

## IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors meeting minutes

ISIT, St. Petersburg, Russia, 07.30.2011, 12-6pm

Natasha Devroye

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**Present:** Giuseppe Caire, Muriel Medard, Bruce Hajek, Gerhard Kramer, Natasha Devroye, Frank Kschischang, Alex Vardy, Emanuele Viterbo, Prakash Narayan, Paul Siegel, Emina Soljanin, Michelle Ersoy, Rolf Johannesson, Li Ping, Nick Laneman, Adriaan Van Wijngaarden, Ezio Biglieri, Helmut Bölcskei, Anthony



ScholarOne system.

- Administrative Assistant for ScholarOne is Alison Larkin

- new AE appointments were listed and voted on. Jean-Claude Bel ore for coding theory: approved. Olgica Milenkovic for coding theory: approved. Robert Fischer for Communications: approved. Bertrand Hochwald for Communications: approved. Angel Lozano for Communications: approved. Francois Baccelli for Communication Networks: approved. Ronald Cramer for Complexity and Cryptography: approved. Ueli Maurer for Complexity and Cryptography: approved. Adam Smith for Complexity and Cryptography: approved. Alexander Holevo for Quantum Information Theory: approved. Michael Elad for Signal Processing: approved. Giuseppe Durisi for Publications Editor: approved. Alex Vardy asked whether the AE could be approved in one go rather than each individually? A few years ago, the BoG wanted to discuss each nominated AE individually, and it has remained like this since then.

- the area of cryptography, in relation to the Transactions on IT was discussed. It was asked why there are so many new editors in this area if it is not the central focus of the Transactions. It was responded that there are an overwhelming number of papers submitted in this area. This topic was explicitly discussed at the editorial board meeting, and it was decided that only papers that have a clear connection with IT, or are truly exceptional will be accepted. The editorial policy concerning cryptography and complexity reads: "Submissions in the editorial area of cryptography will be accepted for review only if they relate to information and/or coding theory or are clearly outstanding contributions to cryptography." Leading cryptographers were consulted by the editorial board and it was agreed that the Transactions on IT is not perceived as the top journal to which to submit papers in cryptography. To address this perception, leading researchers in cryptography were elected as AE in cryptography. Muriel Medard stated that while we certainly want to keep papers that have a strong connection to IT, if we have so many editors in cryptography, it is like soliciting in this area. Helmut Bölcskei stated that the IT Transactions does not want to discourage submissions, and wants to maintain its reputation as an intellectually strong and open society. Helmut hesitates to remove the area of cryptography altogether { this is too strong of a message. Andy Loeliger agrees that that too drastic, and historically there is a strong connection between IT and cryptography. The IT Transactions is hoping to bring quality back up using the new AE which should attract excellent papers.

- the general submission / publication statistics were discussed. The initially alarming 1500 suspected submissions this year was a hiccup in Scholar One; the actual submissions is slightly down. The publication queue is still quite significant but is being reduced by publishing additional pages this year. To further decrease the queue, there will be no special issues in 2012. The average time from submission to first decision stands at 4 months, down from 8 months. The projected page count for 2011 is 8000 pages, up from the 3000 pages in 2000. The accept to print delay was increasing, but is coming down now, so the queue is indeed emptying. Giuseppe Caire warned about emptying out the queue completely. IEEE takes about 10 weeks to process a paper, so the minimal delay is around 3 months.

- 30% of the papers were fast rejects, significantly more than in the past. A small percentage of these rejects came from Helmut directly, the rest in collaboration with the appropriate AE, which gave the authors concrete reasons for the fast reject. It was noted that some authors were quite grateful for the fast turnaround and suggestions (usually out of scope or language issues).

editors meeting, it became clear that the publication model for the IT Transactions will change dramatically in the next 5 years. As such, Helmut Bolcskei proposed forming an Ad Hoc Committee to investigate options for the IT Transactions. Abbas El Gamal stated that some societies have several journals, might this be considered? Michelle Eros stated that it is unclear how making more journals would impact the society since all journals appear to be going online, and there is relatively little distinction between online journals. Moving to electronic only will not change the finances drastically, as it is the editing cost that is costly, not the printing cost. If length of papers is a problem, and # of pages is the main issue, one possibility would be to consider papers that relegate technical details to online. The appendices would be reviewed but not necessarily edited to cut costs. Concerning the editing costs, it was noted that most authors carefully write, edit and submit their papers in latex, and that the IEEE editors then re-write everything in XML, which requires the authors to again carefully proofread the IEEE proof. A general feeling that

- outlined committee members
- outlined the procedure for the IT paper award, where it was noted that more participation and paper recommendations are needed from the publications committee. Muriel Medard suggests including the following "best practice" in the Officers' notes: putting all papers on a website, making one report per paper by committee members, which are again put online.
- non BoG and nominated authors were asked to leave the room.
- Motion: to accept the Awards Committee's report for the Best Paper award for 2011 was made. It was unanimously approved.
- Motions: several were made concerning the best paper award. It was finally decided that the 2011 IT Transactions Best Paper Award would be made jointly to two papers:
  - the joint IT/Comsoc paper award had 6 papers under consideration, mostly nominated by the IT Society. Comsoc should be generating more, higher quality nominations; this should be taken up with the Award Committee (or equivalent) chair of the Comsoc. Muriel Medard again recommended the "best practice" of creating a website for all papers, and assigning these papers to committee members to write a report.

**8. Gerhard Kramer presented the Membership and chapter committee report:**

- the chapter of the year award was given to the Spain Section chapter this year.
- Ezio Biglieri spoke about European School of Information Theory: there was a record attendance of 70 (received over 100 requests), and the organizers received very positive feedback from participants (4.35/5.0).

- Motion: to approve Elza Erkip and Lars Rasmussen as IEEE ITSOC Conference Committee chairs. This motion was approved.

- Tony Ephremides reported that the last registration figure for ISIT 2011 was 780 participants. Financially, ISIT 2011 appears to be a success.

- future ISITs to be held in Cambridge 2012, Istanbul 2013, and Hawaii 2014 are all on track.

12. Michelle Eros presented a report on "Supporting Community Research: A Case Study". The Computing Research Association (CRA) and the Computing Community Consortium (CCC) have been highly successful in marketing computer science, in particular to the NSF, DARPA and various other governmental funding agencies. Whether and how the ITSOC could interact with these associations, or better market information theory (not confined to US organizations, though this was the case study examined and presented) was discussed. **ACTION:** Alex Vardy suggested that the ITSOC president form an ad hoc committee on this topic, that is not too US-centric.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21pm.