

IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting

Location: Aachen, Germany

Date: 25 June 2017

Time: The meeting convened at 12:50pm (GMT+2); the meeting adjourned at 5:11pm.

Meeting Chair: Rüdiger Urbanke

Minutes taken by: Stark Draper

Meeting Attendees: Jeff Andrews*, Alexander Barg, Andrew Barron, Matthieu Bloch, Helmut Bölcskei, Suhas Diggavi, Alex Dimakis, Stark Draper, Mi-0.2 (o)cskei, Su,dreMark DStas :a589cm

- 1) **President's Report:** Rüdiger presented the President's report. Rüdiger started by proposing a new approach to running ITSoc BoG meetings going forward, one that is being prototyped in this meeting. In order to free up time for discussion of forward-looking topics, which at this meeting would center on the proposals for a new journal and a new magazine, many issues were dealt with by email prior to the meeting. Thus, Rüdiger would try to move through the standard reports quickly, with an aim of finishing all within two hours. He requested the BoG to provide feedback on the success of the approach and for further suggestions. Rüdiger then discussed the new approach to distributing the T-IT table of contents via email with one objective being to increase click rate. He updated the BoG on the Shannon movie. While some graphics and historic shooting at Princeton to be done, the target is to have the movie completed by the end of 2017.
- 2) **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Daniela Tuninetti presented the treasurer's report. She focused on the 2018 budget, shortly due to the IEEE. The IEEE Board of Directors approved a target goal of 2.5% operational surplus (excluding new initiatives) for IEEE overall. As noted in previous meetings, ITSoc's challenge is that there has been a continuing decline in revenue from Transactions in the past few years (which the IEEE predicts will continue) and, in the same period, the BoG has aimed to reduce income from conferences. Therefore unless we can, e.g., increase the click-rate to increase the income coming from the Transactions, there will be a need to increase revenue from conferences. She presented two proposals to balance the budget in the near term: (i) reduce subsidies to schools and (ii) increase the conference surplus targets. In 2018 year we can further increase revenue by eliminating the subsidy provided to those that receive the printed version of the Transaction. It is not clear whether this subsidy can be eliminated even more quickly, but Daniela's proposal is to get there as soon as possible. A question was raised about the level of editing of the Transactions, which a couple years back was reduced to "moderate". There is no lower-level of editing, so no further savings are possible there.

Motion: "Change the pricing of the paper copy of the Transition to be cost neutral as soon as possible." Daniela made the motion. Aylin Yener seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Daniela next discussed new initiatives. She suggested ITSoc continue into 2018 some of the new initiatives that started in 2017 as a continuation of the outreach activities for the 2016 Shannon Centennial in 2016. These could continue to be supported under the "3% rule" is needed. These might include (i) further educational videos, (ii) continued development of the children's book, and (iii) an additional subsidy to purchase copies of the Shannon biography that attendees will receive at ISIT. There was a discussion by the BoG on how schools might be reconfigured or augmented to be classified as new initiatives. For example, schools could include undergraduates and/or K-12 outreach, new aspects that would also provide the graduate students attending the opportunity to contribute to outreach.

Motion: "Move for an additional \$45k USD to be spent on video clips, \$15k USD more for the speaker series, \$20k USD for the children's book on information theory, \$20k USD for K-12 and undergraduate outreach, all under the for 3% rule, pending IEEE approval." The motion passed unanimously.

3) **Online Committee:**

and discussed how the activities will be archived. He summarized current outreach via email lists, including distributing the table-of-contents of each month's Transactions.

- 4) **Pilot Video Project:** On behalf of Matthieu Bloch, Michelle Effros gave an update on the pilot video project. The two pilot videos are almost complete. One is on network coding, the other on space-time coding. Both videos were developed in partnership with Brit Cruise, an experienced developer of online educational videos. The target audience was high school students. There is a call out to the community for proposals to develop additional introductory videos. There is budgeting for three more videos. Proposals should be sent to

This year Michelle is reviewing the documents to clean up these aspects. The BoG will receive updated text for the Bylaws prior to the October 2016 meeting.

