

Minutes of the 2018 SIRA Annual Conference

Date: Friday November 16, 2018, 14:15-16:15

Place: University of Bern, Main Building

Participants: Eric Dubuis (ED), Martin Glinz (MG), Philippe Cudre-Mauroux (PCM), Matthias Hauswirth (MH), Peter Kropf (PK), Jim Larus (JL), Oscar Nierstrasz (ON), Christian F. Tschudin (CFT), Siegfried Handschuh (SH)

Guest: Edith Graf-Litscher (EGL) -- left earlier

Keeper of minutes: Siegfried Handschuh

Agenda

1. Welcome and setup
2. Report on activities, communications
3. SIRA fees 2019
4. Approvals (financial report of 2017, discharge of the board, budget 2019)
5. Elections (SIRA board, SIRA president)
6. Date for 2019 conference
7. ParIDigi membership of SIRA
8. Future directions for SIRA (ask delegates in the invitation to prepare and bring ideas)
9. AOB

1. Welcome and setup

The president welcomes the participants. The vote of UZH is represented by MG. The vote of USI is represented by MH. SH agrees to keep the minutes.

Decision: The minutes of the 2017 Annual Conference are approved. Upon request by the president, the participants unanimously decide to move agenda item 7 ahead and treat it right after the welcome. With this modification, the agenda is approved.

1a. ParIDigi membership of SIRA (was item 7 on the agenda)

Ms. Edith Graf-Litscher, Member of the National Council and vice-president of ParIDigi, gives a presentation on ParIDigi (in German).

- Members: 50 MPs
- Topics: OSS; Bitcoin, Open Government, Netzneutralität, Open Access, Open Content, Open Government Data, Open Internet

Q&A (mixed in English and German):

Informatikinfrastruktur für Lehre und Forschung

EGL: Was braucht die Schweiz bzgl. Weiterbildung in der Digitalisierung?

Im Seco stossen wir auf Widerstand, so nach dem Motto, es läuft ja schon alles.

MG: Parldigi could support us in that kind of topic (Bildung und Forschung)

EGL: arbeitet mit Hanna Muralt (ehemals Adjunktin im Bundesamt für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1991-2005 Vizekanzerin der Eidgenossenschaft) zusammen, setzt sich stark für eLearning ein.

MH: was können sie konkret für uns tun?

EGL: im Kontakt mit Bundesämtern oder über Vorstoss ins Parlament ein Thema ins Rollen bringen. Wir brauchen Sie, weil SIRA näher dran ist. Sagen Sie uns, wo Handlungsbedarf ist. Parldigi ist breit abgestützt. Der Unterschied zu ePower ist, ePower ist Wirtschaftsbetrieben.

Braucht der Bund ein Cyber-Risikocenter? Ist die Stimme der Wissenschaft stark genug in dieser Diskussion?

EGL: Bitte bringen Sie ihre Themen ein. Muss ein Thema sein, dass im Parlament und Parteipolitisch eine Breite hat(1/4)

MG: Open Publications, Urheberrechtsgesetz, publication on website should still be allowed... That is very important for us. And totally in line with the policy of SNSF.

Patent issues? In Europe there are no patents for software.

EGL: Urheberrecht polarisiert gewaltig. Gewaltige Fronten, die zusammenkommen. Urheberrechtsrevision ist bereits in der Kommission, direkt mit den Mitgliedern sprechen.

MG: we need you as door opener.

EGL leaves the meeting, as she has to be back in Bundeshaus for a hearing.

