Organizing SIGMOD Conferences
— A guide for conference general chairs

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ACM SIGMOD International Conference on Management of Data (a.k.a. the SIGMOD conference) was started in 1975 and has been held each year since then. Since 1991, the ACM PODS conference has been co-located with the SIGMOD conference with an agreement that the SIGMOD conference organization is responsible for all aspects of both conferences except for the technical program of PODS. ACM SIGMOD is the sole financial sponsor for both conferences.

The annual attendance of the SIGMOD/PODS conferences ranges between slight below 400 (e.g., San Diego, CA, 1992) to around 650 (San Jose, CA, 1995). Clearly, organizing the conferences is a complex task over a 2-3 year span. Although there are many resources to get information about ACM conference organization (e.g., [1]), surfing through the overwhelming information takes time. This document attempts at identifying and simplifying key tasks and milestones to help future SIGMOD conference general chairs.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF MILESTONES (EXTERNAL)

The SIGMOD Conference General Chair (called the General Chair in the remainder of this document) is appointed by the SIGMOD Chair usually about 2 years prior to the conference. Conference organization and planning activities need to start shortly thereafter. The following is a list of key contacts the SIGMOD General Chair will interact with significantly:

• SIGMOD. The SIGMOD Chair should always be consulted for many conference related decisions, expected and unexpected, to be made by the General Chair. For many day-to-day decisions, the SIGMOD Conference Coordinator acts on behalf of the SIGMOD Chair.

• SIGMOD/PODS Program Chairs. Both the contents (e.g., papers, demos, tutorials, and invited talks) and format (i.e., advance and final programs to be publicized) of the technical programs are solely the responsibility of the respective Program Chairs. However, the format of the technical programs needs to be agreed upon by the PODS and SIGMOD General Chairs.

• ACM, Program Coordinators at the ACM Headquarters.

• PODS General Chair. Technically, the SIGMOD General Chair is only responsible for the SIGMOD conference and the PODS General Chair is needed for making sure PODS conference needs are taken care of. Practically, since the joint conference format has been in place for more than 10 years and there is little change in PODS conference needs,[2] there are not many decisions to be made by the PODS General Chair. But the PODS General Chair needs to be kept in the loop and consulted for all conference decisions.

• Managers at the conference hotel and/or meeting facilities: Food, audio/visual, meeting rooms, etc.

• Satellite workshop organizers who will identify themselves by making requests (see Section 4.9).

The following table summarizes the externally observable critical events during the course of SIGMOD and PODS conferences, the time of the events, and whom the General Chair should interact with. The events are sorted by their times given as relatives to the time of the conferences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Contact(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year –2</td>
<td>Suggestions for conference sites, dates, etc. to start of negotiation a hotel contract</td>
<td>ACM and SIGMOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year –2 to Month –18</td>
<td>Determine conference dates</td>
<td>SIGMOD, SIGMOD/PODS Program Chairs, and PODS General Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. CONFERENCE ORGANIZATIONS

SIGMOD/PODS conferences are always organized by volunteers. The primary responsibility of the General Chair is to ensure that (1) all aspects of the conferences are well planned and executed, which include technical programs and social events, and (2) the budget is balanced. One of the first tasks of the General Chair is to appoint volunteers to form the SIGMOD conference organization.

#### 3.1 Chairs in SIGMOD Conferences

Typically, the General Chair needs to appoint many chairs who will handle various aspects of both SIGMOD and PODS conferences. Except that PODS sometimes has a separate publicity chair, the SIGMOD conference organization formed by the General Chair works for both conferences. Depending on each year’s special situations, the General Chair may choose to modify from the following list (add new chairs or merge roles).

- **Local Arrangements Chair**, who will work with the General Chair to develop and execute the conference plans in conjunction with the meeting facilities and hotel
• **Finance Chair**, who will work with the General Chair on the TMRF and final budget

• **Registration Chair**, who is in charge of registration related issues

• **Publicity Chair**, who is responsible for conference promotion (creating and posting Call for Papers, Call-for-Participations, etc.)

• **Web Chair**, who creates and timely maintains the main conference web site, and possibly mirrored sites; will interact closely with the SIGMOD Information Director

• **Regional coordinators** (Europe, Asia/Australia, and South America), who will help the publicity chair and the web chair on conference promotion in their regions (running mirror sites, etc.)

