIGIR and that is especially gratifying. A growing amount of student travel to SIGIR is supported by a SIGIR budget item and by contributions from the 1998 conference in Melbourne.

SIGIR is also involved in the sponsorship of two other ACM conferences, CIKM and DL. CIKM'99, the 8th International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management, was co-sponsored by SIGIR, SIGMIS, and SIGGROUP (http://www.csee.umbc.edu/cikm/1999/). The 1999 meeting was held in Kansas City, Missouri. Kai Makki and E.K. Park served as General Conference Co-Chairs, and Susan Gauch and Il-Yeol Song served as Program Co-Chairs. CIKM '99 had 229 attendees. Financially, the conference was quite successful, with a surplus of $43,000. Each sponsoring SIG received its share of the surplus. CIKM has a strong focus on databases in combination with information retrieval and management techniques. This year there was good representation of work on web databases and data warehousing techniques. Keynote addresses by Lee Giles (NEC Research) and James Scoggins (NCR Corporation) focused on these two new directions.

DL'99, the Fourth ACM Conference on Digital Libraries, was held in Berkeley, California (http://fox.cs.vt.edu/DL99/). DL'99 was co-sponsored by SIGIR and SIGWEB. DL'99 immediately preceded SIGIR'99 with some shared workshops and tutorials. This pairing of conferences provides a complimentary theoretical and practical perspective on information access and management. Neil Rowe was the General Chair of DL'99, with Ed Fox serving as the Program Chair. Neil stepped in as General chair in December (for an August conference) and did a great job in pulling together a fine technical and social program in an important area. Attendance for the main conference was 281, with 152 attending six tutorials before the conference and 156 attending five workshops after the conference. The conference was also successful financially, with a surplus of $40,000, half of which was returned to SIGIR. The Vannevar Bush Award for Best Paper was presented to: David Bainbridge (University of Waikato), Craig G. Nevill-Manning (Rutgers University), Ian H. Witten, Lloyd A. Smith, and Rodger J. McNab (University of Waikato) for their paper *"Towards a Digital Library of Popular Music"*.

DL'00 was also held this past year and was co-locate with Hypertext in San Antonio, Texas in early June (http://www.dl00.org/). Peter J. Nürnberg and David L. Hicks served as Conference Co-Chairs for both conferences, with Rick Furuta serving as Program Chair. There was a strong program of 23 full papers, 21 short papers, 11 tutorials and 7 workshops. The Vannevar Bush Award for Best Paper was presented to: Joanna Wolfe (University of Texas at Austin) for the paper *"Effects of Annotations on Student Writers"*. Because the conference was just recently completed, there are no final attendance or

financial figures available yet, but by informal accounts it was a successful DL conference.

Two very important changes are in store for the ACM Digital Libraries conference. For the first several years, DL was co-located with an established conference, SIGIR and Hypertext in alternating years. Because of the growing interest and reputation of the conference, beginning in 2001, DL will operate on its own without co-location. For the last several years, the ACM DL Steering Committee worked hard to merge of ACM DL and IEEE ADL conferences, and final merger documents were approved recently by both ACM and IEEE. In 2001, the First ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries will take place in June (http://www.jcdl.org). We look forward to a meeting with even broader appeal, capitalizing on its strengths in research, practice, systems and policy issues surrounding digital libraries. We thank the ACM DL Steering Committee (in particular our SIGIR representative, Nick Belkin) for its very hard and careful work in creating a new, richer DL forum. SIGIR and SIGWEB will continue to be equal co-sponsors of the series, along with IEEE's technical committee on digital libraries (TCDL).

In addition, the three ACM conferences that SIGIR sponsors, we "cooperate" with several other IR-related conferences but have no financial stake in them. These conferences compliment the technical focus of our own conferences, and include work on hypertext, multimedia, Asian languages, etc. As a cooperating society, SIGIR members obtained reduced registration fees at these conferences. This year, SIGIR had "in cooperation" agreements with: ACM:HT'00 (Hypertext), ACM:MM'00 (MultiMedia), ACM:CUU'00 (Conference on Universal Usability), RIAO 2000 (Recherche d'Informations Assistee par Ordinateur), IRAL'00 (IR with Asian Languages), and AH'00 (International Conference on Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-based Systems).

Thanks again are due to the editors of *SIGIR Forum*, Bill Hersh and Fazli Can, who have successfully developed this journal into both a news forum and an important scientific forum. This past year, the Forum moved online for the first time and we will look in ways to use this more timely publication avenue. The online forum is available at http://www.acm.org/sigir/forum/. For the time being, a print version of the Forum will also be continued. During the year Bill Hersh stepped down as Forum editor and was replaced by Mark Sanderson (University of Sheffield). We thank Bill for his many contributions to the Forum and welcome Mark.

SIGIR's Information Officer, Charles Viles (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA), did a fine job expanding the SIGIR home page, adding an archive of the IR-List, and providing support to move the SIGIR Forum online. The SIGIR Web site has become an important resource for IR researchers and practitioners, and we anticipate that its influence will continue to grow.

Although interest in information retrieval is growing and SIGIR-sponsored conferences are seeing steadily increasing attendance, membership continues to slowly decline. Some

new membership services have been developed to help address this issue and to provide better service to our continuing members. We have developed a new Membership Value Plus (MVP) option, which allows SIGIR members to get both the DL and CIKM Proceedings at cost. SIGIR-sponsored conference proceedings will soon be available on the SIGMOD Anthology CDs. This has the two fold advantage of providing added visibility for IR research, and providing database-related content to our members at low cost. We continue to look for other ways to enhance our membership, including a more active publicity campaign, offering new online membership services, and developing stronger ties with related organizations including more joint meetings. Since our problem is common to many ACM SIGs, we also look to them for collaboration in addressing this issue.

SIGIR had a productive and successful year, with important intellectual and social contributions. Our conferences have been remarkably successful in all senses (with especially strong technical content and good international participation), and our financial situation is quite healthy. We will continue to work on ways to improve membership benefits, student and international participation, and relevance to industrial members. We look forward with great anticipation to the next year, and hope to see many new faces, as well as many familiar ones, at upcoming meetings.