2. Report on activities

- New SIRA-SI contract (see minutes of the 2017 SIRA conference) has eventually been signed in April 2018 and became active as of January 1, 2018.
- Representation of SIRA in SI board: So far by MG and ON, newly by MG and MH, provided that they will be elected/re-elected today (see item 5 below).
- Membership administration: currently done with Google spreadsheets that are sent to members once a year for updating. MG will investigate a better solution with the SI treasurer.
- New SIRA webmaster & mailing list moderator sought – no volunteers so far. Maybe SIRA needs to offer payment.
- SIRA Events: On May 4, 2018 we had a SIRA event at EPFL on Startups, organized by Babak Falsafi (EPFL) and Avi Bernstein (UZH). We had an excellent program and really good speakers. Unfortunately, the attendance was way lower than the quality of presentations. Future events: Christine Legner (UniL) and Giovanna Di Marzo Serugendo (UniGE) have agreed to organize an event on funding opportunities in 2019.
- State of SI. SI is in all sorts of trouble, organizationally and financially. SI is running out of money. The ECDL sub-license contract (which is a major source of revenue for SI) needs to be re-negotiated, but it is currently unclear with which partner. Currently, SI is concentrating on surviving. SIRA will not be killed if SI should go bankrupt.

In SI, there are two initiatives for certifying for continuous education. One is 3L Informatik (owned with 50:50 shares by SI and swissICT) which is going to offer a certificate called SI Professional. Applicants submit a structured CV which is analyzed. Earned degrees as well as course certificates are valued with a certain number of points. Points are systematically devalued over time with a function. To achieve certification, the candidate needs a certain number of points. Certificates are valid for three years. To guarantee a minimum level of competence when applying for the certificate for the first time, a multiple-choice test must be passed. 3L Informatik currently develops a partially automated CV assessment scheme and the multiple-choice test. First certifications are planned for 2019. More information is available at 3L-Informatik.ch or SI-Professional.ch.

About a year earlier than 3L Informatik, Simon Moser (who is a member of the SI Board) has launched a certification scheme called FSIE (Förderverein Schweizer Informatik Experten /

Swiss IT Experts; www.fsie.ch). FSIE aims at certifying experts in certain sub-fields of Informatics, such as engineering, operations, quality, security or user experience. FSIE is not officially endorsed by SI, but two members of the SI FSIE Board are also on the SI Board.

- Informatics Europe. An organization similar to SIRA on a European level. Bertrand Meyer drafted the idea after the CRA, the American Computing Research Association. Informatics Europe is still growing. Many departments in Switzerland are members of informatics Europe. They publish interesting reports, for example, about the situation of education and European universities or ethical issues of AI and machine learning. Currently, Informatics Europe tries to establish links to national organizations such as SIRA.
- Student statistics. MG has not found time to drive this topic. He has not resigned yet. We still have a position in the budget to revive this. Don't lose the hope.

3. SIRA fees 2019

The SIRA Board proposes not to change the membership fees. We have 120 CHF flat per active professor of the active departments. (CHF 36 to SIRA, CHF 50 to SI, CHF 14 to joint SI-SIRA R&E fund, CHF 20 flat fee for SIG membership). For emeriti, the SIRA membership is free, while SIRA pays CHF 40 per emeritus to SI for their SI membership. This might result in a loss in 2019, but SIRA has over 200 K CHF in assets. In the future, SIRA might be forced to charge a fee also for emeriti.

Decision: The proposed fees are unanimously approved.

4. Approvals

Financial report of 2017

	Budget 2017	Actual 2017
Income	CHF 15'900	CHF 19'210.00
Expenses		
Parl Digi	CHF 6'000	CHF 6'000.00
At discretion of the board	CHF 2500	CHF 138.75
Surplus / Loss	CHF 7'400	CHF 13'071.25

Assets per December 31, 2017: CHF 215'182.33

Decision: The report is unanimously approved.

Estimated outcome for 2018

Information only, no decision.

	Budget 2018	Estimate 2018
Income	CHF 8'160	CHF 12'426.00
Expenses	CHF 8'000	CHF 9'939.65
Surplus / Loss	CHF 160	CHF 2'486.35

Discharge of the Board

Decision: 5 in favor, none against, and 4 abstentions (by board members).

