The SIGIR 2005 Workshop Program

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The SIGIR 2005 workshop program included seven workshops that were competitively selected from among eight proposals. Organizers of SIGIR 2004 workshops had reported that tight timelines for publicizing workshops and reviewing submissions had resulted in some workshop participants not being notified that a workshop paper had been accepted until the deadline for registration at regular prices had passed. The submission date for SIGIR 2005 workshop proposals was therefore advanced to occur one week after full papers were due. Expedited reviews of all workshop proposals were performed by a committee consisting of recent workshops chairs, augmented where necessary with additional reviewers to ensure that expertise in the topic of each workshop proposal was available. The review results were summarized in an email to the organizing committee and area chairs, and decisions were made by the PC chairs after an email discussion. Workshop organizers were notified of their selection shortly after the poster deadline, about 5 weeks earlier than in previous years. As a result, workshop organizers were generally able to solicit and review submissions sufficiently rapidly to permit workshop participants to qualify for discounted early registration rates.

The selected workshops included five that built on successful workshop program in prior years, and workshops on stylistic analysis and lexical cohesion that were new to SIGIR. The workshops were well subscribed, with a total of 149 participants registering. That works out to about 44% of the total paid registration for the main conference. A substantial fraction of this registration reflects workshop presenters who were not also presenting in other venues (papers, posters, demos, or tutorials). The workshops program therefore contributes significantly to the vibrancy and viability of the main conference each year by attracting participants who otherwise might otherwise not have reason to attend.

Several participants remarked on the strong emphasis on interaction among the participants that was evident in this year's workshop program. Workshop organizers used poster sessions, demo sessions, and breakout rooms to foster small group discussions, they augmented presentations with panel discussions, and they selected seating layouts and scheduling options that maximized interaction opportunities. Some specifics are described in the papers describing individual workshops in this volume.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to two groups without whim the workshops program simply would not have happened. The first is the creative and hard working workshop organizers that started with a vision and turned it into reality in just six short months. They did a remarkable job! The other indispensable element is, of course, the local arrangements staff, and most especially Nivio Ziviani. Never have I worked with a more professional an capable group!