

General Chairs' Welcome

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to SIGIR 2016, the 39th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval. SIGIR is back in Pisa, Italy, after exactly 30 years from the 1986 edition; at that time the proceedings were still in paper form, the conference did not have its own web page, Wi-Fi in the lecture rooms was not provided, and delegates tweeting about their impressions were still rare. Notwithstanding the lack of the modern commodities above, those who participated in that edition tell us stories of a lively and thoroughly enjoyable event; we hope to live up to that tradition and offer you five days of engaging scientific events, networking opportunities, and social fun.

The conference will start on July 17 with a day of (full-day and half-day) tutorials, plus the Doctoral Consortium. SIGIR 2016 will enter its main phase in the three days that follow, when the main conference (July 18-20) and the SIRIP Industry Track (July 20) will take place. The stimulating technical program set up includes two valuable and insightful keynote talks opening the first and the third day of the main conference:

- *Understanding Human Language: Can NLP and Deep Learning Help?* by Christopher Manning, Stanford University;
- *Big Data in Climate: Opportunities and Challenges for Machine Learning*, by Vipin Kumar, University of Minnesota.

The last day of the conference (July 21) will be entirely devoted to workshops.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who helped us in setting up SIGIR 2016. First of all, we would like to give heartfelt thanks to our sponsor, ACM SIGIR, and our corporate supporters: Baidu (Platinum Supporter), Appen, Bloomberg, Booking.com, eBay, Facebook, Google, Huawei, IBM, Microsoft, Yahoo! (Silver Supporters), and Yandex (Bronze Supporter). All of them provided generous sponsorship, which allowed us to keep the registration fees (believe it or not...) as low as possible and fund a lot of student travels. Thanks also to the National Research Council of Italy and to the Qatar Computing Research Institute for supporting our organizational work.

Putting everything together was hard teamwork. We want to thank everybody involved in making SIGIR 2016 an exciting event. First and foremost, we want to thank our Program Chairs Javed Aslam, Ian Ruthven, and Justin Zobel, not only for chairing the selection of the full papers, but also for painstakingly overseeing the rest of the scientific program. Many thanks also to the Short Papers Chairs Ben Carterette, Carlos Castillo, and Jaana Kekäläinen, who had to deal with an inordinate amount of short paper submissions under tighter-than-usual time constraints; to the Tutorials Chairs Evangelos Kanoulas and Tie-Yan Liu; to the Workshops Chairs Aristides Gionis and Edie Rasmussen; to the Demo Chair Craig

Macdonald; to the Doctoral Consortium Chairs Brian Davison and Kira Radinski; to the SIRIP Industry Track Chairs Jussi Karlgren and Gilad Mishne; to the Sponsorship Chairs Fabrizio Falchi and Jimmy Huang; and to the Awards Chair Norbert Fuhr. All of them went to great lengths to ensure the high quality of this conference. Quite aside from the people who held chairing roles, lots of other people contributed to the scientific success of SIGIR 2016: many thanks to the members of the Senior Program Committee, to the members of the first-tier Program Committee, to the mentors of the Doctoral Consortium Committee, and to all those who reviewed, in any capacity, full papers, short papers, tutorial and workshop proposals, demo papers.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all the members of the local organizing team at the National Research Council of Italy; in order to keep the registration fees as low as possible, no professional conference organization company was called in to help, and they took 100% of the organization upon them. We would thus like our two Local Chairs Andrea Esuli and Chiara Renso; our Treasurer Giulio Galesi; our Publications Chair Claudio Lucchese; our Publicity Chair Nicola Tonello; our Webmaster Franco Maria Nardini; our Student Volunteers Coordinators Alejandro Moreo Fernández and, again, Franco Maria Nardini. Thanks also to (in no particular order) Catherine Bosio, Matteo Catena, Francesca Donati, and Sara Montesi for helping in various phases of the organization. They all invested tremendous efforts into making SIGIR 2016 an exciting and enjoyable event. It is due to them that the organization of SIGIR 2016 was not just hard work, but also a pleasure.

We look forward to welcoming you in Pisa, Tuscany, possibly the most enchanting region of Italy, surely the richest of artistic heritage and landscapes. Due to its history and the extraordinary quality of food and wines, it is an unforgettable place to visit. We hope that you will be rewarded by the technical challenges of SIGIR 2016 but you will also get a chance to explore our region and enjoy its vibrant atmosphere!

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