



## **ISIT GUIDELINES (revised 18 January 2014)**

This document provides guidelines for the organization of an IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT). It includes an explanation of the approval process, guidelines for proposals, a timeline and task list, and a ten-point list for post-conference reports. The

A proposal should cover the following specific items:

- I. Date of symposium. The preferred/targeted dates are late June to early July, but deviations are permitted. Include a brief paragraph about alternative dates, if appropriate.
- II. Location of symposium

This section lists the important dates and tasks involved in the conference organization. The conference co-chairs should make sure that all tasks are assigned. The list of committees for ISITs is not totally standardized, so there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the tasks listed here and conference committees.

**Combined Timing Schedule:**

- Board/conference committee approval of proposal 3-4 years in advance
- Conference location selected and hotel contract signed 3-4 years in advance
- Conference information schedule filed with IEEE 3-4 years in advance
-

## **Communication with IT Society and IEEE**

After approval of an ISIT proposal by the BoG, the conference organizers are required to file a budget with IEEE and submit a budget for approval by the CC and the IT Society Treasurer (see the guidelines). To a large extent, most ISITs have a similar format, including: an opening reception on a Sunday evening, technical program running from Monday through Friday, with possible half day on Friday, Wednesday afternoon free with possible optional tour, Tuesday noon awards luncheon, Thursday evening banquet, and a poster session for recent results. Half or full day tutorials are encouraged preceding the meeting. The format is not mandatory, is always evolving, and can be adapted depending on circumstances. However, significant deviations from previous ISIT formats should be discussed with the CC, which in turn brings major issues to the BoG.

The conference organizers are requested to keep the CC and BoG informed of progress by sending a brief update to the CC at least four weeks before each BoG meeting, alerting the CC about any special plans or difficulties. The CC will include the updates in its report to the BoG. It is not anticipated that ISIT organizers will make reports at BoG meetings, other than the initial proposal presentation.

Organizers of different conferences are expected to help each other. It is desirable for chairs of one conference to attend the planning meetings of other conferences, a year earlier or a year later. Each conference is expected to promptly complete a ten-point post-conference report (see guidelines at the end of this document). Each conference is requested to make available a list of postal addresses of participants for use by subsequent conferences to mail promotional material, such as conference posters.

## **Finance**

Responsibilities of the treasurer or finance chair include: oversight of conference finances, checking major contracts, making sure miscellaneous expenses were properly paid for, watching for surprises from the hotel during the conference, writing checks and collecting receipts, keeping an eye on



- Check audio-

whsn Csviws must bs in.

Section 1. The International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT) Student Paper Award shall be given annually for up to three outstanding papers at the ISIT for which a student is the principal author and presenter. This author must be a registered student at the time of paper submission to be eligible for this award. The criteria for the award shall include both content and presentation. The award consists of a \$500 honorarium to be divided equally between all student authors of the paper, and a plaque for each such author.

Section 2. The Awards Committee (AC) shall be responsible for selecting the winner(s) of this award, with the support of the ISIT Technical Program Committee (TPC). The ISIT TPC shall





According to the IT Society Bylaws, the Shannon Award recipient is to receive an honorarium from the Society and travel expenses for the ISIT at which the award is presented and the Shannon Lecture is given. Travel expense is understood to include conference registration. These expenses are to be paid by the IT Society, not the ISIT, although as a convenience the ISIT and IT Treasurer may agree that a registration waiver be granted by the ISIT and charged to a Society tab. (Another item on such a tab could be expenses for Society sponsored meetings, such as a Board of Governors meeting.)

A long time tradition at ISITs (which is not set in stone!) is to have, in addition to the Shannon lecture, four plenary lectures per ISIT. If a plenary lecturer is someone who often attends ISITs, s/he could be offered a registration fee waiver as a small token of appreciation by the ISIT, but no other payment. If a plenary lecturer is someone from outside the usual information theory community, it may be necessary to offer payment beyond the registration fee waiver. Such payment would typically be in the range of \$1000 to \$2500, which could be taken in a combination of reimbursed travel expenses based on receipts and honorarium. The split between expense reimbursement and honorarium could be determined by the lecturer, and the total offer determined by ISIT organizers based on what is likely to be needed to enlist the lecturer.

Often half-day tutorials are offered during the day preceding an ISIT, and registrants pay to enroll in such tutorials. Sometimes there is a discount if a participant enrolls in both a morning and an afternoon tutorial. IEEE recognizes that offering a short course is similar to consulting by the offerer, and that payment is appropriate. While the exact level of payment can be determined by an ISIT organizing committee, we recommend the following approximate amount, which includes an incentive for attracting lots of registrants (in 2012 dollars): \$600 + (\$25 per registrant in excess of 40). If multiple speakers jointly present a tutorial, this amount would be split among them according to their instructions. Note that no conference registration fee waiver is included.

In recent years the conference policy has been to discourage payment to ITW speakers, with the possible rare exception of necessary payment for hard to get people from beyond the group of usual IEEE IT meeting attendees.

## **Recent Results Session**

In recent years, there have been poster sessions for presentations of recent results. There should probably be one or two people serving as recent results session chairs to oversee this activity (such as members of the local arrangements committee, because of the poster logistics).

## **Publications**

A book of abstracts and program are typically distributed at the conference. In addition, CDs containing all the papers are distributed. A reputable service (IEEE or other) should be contracted for burning the CDs and printing the jacket covers. In addition, the papers must be forwarded to IEEE in IEEE Xplore compliant format.

