

SGB Meeting - November 8, 2024

0900-0905	Welcome + Goals	Neha Kumar
0905-0915	Council Meeting Update	Jens Palsberg
0915-1000	President's Update	Yannis Ioannidis
1000-1015	Break	All
1015-1115	Peer Review	Jonathan Aldrich + SIGs
1115-1130	Finances + SORF	James Schembari
1130-1200	ACM OPEN (Updates)	Scott Delman
1200-1230	AI+X	Neha Kumar + SIGs
1230-1330	Lunch	All
1330-1430	ACM OPEN (Discussion)	AO Working Group + SIGs
1430-1500	ACM-IEEE	Jens Palsberg
1500-1515	Break	All
1515-1615	Broadening Participation	Neha Kumar + SIGs
1615-1630	Miscellaneous Topics	Neha Kumar + SIGs

Welcome and Goals

Neha introduced herself and indicated the intent for the day to cover as many agenda items as possible. Whatever cannot be covered today, will be pushed to the next coffee hour. A link was sent to all the SIG Chairs for a collaborative document to be used for the day.

Council Meeting Update - Jens Palsberg

Neha thanked Jens for his years of work on the SGB.

Jens discussed ACM's plan to migrate all its publications to open access by January 1st, 2026, as reaffirmed by the Council. ACM has been working very hard on the financial sustainability of this model.

Jens gave his views on the 3 main points that came from the discussion.

1. Money Concern
2. Mega Trend of the world is going open access and ACM is leading the way.
3. Practical matters – how we align joint publications and joint conference work.

Other items discussed at Council:

Jack Davidson and Wayne Graves are working on improvements to the DL including progress on how the various tiers and levels of service will function.

There was also a discussion at the Council meeting about AI and the need for greater engagement in this area. ACM leadership is deeply committed to ensuring ACM remains a key player in the AI field.

Questions:

Christian Servin inquired about ACM's relationship with AAI. Jens emphasized that AAI is a partner, and we should continue collaborating with them.

Presidents Update: Yannis Ioannidis

Yannis discussed ongoing efforts to expand ACM's global presence and improve our membership model.

He reminded the SIG leaders of the importance of physical meetings and the need for greater representation from various SIGs. He noted that while virtual meetings have increased productivity, there is no substitute for what can be accomplished when everyone is in the same room. He urged everyone to attend the next meeting in Chicago, as in-person participation truly makes a difference.

Yannis also discussed the various Boards and Leadership Councils within ACM, highlighting the four SGB representatives on the ACM Council and the importance of turnover in these appointments. As a volunteer-driven organization, it is critical to foster interaction and share new ideas to drive ACM forward.

During the Council meeting, several bylaw changes and council decisions were made:

- Nominations Committee: New directive to ensure diversity among nominees, making an effort to represent all dimensions of our community, so that the full set of nominees reflects the diversity of ACM's membership.
- Publications Board: Co-Chairs of the Publications Board will have the responsibility of appointing Editors-in-Chief for ACM journals and magazines.

- Governance: It was decided that board and council chairs will serve as ex-officio members of the council to ensure adequate representation from all communities.
- Bylaws Non-Change: Elected officers will have a 2-year term limit.
- Open Access: Starting on January 1, 2026, all research publications and related research artifacts in the ACM DL will be openly accessible.
- AI + X: The council has decided to move forward with an ACM Conference on AI + X, aiming to make a significant impact in 2026. This will coincide with the transition to full Open Access. Five council members will lead this initiative: Elisa Bertino, Neha Kumar, Rashmi Mohan, Tom Zimmerman, and Wendy Hall. **ACM 4.0**

Yannis reminded the group of the 10 Presidential Task Forces (PTFs) he developed to better serve our members and society as a whole:

1. New Membership Model: We need to create a new, inclusive membership model that works for all.
2. Globalization: Expanding our global presence to meet the diverse needs of different regions.
3. Youthification: Attracting and supporting young professionals and students, ensuring we engage with them early to serve their needs long-term.
4. UN Social Development Goals: Exploring how computing can contribute to solving the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Code of Ethics and Social Responsibility: Developing guidelines for integrating ethics and social responsibility into daily professional practices.
6. Open Science: Determining how to support our community in embracing Open Science practices.
7. Product Portfolio: Assessing our strengths and weaknesses to determine if changes are needed in our offerings.
8. New Financial Model: Exploring new financial models to sustain and grow ACM.
9. Updates to Our Bylaws: Updating ACM's bylaws to align with current and future needs.
10. Establishing Regional Offices: Expanding ACM's reach by establishing regional offices around the world.

These ten PTF's are all in various stages of development.

The Globalization PTF is set to complete its work by the end of this year or early next year. Finances, Regional Offices and Membership are all starting their work as we speak. The remaining PTF's are in prep mode.

A key takeaway from the Globalization PTF is the importance of strengthening our relationships with other sister societies and expanding our network.

The Membership Model PTF will focus on simplifying membership options. Currently, members can belong to ACM, a SIG, a regional council, a chapter, etc., —but these choices are often confusing. The first meeting of the PTF is scheduled for the coming weeks, and we will begin exploring solutions.