10) Nominations to Presidential chain: Rüdiger next requested nominations to the presidential chain of offices. He first asked for nominations for the second vice president: (i) Emanuele Viterbo was nominated by Elza Erkip and seconded by Prakash Narayan; (ii) Helmut Bölcskei was nominated by Emina Soljanin and seconded by Pierre Moulin. Rüdiger next asked for nominations for the first vice president: Emina Soljanin was nominated by Alon Orlitsky and seconded by Christina Fragouli. Rüdiger then requested for nominations for president: Michelle Effros was nominated by Elza Erkip and seconded by Suhas Diggavi. The election will be conducted by email.

11) Awards Committee: Awards Committee Chair Elza Erkip discussed the Best Paper award. A report was distributed to the BoG a couple weeks prior to the meeting. She talked through the nti l-0.2(ro) T Q q 1 02.2 (l) -0S(ri) -0.2() 0.2 (c (a) -0.2(Ef) 17.i) -0.2((o) -0.2 (r) 0. (g) -C

community, reduce sub-to-pub times, and how to improve impact factor and click rates on IEEEXplore. The Group backed the following recent steps: (i) increase the number of associate editors (AEs) to 60, and (ii) try to accelerate inevitable decisions. Regarding the latter, Prakash discussed the process for fast rejection of out-of-scope or technically deficient submissions. For out-of-scope, fast rejection is handled by the EE. To reject based on technical deficiency the assigned AE discusses the article with the EiC and the EE; all three must concur on a decision to reject.

Prakash then discussed some new initiatives backed by the Ad-Hoc Group intended to enhance the appeal of the Transactions, and also to increase the impact factor and clicks on IEEEXplore. These can be categorized into “Quickies” that are already in motion and “Slowies” which will be initiated beginning in 2018. The quickies include distribution of each

new journal could relieve some pressure on the Transactions. Financially, such a journal could provide a new and significant long term stream of revenue.

Some logistics were also reviewed. First, Rüdiger reviewed the approval process, which is the same as for the magazine discussed above. In contrast to the magazine, the special topics journal is envisioned as an electronic-only journal. It would publish about 4 to 6 special issues a year, and there would most likely be page limits. Rudiger reviewed preliminary financial projections as of year four. He discussed the proposed governance structure: an EiC and steering committee plus a set of 8-10 senior editors who would supervise the special issues. A few ideas on possible initial topics were presented.

Motion: “ITSoc should submit a letter of intent for a special topics journal to IEEE,” and

Motion: “Authorize reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses for in-person presentations at the necessary TAB meetings.”

The two motions were moved by Vincent Poor and seconded by Ubli Mitra. Following discussion, the motions passed with 17 votes in favor, 7 abstentions, and 1 opposed.

Following Rüdiger's presentation an extended discussion took place. A initial question raised concerned technical papers submitted to the new journal that in current circumstances would rather have been submitted to the Transactions, and the impact on the latter. The Committee's hope is that, while certainly some papers would appear in the new journal that would have been submitted to the Transactions, many more papers would eventually be attracted to the new journal that would never have be submitted to the Transactions. The special topics issues would provide the kernel for additional follow-on submissions to the Transactions from outside the information theory community, and for initial involvement of non-ITSoc members with the ITSoc community, through the mechanism of guest editorship of the new journal.

Building on this last point followed a discussion of creating a new journal that could serve as a home to, e.g., NIPS or ICML (the International Conference on Machine Learning) papers that currently don't have a great venue for journal publication. In particular, our society might provide a good venue for a subset of learning theory papers that match our society's culture, perspective and tools. Further, it was felt that, in addition to attracting contribution in such research areas, this initiative will only be really successful if contributions are two-way; if we members of ITSoc can contribute aspects of our tools and culture to the problems and culture of those areas. A question was then raised at how dire the situation really is, whether these proposals on new publications are too conservative, since they look a lot like what other societies are doing. In the past a proposal for a journal on “Information” had been floated, perhaps something like that would be a bold step.

Other points of discussion raised in the BoG discussion included the following. First was a

Rüdiger