

IEEE/ACM ASONAM 2020

Message from Steering Chair

The IEEE/ACM conference on advances in social network analysis and mining (ASONAM) started in 2009 in Athens, Greece with in-person attendance to mainly analyze virtual social activities. The steering committee never thought of organizing the conference virtually. However, the recent pandemic which started in China in late 2019 and spread swiftly to severely affect every part of the world, forcing people to practice social distancing as a major measure to prevent and control further spread of the virus. Initially we were optimistic and expected the virus would disappear by summer 2020 and hence we were hoping to have a regular organization with in-person attendance. However, during the summer months the virus went out of control in most countries and keeping the hope for an in-person attendance, we decided to move the conference to early December 2020 as a better option than canceling the event. At the end, we had no choice other than a virtual organization. Despite all the challenges and difficulties associated with the pandemic, a large number of submissions were received as another marker of the trust in the quality of ASONAM as a leading conference. This could be clearly realized by the acceptance rate which has stabilized around 13-18% since ASONAM was organized in Istanbul, Turkey in 2012. Indeed, Athens was the city where ASONAM was born and Istanbul was the city where ASONAM showed first signals of maturity and stability in terms of the number of submissions, acceptance rate and participation. The stability sustained since then and ASONAM got its permanent position among top tier international conferences. Every year, authors of all papers presented at ASONAM and the co-located events are invited to submit expanded versions of their manuscripts to the prestigious SNAM journal, NetMAHIB journal, or the LNSN series which are characterized by their high visibility and fast processing of submissions. Special thanks to Springer Nature for their continuous support since ASONAM started in 2009 and for having their prestigious venues which have been well integrated with ASONAM to the benefit of both parties.

This year, we gathered virtually over four days to witness interesting and exciting research achievements by various authors who presented full, short, or demo papers. However, a large team of dedicated and motivated research leaders worked closely for twelve months to put together the attractive and intensive scientific program. Their great achievements contribute much to the visibility of ASONAM. I would like to heartedly thank them all. Thank you to all organizers including honorary chairs, general chairs, program chairs, tutorial chairs, workshop chairs, demos track chairs, industrial track chairs, PhD track chairs, and multidisciplinary track chairs. Not to forget in particular the generous support received from the operational organizing team who have spent considerable time and effort handling daily issues and activities, answering emails, updating the Websites, etc. Special thanks to Min-Yuh, Panagiotis, Tansel, Mehmet, Diaylo, Jalal, Tamer, Kashfia, Ahmed, Abdullah, Aya, Busra, Deniz, Loubaba, Coskun, and Peter, who have worked hard to produce the proceedings, communicate with participants/authors, and handle the registration, budget, virtual setup and logistics. Indeed, without their highly appreciated effort it would have been really very hard to maintain the high quality of service. It is also important to thank the participants and the authors who submitted papers, as well as the program committee members and the reviewers who invested their valuable time and effort to provide timely and comprehensive reviews. Hard luck to authors who could not get their papers accepted this year. They are strongly encouraged to submit again and try to get the opportunity and privilege to present their work at ASONAM in the coming years. With the hope that the pandemic will be over soon, and the situation will allow for in-person participation, next year ASONAM 2021 will be held in The Hague, The Netherlands which is another one of the most popular touristic destination.

The received feedback revealed how participants enjoyed ASONAM 2020 though virtually organized. We look forward to receiving your new submissions and seeing you next year for ASONAM 2021.

Reda Alhajj,
Steering Chair