New Presidential Task Forces – ACM 4.1

Policy Violation PFT – There are 4 types of violation policies:

- Violations of publication policies
- Harassment policies
- Code of Ethics
- Elections

The processes vary and some of the individual steps require reform. This PFT will look into how we handle violations.

Publications / Scientific Ethics PTF

This PTF will identify root causes, increase detection sensitivity, and explore solutions, one being training materials.

New Areas of Growth PTF

This PTF is a result of an initiative brought by our VP, Elisa Bertino. It will investigate new critical hot areas such as AI. The Portfolio PTF will consider the right structures for new area requests, recognizing that not every community must be a SIG. There are GIGs, EIGs, TIGs that may be a better fit.

ACM /IEEE Relationship (OA) PTF

We are working to find a balance between IEEE and our Open Access model through discussions and the task force led by Jens.

Yannis hopes that the volunteers involved in the PTFs will be able to look into the future and think outside of the box.

ACM Conference Tour

When Yannis was first elected, he was able to attend 8 of the top 10 conferences. Upon re-election, the list grew to 13. So far, he has been able to attend a few and will try to attend them all during his remaining two years. As ACM President he is also invited to other conferences. In September, Yannis, along with other ACM leaders were present at the Science Summit where the AI Governance Report was launched by a committee of the UN. Yannis will attend the Climate Summit (COP 27/ COP28); his third visit. As part of the globalization effort, the Latin American computer conference celebrated their 50th anniversary in August. Yannis, Pat Ryan and Karen

Brightman all attended and signed a memorandum of understanding with the hope that this is the beginning that will lead to a Latin American council for ACM.

By attending all these conferences, Yannis identified 8 common conference issues.

- 1 Purpose, why are we traveling? (publish, present, interact)
2. Sustainability (environment, finances)
3. Openness (ACM Open, open science)
4. DEI+A (awards, fees, conferences)
5. Publications Ethics (collusion nets)
- 6, Scientific Ethics (alg/data bias, reproducibility)
7. Foreign Visas (early prep)
8. Logistics (DL processes, deadlines, dates)

At the SIG level the issues are:

1. Membership (confusion, decrease)
2. ACM Hierarchy (confusion, flow of information from SIGs to ACM)

There is a PTF related to each of the conference issues/topics. The publications board and the SGB will also have a role as conference organizers.

Policy Violations/Disclosure

We will publish aggregate data for harassment policy and code of ethics violations on our website. In addition, sanitized versions / examples of actual cases will also be published. Yannis will write a column in CACM about this.

Public Statements:

Some SIGs and ACM subgroups have made political statements on geo-political conflicts under the ACM name. Because of this, ACM has come up with a policy that you cannot make public statements on things that are divisive, political issues and conflicts around the world. This policy also states that if you want to make a statement of that kind the ACM EC will have to review it first. The policy was written at a time of urgency, and so we are still doing some wordsmithing to improve the way the policy reads.

Questions:

How will SIGs be involved in the publication/scientific ethics PTFS?

There will be some leaders, and any results will be shared with the community not just the SGB, even possibly at virtual town halls with our members so they can share their outlook of where they see us going. This will also happen for the membership model and others.

Were any of the conferences Yannis visited co-sponsored with IEEE?

SC and DAC were IEEE co-sponsored conferences.

Peer Review – Jonathan Aldrich

Jonathan presented some solutions in response to a number of concerns that have been raised regarding peer review. In addition to today's presentation, Neha reminded the SIGs of the collaborative document (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ma6W-YFNQyISCDQXFWprTLJ2b42d0pNzsrXHiwNfKOl/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.xgoak8a7eu47>) and encouraged the SIGs to contribute to the discussion prompts.

1. Overworked reviewers: It can be difficult to find reviewers given the increasing paper submissions. Below are some possible solutions:
 - a. Allow self-nominations to PCs (subject to PC chair approval)
 - b. Ask all senior authors on submissions to contribute to reviewing.
 - c. Support major revisions, to reduce churn & reviewer effort per paper.
 - d. Consider fewer reviews, eg some ACM journals allow 2.
 - e. Encourage journal first reviewing; maybe a journal that aligns with your conference or your area. The benefit to this is that not all the submissions come at once, and you can tap your entire community for reviewers.
 - f. There is a “reviewer locator” tool built into Manuscript Central. Could ACM find or build a similar tool for conferences to find reviewers? Especially those who are qualified but untapped.

Discussion: What solutions has your SIG applied and are they working?

ASPLOS has been experimenting with major revisions on the premise that it will reduce churn and be less work to re-review something. When ASPLOS did this however, it led to a multi-deadline model and submissions skyrocketed, becoming unmanageable for them. It is not scaling well for them and there is increased pressure with going from 400 to over 900 submissions in a period of 2-3 years. Has any other SIG moved to a major revision model and found it successful?

KDD moved from 1 deadline to 2 a year with some major restructuring of the reviewing process. So far, they have managed through their new August deadline smoothly. Their restructuring included a rolling base, and a very large reviewer pool and required every paper to have at least one registered reviewer. For this past deadline there were about 1000 submissions in the research track and 400 in the applied data science track; this was about half of what they saw in their February deadline. So far, they have managed to get through these smoothly, but they did require every paper to have one registered reviewer.

