



## Conference Reports

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This section features brief reports from recent events sponsored or run in cooperation with ACM SIGAI.

### 2nd IEEE International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality (AIVR 2019)

*San Diego, USA, December 9-11, 2019*  
<https://aivr.science.uu.nl/2019/>

AIVR 2019 was co-located with the IEEE International Symposium on Multimedia (ISM), which is organized by the same IEEE Technical Committee. Together both conferences had an attendance of about 175+ participants.

Overall, IEEE AIVR received 67 submissions over all submission categories (not including workshops). Being in its second year now, AIVR slowly starts to create a community and develop its own profile. Several papers nicely demonstrated the relation between AI and VR/AR and the potential of bringing these two communities together in a unique event. Some submissions exclusively covered AI or VR/AR. A few of these were accepted because the conference reasoned that if the aim was to bring people from these communities together, it needed to be open to people who are not working in both fields yet, but whose work is of potential interest to both communities. These were not included in the main program though but presented in the special sessions or poster session.

All submissions were carefully reviewed in an elaborate process. Several rejected papers were invited to other categories. All of these were well reviewed and showed potential, but lacked a bit in depth, level, or conclusiveness in the results. Thus, they were very well suited for the newly introduced poster session and special session. The combined poster and demo session actually made a very nice and well received addition to this year's event.

Overall, the conference organization went smoothly, thanks to the experienced organization team (which also co-hosted IEEE ISM and

has a long successful history of conference organization for IEEE). Submission rates were a bit lower than expected, although the community seems to grow and the event gets better recognized.

The conference was sponsored by IEEE Computer Society and financially supported by the IEEE Technical Committee on Semantic Computing (IEEE TCMC).

In conclusion, the organising committee was happy with the outcome and optimistic that the conference is on the right track and will grow in the future. The support of ACM and its three SIGs helped a lot in achieving this.

### International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems (AAMAS 2020)

*Virtual Online, May 11-13, 2020*

<https://aamas2020.conference.auckland.ac.nz/>

The Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems (AAMAS) conference series gathers researchers from around the world to share the latest advances in the field. Agents, entities that can interact with their environment or other agents, are an increasingly important field of artificial intelligence. Agents can learn, reason about others, adopt norms, and interact with humans in both virtual and physical settings. This field includes contributions to many areas across artificial intelligence, including game theory, machine learning, robotics, human-agent interaction, modeling, and social choice. While the majority of the work is academic investigations with lab-based experiments, there have also been a growing number of real-world deployments with direct impact on governmental and commercial organizations.

The 19th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems was originally scheduled to be held in Auckland, NZ. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, it was conducted as a virtual conference from May 11-13, 2020 with the videos hosted on the underline.io platform. The live stream of

the virtual conference was a single track of keynotes and a panel. It featured keynote presentations by Carla Gomes (Cornell), Alison Heppenstall (U of Leeds), Sergey Levine (UC-Berkeley), and Thore Graepel (DeepMind). The ACM SIGAI Autonomous Agents Research Award talk was presented by Muninder P. Singh (NCSU), and Dominik Peters (CMU) delivered the Victor Lesser Dissertation Award presentation. There was a Blue Sky Panel that discussed future research directions for the multi-agent systems community. The best paper of the Blue Sky track was delivered by Frank and Virginia Dignum.

Paper authors recorded 15 minute talks which were archived on the [underline.io](https://underline.io) site. In total there were 847 paper submissions, 186 of the submissions were accepted as full papers (23%) and 129 as extended abstracts (16%). The top 20% of accepted papers from the main track were nominated for an expedited review process at Journal of Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems. The smaller meetings (workshops, doctoral mentoring consortium) primarily relied on Zoom; tutorials were free to view on the [underline.io](https://underline.io) platform. Conference costs were covered by authors, and attendance was free for participants. During the conference, participants communicated using Discord (which supports a chat lobby, message board and a VoIP chatting system) and Online Town, a video conferencing system that allows people to hold separate video conversations in parallel by walking around a virtual conference center.

Like many other 2020 conferences, the major challenge was dealing with the COVID-19 situation. The conference negotiated the mutually beneficial agreement of returning to Auckland for AAMAS 2022 and using pre-paid venue deposits for 2020 as a down payment for 2022. After the conference switched to the virtual-only format, the conference halved the registration fee for authors and made the conference free for participants and workshop authors. The conference had 292 registered paper authors and 104 workshop registrations. On the first day of the conference, the live stream had 1318 viewers; during the first week, 3726 users watched the AAMAS conference videos. Most participants favorably reviewed the virtual conference and would like

the option to attend virtually in the future.



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