• **Local Demo Chair**, who will ensure that SIGMOD demo sessions will have the necessary space, networking, and equipment (e.g., poster boards). (Note that this chair is different from the SIGMOD Demo Chair: the latter is appointed by the SIGMOD Program Chair and responsible to select demos to be a part of the conference technical program.)

• **Exhibits Chair**, who helps the General Chair to handle book vendor requests

• **Corporate Sponsor Chair**, who will contact corporations to solicit their contributions

As SIGMOD conferences are becoming increasingly complex with increasing technological demands, it might also be useful to delegate the following responsibilities from the General Chair and Local Arrangements Chair to other volunteers:

• **Book Drive Chair**, who runs the book donation program and should collaborate closely with SIGMOD Chair or designate

• **Audio-Visual Chair**, who is responsible for audio and visual needs at the conferences

• **Workshop Chair**, who will coordinate with workshop organizers

The above list of chairs summarizes the experiences from recent SIGMOD/PODS conferences and gives some basic idea of a conference organization; it is up to the General Chair to decide which chairs are needed in a particular year.

In addition to the above chairs, the General Chair may occasionally interact with the following chairs that are appointed by the corresponding Program Chairs:

• **SIGMOD/PODS Proceedings Chairs and Electronic Proceedings Chairs**. The General Chair does not need to have much interaction with them in normal situations, while the Program Chairs do

• **SIGMOD Tutorials Chair**

• **SIGMOD Demo Chair**

The appointment of chairs should be coordinated with the SIGMOD Chair.

### 3.2 Appointing the Chairs

While filling some of these positions can be deferred, the **Finance Chair** and **Local Arrangements Chair** must be chosen as soon as possible since some of their duties are performed prior to the hotel contract being negotiated. Ultimately, the General Chair assumes these responsibilities if any of the two chairs have not been appointed.

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1 The (Electronic) Proceedings Chairs will interface with DiSC associate editor(s) in charge of SIGMOD and PODS to get prior approval from research paper and demo authors for the inclusion of presentation material (e.g., PowerPoint) on DiSC.
The Publicity Chair and Web Chair must also be chosen at least 14 months in advance of the conference as the Call for Papers (CFP) should be distributed at the previous year’s conference. The web site should also be set up prior to being advertised on the CFP.

It is also wise to appoint the Corporate Sponsors Chair as soon as possible (preferably 18 months in advance of the conference) so that she or he has time to line up commitments from corporate sponsors. The corporate sponsors can then be advertised on the Call for Papers. The budget can also be planned more easily when the commitments are known.

4. CONFERENCE PLAN AND CHAIRS

The General Chair must interface with the organizing committee over all key issues and oversee the progress of the conference plan and activities. This section gives a summary of a typical sequence of the conference planning activities, approximate completion time in the number of weeks prior to (negative number) or after the conference, and the chair who is typically in charge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>In Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submission of Preliminary TRMF to ACM</td>
<td>−80</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel commitment</td>
<td>−60</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of TMRF to ACM</td>
<td>−60</td>
<td>Finance, SIGMOD General Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP designed, Web site set up</td>
<td>−52</td>
<td>Publicity and Web Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of meeting proposal</td>
<td>−52</td>
<td>ACM Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for exhibits</td>
<td>−48</td>
<td>Exhibits Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule tutorials</td>
<td>−48</td>
<td>Tutorials Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadlines for papers</td>
<td>−26</td>
<td>Program Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of functions to hotel</td>
<td>−24</td>
<td>Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC meeting</td>
<td>−20</td>
<td>Program Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept/copyright forms to authors</td>
<td>−19</td>
<td>Program (and Proceedings) Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP designed, advertised</td>
<td>−17</td>
<td>Program Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize registration forms</td>
<td>−16</td>
<td>Registration Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers from authors</td>
<td>−16</td>
<td>Proceedings Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera-ready papers sent to printer or ACM</td>
<td>−12</td>
<td>Proceedings Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line registration open</td>
<td>−10</td>
<td>Registration Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badges and ribbons</td>
<td>−6</td>
<td>Registration Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final requirements to hotel</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final program to printer</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>Program Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance registration closes</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>Registration Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP and proceedings delivered (1)</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteed function numbers to hotel</td>
<td>−1</td>
<td>Local Arrangements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The contents of TMRF depend on costs at the hotel (e.g., A/V, meeting rooms, food, coffee breaks etc.).
3 Before the start of the SIGMOD/PODS in the previous year.
4 Ask the Program Chair for a cost estimate of the PC meeting when preparing TMRF.
In the following sections, some key interactions for the General Chair are discussed in some detail.

