Call for Bids: ECIR 2010

The BCS Information Retrieval Specialist Group (IRSG) has been running a successful annual conference for young researchers in Information Retrieval since 1979. Originally the event was started as a BCS-IRSG Colloquium for Information Retrieval, but now has developed into a European conference to reflect the increased popularity and importance of the event. Currently the BCS-IRSG European Conference in Information Retrieval Research (ECIR) is alternated between Britain (even years) and continental Europe (odd years).

The BCS IRSG Committee is interested in hearing from bidders for organizing ECIR 2010 in Britain. The next ECIR is to be held in and Grenoble (2009). Recent ECIR events have been held in Glasgow, UK (2008), Rome, Italy (2007), London, UK (2006), Santiago de Compostela, Spain (2005); Sunderland, UK (2004); Pisa, (2003); and Glasgow, UK, (2002).

Interested parties should submit their proposal by email to the IRSG Secretary (and copy to irsgchair@bcs.org.uk <mailto:irsgchair@bcs.org.uk>)

Deadline for ECIR 2010 proposals: Midnight UTC Thursday 31st July 2008

Guidelines and Conditions of Bids to Host the BCS-IRSG European Conference in Information Retrieval Research (ECIR)

The BCS IRSG Committee (referred to as IRSG) will evaluate all bids in terms of their quality. In addition, the Committee will also assess the professionalism of the bid documentation and the proposers' compliance with IRSG and ECIR philosophy and vision.

In order to make submission and evaluation more consistent bids are expected not exceed 12 pages in length, excluding appendices and supporting documentation.

The IRSG may wish to discuss aspects of the bid with the proposers prior to making a decision on the success of the bid, and so principal contact should be nominated.

Anyone interested in bidding is welcome to talk informally with the Chair or Secretary prior to the deadline date for bids. Any such discussion will be reported back to the IRSG.

The IRSG will normally meet to review proposals and make its decision within six weeks of the submission date. BCS IRSG Committee members whose

institutions are among the candidates will not participate in the decision making process. The IRSG will vote to decide between competing bids and IRSG's decision is final.

The following points should be addressed in the bid to host ECIR.

(1) Location, venue, timing, etc

1.1 Location

The location should be easily accessible for people attending from across Europe and elsewhere. Good air, rail and road links are essential.

The bid should include a short description of the locality and any remarkable or outstanding features that would make it particularly attractive for potential delegates.

1.2 Venue

Proposers should demonstrate that their host institution has appropriate conference facilities for the different sessions during ECIR. Specifically, addressing the following points (where appropriate):

- Single Track Sessions (including conference opening/closing, keynotes, panels, etc): Lecture Theatre to accommodate up to 200 delegates
- Parallel Sessions: Lecture Theatre/Room to accommodate up to 75-100 delegates for 2 or 3 streams (depending on the programme).
- Poster Sessions: Suitable and conducive area for display and interaction for approximately 30-50 posters.
- Workshops/Tutorials: Class rooms to accommodate up to 30-50 delegates, and up to four rooms (depending on programme)
- Breaks and Lunch: An adjacent area for coffee breaks and a separate dining area nearby are also desirable.
- Sponsors Display: An area for sponsors to display and promote their organization.

1.3 Length

The conference should be run over a course of three days. An additional day is encouraged for running workshop/tutorials or other IR related events (such as an Industry Day, as done at ECIR 2006 and ECIR 2008).

1.4 Timing

Traditionally, ECIR is held in the Spring, near to the Easter weekend. It is also important that the timing does not conflict with other important meetings. In particular, proposers should check to make sure that the proposed dates for the conference do not clash with other major information retrieval events.

1.5 Social Events

A range of social events has become a common feature of ECIR, including a more formal Conference Dinner. Proposers should include suggestions on a range of such events - with various price options - for consideration and

approval (e.g. discos, sightseeing visits, unusual venues for evening meals). The cost of these activities should be reasonable and should not unduly affect the overall conference fee. It is often possible to arrange drink receptions and such like using corporate sponsorships.