SIGMM shared that they experimented with Open Review but with a different goal, which was to improve the quality of review. Most reviews were superficial, this made many of them unsatisfied with reviews and final decision. They decided to adopt open review to improve the quality of the conference and empower reviewers. In cases where both the authors and reviewers agree, reviews are made public for accepted papers. They started this practice in ACM MM in '22, and this year is the 3rd time it's been adopted. THE SIGMM executive committee decided to use this tool as

mandatory for the flagship conference. Their post-conference surveys show that more than 75% agree with the method and are satisfied and so this forced them to adopt the method indefinitely. The tool is not so easy to adopt in the beginning, so they put together a team to create some scripts and handle the configuration as well as ensure the tool has the ability to have a dialogue with Sheridan Publishing. Presently the tool is working and MM'24 held a few weeks ago went smoothly. The team is made up of two people who are permanently established and who support the conferences each year in adopting the tools. They do, however, face some problems with recruiting reviewers due to the number of conferences in their field and therefore not many are available to conduct additional reviews.

One approach Jonathan has observed in his community involves setting clear standards and providing guidelines regarding the length and quality expectations for reviews. As reviews are submitted, they are monitored to ensure they meet these standards, a process that requires active effort from the PC Chairs. This can be difficult when dealing with thousands of submissions and so other communities have implemented hierarchical structures with multiple chairs or sub-chairs, and so the process of overseeing submission quality is distributed among more people.

SOSP program chairs are careful when choosing reviewers and for the past several conferences have used Hot CRP to track their record before inviting them to review. It's also helpful if the reviewers are proactive in terms of rating and pointing out issues of other reviewers. SOSP also implements shadow PCs as a way of grooming future PCs and promote them to full reviewers. You can read more about this initiative here: <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3485952.3485956>

SIGKDD introduced a policy stipulating that if a reviewer fails to adhere to the reviewer guidelines, they forfeit access to their own review and any details about their submission. This approach has proven effective, and as a result, 99% of their review process is now in good shape.

The shift away from in-person program committee meetings has impacted the peer review process, as these gatherings were a key opportunity for junior researchers to learn about the process and expand their professional networks. How can we recreate some of these dynamics in a virtual or hybrid setting?

SIGLOG shared that the PETS conference introduced a process where reviewers vote on each other's reviews for the same paper, rating them as good, excellent, and so on. This approach has contributed to enhancing the overall quality of the reviews.

Journals are also reporting that it is harder to find reviewers. In response to this issue, Jonathan has seen people experiment with creating the equivalent of program committees but for journals. This review committee or editorial committee are reviewers who promise to make themselves available for a year or two for reviewing papers from the journal. The idea here is that you have a pool you can draw from like a PC but also it can be an honor and so people can be encouraged to say yes more so than they otherwise would.

There has been some discussion about evolving review practices. One effective approach is to create a detailed document outlining how to run a PC. This document will detail how to run a conference with a specific focus on the review process. This is a practice that communities can adopt if they haven't already.

SIGMETRICS indicated many reviewers are now refusing to participate in face-to-face meetings altogether. As a result, the quality of reviews has dropped significantly. They are seeking solutions to address the challenges associated with in-person review processes.

Jonathan mentioned that some conferences have adopted short Zoom meetings to facilitate more discussions and create an environment where reviewers feel compelled to be prepared to discuss their reviews.

SIGLOG shared that one reason it's challenging to find reviewers for journals is the lack of recognition or reward for the role. Unlike publications or conference program committee participation, reviewing can't be easily verified. Aside from listing it on a personal CV, there is no formal acknowledgment of the contribution. It would be helpful to develop a way to certify that someone has served as a reviewer for a journal and done so effectively. This could provide an incentive, especially for junior reviewers.

SIGGRAPH still holds in-person IPC meetings each year and consistently discusses whether to continue with this format. What are your findings regarding why some people choose not to attend these in-person meetings? Is it because junior researchers may not understand the value of these meetings and thus don't realize what they are missing, or is it that senior researchers feel it's no longer something they want to participate in?

Jonathan responded that a major reason people state for not meeting in person is climate concerns.

SIGBIO reported that since adopting open review practices two years ago, the quality has absolutely improved. However, although they would like to ensure every paper receives three reviews, it has been a challenge. This is the only concern they need to address now and would like some feedback on whether it would be allowed for senior reviewers to assign junior reviewers? The concern is that the senior reviewers would assign it all to their students.

SIGSOFT is interested in hearing about the experience of open reviewing. From experience, traveling when you have other commitments is always a tradeoff and therefore, doesn't believe in person PC meetings is the way to go. SIGSOFT has experimented with recognizing good reviewers and prompt reviewers. In principle, open science or an open review model can work for conferences but it is not clear as to how to move this model to deal with journals because the incentive structure is even lower and so it is curious how this model can move to journals. How does one set up an incentive structure? It has also been observed in the SIGSOFT community that people who write papers do not feel incentivized to write reviews at all. This is again especially true for the journals since there is a great time that elapses from when you submit to the moment you're asked to review and if you decline, you do not face any negative penalties.

