

IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting

Palácio da Bolsa, Porto, Portugal, May 4, 2008

João Barros

Attendees: Behnaam Aazhang, João Barros, Ezio Biglieri, Daniel Costello, Michelle Effros, Anthony Ephremides, Dave Forney, Andrea Goldsmith, Tor Helleseth, Gerhard Kramer, J. Nicholas Laneman, Hans-Andrea Loeliger, Muriel Médard, David L. Neuhoff, Bixio Rimoldi, Anant Sahai, Shlomo Shamai, Amin Shokrollahi, Aylin Yener.

The meeting was called to order at 14:00 by Society President G. David Forney, who welcomed the members of the Board.

1. Board members were encouraged to look at the agenda and other materials online at the Society development server.
2. By consent, the Board unanimously approved the agenda of the meeting.
3. By consent, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the previous meeting (Allerton, Monticello IL, September 26, 2007).
4. By consent, the Board approved technical co-sponsorships for the following conferences:
 - 2009 Workshop on Network Coding, Theory, and Applications (NetCod 2009),
 - International Conference on Information-Theoretic Security,
 - XII International Symposium on Problems of Redundancy in Information and Control Systems.
5. The President presented his report and miscellaneous announcements.

The President noted that the Society is in very good financial shape, with surpluses that are beyond expectation.

The President thanked Bixio Rimoldi for his contributions as President of the Society, and Andrea Goldsmith for attending the forthcoming TAB meetings.

6. The Board members expressed their condolences to the Society's precious collaborator Nela Rybowicz on the death of her husband, and sent her their heartfelt sympathy.
7. Ezio Biglieri presented the report of the Editor-in-Chief.

An Author Gateway will be introduced by IEEE in 2008. The goal is to provide a means for an author to follow the status of a paper. A plagiarism detection tool is also planned.

An Ad Hoc Committee approved by IEEE TAB in 2006 has set the goal of a mean submission-to-publication time of one year for 80% of papers.

The Editor-in-Chief described the status of the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory. The mean submission-to-publication time was 64 weeks in 2006 and 2007, whereas the median was 86 weeks. The Board discussed ways of improving timeliness. Michelle

Effros noted that different Associate Editors and Editor-in-Chiefs have different ways of approaching the review process. Muriel Médard suggested assigning a staff person to usher the papers from submission to publication, as is done by other Societies. The Editor-in-Chief mentioned that he plans to work on a best-practices document.

8. Ezio Biglieri presented the following motion:

1. There will be no more Correspondence section in the Transactions.
2. No submission in the Correspondence category will be accepted as soon as the new policy is posted on the IT society web page and mentioned in the Transactions, and the appropriate changes are made in the Pareja submission procedure (this should take about three months after BoG approval). The remaining submission categories will be denoted: Paper; Correction; Other.
3. As of January 2009 (by that time, most of the Correspondence items in the editorial pipeline should already have been printed), the Correspondence section will disappear from the Transactions, and all manuscripts (except Corrections, and possibly Others) will have the same size and pagination.
4. While we accept a diverse range of papers in terms of scope and length, we do expect that papers' length will be proportional to their scope.

The Board approved the motion unanimously.

9. Ezio Biglieri presented a second motion:

Starting in 2008, the Annual Index of the Transactions will not appear in print. Only an electronic version will be generated, to appear in IEEE Xplore and on the web site of the Society. The triennial index will be discontinued.

The Board approved the motion unanimously.

10. Regarding self-plagiarism policies, the Editor-in-Chief suggested waiting for a year to see the impact of the elimination of Correspondence items before implementing stricter rules.
11. Dan Costello presented the conference committee's report. ITW 2007 Bergen, ISIT 2007 Nice and ITW 2007 Lake Tahoe are closing successfully. The following conferences are on track:

- ITW 2008 Porto
- ISIT 2008 Toronto
- ISIT 2009 Seoul
- ISIT 2011 St. Petersburg

ISIT 2009 organizers were not able to register the domain name isit2009.org, and suggest that a solution be found for the domain name of future ISITs. Nicholas Laneman pointed out that the problem will be solved automatically when ISITs are hosted on the IT web site.

Anthony Ephremides will visit St. Petersburg to continue preparation for ISIT 2011.

12. Anthony Ephremides presented a proposal to hold a ITW in 2009 in Volos, Greece during June 10-12, 2009, to be devoted to Networking and Information Theory. The General Co-chairs will be Bruce Hajek and Leandros Tassiulas. Venkat Anantharam and Yannis Kontoyannis will be the Technical Program Committee Co-chairs.

Daniel Costello presented a motion to approve this proposal. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

13. Ezio Biglieri presented a proposal to hold a second ITW in 2009 in Taormina, Sicily during October 11-16, 2009. The General Co-chairs would be Ezio Biglieri and Emanuele Viterbo. The Technical Program Committee Co-chairs would be Dan Costello and Alex Grant.

