

ACM History Committee Meeting

Minutes, November 16, 2020 (v. 1)

1. Welcome (Whitton)

- Meeting began at 11:00am EDT / 8:00am PDT via Zoom

2. Attendees (Whitton)

- Mary Whitton (chairing on Barb's behalf)
- Vicki Almstrum
- David Brock
- Roy Levin
- Bernadette Longo
- Erik Rau
- Kim Tracy
- Amanda Wick
- Jeffrey Yost
- Chuck House (guest)

Not present

- Barbara Boucher Owens (chair)
- Carol Hutchins
- Sachin Maheshwari
- Ursula Martin

3. Minutes from October meeting (Almstrum)

- The October minutes were accepted without modification.

4. Status of Turing update (Levin)

- Tom Haigh had emailed an update regarding snippet status. He completed snippets for the last eight profiles for which we had full-length interviews, including Feigenbaum, Sifakis, Lamport, Kahn, Goldwasser, Kahan, Sifakis, and Stearns.
- Because the main phase of work is finished, Tom recommends that the Committee should find ways to get word about these clips distributed to people teaching CS.
- Some discussion regarding challenges due to workarounds with the embedding process.
- The interview with Dana Scott is underway and is being done remotely. The first session was very successful. The goal is to make each session relatively short.
- For some recent winners, no interview has been scheduled. The focus has been to capture interviews with individuals who are older.
- ACTION ITEM: Roy will develop a draft ad with information about availability of the snippets, for distribution to SIGCSE and other organizations.

5. Web work (Tracy, Almstrum, Wick)

- Kim updated the website with the call for this year's fellowship. He added helpful information from our old website.
- Kim experimented with adding one of the AM Turing Oral History snippets to the history.acm.org web site; hopes to find a straightforward way for snippets to rotate.
- Kim has not received a response from ACM IT regarding import of the History Committee's old blog content.
- We discussed the letter to ACM regarding IT support.
 - Vicki will collect the information for the letter.
 - We discussed the appropriate recipient for our letter and how best to approach the issues.
 - We agreed that Wayne should receive the letter.
 - Focus: our long-term, on-going need for more timely support. These issues have been pending for a long time and significantly affect the committee's ability to make progress in their projects.

6. Fellowship follow-up and call (Tracy, Rau)

- Once the call had been reviewed by the subcommittee, Kim shared it with the full committee. The call does not mention archival support for SIG materials because this is not yet clear. Jeff suggested a wording change related to archives v artefacts.
- The updated call includes wording that helps make clear how many projects can be funded and at which levels.
- We agreed the call was ready to post after some small tweaks.

7. International (Martin)

- Overall discussion on international issues was deferred.
- India Interview project
 - Sachin provided an email update with a link to the edited version of the second recording session with Professor Rajaraman as well as a transcript for the first interview. He is unsure how many sessions remain.
 - Roy has reviewed the first two interviews and has provided Sachin with feedback about the technical aspects and the questioning technique. The first interview had several problems, but the second interview was considerably better.
 - Roy has discussed editing strategies with Sachin. Roy found the recordings difficult to understand without a transcript, partly due to unfamiliar names and partly because the accents were hard to understand.
 - It was unclear from our discussion how the transcripts are being created.
 - David ran one of the videos through Video Indexer, where he has a guest account. Using Video Indexer, David created two versions, in English and Hindi. He sent these to Sachin, who corrected them by hand.
 - David did not review either of the recordings in detail. He suggests engaging someone with a background as a historian to help with the interviews.
- Discussion of additional information that could be included with the posted interviews.

- Chuck shared thoughts about the background research he does for the interviews he conducts for the ACM Award Video Series.
- Vicki shared the approach used with the Computing Educators Oral History Project.
- David Brock explained the practices at the Computer History Museum, where they sometimes include a CV page.
- Jeff addressed the approach at Charles Babbage Institute, where background materials are saved, but are not necessarily put on-line.
- Mary asked whether these background materials should be put on-line or if the goal is simply to ensure that the materials are saved.
- Chuck argued for having separate pages that give the background information for each interview. To do this would require a planned quality control service.

8. ACM Award Video Series (House)

- Chuck's preliminary report on the wrap-up
 - Overall, Chuck feels that the project is on-schedule. He has finished the planned interviews for 2019 (22 of them, started in April). He had proposed 34 for 2020 and has completed 29 of those. He hopes to complete five more interviews by the end of 2020.
 - Because the most recent five interviews were international, this created new challenges. Chuck found that both the dialect of the interviewee and the speed of discussion affect the process of understanding for him as the interviewer.
 - Chuck asked David to experiment using Video Indexer with interviews from the ACM Award series to provide a basis for comparison.
- We discussed on-going work for this project. One possibility is to conduct additional interviews, Another option is to extract snippets for existing interviews. No conclusions.

9. Preservation Outreach

- Bernadette circulated the following suggestion:
 - Call for Historical Materials: In conjunction with its oral history projects, the ACM History Committee is interested in materials related to notable individuals in computer history, such as recipients of the Turing Award and other ACM awards. We especially seek video recordings and other materials for individuals who have died or who might have been under-represented in efforts to capture computing history. For full information on this Preservation Initiative and project contacts, see WEB ADDRESS.
- We discussed this briefly, but will plan to do additional follow-up next month.

10. Other business

- Next year's budget will be about the same as last year. We must anticipate how the needs for our various projects will continue.
- We will defer discussion of the workshop plans until next month.

11. Upcoming meetings

Monday, December 21, 2020, 11:00 am EST via Zoom

- We discussed whether this would work for most members. Only Amanda indicated it would be a problem.

12. Conclusion 12:00 pm EDT / 9:00 am PDT