For 2 of KDD's larger conferences, they implemented a rule that states if you submit a paper and you have published at least 3 papers in top conferences in your field, you must become a reviewer. If you don't, then your paper will be desk rejected. This policy has been very effective. Another method she has seen that has proven effective is to offer free conference registration to those identified as a top or excellent reviewer. It's another way to incentivize reviewers.

Jonathan highlighted that we have reviewing policies written for conventional blinded reviews. Open review is different, so we ask that if you are going to innovate, please look at the policy and second that you be in touch and coordinate with any publications board member or Scott. We want to support these experiments and learn from them.

CHI uses PCS across their conferences that use an excellent reviewer checkoff. Members of the community are aware of this and request letters stating that they served as a reviewer and received an excellent reviewer score. To some degree this has incentivized good reviews.

Leaders were reminded to refer to the shared google document for other best practices.

Proposed Conference Publication Policy - Updates Relating to Ethics and Plagiarism.

The question is how should publication policy violations be handled if they are caught before publication?

In the traditional approach, the ACM Publications Board will handle all issues that come up after publication. Also in the traditional approach, conference chairs / journal editors handle pre-publication issues.

Our formal policies contain some conflict regarding who is responsible for handling higher-level (level 3-5) violations. To address this, greater consistency is needed in how these violations are managed. Therefore, the publications board is proposing an approach which will embed in revised versions of the policies for consistency.

Under this proposal, the PC chairs handle level one and two violations and communicate their investigations and decisions to the ACM HQ staff. The Ethics and Plagiarism Committee on the Publications Board and publication staff will also be available for consultation, but in general the PC Chairs take the lead and make the decisions.

Levels 3 – 5 violations will be decided by the Publications Board based on recommendations from the PC Chair.

Levels 4 and 5 are much more severe violations and would involve the PC working together with the Ethics and Plagiarism committee. Together, they will make recommendations to the publications board who then will make the ultimate decision.

A comment was made that this proposal makes a lot of sense. Not only is it consistent, but it will also address ongoing concerns from our community and clarify the respective roles of the PC and ACM.

For those interested in learning more about our current policies and violation levels, please refer to the attached PowerPoint presentation on these topics.

One particular concern related to misconduct raised before this meeting is that of collusion rings. A collusion ring is when PC members agree to bid for each other's papers and rate them highly. There was some recent activity of this identified at some of our conferences. We take these violations very seriously, assigning two-to-five-year bans for level 4 and 5 violations from doing anything with ACM. However, it is sometimes difficult to identify these rings. The problem is that someone may not have the courage to step forward and report these individuals. Therefore, we

need to create an environment where people feel comfortable in doing so and where they also feel their identity will be anonymous and protected.

SIGAI leadership noted that the Computational Choice community looks at issues of how to make collective decisions. One part of the community looks at reviewing Incentive structures and how to make it strategy proof. This is an interesting problem for this community that looks to how to detect these rings and how to provide the right incentives for reviewers not to collude.

Another concern brought up in conversation is that of AI and paper writing and reviewing.

We are all delighted and terrified by what AI can do these days and how it affects our reviewing and authoring processes. The ACM Policy on Authorship states that all authors take full responsibility for all content in their published works, therefore, AI cannot be an author, and any use of generative AI must be disclosed in the work.

The ACM Policy on Peer Review states that AI cannot substitute for reviewer judgement. Reviewers must carefully read submissions prior to completing their review.

Are SIGS seeing problems with AI in paper writing and reviewing? Are there aspects of ACM policies that should be clarified?

SIGKDD conducted a study last year using a machine learning model they developed to assess how many open reviews are done by AI. The results indicated the trend is growing 30% across the board with some conferences seeing an even higher percentage. Will ACM have an actionable policy once a reviewer is identified as using AI to conduct their review, or submitting a view highly likely generated by AI? The machine learning model developed by SIGKDD has about a 90% accuracy rate. Is ACM considering using some of those tools to help the SIGs discipline the reviewing process?

Scott indicated that ACM is experimenting with different tools and is using one of them for all of the ICPS conference where they've had some level of concern over quality and also AI generated content. They will start to make some of these tools available to various conferences as their experiment progresses and they feel more comfortable with the results.

Jonathan added that if a reviewer is found to have used AI to substitute for their own judgment on a paper would be in violation of the ACM Policy on Peer Review and could be brought to the Ethics and Plagiarism subcommittee within the publications board. So, if these tools to identify these issues and clear examples are found of these violations, they are actionable.

Adrienne added that an article was just written about these tools misidentifying things as being written by AI that are written by people who are neurodivergent. We must be careful of misidentifications.

Scott clarified these are just tools and all they do is raise flags and use them as an indicator for investigation. There is always a manual evaluation that follows and an investigation when an allegation comes forward.

ACTION ITEM: Neha will work to collate these issues with Jonathan and bring them to a coffee hour and discuss if a task force should be created.

Finances & SORF - James Schembari

Overall, the organization is 5 million over budget with the majority of this revenue coming from the SIG conference area, and then the SIG governance area. On the expense side, we are approximately two million over our budget with the majority of these expenses stemming from conferences.

