

Minutes of the Committee on Electronic Information and Communication (CEIC)

Budapest, Hungary 22 April 2008

Present: John Ball, Jon Borwein, Michael Doob, John Ewing, Ulf Rehmann

After a discussion of the previous afternoon's meeting with the EC, the following main items formed the core of the day's discussion.

1. Future directions and organization of the committee An extensive discussion took place concerning both the history of the committee and the changed computing environment for mathematicians over the past ten years. The committee concluded that the original mandate was now out of date and should be revised. It was moved and seconded by that:

The mandate of the CEIC is to advise the Executive Committee (EC) on matters of information and communication. The CEIC's duties include:

- ▶ Reporting regularly to the EC, advising it on aspects of IMU operations related to information and communication, including financial implications, and keeping it informed of new developments.
- ▶ Reviewing the development of electronic information, communication, publication, and archiving so as to keep the EC abreast of current and emerging issues.
- ▶ Advising the EC about potential opportunities to endorse standards ('best practice recommendations') on issues related to publication and communication, including such matters as the use of software and data repositories.
- ▶ Advising the EC about potential opportunities to foster the growth of electronic infrastructure, and most selectively creating tools for this purpose.

The motion was passed unanimously.

2. New members for the committee John Ewing and Jon Borwein indicated that, after many years on the committee, they felt that their role on the committee had been completed. The committee met in camera to discuss replacements for them and the other members of the committee who have completed their terms. It was felt that the new members should represent varying expertise and skills: technical, pedagogic, communicative. The resulting list of four candidates and four backups have been forwarded to the EC.
3. CEIC web pages The CEIC web pages need to be updated. In addition, they should devolve from the current variety of public pages to ones that are mostly resources for the committee.

They should include:

- ▶ list of current members
- ▶ charge to the committee
- ▶ historical record of meetings
- ▶ current business

The current public pages should be moved to the IMU web site. This would include

- ▶ information on the World Digital Mathematics Library (WDML)
 - ▶ articles for "IMU on the web" (It was noted that this valuable source of information is sometimes not distributed to all members: indeed, two members of the committee have not received their copies and there was no apparent way to correct the problem.)
 - ▶ information on the Federated World Directory of Mathematicians (FWDM)
 - ▶ "Best Practices" recommendation
 - ▶ digitization issues
 - ▶ copyright issues
 - ▶ any other useful links
4. Response to the International Council for Science (ICSU) statement It was agreed that a response to the ICSU is necessary. The appended response has been sent by John Ball.
 5. Future chair of the committee The EC needs to appoint an interim chair for the committee. It is suggested that the chair be chosen by the committee on a rotating basis annually.

Appendix 1

Response to the ICSU Even though the focus of the SCID report was on the needs of sciences with large data issues, if ICSU is to maintain a committee on scientific information and data, it should have a broader remit that includes all related issues, including scientific journals and the use of metrics to evaluate research.

These topics have been of intense interest within the mathematics community, and our own Committee on Electronic Information and Communication (www.ceic.math.ca) has considered many such issues over the last decade. For example, a forthcoming report from the IMU draws on the statistical expertise of our community to analyse the use and misuse of citation data in the assessment of research. In recommending that national members and unions establish committees or commissions where these do not already exist, focusing on data and information issues, ICSU should suggest that the terms of reference of these committees cover scientific information and data as a whole, and not just the issues covered in the SCID report.