

Program Chair Message

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We are pleased to present the technical papers for the 2016 IEEE Virtual Reality Conference (IEEE VR 2016), held March 19–23, 2016, in Greenville, South Carolina, USA.

This year, out of 135 submissions, 17 were accepted as journal papers to IEEE *TVCG* (12.6%), and 16 will be published as conference papers, for a global acceptance rate of 25.9%. A further 43 paper submissions were accepted in poster abstract format. All of these accepted submissions will be presented at the IEEE VR 2016 conference, along with 6 additional papers in the VR area that were published in IEEE *TVCG* during the past year, as well as 2 papers that were published in IEEE *Computer Graphics & Applications*.

The International Program Committee (IPC) was comprised of 40 internationally renowned experts from 11 different countries spanning North and South America, Europe, and Asia/ Oceania. Membership in the IPC was determined by a formal nomination and voting process among the four program chairs, with additional help from Kiyoshi Kiyokawa. To guide the IPC selection process we started with a database of 158 previous IPC nominees and augmented it with 65 new nominations, then subtracted candidates who had already served on the IPC in each of the three consecutive prior years. After an initial round of closed voting, in which each IPC chair had a fixed number of votes they could award to candidates in each of the three geographical regions, we held a live virtual meeting in which we discussed all of the candidates who had received multiple votes and came to a consensus on whom to invite.

All of the accepted papers this year underwent a rigorous two-round review process, mediated through the Precision Conference System. Each submitted paper received four expert reviews, including two external reviews and two reviews from members of the IPC. The primary and secondary reviewers for each paper were chosen from the IPC by the program chairs after an internal bidding process among the IPC members. Each IPC reviewer then recruited one additional external reviewer for each paper to which they were assigned.

After the first-round review, there was a week-long online discussion period during which the four reviewers of each submission, under the guidance of the primary coordinator, reached a consensus recommendation to either accept the paper, reject the paper, or engage in further discussion about the paper with additional readers from among the IPC. This small group discussion period was followed by a first-round online meeting of the full IPC during which a general consensus was reached about the preliminary classification of all of the submissions.

In line with our adherence to strict conflict-of-interest

rules throughout the entire process, individual IPC members were recused from the meeting when any submission they were conflicted with came up for discussion.

After this initial meeting, 12 papers were recommended for conditional acceptance, and 48 additional submissions were categorized as warranting further discussion. The remaining 75 submissions were either rejected or conditionally accepted as 2-page poster abstracts. A second round of bidding was used to assign two additional readers from the IPC to each paper in the “discuss” category. After a two-week interval, during which time each remaining paper was discussed among the four total IPC members assigned to read it, the entire IPC re-convened for a second two-day online meeting to arrive at a consensus decision for each of these submissions. Possible decisions at the second IPC meeting were: conditional acceptance as journal paper, conditional acceptance as conference paper, or rejection.

The final decision for each paper was determined by a majority vote of all non-conflicted members of the entire IPC, which was conducted anonymously. The set of journal papers recommended for conditional acceptance was separately approved by the *TVCG* board. For each conditionally accepted paper, the set of modifications that were deemed necessary for a conditional acceptance were also defined.

After these decisions were taken, all of the conditionally accepted submissions (journal papers, conference papers, and poster abstracts) underwent a second round of reviewing, in which each revised submission was re-reviewed by the primary reviewer to check whether the revisions were sufficient to warrant final acceptance. The final acceptance of the journal papers was approved by the *TVCG* board. Additional poster abstracts, separately submitted through the posters track, were independently reviewed by the posters chairs.

All accepted journal papers are published in a special issue of IEEE *Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* (*TVCG*). The Proceedings of the IEEE Virtual Reality Conference 2016 contains all of the accepted conference papers and the poster abstracts. Both the special issue of IEEE *Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* and the Proceedings of the IEEE Virtual Reality Conference 2016 are permanently archived in the IEEE Digital Library.

Many individuals have contributed a great deal of time and energy towards making the technical program of the 2016 IEEE Virtual Reality Conference a success. We would like to thank each of the 545 authors of submitted papers for sending their work for consideration to IEEE VR 2016, as well as the 40 members of the international program committee and 196 external reviewers for their many hours of dedicated effort to select the work that appears here. We are grateful to Leila De Floriani, Editor-in-Chief of *TVCG*, for her support of the IEEE Virtual Reality 2016 Special Issue, and to Associate Editor-in-Chief Dieter Schmalstieg for his assistance in coordinating it. We also thank Meghan Haley of Junction Publishing for her efforts in assembling the IEEE VR 2016 conference proceedings. Finally, we are indebted to the Virtual Reality Steering Committee for their leadership and advice, and to all of the members of the extensive and vibrant IEEE VR community for your strong support of this event.