arXiv Scientific Advisory Board Meeting – Minutes (draft)
September 16, 2013
New York City

arXiv IT issues and priorities
- Paul agreed to give the library copies of the classifier software and model to be installed on production servers. Paul noted that the integration task will involve considerable work. While in the longer term it would be appropriate for library staff to retrain the classifier, this will be done by Paul in the immediate future.
    - Simeon to work with Paul to obtain classifier software and model to install on production servers. It is expected that Paul will continue to retrain the classifier and pass over new model data to the development team to install on a periodic basis. Paul may also update the software on occasion and Simeon should ensure that the production copy can be updated as necessary.
- Simeon to work with Paul to obtain bulk overlap check software to install on production servers (sequencing of this work vis-à-vis effort on classifier to be determined).
- Simeon to ensure that the moderator "hold" facility is quickly reinstated.
- Tools and actions in https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/arXivsab/Moderation+tools were discussed and the consensus was that these moderation tools should be the development priority.
- Based on analysis of past development effort, we should expect that a baseline effort of approximately 1.5 FTE is needed to cover routine maintenance, system administration, bug fixes, and minor improvements for the arXiv system.
- Code documentation: Simeon to provide documentation of the arXiv codebase arrangement, technologies and areas of personnel expertise. He proposed doing this as an exercise of updating, fleshing-out and organizing information on the arXiv wiki. A dumped snapshot will be provided to SAB.
- Dave Morrison will form an SAB sub-committee to liaise with Simeon on IT issues, until the appointment of a Scientific Director. Goals:
    - Understand and help prioritize development schedule for IT issues.
    - Serve as a communications channel to SAB on arXiv IT issues.
- Paul will transfer 'arxiv.org' domain name to Library.
- arXiv front page modifications are lower priority.

arXiv budget review and issues
- In terms of budget priorities, there was a consensus that hiring an interim Scientific Director and increasing developer effort to 2.5 FTE were most important.

Executive session
- It was hoped that in the future even fewer FTEs on mod-admins and more FTEs on developers would be possible (assuming that some of the current activities of the mod-admins can be relieved by better software tools). It was emphasized that transparency in the prioritization of IT issues is paramount. Along the same lines it was considered important that the interim Scientific Director will have significant input into IT priorities which was not so clear from the org chart provided (which shows HR relationships).

Scientific Director
- Proposed job description for a Scientific Director was approved with the addition of one item clarifying that the Scientific Director will have final authority over the scientific content of the arXiv.
- Scientific Director should not be the Chair of the SAB, but an *ex officio* member.

Moderation issues
- Moderator hierarchy:
  - There was recognition that in order to provide adequate coverage and manageable workloads intermediate levels of moderators (appellate or global mods) may need to be created within subject areas. This is acceptable, and is left to the discretion of subject area committees.
  - General acceptance that "higher up" moderators would have more authority (be able to overrule moderation decisions).
- Recognition of moderators:
  - The library can provide letters addressed to moderators expressing appreciation and recognition of effort. Library will do this on request (from area chair or individual moderators).
- Moderator terms:
  - We shouldn't impose terms on existing moderators. Subject area chairs can choose to start new mods with an explicit term if desired or useful (e.g., for recruitment).
- Paid moderators (especially gen-ph):
  - Paying moderators was not felt to have the same financial priority as Scientific Director or additional developer effort.
  - The physics subject committee is discussing some alternative ways of managing gen-ph (e.g., lowering standards, rapid rotation of mods, improved tools).
  - Historically, only established gen-ph authors could submit to gen-ph, which kept naïve submitters out.

SAB business
- Bylaws approved with one change (5.10: travel reimbursement should not include specific dollar amounts; an appropriate cap will be communicated to members prior to the meeting).
- SAB Chair: Members elected Ralf Bundschuh to serve as SAB Chair in 2014.
- Member terms: SAB members have three-year terms. All current members were assigned a 1, 2, or 3 year term (with roughly equal numbers in each group), to ensure some rotation every year. These terms will begin Jan 2014. A table with members and the last year of their term is on the SAB wiki: https://confluence.cornell.edu/x/hwPfDQ
- Member recruitment: this will be the responsibility of the SAB nominating committee, to be formed in Spring 2014.

Moderation issues
- Flagged users: when admins reference a submitter's status as flagged, in their correspondence with moderators, they should attempt to summarize why the flag was set.
- Openness of comments about submissions: Library team to work on procedures and technologies to move toward sharing of comments about submissions and submitters with relevant moderators, subject to constraints imposed by the existence of inappropriate comments in the arXiv admin database. Relevant moderators were defined as moderators of any category in which the submission is classified or being considered for reclassification. Only comments related to manuscripts and authors of manuscripts currently under consideration are to be available.