1.6 Registrations

The registration process should be as easy as possible for delegates to use. Ideally, registrations would be performed electronically via the internet and payments processed online (via debt or credit cards) i.e. a point and click registration. In the cases, where this is not possible, then registrations which take payment via credit/debit card payments is desirable.

1.7 Catering

To ensure that delegates can interact as much as possible during the conference it is important to ensure that lunches for delegates can be provided on site or near by the conference venue. If this is not possible, the average cost of meals should be provided along with a list of establishments (takeaways, diners, restaurants) nearby where delegates can go for lunch. It is also desirable to be able to cater for delegates with particular dietary requirements (providing options for vegetarians, vegans, etc).

1.8 Additional Workshop/Tutorials

Proposers are encouraged to organize an extra day to run ECIR Workshops/ Tutorials or an Industry Day.

For workshops, we strongly encourage the call for workshops to be designed to attract workshops that are interactive and aim to produce an outcome based on this interaction (for example, a report or paper based on the work done at the workshop). Also, to ensure that the workshop organizers have sufficient time, it is advisable to set the acceptance/notification date to be mid October.

1.9 Accommodation for Delegates

Proposers should demonstrate that they have suitable accommodation for delegates (e.g. en-suite rooms in student halls and/or local hotels), for a meeting of normally three days duration. The BCS IRSG Committee is keen to encourage the participation of students and new researchers in information retrieval (IR) to the Conference. Thus potential hosts must also demonstrate access to low budget accommodation, such as youth hostels or inexpensive student halls.

1.10 Conference Web Site

Proposers are expected to set up, organize and maintain a web site for the conference, providing all necessary information for contributors and potential delegates. Responsibility for obtaining an appropriate domain name rests with the host.

For information, the conference web sites for other ECIR events are:

- http://ecir2008.dcs.gla.ac.uk/
- http://ecir2007.fub.it/,
- http://ecir2006.soi.city.ac.uk/.

(2) Proposers

The bid should include details on how the proposers intend to organize of the conference and nominate who will be responsible for each of the main roles (i.e. General Chair(s), Programme Chair(s), Workshop/Poster Chair, Local Organization Chair and other organizers).

2.1 Motivation

The bid should also include a short statement about why the proposers would like to organize ECIR.

2.2 Track record of proposers

Normally we would expect proposers to have some prior experience of organizing conferences or other major events, although these do not have to be connected with information retrieval. Evidence of such activity should be provided. However, new organisers should not be put off by this stipulation and are encouraged to submit proposals providing prior experience of organizing other events such as workshops, etc.

In addition, it is normally expected that proposers should have some connection with the BCS IRSG such as being a member of the BCS or BCS-IRSG, or regularly attending IRSG events, such as ECIR, Search Solutions, FDIA, etc. Continuity is particularly important for ECIR; and proposers that have participated at previous conferences are favoured.

2.3 Support from host institution

A letter of support from the host institution(s) should accompany the bid. Letters of support should include in what capacity they support the bid.

(3) Budget preparation and costings

Proposers must produce a budget for the conference (using the excel template provided). A list of expected costs (fixed and per head should be included) along with expected income and sponsorship and provision for student grants. The budget should include provisions for the costs of organizers and volunteers, invited speakers and the IRSG chair (or nominated representative).

Registration fees for students should be kept as low as possible in order to encourage young researchers to participate. Incentives for early registration is advisable.

Please note, that it is expected that the conference should, at the least, break even; but should aim to make a surplus (where this could be used to provide additional student grants, accommodate any unexpected costs, and to generate a small profit).

3.1 Discounts

Members of BCS/BCS-IRSG and other supporting bodies normally receive a 10-15% discount on the registration. It is reasonable to assume that most delegates will be members of an affiliated body. Currently, the IRSG have arrangements with several supporting bodies: ACM-SIGIR and European-IRSG groups (ARIA, etc), where members of such bodies are eligible for the discount.