### 4.1 Interface with Finance Chair

The General Chair and Finance Chair initially fill out the Technical Meeting Request Form (TMRF) and establish a financial outline of the conference using the budget(s) from previous conferences as a guide. The SIGMOD Treasurer should be contacted throughout this process. The finances will be adjusted from time to time, but should not deviate radically from what it initially proposed and approved by the SIGMOD Chair, SIGMOD Treasurer, and the ACM. An overall increase of more than 20% must be pre-approved by ACM.

- Get TMRF to ACM (2 years lead time).
- Set up a preliminary budget; this must be approved by ACM prior to the hotel contract being negotiated.

**TMRF.** The conference is sponsored (with complete financial responsibility) by SIGMOD. The outline of topics to be covered in may be as follows:

- **Databases:** active databases; authorization and security; access methods; data models; constraint and rule management, data mining and OLAP, database design, performance and benchmarks; database programming languages; distributed databases; parallel databases; logic and databases; real-time databases; WWW and databases.

Typically, this can be taken from the CFP of the previous year’s conference. The anticipated audience was stated as:

- **Database professionals from academia, research labs and industry; students from academic institutions.**

Papers were said to be solicited by issuing a call for papers which was distributed in paper form at other conferences and mailed to key places, and posting electronic messages on relevant newsgroups. The number of pages in the proceedings is roughly 560-680 for SIGMOD and 260-310 for PODS, with a maximum number of papers of about 40-53 for SIGMOD and about 20-27 for PODS. The maximum number of pages per paper is set at 12. (This should be checked with the previous year conferences to see if the numbers are right.) 4-5 half-day tutorials are typical for SIGMOD and about 3 tutorials for PODS. The proceedings are published and sold by ACM, who also holds the copyright. There are electronic proceedings for both SIGMOD and PODS. The SIGMOD keynote speeches as well as tutorials and panels are to be videotaped.

Typical revenue assumptions are: 1) registration, 2) on-site proceedings, 3) charge for exhibitors, and 4) corporate donations. A simple model for expenses is to inflate from a previous year’s by some percentage. However, the similarity of the conference structures needs to be taken into consideration.

**Budget.** In a nutshell, the SIGMOD/PODS conference budget is not overly complicated. Some of the big items in the budget include: food (including coffee breaks), audio/visual equipment, entertainment, registration handling (e.g., hiring a company), and possible meeting room rentals. These are usually quite

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5 Theoretically, PODS also has cooperating ACM sub-units, namely SIGACT and SIGART. But the PODS General Chair can deal with this.

6 The numbers are estimates to be used for TMRF. The actual numbers need to be determined among the Program Chairs, the General Chairs, and SIGMOD.
clear. In addition, there are many “small” items. For example, program committee meeting costs, additional network setup (e.g., email room or WI-FI), poster boards for demos, videotaping of the keynote speeches, tutorials and panels, free registrations for student volunteers and invited speakers, copying tutorial notes, security guards, and miscellaneous costs for organizers. Furthermore, it has now been a tradition to offer about 5 undergraduate scholarships for attending the conferences each year. Although SIGMOD pays the travel costs, the conference budget needs to include 5 free registrations as a part of the scholarships.

In principle, it is useful to keep two budgets: a “bare bones” budget and a “wish list” budget. The wish list gives you an idea of how much money must be raised from sponsorships. As this money comes in you can move from the bare bones to the ideal budget.

It is desirable to keep the registration fee low. The social events typically include: Welcome Reception (Sunday night), PODS Business Meeting (Monday or Tuesday evening, beer and chips provided), SIGMOD lunches (Tuesday and Wednesday), and a Banquet (Wednesday evening). Starting with 2002, SIGMOD also organizes a New Database Faculty Symposium on the Monday evening and beer and chips are usually served. (The satellite workshops will be responsible for their own cost, unless it does not increase the conference cost.)

4.2 Interface with Corporate Sponsors Chair

The General Chair and Corporate Sponsors Chair must set guidelines and target for sponsorship. It is good to do this far enough in advance to get an idea of how the budget will look (suggest 1.5 years lead time).