Instructions for preparation of papers, including templates, samples, and style must be posted on the website. (See IEEE online resources regarding IEEE Xplore compliance.) Copyright forms are needed for each paper. (It may now be possible for authors to sign copyright forms online.) Include a downloadable copyright form for authors on the website, ideally filled in with paper title, authors, and paper tracking number, for authors to send in by mail or fax. It is probably worthwhile to contract this out, perhaps to the same entity that handles paper submission and/or registration.

### **Awards luncheon booklet**

This is typically handled by someone on the publications committee, the local arrangements committee, or a general co-chair. A 10-



The publicity committee should have conference announcements listed on conference calendars and in newsletters of other societies, such as the IEEE Communications Society, and in various e-letters. Typically such listings are free of charge.

Announcements for the meeting should appear in several issues of the IT Society Newsletter. A first conference announcement can be prepared two years before the meeting and be distributed at other conferences. About 14 months before the conference, the first call for papers can be prepared, listing plenary and tutorial speakers. Copies of it should be made available at the ISIT a year earlier, and at related conferences such as Globecom, ICC, ISITA, and other meetings throughout the world.

ISIT organizers often give attendees a smart looking conference bag with a conference logo.

## **Registration**

A list of tasks associated with registration follows. These could be handled by contracting with an outside service.

1. Design the registration form and have it available online.
2. Provide for registration via web, fax, and mail.
3. Establish an escrow account. Bulk transfers are made from it to a main conference account.
4. Link registration to paper submissions to ensure that all papers have a registered author.
5. Provide all registration and accounting data to meet IEEE audit specifications.
6. Provide two on-site personnel for registration during the conference.
7. Format and produce full color badge sheets for the conference.
8. Supervise on-site volunteers for advance registration.
9. Assist registration chair and answer all attendee correspondence.
10. Provide name tag (badge), receipt, tickets for banquet (and, possibly, luncheon and reception).
11. Provide for sale of extra tickets to banquet or luncheon at on-site registration.

The service might also be involved with making hotel reservations, but this should be done sparingly, since participants can usually make their own lodging arrangements. If there are any designated conference hotels, web links should be provided. The same service could handle selling tickets for excursions, but excursions can also be contracted out to a local tourist agency. The local organizers may need to insure there is a laser printer and copy machine at the on-site registration. Typically 20-25% of attendees register on-site

Upon registration, attendees are given receipts, name tags (badges), tickets, and a conference bag including a final program booklet, a book of abstracts of papers, a CD with the complete papers, and optional items such as a map of the area, other brochures (often available free of charge from a tourist office), a restaurant list, a pad of note paper, and a pen/pencil.

The IT Society does not have a general policy regarding reimbursements, but it is recommended that ISITs allow a partial refund for cancellations by a given date, or maybe two levels of partial refund for two different dates. In some unfortunate instances, registrants were unable to secure a travel visa, and then requested reimbursement. Such reimbursements have been granted in full or in part by some past ISITs.



OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT VOLUNTEERS Students registering for ISIT by the early registration deadline received a \$50 discount if they volunteer to be a student aid for the symposium. A volunteer can be assigned as an aid for each session to help with speaker transition and equipment maintenance. The session assignment and instructions to students should be taken care of before the meeting. A schedule of volunteer assignments can be posted onsite near the conference registration area, and the registration material can remind volunteers that they have a job to do.

AUTHOR SUPPORT Provide material on request, overhead sheets and pens, memory sticks, and so on.

SIGNAGE Provide signs to steer participants to correct locations upon arrival, for lectures, for the banquet, and so on. Session listings, with paper titles and authors, should be posted outside each session door throughout the meeti

nonmember registration fee. There could be a base price for one table, and an increment for a second table, if space is tight.

EXCURSIONS Keep in mind that only a quarter to a third of the attendees are typically interested in paying to go on a group excursion on the free half day (typically Wednesday afternoon).

IT SOCIETY BOG events The IT Society Board of Governors sponsors (and pays for) several events at ISITs. A list of such events at ISIT 2010 in Austin is listed below. The conference organizers should have the likelihood of these events in mind when making arrangements for conference venues, and plans for these events should be firmed up six months in advance of the conference.





The organizers of each ISIT are requested to submit a post-conference report to the CC, (see footnote on first page for which CC member is currently collecting these) to be made available to organizers of future ISITs, addressing the following ten points:

1. Dates, city, specific venue of conference, and organizing committee composition.
2. Number of papers submitted and number of papers accepted.
3. Total number of registrants and breakdowns: number of students and number of registrants that registered on-site.
4. Room block usage. For any hotel for which the number of guest rooms used by participants was counted, what was the conference rate available and how many rooms were used on each of the nights just before, during, and after the conference?
5. Number of persons attending social events, such as the opening reception, awards luncheon, and banquet. Also, the number participating in excursions.
6. What system was used for submission of papers and formation of the technical program? In particular, did you pay for a particular service? Do you have any recommendations for future organizers?
7. What system was used for online and onsite conference registration? In particular, did you pay for a particular service? Do you have any recommendations for future organizers?
8. Who provided the audio-visual equipment used by the conference (such as the hotel, conference center, or outside company)?
9. Amount of money raised for travel grants, number of travel grants, and sources of support.
10. Include the IEEE final report financials spreadsheet along with this report.