Some members of the Board expressed concerns that the registration fee may be too high.

A final proposal will be presented at the next Board meeting.

14. Behnaam Aazhang presented a proposal to hold ISIT 2010 in Austin, Texas (June 12-18, 2010), with General Co-Chairs Costas N. Georghiades and Behnaam Aazhang, and Technical Program Co-Chairs Robert Heath, Krishna Narayanan, and Michael Gastpar. Dan Costello presented a motion to approve this proposal. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

15. Muriel Médard presented a proposal for a concerted effort from our Society to enhance women's participation in a way that is inclusive and beneficial to all members of the Society. This effort will be led by Bob Gray, Muriel Médard and any others who are interested. The proposal, which was motivated by a request by IEEE for the Society to contribute to the Women in Engineering program of the IEEE, included a request of an initial \$3000 from the Society for such efforts. The proposal was approved unanimously by the Board.

16. The President reported on the financial status of the Society. Due mainly to large revenues from IEEE Xplore, the Society currently has a large surplus. The President discussed various methods that the Society could use to reduce or eliminate this surplus.

The Treasurer presented a strategic view of the 2008 budget. There will be approximately 560K available for spending this year. About 100K should be viewed as a structural surplus that can be spent on a program that is likely to be ongoing. The Treasurer recommended that the Board decide first what the net result should be before deciding how to spend the surplus.

Muriel Médard suggested that some investment be made in improving the submission-to-publication time, e.g., by using dedicated staff (perhaps part-time). Andrea Goldsmith proposed measures to increase membership. Nicholas Laneman noted the initiatives of the theoretical computer science community to advocate for funding support for research projects.

The President presented a motion to

- (a) Freeze all dues and fees at their present levels— i.e., do not raise member fees, fees for member print copies, or nonmember subscription fees.

- (b) Change our guidance to conferences to allow them to budget on a breakeven basis.
- (c) Increase level of Society expenses.

The Board approved the motion unanimously.

Concrete proposals will be discussed in Toronto.

17. Andrea Goldsmith presented the report of the Awards Committee. Three awards were discussed: the IT Paper Award, the Joint IT/Comsoc Paper Award (decision will be made next week), and the IT Student Paper Award (the decision is to be made soon). One of the issues to be considered is whether a paper can get both prizes (IT and Joint). A recommendation has been made to ComSoc to extend the award window to two years. The Bylaws require that the publication committee submit 9 nominations, which has not been done in the past. Andrea Goldsmith will ask for inputs, and possibly suggest a bylaws change.

The IEEE Awards Board has recently decided to recommend discontinuing the Baker Award for the most outstanding paper in any IEEE publication in a given year on the grounds that finding the right criteria and the right people for the awards committee is too hard, despite interest expressed by IT and several other societies in funding and staffing this award. Andrea Goldsmith proposed to convey the Society's disappointment in this outcome at the IEEE TAB meeting in June.

18. Aylin Yener presented the report of the Student Committee. Special events have been arranged at CISS 2008 (round table event for students only) and ISIT 2008 (round table research and panel discussion, both at lunch time). The students will receive free T-shirts at the panel event at ISIT 2008. New initiatives include (a) moving the Student Committee web site to a content-based system and (b) increasing the number of volunteers. The preparation for the Summer School on Information Theory are well under way, with over 150 applicants (more than twice what was predicted). Consequently the budget has had to be revised.

Aylin Yener presented a motion for an additional \$10K from the society to cover School expenses and provide travel grants for attendees. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

19. The President reported on an IT Society proposal for an endowment by the widow of Michel Goutmann to be combined with a matching fund by the Society for a Goutmann-Servetto travel grant for the School. Mrs. Goutmann declined this proposal in favor of a proposal from the Signal Processing Society for a student paper award honoring Dr. Goutmann.
20. Daniel Costello presented the report of the Fellow Committee. The Committee has addressed the following questions from the officers:
 - (a) Are we getting enough Fellow nominations? If not, what can we do to improve?
 - (b) Some concern has been voiced that it seems to be harder to become a Fellow via the IT Society than via some other societies. Is there any hard evidence for or against this proposition? If so, is there anything we can do about it?

The number of nominations has dropped, in line with the decline in Society membership. The Chair believes that the Society is probably not getting enough Fellow nominations, and suggests making an announcement in the newsletter. The Board discussed whether we should be more proactive with respect to Fellow nominations. Andrea Goldsmith urged that the Society should improve its support of the career advancement of its members.

Daniel Costello will make more specific suggestions at the next meeting.

21. The Online Editor, Nicholas Laneman, presented the report of the Web Committee. The committee decided to change developers, and the project is now moving at a satisfactory pace.
22. There was no new business.
23. The next Board meeting will be held in Toronto, Canada, on July 6, 2008.
24. The meeting was adjourned at 18:40.