

Report of (*Executive Officer Title*)
IASSID Council Meeting
August, 2008

Summary of Past Year Activities

Preparation for the Cape Town World Congress.

This involved an enormous amount of work: I had over 4,000 emails about the conference, over 3,000 of these being about the abstracts themselves. Basically I have spent two or three days a week on it every week from December 07 til now (mid-August), and quite often have had to spend weekends on it too. I have had two helpers: Nell Ellison who is a psychology graduate and Trish Barton who is a secretary in the Tizard centre. Neither was available full-time but they probably also spent an average of two days per week for 4 or 5 months on it each.

We learnt a great deal about what to do and what not to do and I will put this in writing for the next World Congress team.

In brief: we found **what worked well** was:

- Writing our own simple instructions for abstracts (which went on our IASSID web site)
- Receiving the abstracts directly to us over the email as an attached word document
- Rating them as acceptable/not (by the executive meeting in Cambridge in January)
- Pasting them into the abstract book in word and then formatting them
- People who submitted no more than 1 – 4 abstracts each
- People who organized pre-prepared symposia ie. gathered 3 authors/abstracts together
- SIRG chairs who prepared their theme's mini abstract book once I sent them all the abstracts (with varying amounts of structure)
- Having CMC complete the registration etc for us (but the price for this was high!)
- Having pre-conference workshops (but we need to discuss this at more length later)

What **did not work well** was:

- People ignoring instructions for submitting abstracts (possibly due to CMC's contradictory instructions), so they had to be returned to them – eg. no sub-headings, no title, no author email address, no stated theme, etc, etc
- People having email addresses like snowleopard@hotmail.com that bore no relation whatsoever to their name
- Having the Conference Management Centre write an inflexible form for the abstracts that could not be easily pasted into word document for the abstract book
- Having the CMC submit these to me electronically on their system (only about 1/3 arrived, though they claimed they could find no fault)

- People submitting e.g. 8 abstracts (very easy for us to get muddled and very hard to stop them clashing in the programme)
- Saving abstracts into separate themes – this sometimes meant they were saved more than once in more than one theme (eg where the author wasn't sure of the theme), so that we later had to prune abstracts out that were repeated
- People changing their minds about what they had submitted (even in August!)
- People withdrawing after their abstract had been accepted
- People telling us they could only be here for one or two days – meaning we had to schedule their paper on a particular day
- The separately bookable Saturday plenaries (less than 10 extra people booked in)

Overall we had nearly 900 abstracts submitted. We have about 800 delegates coming to the conference. This is far fewer than in Montpellier (1500 approx) and we are not sure why (Effect of electronic advertising? Credit crunch? Weak dollar? Long distance? Nervous delegates?).

Budget-wise we feel we have been charged a very high price for the venue and for the audio-visual requirements. We have learnt our lesson from this as you will see when we discuss the venue for the next World Congress.

Plans for Upcoming Year

To have a quiet period for at least a month!

Issues or Acting Items

Budget still to be completed of course but likely we will make no profit at all

Discussion Points for Council

We need to discuss:

- What we want to do differently next time in advertising; abstract submission, etc ?
- Do we want a dedicated conference team ourselves (in IASSID)? – now we are doing a conference every year
- Do we want pre-conference workshops?