

Charter of the European Conference on Digital Libraries ECDL

The European Conference on Digital Libraries (ECDL) is a self-organized body whose main mission is to promote research and development in the area of digital libraries and other digital collections.

Digital libraries and other digital collections are becoming a critical component of the emerging “distributed knowledge environments” which can provide access to virtually all areas of human knowledge. As such, the field of digital library research and technology encompasses architectures, technologies and architecture/management structures for information creation, acquisition, access, processing, preservation, distribution, and evaluation, not only on digital library subjects, but also including museums, archives and other digital data collections. Major applications of this research and technology include education, science, commerce, medicine and the arts. A major aim of ECDL will be to provide a forum for bringing together researchers and users in the field of digital libraries and their applications, and to ensure that the proper focus is given to all of the different research aspects.

The structure of ECDL is based on four major constituencies, which collectively will overview the organization and management of the series of ECDL conferences, normally held on a yearly basis in September. The constituencies are:

- **the Steering Committee Chair and the Executive Board**
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- **the General Chair(s) and the Organizing Committee**
- **the Program Chair(s) and the Program Committee**

The Steering Committee Chair and the Executive Board

The Executive Board has as a main responsibility to solicit proposals for future conferences, and, in agreement with the Steering Committee, to make the final decisions on proposal selection.

The Executive Board is formed by the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer, who will be elected by the Steering Committee members, and will remain in charge for three years. The first Chair of the Steering Committee is the founder of the Conference series, Prof. Constantino Thanos, who will remain in charge for a three years term. To ensure continuity, the initial appointment of the Secretary and the Treasurer will be done for two years and one year respectively, so that normally each year only one new member of the Executive Board will need to be appointed. The members of the Executive Board can be re-elected at most once.

The Steering Committee Chair has as principal responsibility to oversee the overall functioning of the ECDL Steering Committee and the quality of the ECDL series of Conferences, and to represent the Steering Committee to the outside world.

The Steering Committee Secretary has as principal responsibility the invitation to the Steering Committee meetings and to provide their agenda together with all available informational material two weeks before the meeting. (S)he is responsible for the minutes of the meeting, to be sent for approval to the Steering Committee members within one month from each meeting. In case of absence of the Steering Committee Chair the Secretary will appoint a chair for the meeting.

The Steering Committee Treasurer has as his principal responsibility to oversee the financial aspects of the Steering Committee activities.

The Steering Committee

The main purpose of the Steering Committee is to ensure the continuity and the quality of ECDL. More specifically, the Steering Committee should:

- plan future ECDL conferences;
- evaluate how well each conference has achieved the objectives and the mission of ECDL;
- collect feedback about ECDL for the purpose of improving the conference over time and for giving support to future organizers;
- work together with the Executive Board to solicit proposals for future conferences and decide on the venue of future ECDL conferences, in response to the submitted proposals;
- approve the General Chair(s) and the Program Chair(s) for each ECDL conference, as indicated in the selected proposal;
- assist in the appointment of positions in the Organizing and Program Committees;
- appoint the Executive Board members.

The Steering Committee has the final authority on every aspect related to the organization and management of ECDL.

As a general rule the Steering Committee will meet once a year, in connection with the ECDL conference, unless some exceptional circumstances will require more frequent meetings. Those additional meetings may use electronic means like e-mail or telephone as long as it allows full participation of all Steering Committee members.

Steering Committee Membership

The Steering Committee members are:

- the General Chair(s) and the Program Chair(s) of the previous conferences;
- a representative of the ACM/IEEE JCDL Steering Committee;
- any other expert who is a prominent member of the ECDL community, not being a General Chair or Program Chair, on which the Steering Committee members are in agreement with a majority of two thirds

The representative of the ACM/IEEE JCDL Steering Committee is appointed by the ACM/IEEE JCDL Steering Committee for a three year period.

The members of the Steering Committee will remain in charge as long as they are active in the ECDL Community and attend ECDL Conferences. Members who do not participate to two ECDL conferences in a row and are not participating to the third conference will lose their status of members, unless they submit a request for a one year extension, which can be granted by a vote of the Steering Committee.

General Chair(s) and the Organizing Committee

In each conference, the General Chair(s), the Program Chair(s), and any other explicitly identified chairs (for example, Tutorial Chair, Panel Chair, etc.) form the Conference Organizing Committee for that conference and are in charge of the planning, running, and oversight of that conference to ensure that it meets the objectives of ECDL

The General Chair(s) are responsible for the overall running of the conference and serve as the Chair(s) of the Organizing Committee. They will prepare a report of the scientific results and the expected financial results of the conference, to be presented at the yearly meeting of the Steering Committee being held in connection with that conference.

The Organizing Committee approves all major decisions concerning the conference. The General Chair(s) are responsible for the finances of the conference and for coordinating local arrangements. To these ends, the General Chair(s) will appoint a Treasurer and a Local Arrangements Chair. The General Chair(s) may also appoint a Publicity Chair, a Publication Chair and other positions as necessary.

As a general rule it is assumed that each conference will be a not-for-profit self-supporting event. It is the responsibility of the Organizing Committee to seek external funding (sponsors, specific programs at the national or European Commission level, contributions from scientific institutions, etc) in order to keep the registration fee as low as possible. If the final balance of a conference budget will be positive, it is recommended to use the surplus money to fund the participation of young researchers to ECDL conferences, or to other scientific events related to Digital Libraries under the oversight of the ECDL Steering Committee. Any surplus will be held in the ECDL Steering Committee account. Profit sharing with co-sponsors is allowed but has to be decided by the Steering Committee at the time the Conference is approved. The participation of invited speakers, panelists, tutorialists, etc should not normally be paid, except for the waiving of the registration fee and, possibly, the reimbursement of travel expenses.