The organization was budgeted for a 1.5-million-dollar deficit; however, the estimated financial results are approximately 1.6 million dollars of a surplus, a net change of 3 million dollars.

SIG Overhead Reserve Fund (SORF)

Based on the Presidential Task Force recommendation, the SORF was to be replenished at half of the overhead amount over a five-year period. In FY'23 there was a contribution of \$356 thousand and a \$1.6 million dollar contribution for this year, bringing the balance up to 1.9 million dollars.

The FY'25 budget calls for a contribution of 1.7 million dollars, assuming every SIG spends every dollar they budgeted for in FY'25. If this were to happen, the SORF would be at 3.7 million dollars. The goal is 50% of the overhead amount which would result in about \$2.3 million dollars. So, at the end of FY' 25 there would be an overfunding of approximately 1.4 million dollars. If this holds true, then it would be up to the SGB to determine what the next steps for the SORF would be.

It is important to note that the SORF requirement will increase every year as the overhead amount increases. Based on the FY'25 overhead amount, the goal is 2.3 million, but assuming expenses increase by 3% each of the additional years, there would be a 3% increase on the overheard amount and then half of that would have to be contributed to the SORF.

Questions:

Jens questioned what is the contribution to the SIGs from the DL in the context of ACM Open? And should we expect the contribution to decrease once the transition to ACM Open is complete?

The formula that was derived when this distribution was started looks at the digital library revenue minus expenses. Then there's a small amount set aside for development of the digital library and then a percentage of the net surplus relating to the digital library is provided back to the SIGs. This is allocated based on the number of downloads of articles for each of those SIGs as a percentage of the total downloads.

For FY'24, the DL contribution to the SIGs was approximately \$3.8 million dollars. Once we close the books for FY'24 and receive our audited results, we will reassess that amount for FY'25. It is expected that this amount will decrease after the ACM Open.

May / SIGBIO asked is it correct that currently each SIG receives a minimum of \$10,000 in revenue per year from the DL? And will we lose this after Open Access is in place?

The amount that each of the SIGs receive is based on their proportion of the total downloads with a \$10K minimum. We cannot say how much or if that will decrease after 2026 when we go for complete OA.

Is there a plan for ACM to lower the overhead for the SIG conferences?

Donna will be reviewing overheads in FY'25 with the SGB EC per the last task force.

ACM Open Update- Scott Delman

On Tuesday, November 5, 2024, during its meeting in Vienna, the ACM Council approved the proposal to transition to ACM Open, effective January 1, 2026.

Since last year we have doubled the number of institutions subscribed to ACM Open. We currently have 1630+ institutions in ACM and we expect this will continue to grow.

We are on track with our goal to transition when we achieved about 70% by institutional numbers, by article percentages, and by revenue. In general, the number of articles we are publishing is increasing each year. ICPS and ACM proceedings account for almost 80% of what we publish. They account for a very large percentage, so this is critical not just to ACM as an organization but also to the ACM Open model and we expect 2024 numbers to go up and above the 2023 numbers.

Scott was asked to define APC eligible.

APC eligible are research articles that are subject to reimbursed by private and public funders. Most of these are research articles, survey articles and some short articles are included. In 2023 we published about 35,000 articles total, of these, 30,000 were APC eligible. APC eligible articles published in newsletters are not captured currently and they are not charged an APC or counted in the ACM Open because they do not run through the ACM rights system. Over the next year we will be working on including these articles.

Scott provided SIG leaders with the outcome if ACM were to flip today. He indicated there has been growth in ACM Open license revenue through 2024. The model itself has larger institutions paying more and the smaller institutions paying less.

Scott reported that John West did an analysis of APC income projections that involved some complex financial modeling with different scenarios using different risk factors. We need to decide as an organization if the current pricing is acceptable, what would the impacts be, what are the things that we can do as an organization. ACM is adding institutions all the time and 2025 will be a busy year for this.

Scott mentioned the launch of a premium / enhanced DL platform. ACM has decided that it will create two versions of the DL, a basic OA compliant version where all articles published in pdf format will be freely available to the general public and the broader community without any paywall. As we transition to a model where articles in the basic version are publicly accessible, we also needed to develop a premium version of the DL to accommodate the heavy usage that institutions rely on.

As a result, starting January 1, 2026, the ACM DL will offer two access levels: a premium access model and a basic access model. The pricing exact pricing is yet to be determined. In the coming months we will provide more information about the planned features and functionality available in the premium version of the DL. From a technology standpoint, our strategy is to ensure that as many institutional subscribers and ACM individual members as possible continue to use the premium version of the DL.

Scott discussed mitigating the risks of moving to ACM Open and indicated that until we fully understand the impact of APCs and the transition to an entirely Open DL model, we will not have a clear picture of whether we can maintain the required revenue. We need to prepare for the possibility that we may fall short of our target. If it proves to be unsustainable after 3 years with well-defined criteria of success, then ACM should be prepared to reconsider its decision.

Questions

May from SIGBIO asked how the percentages of articles increasing in the OA model, as shown on your ACM Open Progress by SIGs slide? How is that calculated?

