

**IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting  
Prospect House, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ USA, March 17, 2004**

Mehul Motani

**Attendees:** Anthony Ephremides, Dave Forney, Hideki Imai, Ralf Koetter, Muriel Médard, Urbashi Mitra, Mehul Motani, David L. Neuhoff, Vincent Poor, Radha Poovendran, Bixio Rimoldi, Paul Siegel, Sergio Verdu, Jack Wolf.

The meeting was called to order at 13:20 by Society President Hideki Imai. The members of the Board were welcomed and introduced themselves.

1. The President welcomed the board members present, including six new members.
2. The agenda was approved and distributed.
3. The action items from the previous Board meeting in Allerton on October 1, 2003 were reviewed. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with minor amendments.
4. The President presented his report by presenting, including items from the IEEE TAG Meeting.

The President reviewed the message from the IEEE President, Arthur Winston.

The President reported that the finances of the Society are in good order but the IEEE is still keeping the Society in the 2004 Watchlist.

The President reported on the decline in 2003 membership, 13.5% for the IT Society and 5.6% for IEEE overall.

The President then discussed the issue of open access to IEEE publications. Currently, IEEE does not support open access, but there are numerous benefits to open access. In addition, the Sabo bill (in Congress) would mandate open access to publications that result from US government supported research.

→**Action Item** The matter of open access to publications will be further discussed at the next meeting in Chicago.

The president reported that the Society is aiming to get more deeply involved in new related technologies and is considering the possibility of cooperation outside IEEE for new technology areas. One candidate area is Cryptology, which is in the scope of the Society's interests.

The President reported on a possible collaboration with the International Association of Cryptologic Researchers (IACR) in the form of a joint workshop with IACR.

→**Action Item** The President will discuss the matter of collaboration with IACR further at the next meeting in Chicago.

The President discussed an invitation from the Sensors Council for IT Society representation. Anthony Ephremides agreed to represent the Society in the Sensors Council.

The President encouraged all members to participate in the Call for Nominations for the IT Society Distinguished Service Award, meant to honor outstanding leadership and exceptional service to the Society.

The President reported on the potential of proposing new IEEE initiatives. New initiatives can have funding levels of \$50K and greater, be single or multi-year efforts, and require a formal proposal.

5. Muriel Médard presented the Treasurer's report. The Society's net worth was reviewed. It was noted that the final number for year 2003 were not yet available.

It was noted with sadness that the Treasurer for the 2003 Paris IT Workshop has passed away. There is uncertainty in what will happen and in what timeframe. The possibility of IEEE fines was mentioned.

The final numbers for ISIT 2003 are not yet available.

Muriel Médard reported briefly on membership noting that the Society has 37% Student membership while IEEE has 62%.

6. The IT Transactions Editor-in-Chief gave an update on the Society Transactions, noting that submissions continue to grow.

The Board unanimously approved the following Associate Editor appointments: Peter L. Barlett.

The Board unanimously approved inviting Katherine Perry and Nela Rybowicz to the next ISIT in Chicago.

Ralf Koetter and Muriel Médard discussed a special issue with the ACM/IEEE Transactions on Networking on Network Coding. There was some concern about the benefits to the Society but there was general support for this initiative.

Paul Seigel gave a demonstration of Pareja, a web-based paper submission and tracking system developed by Publications Editor Kevin Quirk and his colleagues. There was a subsequent discussion of another paper submission system called EDAS.

→**Action Item** The Board requested Paul Seigel to compare EDAS and Pareja and report at the next meeting.

7. The activities of the IT Society Publications Committee, headed by John Anderson, were then discussed.

Ralf Koetter talked about the editorial process that publications undergo as part of publication in the Society Transactions. It was noted that some papers have been in the system for 3-4 years.

Several suggestions to improve the situation included: (a) The Society should clearly state its editorial policies explicitly, (b) Institute a penalty system, and (c) Hold an annual editorial meeting at which papers are discussed, thus putting in place some sort of deadline.

→**Action Item** The matter of the editorial process for Society publications is to be further discussed at the next meeting in Chicago.

8. Ms. Cecilia Jankowski, representing the IEEE, gave an update on the IEEE and OFAC. In summary, the U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) had placed restrictions on the IEEE publishing process with respect to manuscripts from authors from embargoed countries. The update focused on what IEEE was doing to resolve this situation.

After the presentation, the Board discussed the matter. There was some concern that it was too late to do anything. Ideas for action included: (a) The Society should offer a symbolic gesture and (b) The Society should write a personal letter to the Iranian members and other affected members of the IEEE.