The Corporate Sponsors Chair contacts people suggested by the conference organizers and asks for contributions. Once the verbal commitment is secured, the General Chair writes a letter spelling things out — thanking them for the commitment, specifying what they get in return, and saying where the check should be sent.

In the last few years, the total corporate contributions each year range from $40,000 to about $50,000, which seem to be more than enough to enable things like banners, posters and a really nice banquet.

An alternative approach is to ask corporations to sponsor particular “events” that they can hang their own advertisements on. For example, a reception is about $20,000 (see budget for costs of other events like luncheons, banquets, etc.). Whichever approach is used, it is best to estimate the expenses and send an invoice before the event rather than have them pay it directly. This way, future conferences have a better idea of what the actual expenses were, and the donation can be properly shown as conference income.

4.3 Interface with Local Arrangements Chair

The role of the Local Arrangements Chair is to plan and assist with the conference logistics. Since the General Chair and Local Arrangements Chair work together closely, it is very helpful if they are within close proximity of each other and have a good rapport. How the conference activities are separated between the two people depends on the time, available support, and interests of the people involved.

The General Chair and Local Arrangements Chair need to work very closely over most of the conference details and may in fact share many of the responsibilities below:

- Find appropriate hotel (2+ years lead time); contract is negotiated by ACM Headquarters.
- Find entertainment/venue for the banquet (9 months to 1 year lead time).
- Determine whether or not a network must be installed in the hotel for email/demos, and whether or not security guards must be hired to watch equipment (9 months lead time for network, 1-2 months for security).
• Plan entertainment for receptions, if any (6 months lead time).
• Find and negotiate audio/visual equipment (6 months lead time).
• Find and negotiate with a videotaping company (2 months lead time).
• Plan meals (1-2 months lead time).
• Find and plan student helper support (1-2 months lead time).

Since the conference is becoming increasingly complex both in terms of the technology expected and the functions performed, it is possible that some of these jobs should be broken off as separate positions (e.g. add an AV and Videotape Chair).

Food and Banquet. It is necessary to have different categories of food for lunch(es) and the banquet. Typically, the conference will offer three categories: regular, vegetarian, and kosher. In 2001 and 2002, about 25-50% meals were vegetarian. To get a better estimate, the registration form can include a selection for food categories. For an off-site banquet, there is a logistical challenge. It may be easier to hire an event management company. The fee (e.g., 18% of the total bill) will be well spent. There are many complexities with hiring bussing, entertainment, liquor, renting space, etc., and an event management company will typically pay for itself in the discounts they negotiate.

Networking and Security. It is important to take note of whether or not the conference venue is Internet enabled in the meeting rooms (especially in the demo room area). If it is not, then networking must be contracted separately. Roughly, there need to be 10 seats for email, 20 addresses for demos. For email, (relatively slow) PCs are good enough. It is desirable to have wireless networking available. Security guards may be hired from 9:30pm to 7:30am each day (Monday-Wednesday). Email can be set up on Monday and taken down on Thursday.

It should also be noted that if a network needs to be run, consideration should be given to the layout of email PCs and workstations in the room(s) involved. This layout determines the number of hubs and length of cables.

Audio-Visual. The AV company located in the conference venue may not be the only choice available, that is, they may not have an exclusive contract. It is therefore worth getting competing bids to bring the price down (in 1999, it was possible to negotiate 50% off the original bid this way). At least each session room needs the following equipment: 1-2 screens, 1-2 overhead projectors, 1 LCD projector (XGA resolution, 1024×768). For the plenary sessions, 2-3 LCD projectors are needed. There also need to be an overhead projector, an LCD projector, and 1-2 screens for the PODS Business Meeting.

One way to run the AV program is to have the LCD projectors available with speakers providing their own laptops. This simplifies the setup and should be sufficient.

Another possibility is to also rent laptops (loaded with necessary software, e.g., PowerPoint and Lotus Freelance Graphics) and have them connected “permanently” to the LCD projectors. Speakers need to bring diskettes (CDs, USB key disks, or 3.5” floppy disks) and use the laptop provided rather than their own. In this setup, it is useful to have speakers pre-load their presentations during the break before the session. However, there might be two potential problems. First, the presentation software version might not be exactly the same (causing, e.g., font problems). Second, there might still be people who would prefer to use their own laptop. Ideally, speakers can be given a choice to use their own laptop.

In any case, the equipment that will be available should be advertised to the speakers well in advance of the conference so that they are prepared.

