SIGIR Annual Report:
July 2005 – June 2006

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Introduction

July 2005 – June 2006 was another busy and productive year for SIGIR. Overall, SIGIR is healthy financially, membership is stable, the SIG has an active group of officers and volunteers, and it continues to develop new initiatives and services.

Membership Dues

Last year SIGIR raised its membership dues for the first time in many years. Membership dues now approximately cover the costs of membership for all member categories except the Proceedings Package, which still loses money. The EC will try to reduce the costs of the JCDL and CIKM proceedings that comprise this package. If necessary, the price of this package will be increased again in two years to cover costs.

Finances

Based on preliminary figures from ACM, SIGIR's finances for the last year can be summarized as:

Income:	477,131	(US$)
Expenses:	515,540	
Net:	-38,409	
Fund balance:	431,489	

Usually the Executive Committee attempts to run a "break even" budget in which SIGIR neither gains nor loses much money. This is the first time in many years that SIGIR has had a significant financial loss. Although the financial results are preliminary and may change, our initial assessment is that the size of the loss was caused by a combination of three factors. First, spending on student travel awards was $10,000 higher than usual, due to the high cost of traveling to Brazil from all of our membership regions. The Executive Committee viewed this as a worthwhile one-time expense, even if it required spending from our fund balance. Second, income from all of our sponsored conferences was about $25K lower than expected, for a variety of reasons: SIGIR 2005 profit was affected by unfavorable currency conversions, JCDL has made no real profit for two years, and CIKM 2005 profit has not yet been reported or credited to SIGIR's account. Finally, the recent dues increase is just beginning to take effect, so the increased income has not yet had a significant effect.

The Executive Committee expects that this large deficit was a one-time event, and that SIGIR will return to "break even" budgets next year.

Overall, SIGIR remains extremely healthy financially. Our conferences are generally profitable, and we have a large fund balance.

Conferences
SIGIR sponsors, co-sponsors and cooperates with other technical groups on several conferences and workshops during the year. The main conference is the annual SIGIR conference. SIGIR also co-sponsors two other ACM conferences, CIKM and JCDL.

SIGIR.
The Twenty Eighth Annual ACM SIGIR International Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval, SIGIR'05, was held in Salvador, Brazil August 15 – July 19, 2005. This was the first time the conference has been held in South America, and only the second time it has been held outside of North America or Europe. Key positions and statistics are summarized below.

General Chairs:	Ricardo Baeza-Yates and Nivio Ziviani.
Program Chairs:	Gary Marchionini, Alistair Moffat, and John Tait.
Technical Content:	71 papers, 53 posters, 12 demonstrations, 7 tutorials, 7 workshops.
Keynote Speakers:	*The Portinari Project - IR helps Art and Culture* by João Candido Portinari; *Blogging: A New Computer Eyes, Innovation and Identities Projection* by Fernando Flores; and *Challenges in Running a Commercial Search Engine* by Amit Singhal.
Best Paper:	*Learning to Estimate Query Difficulty (Including Applications to Missing Content Detection and Distributed Information Retrieval)* by Elad Yom-Tov, Shai Fine, David Carmel, and Adam Darlow.
Best Student Paper:	*A Markov Random Field Model for Term Dependencies* by Donald Metzler and Bruce Croft.
Community Support:	Doctoral forum, Mentoring program, Student travel grants
Attendance:	341 for the conference and workshops.
Finances:	The conference made a profit of US$ 12,561.

Boston was selected as the site of the 2009 SIGIR conference.

CIKM
The Fourteenth International Conference on Information and Knowledge, CIKM'05, was held in Bremen, Germany, October 31-November 5, 2005. This was the first time that the conference has been held outside of North America. Key positions and statistics are summarized below.

General Chair:	Otthein Herzog
Program Chairs:	Hans-Jörg Schek, Norbert Fuhr, Abdur Chowdhury, Wilfried Teiken
Technical Content:	77 papers, 86 posters, 6 tutorials, 7 workshops
Keynote Speakers:	*From Bits and Bytes to Information and Knowledge* by Thomas Hofmann; *Emerging Data Management Systems: Close-Up and Personal* by Yannis Ioannidis; and *Leonardo's Laptop: Human Needs and the New Computing Technologies* by Ben Shneiderman
Community Support:	Student travel grants
Attendance:	Not yet reported.

Finances: Not yet reported.

In 2006 SIGWEB will join SIGIR as a co-sponsor of the CIKM conference.

JCDL.

The Fifth Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries, JCDL'05, was held in Denver, Colorado, June 7-11, 2005. The 2005 conference was co-sponsored by ACM (SIGIR and SIGWEB) and IEEE (TCDL). Key positions and statistics are summarized below.

General Chair: Mary Marlino
Program Chairs: Tamara Sumner and Frank Shipman
Technical Content: 59 papers, 41 posters, 15 demonstrations, 5 tutorials, 5 workshops
Keynote Speakers: Deanna Marcum, Guy (Bud) Tribble, and Hector Garcia-Molina
Vannevar Bush Award: *Developing practical automatic metadata assignment and evaluation tools for internet resources* by Gordon W. Paynter
Best Student Paper: *Meaningful presentations of photo libraries: rationale and applications of bi-level radial quantum layouts* by Jack Kustanowitz and Ben Shneiderman
Best Int'l Paper: *Digital libraries' support for the user's 'information journey'* by Anne Adams and Ann Blandford
Community Support: Doctoral forum
Attendance: 295.
Finances: The conference made a profit of US$ 384. SIGIR's share was US$ 127.