Budget 2019

Income

- Membership fees CHF 12'000

Expenses

- Membership in ParlDigi CHF 6'000
- SIRA event 2019 CHF 1'000
- Other measures (at discretion of the board) CHF 6'000
- Miscellaneous (at discretion of the board) CHF 1'000

Surplus / deficit CHF -2'000

The departments should take care of their emeriti on the list so that we do not pay membership fees to SI for emeriti who do no longer want to be members.

Decision: The budget is unanimously approved.

5. Elections

The terms of the president and all board members is ending this year.

Election of the SIRA Board

The current board members Eric Dubuis, Reinhard Jung, James Larus are running for re-election (for a two-year term). Avi Bernstein and Oscar Nierstrasz are stepping down. The president thanks Avi (in absentia) and Oscar for having served on the SIRA board for many years.

New candidates are Siegfried Handschuh (UniSG) and Matthias Hauswirth. No further nominations have been made; so the candidate list is closed. The new candidates briefly introduce themselves.

Decision: Voting for all candidates together is unanimously approved.

Voting result: All five candidates (Eric Dubuis, Siegfried Handschuh, Matthias Hauswirth, Reinhard Jung, James Larus) are elected or re-elected unanimously. They all accept their election.

Election of the SIRA President

CFT acts as election supervisor. MG runs for re-election. No further nominations have been made; so the candidate list is closed.

Voting result: Martin Glinz is re-elected for a second term with 8 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention. He accepts his election.

6. Date for the 2019 conference

- Suggestion: week 46 (Nov 11-15 ,2019) or week 47 (Nov 18-22, 2019)
- Preferred time slot is 14-16
- Again in Bern
- MG will organize a doodle-poll for determining the actual date.

7. ParlDigi membership of SIRA (continuation of 1a)

- Urheberrecht is something to follow up. Bildungspolitische Ziele is another topic that could be followed up with Matthias Stürmer.

- The ROI is low. (It is a bit like the Swiss army, we do not actually need them) But if we abolish it, it would be much more complicated to build it up, when we need it.

Decision: SIRA will continue its ParIDigi membership (with an annual fee of CHF 6'000) in 2019 and beyond.

8. Brainstorming, future directions for SIRA

Discussion starter slide:

- What do we want SIRA to be? How active shall SIRA be?
- Which services shall SIRA offer?
- How can SIRA help foster the exchange of experience among SIRA members?
- What should SIRA do on a regular basis?
- Which information should be available on the SIRA Web site?
- Shall SIRA engage in
 - NFP Digital Transformation
 - Digital Switzerland
 - Digital/computational/design thinking?
- MG: Even if SIRA is not very active, it is at least a kind of insurance: if something should happen that would force the Swiss Informatics professors to act/react jointly and quickly, it is good to have an established organization at hand (analogous to the Swiss army).
- Time resources are the limiting factor, particularly as we do not have a secretary.
- ON: (topic on the radar)
 - gender issue: help mentoring women scientists, raise awareness, trying find partner, tried to do some small things in the past,
 - Computer science obligatory in high schools.
 - MG: everybody involved in the education on the schools side should inform SIRA.
- CFT: gives a short presentation the problem of Swiss academic ICT resources ("Bibliothekaren-Syndrom"). --> SIRA should push to re-establish academic control of academic IT services.
A Coordination Office for Scientific Information (COSI) is currently being founded --> SIRA should request a seat in the COSI steering board.
MG proposes to appoint CFT as the SIRA delegate for COSI matters.
- Decision:** The proposal to appoint CFT as the SIRA delegate for COSI matters is unanimously approved.
- JL: SIRA should have a local connection to Informatics Europe. MG: Would require a web master who sets up at least a page with links to materials offered by Informatics Europe

9. AOB

MG: Is somebody willing to become the SIRA webmaster? No volunteers. JL: find a student and pay him.

The meeting is closed at 16:15.