Note that on the peak day of the conference there are 5 parallel sessions (roughly 1 PODS, 2 SIGMOD Research, 1 SIGMOD Tutorial, and 1 SIGMOD Industrial). The cost of AV with LCD projectors is therefore going to be quite high.
**Videotaping.** SIGMOD has a policy of videotaping the keynote speeches, which are typically held the first session (1.5 hours) on Tuesday and Wednesday. There is a move now to videotape tutorials and panels as well. It is therefore necessary to hire a professional quality videotaping company. Rather than having the videotaping company produce the CD, the editing and final production of the disk will be done by the SIGMOD DiSC Editor. Due to this and the fact that sometimes videotaping can be very expensive if not arranged carefully, the Local Arrangements Chair should interface with the DiSC Editor starting in the planning phase.

**Student Volunteers.** The budget needs to contain 10 to 16 student volunteer positions (i.e., each will get a free registration). There are always difficulties since the students really want to attend the sessions; they are not always reliable about being in early for registration, and may seem resentful by the end of the conference for the amount of work that was involved. It may be better to hire people to perform some of the functions below (especially registration).

Student helpers are used for the following functions:

- Stuffing bags on Sunday (estimate 3 hours).
- Helping people set up demos.
- Standing in the main areas to help people find where session rooms are.
- Being contacts for sessions in case of emergencies.
- Running general errands (e.g. copying, getting supplies).
- Helping with registration.
- Sitting in the email room to handle computer problems. The email room is typically open 7:30am to 9:30pm, Monday to Wednesday and 7:30am to 12noon on Thursday. The email room security needs to be considered during nighttime (9:30pm to 7:30am).
- Helping people find places to go for lunch, dinner, movies and other forms of entertainment.

Student volunteers should register for the conference in order to track the attendance; however, the Local Arrangements/General Chair should provide the student volunteers’ names to the Registration Chair so that conference fees can be waived.

It is a non-trivial job to organize the student volunteers. It is certainly helpful to appoint one as the lead, to be in charge of other volunteers. In 2001, a table of “duty shifts” was drawn prior to the conferences. The lead volunteer assigned the shifts to all volunteers and during the conference was responsible for ensuring that all volunteers performed their tasks. It is important that the student volunteers on duty have all contact information for the other volunteers (including home phone numbers) so that they can be reminded if necessary.

**4.4 Interface with Web and Publicity Chairs**

Find a graphic design artist/company to design a conference logo (1.5 year lead time). The logo will be used in several places: (1) on the web page; (2) on the Call for Papers and Call for Participation; (3) on the conference bags. It should be a logo that can be copied nicely and not rely on color for effect. The graphic design artist may also be used to help design the conference proceedings cover, and advertising such as a poster, banners, T-shirts etc.

**4.5 Interface with Program Chairs**

Set payment policy for the speakers (1 year lead time).
All payments can be included in the speaker’s registration package, with a letter of thanks for their participation in the program. The payment policy for each PODS speaker is typically payment of $1200. The speakers include PODS invited speaker (1) and invited tutorial speakers (2-3). The payment policy for SIGMOD speakers is usually payment of $1200 and complementary registration.

4.6 Interface with Tutorials Chair

SIGMOD tutorial notes should be distributed to all registrants. To accomplish this, the Tutorials Chair should gather and produce the master copy at least 1-2 weeks prior to the conferences. The Local Arrangements Chair can then get the copies made in time to be stuffed in the bags with the proceedings. An option is to also make the notes available for download on the conference web site during the conferences.

Normally, SIGMOD does not pay honorarium to tutorial speakers. However, the speakers may be given a free registration or one free room-night. PODS, on the other hand, typically pays honorarium to its tutorial speaker(s).[2]

4.7 Interface with Next Year’s SIGMOD General Chair

While you are in the midst of trying to figure out how to run the conferences, the next year’s conference General Chair will need a certain amount of advice. While sometimes this is best given by the previous year’s General Chair (they have had time to see what worked and what didn’t), it is good to get the two committees (current and next year’s) together during the conference to answer questions and give general advice. This is called the “Pass the Baton” meeting, and can be done at lunch on the last day of SIGMOD (i.e., right after the conferences in the current three and a half day format).

Since people make their travel plans early, it is good to let the committees of the present and next conferences know the time and date early (2 months lead time). The current General Chair should organize the meeting including necessary food, the new General Chair could help by advertising the meeting once it is set.