Scott explained the chart that was distributed.

AI + X – Yannis

The AI community is not fully integrated into ACM, despite having some AI-focused activities like SIGAI and related conferences. Recently, the ACM Publications Board formed a task force to explore how to better engage with AI, resulting in the creation of AI Letters, aimed at quickly publishing research with input from two leading AI figures. There is also an increasing number of AI-related specialized journals. A key opportunity identified is combining AI with other fields such as archaeology, chemistry, physics, and the humanities. The idea of an AI+ X Federated conference was proposed, bringing together various SIG events and exploring collaborations with other societies. This initiative, alongside new journals, aims to raise ACM's profile in the AI community and create a diverse portfolio of AI-focused events. The Publications Board is also considering packaging AI-related papers and documents into a cohesive portfolio. This effort is crucial for ACM to maintain its relevance in the AI field. This effort was to share that this is an ongoing effort and get input from the SIGs.

Eakta Jain from SIGGRAPH expressed her appreciation for the time ACM has dedicated to this topic and inquired about how the papers will be reviewed.

Yannis responded that the federated conference will include invited conferences, which will continue to function as they currently do. Even new conferences will follow the standard conference format. The review process will be determined by the leaders and organizers of each conference.

Per SIGAI leadership, they are well positioned to facilitate a lot of these initiatives. SIGAI has strong relationships with the major AI conferences and some of their own conferences also satisfy this idea. For example, they have AI which talks about AI and ethics in society as well as other conferences like HRI, IUI, ASC. They believe they are in a strong position to build these bridges and move this forward.

Eakta can see the value in coming together but in terms of getting people to show up at the same venue, how does FCRC work? How do you get everyone to change their deadlines, and travel, etc.

Cappo explained that for FCRC we looked at conferences that were running during the May to July time frame to put together the event. Yannis said the hope is that some new conferences will be part of this major event.

SIGMICRO leadership suggested that, given the growing interest in AI + X, one potential approach could be for SIGs to nominate standout papers focusing on systems for AI or compilers across various domains. These papers could then be invited for publication in specialized journals dedicated to this track. This approach would help reduce reviewer workload, as the papers would be vetted by experts in the respective fields, while also promoting high-quality research across the different SIG communities

ACM Open Discussion

Neha introduced this group as a working group to explore various aspects of ACM Open as we move forward. The group includes Council representatives, Scott and Vijay from the SGB EC, who is focused on smaller SIGs. The aim is to track and address questions and concerns raised by SIGs as they arise.

Jens is overseeing the financial aspects, Jonathan is serving as the liaison with the publications board, and Tom is focused on shared venues. We will present updates from each of these areas today.

Facilitating a transition to Open Access – Jonathan

We should share the key benefits of Open Access. Change is hard and there are going to be a lot of challenges in this transition. However, this is something that benefits all of us and keeping that message in mind in both our own planning and in communication with our SIG members and conference organizers is very important. By doing this, it will help us find solutions that work for everyone.

- Moral and legal obligation to share knowledge freely.
- Benefits to authors. Many funding agencies now require open access publication in one way or another, so this helps authors comply with these funding mandates while they exist. Also, open access papers are cited and downloaded more than closed access papers.
- Our community was the source of the petition to move to Open Access.

Awareness and Preparation:

We all need to raise awareness about transition and spread the good news about open access as well as the challenges or changes that people will have to accommodate. Some key points to share with your community are the ones we've spoken about today already:

- The ACM DL will be fully open on 1/1/26.
- If you're a member of an ACM Open institution, the papers you publish will be open at no cost to you as part of their subscription.
- If your institution is not a member, you will pay an APC to publish research articles, currently \$700 for conference papers for ACM members.
- APC waivers are available for those who can't pay.
- Have your SIG members advocate for joining ACM Open. There is a Call-to-Action letter that can be shared with chairs and deans.

Regarding conference and workshop organization, there is concern that APCs may discourage authors from submitting their work. One possible solution is to offer authors the option to choose whether to formally publish their work. Some authors might opt to publish a short or long research paper and pay an APC if they're not part of ACM Open, as this allows them to have a freely accessible full-length paper in the Digital Library. Others may decide not to publish or to only submit an abstract without incurring a fee.

There are additional topics we can discuss, such as what is the cutoff for an APC-eligible paper, whether short papers should have a reduced APC, and so on. These are open for discussion, but it's important to recognize that there are trade-offs, particularly in terms of income for ACM overall, which will eventually impact SIG finances as well.

To gauge where SIG members stand on ACM Open and to raise awareness about the initiative, we are preparing a survey. This will help SIGs plan accordingly while also providing insight into their perspectives on the initiative.

ACM Open Dangers – Yannis

Our authors are at the core of this initiative, and we have to look at what we can do for the sustainability of the DL. As a pioneer in Open Access, ACM is leading the way, with many other societies watching closely. This is why we have a tiered approach, where authors who can't or choose not to pay an APC, will be given a waiver.

SIGSOFT leadership suggested an author buy an APC package like the institutional package we offer.

That is not in the model but could be.