3.2 Profit sharing model and underwriting by IRSG

The proposer's should provide a cut-off date whereby if, by that date, either the host institution or BCS IRSG Committee did not feel that either enough submissions or registrations had been received, then the conference would be cancelled. This is to ensure that the loss to the host institution and the Group would be minimal. This cut off date should be just after authors are required to register by, and thus break even point should correspond to roughly the number of submissions expected to be accepted (Papers 30, Short Papers 15, Posters 30, Total 75).

The proposer's should also include the percentage on profit sharing. Normally, in the event of a profit, then up to 40% may be retained by the host institution, and the remaining 60-100% would be donated to IRSG. It should be noted that previous hosts have typically donated any profit in its entirety back to the IRSG. In the event of CEPIS providing sponsorship to the conference, then the IRSG will donate a proportion of the profit-share back to CEPIS.

In the event that the conference results in a loss, the IRSG will underwrite 50% of the total loss, up to the value of £2,000.

(4) Promotion, publicity and schedule of activities

Proposers should provide a draft programme for the conference; a schedule of activities, indicating key dates; and their plans for publicizing the conference. Key dates that should be included (suggested dates are provided in brackets):
- Website Launch (asap after notification)
- Paper Submission Deadline (early October) and notification (late November)
- Poster Submission Deadline (mid October) and notification (late November)
- If applicable, Workshop/Tutorial Submission Deadlines (early September) and notification (late October))
- Open Registration (Early January)
- Author Registration (Early February)
- Revised Budget (Early Februrary)
- Conference Dates (Late March/Early April)

(5) Conference Programme

Proposers should specify arrangements for the Conference Programme Committee's operation, anonymous reviewing process, and the mechanism

for producing a final list of accepted papers, including whether or not a face-to-face programme committee will be organized, or some other means of resolving reviewing conflicts and moderating reviewing scores. It is also essential for all chairs to keep in mind that the event they are organising has traditionally had a strong student focus and this should be preserved in future. In this light, it is important that the programme be topical and interesting. Please see The proceedings of the reviewing workshop for notes on using sub-groups within the PC (the currently suggested PC organization).

Generally:
- All papers and posters are to be refereed through a blind peer review.
- Accepted papers and poster abstracts are normally published in the Lecture Notes in Computer Science series. The proceedings are distributed to all delegates at the Conference.
- Submissions must be in English, which is the official language of the conference.
- The paper submission deadline should be set to early October and notification around mid November
- Also, the BCS-IRSG has drafted a number of guidelines for ECIR papers. Proposers should make themselves aware of these guidelines which are available from http://irsg.bcs.org/proceedings/ECIR_Draft_Guidelines.pdf

It is also expected that the Programme Chair will liaise with the IRSG Committee to ensure general consistency in approach and procedures from year to year, in accordance with the overall vision of the ECIR conferences.

Example Topics

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- IR models, techniques, and algorithms
- Searching, browsing, meta-searching, data fusion, filtering, and indexing
- Text and content classification, mining, extraction, and summarisation
- Topic detection, and tracking
- Personalised, collaborative, recommender, user-adaptive IR
- Improvements on existing and new IR models
- Compression, performance, optimisation
- Users, society, and IR
- User modelling, user studies, user interaction in IR systems
- Novel user interfaces for IR systems
- Visualisation and presentation of queries, search results, and content
- Information management
- Cross-language and multi-language IR
- IR applications
- Web IR
- Mobile and ubiquitous IR
- Digital libraries
- IR system architectures
- Distributed and Parallel
- Mobile
- Multimodal
- Open, interoperable, and flexible
- Content representation, and processing
- IR and structured content e.g. XML based
- Unstructured content
- Meta information and structures
- Test and evaluation methods for IR systems
- Test collections and bench marking
- User-oriented and user-centred test and evaluation
- Multimedia and cross-media IR
- Speech and IR
- Image and video IR
- Digital music, radio, and TV

5.1 Call for Papers

A draft call for papers with envisaged deadlines should be appended; where any particular themes or special topics should be highlighted as other areas or special topics are encouraged.