Alternatively, there can be small meetings for the corresponding chairs.

4.8 Interface with the SIGMOD Chair

The SIGMOD Chair should be involved in many aspects of the conference organization since the chair must approve the financial aspects of the meeting (including registration fees).

The SIGMOD Chair or his/her designator will also consult with the General Chair to choose the recipient country for the book drive (6 months lead time). In recent years, the SIGMOD Chair gave the decision of the recipient country for the book drive solely to the General Chair. It is useful to choose a Book Drive Chair to organize the collection and shipping of books (sometimes this may be funded by a corporate sponsor, e.g., Microsoft, but the SIGMOD Chair or his/her designator will have to work out the arrangement for each year).

4.9 Interface with Workshop Organizers

One of somewhat unpredictable aspects of SIGMOD/PODS conferences is about workshops. Typically, the organizer of a workshop makes a request to become a satellite workshop of SIGMOD/PODS conferences. There a three-step approval process for each request, each making an independent decision.

Workshops held in conjunction with the SIGMOD/PODS conferences must be sponsored or co-sponsored by SIGMOD, or held in cooperation with SIGMOD if they are sponsored by another organization. Further, the SIGMOD Chair in consultation with the SIGMOD and PODS Program Chairs must approve the meetings. All requests in this regard should be re-directed to SIGMOD Chair or his/her designate. The SIGMOD General Chairs is in the loop because of the required local arrangements for the workshops,
including rooms and registration, that must be coordinated with the overall conference activities. Requests to co-locate a meeting with the SIGMOD/PODS conference should be submitted at least 10 months before the intended date of the meeting, because these requests impact the SIGMOD/PODS conference budgeting and room reservations process. Late requests may face rejection for this reason.

4.10 All Chairs’ Dinner

Organizing a SIGMOD/PODS joint Conference is a task that involves 400-600 people, a quarter to a half million dollars in revenue, and above all, valuable contributions from the volunteers serving as various chairs. A successful completion certainly deserves to be celebrated. The General Chair may consider (at the time of conference planning!) to host a celebration dinner after the conference.

5. TASKS FOR CHAIRS

The previous section outlines some of the tasks for the various chairs that are carried out in close coordination with the General Chair. There are many other tasks that need to be taken care by the chairs themselves with less or no interaction with the General Chair. In this section, some of these tasks are sketched. (Note that this document does not intend to contain a complete list of tasks.)

5.1 Local Demo Chair

The role of the Local Demo Chair is to prepare and arrange an environment for successful demos, and to communicate with people selected by the Demo Chair concerning the details of the demo environment. The responsibilities include:

- Communication with demo authors to identify demo requirements,
- Developing a map for table assignments,
- Assigning tables, IP addresses and net mask to demo authors,
- Preparing handouts for demo arrangement in the demo room, demo list (table number, title, author), IP list, etc., and
- Putting a label to identify the table for each demo team.

Some additional tasks may include: providing a list of equipment renters (company name, address, fax, email, web site) to demo authors in case of a need, preparing foam-boards for visuals, taking over the networking task from the Local Arrangement Chair, etc.

5.2 Publicity Chair

The Publicity Chair is responsible for publicizing the conference electronically as well as in hardcopy. This entails the Call for Papers, Call for Participation, and the Preliminary and Final Programs. The following are some of the specific tasks:

1. Coordinate publicity of the CFP to relevant conferences, mailing lists and calendars, distribute physical copies of the CFP to relevant conferences either through colleagues who are going or by mailing the CFP to the local arrangements chair.

   Some of the relevant conference include: VLDB, ICDE, KDD, CIKM, EDBT, AAAI: DANA, IW-MMDBMS, Graph drawing, DEXA, ESA98, SIGIR, MFCS, ADBIS, ACM Multimedia, SBBD, CP, ACM GIS, SSTD, etc.

   This task can be helped by the Regional Coordinators (European, Asian etc.) to minimize mailing costs and efforts.
2. Coordinate publicity of the Call for Participation to various mailing lists, and, if it helps, send out a hardcopy Call for Participation. It is also possible to publish one participation call in the Communications of the ACM (April issue). This can be done through coordinating with ACM.

3. Prepare and print final program. This may be the most difficult task for the publicity chair. To start with, go through the final program for the previous year’s SIGMOD/PODS conferences and make a list of things that are needed. It is important to get the relevant information in time from the various people involved. The final program can be printed by ACM (a bit expensive) or elsewhere.