To plan for the transition and the sustainability of the DL, we developed an enhanced version of DL. Yannis then outlined the many suggestions and scenarios being considered as ACM moves ahead.

We face a significant challenge, but one worth tackling for many important reasons, including supporting our authors and helping our communities transition to this new era. We need out of the box thinking to help those that cannot afford the transition. A market survey conducted at MIT, where the enhanced Digital Library was presented to librarians and others, showed that the majority would still want to subscribe if they received additional benefits. Although we don't have a fully sustainable model, there are many promising paths that we can explore.

ACM Open and its financial impact on the SIGs – Jens Palsberg

The SIGs' DL income in FY '23 was \$3.8 million. Based on the information we've received today, it's reasonable to prepare for a potential decrease, with a projected reduction of \$1 million after the flip in 2026. Such a decrease in revenue could pose challenges for some SIGs. Around four years ago, the overhead that SIGs paid to ACM was 10% of their expenses, which was subsequently raised to 12%, though not all SIGs are paying the same percentage. This increase allowed us to build the SIG Overhead Reserve Fund (SORF), which is now well-funded and expected to grow further in the coming year.

After discussions with Neha, Council, Tom Zimmerman, and Vivek Sarkar, a solution has been proposed. Neha's recommendation is to use a portion of the surplus in the SORF to cover the \$1 million shortfall and avoid the need for another process to address the shortfall. The rationale is that by the end of FY '25, the SORF will have a surplus of \$1.4 million, and the goal of SORF was to cover one year's worth of overhead payments—our current balance exceeds that amount.

Scott indicated that the projected \$1 million decrease suggested by Jens could be much higher. The challenge is that, until the transition happens, it is difficult to predict the exact impact.

How is the \$1 million from the SORF to be used? Will the funds be used to defer APC costs and reduce pricing, or allocated on a targeted basis, with some conferences paying APCs while others do not? Jens' plan is to take a community approach to keep each SIG afloat or make everyone whole by using the surplus to offset the income gap for each SIG, ensuring they continue to receive the funding they rely on from the DL.

Jens asked whether the DL income could eventually decrease to zero once Open Access is fully implemented. The response was that it is not yet clear if ACM Open can generate enough long-term income to be fully sustainable.

In response to a question about whether DL income will be based on download percentages or publication percentages, Jens noted that this is a topic that will be discussed and debated over the next year.

ACM/IEEE - Jens

We currently co-sponsor approximately 40 conferences with IEEE. We are discussing several options to move forward with them as the ACM Open plan continues.

Jens encouraged SIGs that cosponsor with IEEE to discuss with their steering committees. He also offered to reach out to them directly to learn what they have discovered.

ACM Open Survey – Neha

Neha shared the document used during the coffee hour, which includes a tab with a starter list of questions. Attendees were asked to break into small groups, both online and in person, to discuss what information they want to provide to their conference and SIG members, as well as what information they want to gather from them. Additionally, they were asked to consider what their one-page information packet for conference attendees would look like.

Group 1

We discussed the types of information we need to gather and the channels available for collecting it. We also considered whether we should conduct a survey targeting a sample population or aim to be exhaustive in our data collection.

If we decide to ask 2-3 questions of conference attendees, we could include them in the registration form, such as:

- Do you know what ACM Open is?
- Do you understand why we are transitioning to ACM Open?
- Have you determined how you will be impacted?
- Would you be willing to pay APC for your paper, and if not, what are your reservations?

Discussed having a slide during the opening sessions of conferences, alongside the "cares" slide, explaining what ACM Open is. All SIG conferences in 2025 could include a slide to inform attendees about the transition and encourage them to prepare. ACM booths could also feature informational flyers.

We also considered updating the e-rights form and the information provided to authors after paper acceptance. We need to decide which group of authors we want to target—successful authors, authors who failed, attending authors, etc. The next step will be to finalize the text for these questions and communications.

Group 2

SIGEVO recently conducted a survey of their membership, asking two key questions:

1. Given the current ACM Open policy, will it affect your likelihood of submitting your work to Gecko (their main conference)?
2. Are you willing to talk to your library if your institution isn't currently signed up?

This survey provided valuable insights for SIGGRAPH, as we have not yet surveyed our own SIG to understand the wording and feedback from our members.

We also discussed additional questions to consider, such as:

- Are there alternate venues your students or collaborators would consider submitting to?
- In light of concerns about travel costs and the carbon impact of travel, would you prefer submitting directly to a journal instead?

More broadly, with growing awareness of sustainability and environmental impact, we also want to ask:

- To what extent does environmental impact influence your decision to submit to a conference, and how does it affect the frequency of your travel to conferences?

Group 3 –

We discussed making the survey more informational, as it's difficult to ask questions when many people may not be familiar with ACM Open. Therefore, it's important to combine an educational campaign with survey feedback. This would include collecting demographics to understand the scope of awareness. For those who are aware of ACM Open, we would need to address questions such as:

- How will this impact me?

- What will it cost?
- What will it cost my conference, my department, my students?
- Do you know if your institution is a member of ACM Open?
- Does a fee waiver apply to you?

Essentially, the goal is to provide information about the impact and then gather feedback through a survey.