The Sixth Joint ACM/IEEE Conference on Digital Libraries, JCDL'06, was held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, June 11-15, 2006. The 2006 conference was co-sponsored by ACM (SIGIR and SIGWEB) and IEEE (TCDL).   Key positions and statistics are summarized below.

General Chair: Gary Marchionini
Program Chairs: Michael Nelson and Cathy Marshall
Technical Content: 57 papers, 37 posters, 13 demonstrations, 8 tutorials, 5 workshops
Keynote Speakers: *Getting Books Online: Practices and Strategies* by Daniel Clancy, David Ferriero, and Daniel Greenstein; and *Open Information: Redaction, Restriction, and Removal* by Jonathan Zittrain.
Vannevar Bush Award: *Metadata Aggregation and "Automated Digital Libraries:" A Retrospective on the NSDL Experience* by Carl Lagoze, Dean Krafft, Tim Cornwell, Naomi Dushay, Dean Ecktrom, and John Saylor.
Best Student Paper: *Building EcoPod: A Mobile Tool for Community Based Biodiversity Collection* by YuanYuan Yu, Jeannie Stamberger, Aswath Manoharan, and Andreas Paepcke.
Community Support: Doctoral forum
Attendance: Not yet reported.
Finances: Not yet reported.

In Cooperation

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, adaptive systems, etc. As a cooperating society, SIGIR members obtained reduced registration fees and

other member benefits at these conferences. This past year, SIGIR had "in cooperation" agreements with: CORIA 2005 (COnférence en Recherche Information et Applications), ECIR 2006 (European Conference on Information Retrieval), and SPIRE 2005 (String Processing and Information Retrieval).

Publications
The SIGIR Web site is maintained by SIGIR's Information Officer, Mounia Lalmas. It provides timely information about SIGIR-sponsored conferences, "in cooperation" conferences, and SIGIR activities, as well as Business Meeting slides, the annual report, and other information about how SIGIR operates. In addition to providing information about the organization, the SIGIR web site also hosts the SIGIR Forum and SIG-IRList sites.

The SIGIR Forum is co-edited by Peter Anick and Ian Ruthven. The Forum is published three times a year. The Special issue is the SIGIR Proceedings; the December and June issues cover IR conferences, workshops and symposia, as well as in depth essays based on the Salton Award Lecture and keynote addresses, and current research trends. The Forum appears both online (http://www.acm.org/sigir/forum/) and in paper. 2006 will be the last year that the Special issue is provided on paper; beginning in 2007 it will be provided in CD or DVD format.

The SIG-IRList is a SIGIR-sponsored electronic newsletter, edited by Raman Chandrasekar (http://www.acm.org/sigir/sigirlist/). The SIG-IRList provides a regular newsletter of IR information and nicely compliments the archival publication SIGIR Forum. The SIG-IRList contains job announcements, notices of publications, conferences, workshops, calls for participation, and project announcements.

Membership and Membership Programs
After growing for five years, the number of SIGIR members declined last year from 1,363 to 1,238 – a 9% drop. The reasons for this steep decline are not clear. The Executive Committee has several hypotheses, some benign, some less benign, which will be investigated during the next year.[1]

SIGIR-sponsored conferences continue to have solid attendance. Attendance at the SIGIR conference continues to increase; CIKM and JCDL have stable attendance.

Some new membership services have been developed to attract new members and to provide better service to our continuing members. We continue to look for other ways to enhance our membership benefits, including a more active publicity campaign, offering new online membership services, and developing stronger ties with related organizations including more joint meetings.

SIGIR offers two Member Plus packages. These programs offer the basic benefits of SIGIR membership, including the SIGIR Forum and SIGIR Proceedings, plus additional benefits. The SIGIR Proceedings Package includes paper copies of the CIKM and JCDL conference proceedings. The SIGIR Digital Symposium Collection (DiSC) package includes a DVD

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[1] After this report was written, it became clear that most of the drop was due to a failure to enroll non-member attendees at the SIGIR 2005 conference for their free one-year membership in SIGIR. This error was due to miscommunication between ACM, the SIGIR 2005 organizers, and the SIGIR Chair. It has been corrected.

containing proceedings from a wide range of IR- and DB-related conferences (including SIGIR, CIKM, JCDL, SIGMOD, and SIGKDD), and newsletters from a wide range of ACM SIGs (including SIGIR and SIGMOD). Interest in the Proceedings Package stabilized at 157 this year (1% growth). In its first full year, the DiSC package attracted 57 members.

From a financial perspective, SIGIR loses money on the Proceedings Package, even after the recent dues increase. The EC is working to reduce the program's costs, and encouraging members to transition to the new DiSC package. If the Proceedings Package program is not at breakeven in two years, we will increase costs again. SIGIR breaks even on the DiSC package. This package is cheaper and more comprehensive than the Proceedings Package, so we expect it to be popular, and perhaps eventually to replace the Proceedings Package.

Awards
The Awards Committee, chaired by Alistair Moffat, identifies distinguished members of the IR community that are eligible for ACM awards. The IR community has not historically been award-oriented, and it is not our goal to change this tradition in a major way. However, the Executive Committee believes that some recognition of the intellectual leaders of the IR community is both deserved and healthy for the field.

Note that to be eligible for an ACM award, one must be a member of ACM, usually for several (e.g., five) years. Some prominent members of the IR field don't meet this requirement, thus their contributions must be recognized in other ways.

Summary
SIGIR had a productive and successful year, with important intellectual and social contributions. Our conferences have been successful in all senses (with strong technical content and good international participation), and our financial situation is quite healthy. Perhaps most importantly, we continue to have very strong participation in ACM SIGIR by the international IR community, especially in a willingness to serve as volunteers for conference and SIG-related activities. The Executive Committee thanks the IR community for its help during the last year.