The General Chair(s) and the appointed Publicity Chair are responsible for the publicity of the conference. All notices requesting papers, panels, tutorials and tool demonstrations, as well as the advance program announcement and registration material, shall be widely distributed in a timely manner. This should include announcements in professional and research journals, electronic bulletin boards, the Web and mailings to individuals on (electronic and postal) mailing lists of interested or participating organizations.

Program Chair(s) and the Program Committee

The Program Chair(s) are responsible for planning and implementing the technical program of the conference, and therefore their main responsibility is to ensure that the scientific quality of the conference be at the highest possible level.

Program Committee

The Program Chair(s) will appoint individuals to serve on the Program Committee (with the advice and consent of the General Chair(s)). Program Committee members shall be chosen on the basis of their scientific and technical qualifications and experience. The Program Committee should be diversified in terms of expertise and representation, including members from the technology domains and members from the user communities. The Program Committee should also be diversified in terms of geographical distribution, with the total number of members from any one country not exceeding one fifth of the total number. The program Chair(s) should promote continuity by keeping some committee members from the previous conferences (e.g., members from past Organizing and Program Committees). It is expected that Program Committee members will attend the program committee meeting(s) at which acceptance or rejection decisions are made. At the discretion of the Program Committee Chair(s) and the General Chair(s) these meetings may be conducted via virtual meeting rooms (video conference) or even via telephone or electronic mail.

Call For Papers

The Program Chair(s) will prepare the Call for Papers (together with the Publicity Chair), send out notification of acceptance or rejection of submitted papers, and send out instructions to authors for submitting their final papers. The call for papers as well as actions by the individuals on the Program Committee shall encourage the submission of high quality papers that have not been previously published or are currently submitted elsewhere. Submissions should be solicited to fall in one or more of the following broad areas:

Research. Significant research results on all aspects of digital libraries, or their components, incorporating validation through implementation and use, as well as evaluation.

Policy. Discussion of significant policy issues related to the design, operation, and economics of digital libraries.

System. Systems issues in design, implementation, and operation of digital libraries, perhaps based on prototypes but strongly grounded by experience.

Experience/Evaluation. Analysis of library implementations and their application within a use context, including contributions from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology and related areas.

Fundamentals. Studies associating digital libraries with previous areas of thought and discourse. This explicitly includes topics within the realms of Library/Information Science. However, contributions in this area, as with the other areas, must be accessible to the range of conference attendees, including the more practical outlook of system developers.

ECDL will also provide a forum for discussing applications of digital library concepts and techniques in the areas of: Digital Earth, Health Care applications, Digital Sky, Digital Law, Digital Art, Digital Music, Humanities, Social Sciences, Geo-spatial Information, Natural Sciences, etc.

Reviews of Submitted Papers

The Program Committee shall be responsible for reviewing all submitted papers, for submitting timely, informative reviews that provide authors with feedback about their papers, and for attending physical or electronic Program Committee meetings. The Program Chair(s) will determine the procedures for reviewing and accepting papers for the program. They shall distribute the papers for review and arrange information so the papers can be discussed by knowledgeable reviewers before or during the program committee meeting. Program Committee members can seek expert advice from external reviewers, but they shall be responsible for having reviewed the papers themselves. Each paper shall be reviewed by at least three reviewers and each paper shall be discussed at the program committee meeting. If consensus cannot be formed or there are additional concerns raised about a paper, additional information or reviews should be obtained.

If a committee member (Program, Organizing or Steering Committee) submits papers, care must be taken that her/his paper(s) be reviewed at least as stringently as other submitted papers. Committee members shall leave the room or be electronically excluded during the discussion of their submitted papers or for any paper where she/he might have a conflict of interest. All discussion about a paper shall remain in confidence. The names of the reviewers are not to be revealed to the authors. Reviewers, however, shall be free to identify themselves to an author, if they so wish.

Constituting a Conference

The Steering Committee obtains, through open and informal solicitations, proposals for conference locations and names of individuals who are suitable to serve as General Chair(s) and Program Chair(s).

Institutions or individuals interested to propose and organize a future ECDL conference should send a written proposal to the Chair(s) of the Steering Committee at least 20 months before the proposed date. The proposal shall list facilities, venue, proposed management, preliminary budget and financial arrangements, a brief summary of the conference structure, a draft of a preliminary call for papers, the scheduling of any other potentially conflicting digital library related event (within several months before and after the proposed conference date), and any other information that the proposers deem relevant to the evaluation of the proposal.

The Steering Committee evaluates the proposals (possibly with the assistance of external reviewers), decides on one for each calendar year and notifies the proposers of acceptance at least 18 months before the proposed date. It may ask for changes in the proposals.

An ECDL conference aims to appeal to a broad digital library community. To that end proposals (and subsequent program implementation) should insure a broad range of contributions, from a broad representation of the digital library community. Research papers will be the primary type of contributions, but other types should also be included, such as invited talks, panels, posters, demonstrations, reports on systems, vendor displays.

In addition, satellite events such as tutorials and workshops should be organized in connection of an ECDL conference, in order to better fulfill the objectives of ECDL. Tutorials should address young researchers in the field of digital libraries, to promote

the knowledge of advanced and emerging technologies, or they should address user communities, to disseminate the use of advanced tools. Workshops should be a forum for discussions and exchange of ideas on relevant new topics, and they should include both the researchers and the user communities.