



**Association for
Computing Machinery**

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From “Chilecon Valley” to the World

Information Retrieval Pioneer Ricardo Baeza-Yates Earns Major Accolade

New York, NY – April 15, 2026 – ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, today announced Ricardo Baeza-Yates as the recipient of the [2025 ACM Luiz André Barroso Award](#), recognizing his pioneering contributions to algorithms and information retrieval as well as his leadership in fostering a vibrant transnational research community across Latin America.

The ACM Luiz André Barroso Award recognizes researchers from historically underrepresented communities who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. The award is named after Luiz André Barroso, a Brazilian computer engineer who pioneered the design of the modern data center. Barroso, who grew up in a diverse community, was a strong supporter of equal opportunity for everyone.

Technical Contributions

Baeza-Yates is widely regarded as one of the world’s foremost researchers in information retrieval, celebrated especially for pioneering innovative data structures that have shaped the field. His work has produced influential algorithms for string searching and fuzzy matching, including the well-known Shift-Or algorithm. Over the course of a prolific career, Baeza-Yates has authored more than 500 highly cited papers and co-written several books. His textbook, *Modern Information Retrieval* (co-authored with Berthier Ribeiro-Neto), remains the most widely used and authoritative reference in the discipline.

Building the Latin American Computing Community

Baeza-Yates has played a pivotal role in strengthening the Latin American computing community. At the University of Chile, he was the founding director of the Center for Web Research which became a hub for attracting top talent and supporting young researchers. The efforts of Baeza-Yates and others gradually led to a vibrant technology sector in Chile—reflected in today’s moniker of “Chilecon Valley.”

Later, as President of the Centro Latinoamericano de Estudios en Informática (CLEI), he led the association of computing science departments in Latin America. He also was one of the

coordinators of the Ibero-American cooperation program in science and technology for development (CYTED). He also co-founded two of Latin America's most influential research conferences—String Processing and Information Retrieval Symposium (SPIRE), focused on string processing (now an international meeting), and the Alberto Mendelzon Workshop (AMW), dedicated to databases and web research.

During this decade, he has focused on responsible AI, being one of the leading authors of ACM's Principles for Responsible Algorithmic Systems published in October 2022. He is currently a member of several technology policy committees including ACM, IEEE, OECD, and WEF.

A respected mentor, Baeza-Yates has advised 34 PhD students, many from Latin America, with 50% of them female, 53% from Latin America, and 68% from developing countries. Young people have also been excited and inspired by the South American Programming Contest which he helped to bootstrap. Launched in 1996, the Contest held its 30th competition in 2025.

“It is fitting that an ACM Award named for Luiz Barroso, who was a leading Brazilian computer scientist, would be earned this year by Ricardo Baeza-Yates, a Chilean technical star,” said ACM President Yannis Ioannidis. “Their careers reflect how institutions of higher education in Latin America have produced some of the field's most important trailblazers. Building on this foundation, Ricardo Baeza-Yates saw that a transnational approach encouraging cooperation among various Latin American countries was the most effective way to foster digital economies in the region. ACM is excited to be part of this growth. Latin American countries are increasingly hosting ACM conferences, our membership is growing across the region, and increasingly more ACM Fellows and ACM journal editors call Latin America home.”

“Google is proud to sponsor this award in honor of our late colleague Luiz Barroso,” said Jeff Dean, Google's Chief Scientist. “By fundamentally re-thinking the design of data centers, Luiz laid the foundations for cloud computing. In the same way, Ricardo Baeza-Yates' innovations and indispensable book on information retrieval have been crucial to how we harness data and gain insights from it. We're also proud to collaborate with Ricardo Baeza-Yates and others who are furthering technology in Latin America. Google continues to make major investments in the region to increase connectivity, foster digital growth, and enable greater access to AI applications.”

Biographical Background

Ricardo Baeza-Yates, a native of Chile, is currently the Search Chief Scientist at You.com, holding part-time professor appointments at KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain) and Universidad de Chile. As a practitioner, Baeza-Yates served as VP of Research for Yahoo Labs, secured 14 patents, and co-founded several startups in Chile and Spain, the latest one Theodora AI, devoted to mitigating technological bias.

Baeza-Yates is an engineering graduate of the Universidad de Chile, where he also earned Master's Degrees in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering. He earned a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Waterloo. Among his honors, Baeza-Yates received the CLEI Distinction for

Contributions to Computing in Latin America in 2009, the Spanish “Ángela Ruiz Robles” Award for research excellence and entrepreneurship in applied computing in 2018, the 2024 Chilean National Prize for Applied Sciences and Technology, and the first Merit Award from the Chilean Computing Science Society in 2025. He is a member of Academia Europaea, and a Fellow of ACM and IEEE.

Baeza-Yates will be formally presented with the ACM Luiz André Barroso Award at the annual ACM Awards Banquet, which will be held this year on Saturday, June 13 at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco.

About the ACM Luiz André Barroso Award

The [ACM Luiz André Barroso Award](#) celebrates researchers from communities historically underrepresented in computing from across the world who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. Each year ACM honors a preeminent computer scientist with the Luiz André Barroso Award. The award recipient gives a one-hour invited talk at a major ACM conference of their choice. A video of the talk is made available on the ACM website. The award carries a cash prize of \$40,000 plus an additional \$10,000 cash contribution to an approved charity of the awardee’s choice. Financial support for the Luiz André Barroso Award is provided by Google.

About ACM

[ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery](#), is the world’s largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources, and address the field’s challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession’s collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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