After deliberation, the President requested Dave Forney to draft a statement clarifying the IT Society position on this situation. The resolution is reproduced below:

The Board of Governors of the IEEE Information Theory Society, recognizing the difficult position into which the IEEE has been put by its interpretation of U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) regulations embargoing services to residents of Iran and other countries, as well as by subsequent rulings requested from OFAC, nonetheless:

1. Expresses its extreme dismay at the operation of the IEEE embargo and its effects on the IEEE's reputation as an international scientific society;
2. Condemns the application of embargo regulations to scientific exchange and publishing as contrary to the fundamental values of our society;
3. Encourages the IEEE to stand up for universal principles of open scientific interchange and cooperation;
4. Expresses its profound hope that the current negotiations between IEEE and OFAC will soon result in the full restoration of the status quo ante; and
5. Urges that all possible measures be taken in the interim to minimize damage to members, to the IEEE, and to its societies.

Shortly after the meeting, the U.S. lifted the restrictions on the IEEE. Specifically, OFAC ruled on 2 April that the IEEE's publishing process is exempt from OFAC regulations and licensing requirements for scholarly papers submitted by authors from Cuba, Iran, Libya, and Sudan.

It was agreed that the IT Society resolution should still be included in its present form in the minutes of our March meeting as reflecting the sense of the meeting at that time. However, further efforts to publicize this resolution, e.g., by putting it on our Web site, were deemed no longer to be necessary.

9. David Neuhoff gave an update of membership development and discussed the 13% decline in membership. It was questioned how much of the decrease was due to the IEEE mistake in stating Society membership fees last year.

Ways of attracting members were then discussed. Suggestions to attract fresh PhDs include (a) Best thesis prize, (b) Mixers at conferences, (c) Best Student paper award, (d) Panel at ISIT, and (e) Publishing thesis abstracts in IT Society Newsletter.

It was also suggested to use the Society Transactions as a centerpiece. The Transactions could include more tutorial articles. The Transactions/Newsletter could also contain a news section.

Anthony Ephremides suggested to offer tutorials to sister society conferences. For key topics, it was suggested to get outside researchers involved.

It was suggested to take a survey to poll former members why they did not renew. This could be in the form of a letter or electronic survey.

David Forney suggested the need for a tutorials editor.

10. Jack Wolf related his experience at an international conference of the Operations Research Society. The OR Society gives an award each year for the Best PhD Dissertation. The thesis is nominated by a thesis advisor and a committee selects and invites a subset of the authors to the annual conference. At a special session, the candidates give an oral presentation and the committee selects a winner.

The Board discussed adopting a similar method to award a best thesis for our Society.

The President appointed a task force to look into setting up a Outstanding PhD Dissertation award. The members include Jack Wolf, David Neuhoff, Steven McLaughlin (as Awards Chair), and the Program Chairs of the relevant ISIT.

11. The Awards Committee report was presented. The committee has received 13 nominations for the IT Society Paper award and 8 nominations for the Joint Comsoc/IT Society best paper award.

Regarding IEEE wide awards, the Awards committee is in the process of producing nominations. It was reported that nominations for the Hamming Medal are good.

12. The Nominations Subcommittee report was presented. It was noted that the nominations subcommittee assembled three subcommittees in 2004, namely the Shannon Award Selection Subcommittee, the Distinguished Service Award Selection Subcommittee, and the Awards Subcommittee.

13. Vincent Poor was nominated as the next Transactions Editor-in-Chief by the Nominations Committee and the nomination was unanimously supported by the Board. The matter will be finalized at the next Board meeting in Chicago.

14. Bixio Rimoldi discussed matters related to Symposia and Workshops.

- (a) ISIT 2004 in Chicago: 928 papers submitted, 700 people. The Friday reception was cancelled to accommodate more sessions.
- (b) ISIT 2005 in Adelaide: Everything is fine.
- (c) ISIT 2006 in Seattle: All meetings to be on the same floor and hotel rates further reduced.
- (d) ISIT 2007 expected to be in Salzburg, Martin Bossert to liaison.
- (e) ISIT 2008 to be in Toronto, Canada, Frank Kschischang to liaison.

- (f) ITW 2004 in San Antonio: Sessions have been identified, and the registration fee is expected to be less than \$350.
  - (g) ITW 2005 in New Zealand: Aug/Sept timeframe.
  - (h) There are no IT Workshops in 2006. The need for more workshops was noted. Bixio Rimoldi will send an email to solicit new ITWs.
15. The Board unanimously approved technical co-sponsorship of the WiOpt Workshop.
  16. It was noted that Urbashi Mitra (Society Information Officer) has compiled a document outlining all officers' responsibilities.
  17. It was announced that the second BOG 2004 meeting will be held in conjunction with ISIT on 27 June 2004 in Chicago, USA. The third 2004 BOG meeting will be held at ISITA on 11 October 2004 in Parma, Italy.
  18. The meeting was adjourned at 17:00.