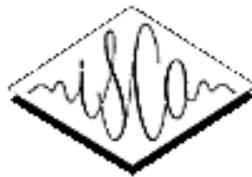
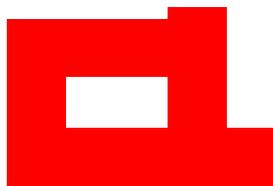


SIGDIAL 2017



**18th Annual Meeting of the
Special Interest Group on Discourse and
Dialogue**



Proceedings of the Conference

**15-17 August 2017
Saarbrücken, Germany**

In cooperation with:

Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL)

International Speech Communication Association (ISCA)

Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)

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Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL)
209 N. Eighth Street
Stroudsburg, PA 18360
USA
Tel: +1-570-476-8006
Fax: +1-570-476-0860
acl@aclweb.org

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Introduction

We are excited to welcome you to this year's SIGdial Conference, the 18th Annual Meeting of the Special Interest Group on Discourse and Dialogue. We are pleased to hold the conference in Saarbrücken on August 15-17th, co-located with SemDial 2017, and in close proximity to both INTERSPEECH 2017 and YRRSDS 2017, the Young Researchers' Roundtable on Spoken Dialog Systems.

The SIGdial conference remains a premier publication venue for research in discourse and dialogue. This year, the program includes oral presentations, poster sessions, and one demo session. SIGdial 2017 also hosts three special sessions, two joint with SemDial 2017.

We received 113 submissions this year. In only one previous year has there been a greater number of submissions to SIGdial. All long and short papers received at least 3 reviews. We carefully considered both the numeric ratings and the tenor of the comments in making our selections for the program. Overall, the members of the Program Committee did an excellent job in reviewing the submitted papers. We thank them for their important role in selecting the accepted papers and for helping to come up with a high quality program for the conference. We also thank Pierre Lison, Mentoring Chair for SIGdial 2017, for his dedicated work on the mentoring process. The goal of mentoring is to assist authors of papers that contain important ideas but lack clarity. In line with the SIGdial tradition, our aim has been to create a balanced program that accommodates as many favorably rated papers as possible. We accepted 29 long papers, 11 short papers and 7 demo presentations. These numbers give an overall acceptance rate of 41.6%. The rates separately for types of papers are 42% for long papers, 30% for short and 87% for demo submissions. Of the long papers, 18 were presented as oral presentations. The remaining 11 long papers and all the short papers were presented as posters, split into two poster sessions.

This year SIGdial has three special sessions on topics of growing interest. The chosen sessions were (i) the Special Session on Negotiation Dialog organized by Amanda Stent, Aasish Pappu, Diane Litman and Marilyn Walker; (ii) the Second WOCHAT Special Session on Chatbots and Conversational Agents organized by Ryuichiro Higashinaka, Ron Artstein, Rafael E. Banchs, and Wolfgang Minker; and (iii) Special Session on Natural Language Generation for Dialog Systems organized by Marilyn Walker, Verena Rieser, Vera Demberg, Dietrich Klakow, Dilek Hakkani-Tur, David M. Howcroft and Shereen Oraby. These specialized topics brought diverse paper submissions to our technical program. At the conference, the special sessions also featured panel discussions and position talks, allowing for active engagement of the conference participants. This year, two of these special sessions, the one on negotiation and on conversational agents, are part of the joint SIGdial/SemDial program at the conference bringing both communities to participate in them.

This year's SIGdial conference runs 3 full days compared to previous years where it was 2.5 days. We have designed our program to be balanced and inviting to SIGdial and SemDial participants alike. One keynote and one special session is held each day with remaining time given to oral and poster presentations. Two of the special sessions were run as joint sessions with SemDial and the poster/demo sessions contained presentations from both venues. We hope that we achieved a tighter bond between the two communities this year, and we hope the two communities will continue to foster their common interests and research ideas.

A conference of this scale requires advice, help and enthusiastic participation of many parties and we have a big 'thank you' to say to all of them.

We thank our three keynote speakers, Elisabeth André (Augsburg University, Germany), Andrew Kehler (UC San Diego, USA) and Oliver Lemon (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, UK) for their inspiring talks and views on the many modern aspects of research in discourse and dialog.