If we are using the registration form, we will need to limit the amount of information we add.

Group 4:

Most of our discussions focused on setting up a system to identify the genuine need for waivers when publishing with ACM. Is it possible to create a system that automatically uses checkboxes, instead of Scott manually screening and approving each request, which is time-consuming?

We also discussed whether SIG leaders and conference committees could conduct preliminary analyses at the SIG level, similar to the work done for the viability report. This analysis would look at factors such as who publishes, the percentage of articles authored by tenured faculty vs. graduate students, non-tenured track faculty, and industry practitioners, and how many of these publications could be funded by grants. This preliminary analysis would provide baseline data that could help Scott better understand the realities of each SIG and the expected percentage of graduate students publishing each year.

Based on historical data, we could identify the need for waivers for each SIG or conference and possibly have ACM assign a certain number of waivers for distribution at the discretion of the SIG or conference organizers.

Scott also raised the idea of differentiated APC pricing. As we progress, we may consider offering lower pricing for workshop publications, since they tend to be less expensive to produce than conference publications. Additionally, some SIGs may spend more on publications than others, so it might be worth exploring differentiated pricing for those publications.

Group 5:

We discussed addressing authors with questions such as:

- Are you part of an open access institution?
- If not, are you willing to pay the APC fees, and if not, what is your plan?
 - Would you choose not to publish, or would you submit to a non-ACM conference instead?
 - If unwilling to pay the APC fees, would you consider publishing only an abstract?
 - Alternatively, if your paper is accepted but you refuse to pay the APC, would you compromise by publishing just a two-page abstract?

For conference organizers, we would want to ask:

- Is your conference willing to cover APC costs for authors who cannot or are unwilling to pay?

The goal is to convey that if neither you nor your institution is part of an ACM Open Access institution, you will be required to pay APC fees.

How will authors decide whether to submit a paper if they don't know if they will receive a waiver?

One possible option for addressing costs could be to introduce a submission fee for authors who are not part of an open access institution. This fee could act as a deposit for submitting the paper, and if the paper is approved but the author refuses to pay the APC, the submission fee would be nonrefundable and could go towards covering costs.

All the questions in our surveys should be worded in a positive manner. Scott will review the final questions before they are distributed. Additionally, we have a survey company that will ensure the questions are formulated properly.

Group 6:

We discussed starting with a few key statements to clearly justify the change and explain why it is a fair and reasonable solution for the community. These include highlighting the mandate for open access, justifying the increase in APC for SIGs that already have them, and emphasizing that we listened to the community's desire for open access and have delivered it.

Regarding questions, we considered asking for opinions on joint IEEE and ACM conferences:

- Do you support asymmetric open access, with ACM being fully open and IEEE offering a choice of open or closed access?
- Similarly, how do you feel about asymmetric APC fees in IEEE versus ACM years?
- Another question is whether January 2026 is a reasonable timeline for fully transitioning to open access.

We also discussed asking institutions that are not currently ACM Open institutions would they be willing to switch? Also, whether the APC waiver policy should account for K-12 and community college researchers. Scott noted that there are membership discounts and APC waivers available for these groups.

Ask if an author's eligibility for an ACM Open institution would affect your collaboration. Jonathan clarified that it would be an ethics violation to include someone who had no contribution to the paper.

Neha will take this document to the ACM Open group and come back with ideas for how to move forward.

Broadening Participation

This topic was intended to cover accessibility, hybridity, sustainability concerns, and visas. However, due to time constraints, we will move this discussion to a coffee hour session.

Miscellaneous Topics

Meetings – We will plan ahead to ensure representation from all SIGs.

Action: Donna will send out a poll for April and May 2025 to help set those dates in advance.

Elections - Do SIGs require any guidance regarding elections? Adrienne emphasized the importance of submitting election information on time if your SIG is holding elections this year. She urged everyone to stay on top of deadlines to ensure the elections proceed smoothly.

SIG Structure – Should we consider a different SIG structure at the SGB level, possibly introducing conference-only SIGs? The main motivation for this idea is that some SIGs have fewer conferences, making their overhead costs high.

Is it important to differentiate between SIGs, as some have smaller conferences or limited income and may not survive unless we are flexible?

Donna shared that, in the past, we had conference-only and newsletter-only SIGs that frequently sought to become full-service SIGs. This caused frustration for the SGB Executive Committee, leading to the decision that every SIG should be a full-service SIG.

A related question that came up was whether a SIG's viability might be impacted by ACM Open. Should we explore solutions to help struggling SIGs, such as having one SIG become a committee within a larger SIG, if this arrangement benefits both SIGs? Additionally, we might need to consider the autonomy of SIGs as part of the discussion.

ACM's Policy on Statements: ACM's policy on statements is currently under revision. A larger issue is the process by which we seek or offer input on various policy changes. For instance, when the publications board has changes, Jonathan sends them out for our feedback. We provide input, he forwards it to the publications board, and then changes are made. This seems to be an effective workflow. The question now is whether there are any suggestions for future policy changes that people would like to propose.

Conclusion

Neha thanked everyone for their patience and expressed her hope to see many of the attendees in person at the next meeting.