5.2 Reviewing Forms

Proposers should include a draft of the questions paper reviewers will be asked and what factors will play a part in the ranking and selection of papers.

(6) BCS IRSG Annual General Meeting [For U.K. Bids only].

As ECIR represents the premier annual meeting of Group members, it is essential that a timeslot for the Annual General Meeting of the Group be built into the programme, and scheduled at a convenient time to encourage all members to attend. Based on past experience, an hour should be an adequate amount of time for this.

Notes and Conditions on Organization

Philosophy

ECIR should strive to:
- Deliver high quality scientific works that present cutting edge information retrieval research
- Promote and encourage student and post-doctoral research

Responsibilities of Organizers

The organizers are appointed to organize ECIR on behalf of the IRSG. The main roles in the organization of the conference are assigned to the General Chair(s) and the Programme Chair(s) and consequently the main responsibility of the organization of conference lie with these organizers.

The main duties performed by the chairs are listed below, but are not limited to the following.
In particular General chair(s) will usually be responsible for:
- local arrangements, by appointing if needed local chair (s) to deal with them,
- business plans including registrations
- publicity and visibility by maintaining an up-to-date event web site
- soliciting sponsorships
- arranging students grants.
- Coordinating organizers
- Arranging the Annual General Meeting

Programme chair(s) will be expected to deal with the following essential steps:
- recruiting the programme committee
- preparation of call for paper/posters
- management of paper/poster submissions and reviewing,

- running the program committee meeting and selecting the list of accepted papers (in conjunction with the Programme Committee)
- finalising of presentation schedule,
- publishing arrangement,
- arranging special awards for best paper and best student paper.
- Selecting Keynote Speakers (in conjunction with the General Chair)

It has always being common practice by the IRSG to provide the greatest freedom to General and Programme chairs. In the past, this has proved the best solution in terms of effort and creativity the organizers of ECIR have devoted to the organisation. However, in the event of a serious breakdown in the organization of the conference the IRSG reserve the right to intervene and resolution any issues.

Further, since the organizers are appointed to run the conference on behalf of the BCS-IRSG committee, in the event of serious breakdown in communication between organizers, the IRSG reserves the right to appoint new chairs, if necessary.

Budget

It is expected that the initial budget will be adhered to in principle. Organizers will be asked to produce a revised budget, once authors have registered (by late January). After the conference the organizers will be asked for a final financial account after the conference. The IRSG should be notified if there are any major changes to the budget during the organization, such as huge increases in costs or large increases to registration fees.

Reporting

During the organization of the conference there will be times when the IRSG will ask you to provide an update on the committee (such as submission of papers, number of registrations, accepted papers, etc). At the end of the conference, the organizers should write a report of the conference for Informer.

Types of Support for the Conference

IRSG/ECIR collaborates with various external organizations, such as Universities, Companies, Charities, and this support is provided in a number of different ways. In order to properly acknowledge the different types of contribution from the different organizations, the following reference should be used from 2008 onwards:

- "in cooperation with": denotes the collaboration between the IRSG and the host institution(s) which are financial responsible for the event. The profit sharing agreement is set up as described in the bid document.
- "is supported by": denotes a collaboration between specialist groups. A reciprocal agreement between the groups is in place, where IRSG members received discounts to event(s) organized by another SG, and vice versa. There is no financial links between organizations.

- "sponsored by": denotes when a company, institute, etc, donates resources or sponsorship to the conference.

Example Uses
- The BCS-IRSG ECIR 2002 was held in cooperation with the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, and Paisley and was sponsored by Memex Technology.
- The BCS-IRSG ECIR 2009 is supported by ACM SIGIR and E-IRSG.

Reciprocal Agreements with IRSG/ECIR
Currently, the IRSG has several reciprocal agreements with other IR specialist groups. These are:
- ACM-SIGIR / The annual international conference in Information Retrieval Research and Development (SIGIR), and,
- European IRSG (E-IRSG), such as:
  - ARIA
  - WGI