The following table summarizes the information needed for the final program and the contact person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information needed</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of corporate sponsor logos to put in the program along with necessary text</td>
<td>Corporate Sponsor Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message to the database community</td>
<td>SIGMOD and PODS General Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PODS highlights</td>
<td>PODS Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD highlights</td>
<td>SIGMOD Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local blurb</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair / Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration information</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair / Registration Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social events information</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair / Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PODS sessions: papers, authors, and session chairs</td>
<td>PODS Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD sessions: papers, authors, and session chairs</td>
<td>SIGMOD Program Chair, Tutorials Chair, Industrial Chair, Panel Chair, and Demo Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD annual awards information</td>
<td>SIGMOD Awards Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best paper awards information</td>
<td>SIGMOD Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PODS invited/plenary talks information</td>
<td>PODS Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD invited/plenary talks information</td>
<td>SIGMOD Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD tutorials information</td>
<td>SIGMOD Tutorials Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PODS tutorials information</td>
<td>PODS Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-located workshops information</td>
<td>Workshop Organizers/SIGMOD General Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGMOD committees</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair / Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PODS committees</td>
<td>PODS Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General information ? travel, weather, attractions, etc.</td>
<td>SIGMOD General Chair / Local Arrangements Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Web Chair

The Web Chair is responsible for creating and updating the web site for the conferences. The web site acts as the central source of information for the conference. There are two phases of the operations and uses of the conference web site.

- Prior to the previous year’s SIGMOD/PODS conferences, the web site is in the process of being developed and tested. There will be some hits but not much.
• After the previous year’s SIGMOD/PODS conferences but before the conferences, the web site is in the “official operation” mode. All vital information should be available, including CFPs, conference organizations, etc.

Web Chair should coordinate with SIGMOD Information Director to ensure that appropriate cross-links are established.

5.4 Registration Chair

The main responsibility of the Registration Chair is to ensure that (1) conference participants will be able to register for the conference in time, (2) fees and other income (e.g. sales of proceedings, social event tickets) are properly deposited into the conference account, and (3) a summary and important statistics are reported to the General Chair periodically prior to the conferences and after the conferences. This is a critical task for the conferences. The following enumerates a few key tasks/decisions for the Registration Chair.

Registration Process Planning. Typically, a conference participant starts with filling in a registration form (either online or a hardcopy) and make a payment before the conferences; upon arrival at the conference site, he or she expects to get a package that includes among other things, a receipt, a name tag, and possibly some social event tickets. This happens for about 80-90% of the participants. For the remaining, a significant portion is for onsite registrations that essentially get everything done in 5 minutes. There is a very small group who may have additional requests due to various reasons (cancellations, additional purchases, etc.). Thus, the immediate task for the Registration Chair is to plan how these can be handled.

Credit Cards & Currencies. One of the first decisions is on how to handle credit cards, checks, and cash. One possibility is to hire a company to handle basically the entire registration process (discussed below).

Outsourcing the Registration Process. In several of the recent conferences (2000, 2001, and 2003), the conference organizations hired Registration Systems Lab (RSL, http://www.regmaster.com) to handle all conference registrations. The experiences have been positive. RSL handles all transactions, provides weekly reports prior to the conferences and a final report after the conferences, and makes deposits into the conference account via the Finance Chair. The General Chair and the Registration Chair should definitely consider outsourcing registrations, and make a decision early so that the cost can be included in the budget.

Registration Form. Regardless of the decision on outsourcing registrations, the Registration Chair needs to design the form. The form should include the following categories: (1a) SIGMOD member, (1b) ACM member, (2) Non-member, (3a) SIGMOD student member, (3b) ACM student member, and (4) Student non-member. For each category, there are early and regular registration fees. Attention needs to be paid on verifying memberships stated in the registration forms. The registration form needs to be designed early; while the exact fees can be determined right before the form goes online, to account for the latest budget information.

6. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Origin of this document is a report [3] by Susan Davidson on her experiences of organizing SIGMOD/PODS ’99. In particular, Sections 4 and 5 are modified from the report, which also outlines some of the special circumstances in 1999.
7. RELATED INFORMATION

[1] ACM SIG Conference Manual,
http://www.acm.org/sig_volunteer_info/conference_manual/

[2] The Care and Feeding of PODS.