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Preface

We are glad to pen the first few words for the proceedings of SIGDIAL 2021, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Special Interest Group on Discourse and Dialogue. The SIGDIAL conference is a premier publication venue for research in discourse and dialogue.

This year, the conference is organized as a hybrid event with both in-person and virtual participation on July 29-31, 2021, right before ACL-IJCNLP 2021. The 2021 Young Researchers’ Roundtable on Spoken Dialog Systems (YRRSDS 2021) is also held as a satellite event. The SIGDIAL 2021 program features three keynote talks, 6 paper presentation sessions, 1 demo session, and 2 special sessions, entitled “Summarization of Dialogues and Multi-Party Meetings”, and “Safety for E2E Conversational AI”.

COVID has changed the way we work, but it doesn’t hamper our research progress. We received 142 submissions this year, comprising 88 long papers, 49 short papers, and 5 demo descriptions. We had 12 Senior Program Committee (SPC) members who were each responsible for 11-12 papers, leading the discussion process and also contributing meta-reviews. Each submission was assigned to an SPC member and received at least three reviews. Decisions carefully considered the original reviews, meta-reviews, and discussions among reviewers facilitated by the SPCs. We are immensely grateful to the members of the Program Committee and Senior Program Committee for efforts in providing excellent, thoughtful reviews of the large number of submissions. Their contributions have been essential to selecting the accepted papers and providing a high-quality technical program for the conference. We have aimed to develop a broad, varied program spanning the many positively rated papers identified by the review process. We accepted 59 papers in total: 40 long papers (45%), 15 short papers (31%), and 4 demo descriptions, for an overall acceptance rate of 41.5%, in line with prior years.

One keynote will highlight each of the three days of the conference. In organizing this hybrid in-person/virtual conference, we have tried to maintain as much of the spirit of a fully online conference as possible. Recordings for all papers and demos have been made available several days before the start of the conference, for participants to watch asynchronously. Long and short papers are organized into sessions taking into consideration the presenters’ time zones. Regular papers sessions span 8-11 papers, each presented as a two-minute pre-recorded talk followed by five minutes of live Q&A. For demos, we organized four parallel zoom rooms to allow participants to interact with and observe live interactions with the systems. The topics represent the breadth of research in discourse and dialogue. A conference of this size requires the energy, guidance, and contributions of many parties, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge them all. We thank our three keynote speakers, Julia Hirschberg (Columbia University), Raymond J. Mooney (University of Texas at Austin), and Jason Weston (Facebook AI & NYU), for their inspiring talks on “Whom Do We Trust in Dialogue Systems?”, “Dialog with Robots: Perceptually Grounded Communication with Lifelong Learning”, and “A journey from ML & NNs to NLP and Beyond: Just more of the same isn’t enough?” We also thank the organizers of the two special sessions: “Summarization of Dialogues and Multi-Party Meetings”, and “Safety for E2E Conversational AI”. We are grateful for their coordination with the main conference.

SIGDIAL 2021 is made possible by the dedication and hard work of our community. We are indebted to many. The SIGDIAL track record of excellence continues this year. This would not have been possible without the advice and support of the SIGDIAL board, particularly Gabriel Skantze and Mikio Nakano for their guidance. Special mention must be made of the fact that, for the first time, we pilot a hybrid conference to facilitate the participation. This inevitably increases the workload for the organizers.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the local chairs, Chitralekha Gupta, and Berrak Sisman for coordinating everything flawlessly, the local co-chairs, Yi Zhou, Mingyang Zhang, Grandee Lee, Rui Liu, Zongyang Du, Kun Zhou, and Chen Zhang for managing the virtual platform and local
matters professionally; the COLIPS council members Yan Wu, Minghui Dong, and Lei Wang for their tremendous support to the arrangement of venue and social programs. Special thanks go to local chair Siqi Cai for her tireless effort in managing the website with timely updates, and to local co-chair Bidisha Sharma for conference registration, last but not least, to Celine Cheong and Min Yuan for their administrative support. SIGDIAL 2021 would not have been possible without their extraordinary effort.

We would also like to thank the sponsorship chair David Vandyke, who has been our SIGDIAL ambassador to the industry year after year. He continued to bring to the conference an impressive panel of conference sponsors. We thank David for his dedicated effort. We gratefully acknowledge the support of our sponsors: LivePerson (Platinum), Apple, DataBaker, Google and Rasa Technologies (Gold) and Furhat Robotics, Toshiba Research Europe (Silver). In addition, we thank Jessy Li, the publication chair, Nina Dethlefs, the mentoring chair for their dedicated services.

Finally, it is our great pleasure to welcome you physically and virtually to the conference. We hope that you will have an enjoyable and productive time, and leave with fond memories of SIGDIAL 2021. With our best wishes for a successful conference!

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Gina-Anne Levow, Zhou Yu, Program Co-Chairs
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Bing Liu, Facebook, United States
Eduardo Lleida Solano, University of Zaragoza, Spain
José Lopes, Heriot Watt University, United Kingdom
Nurul Lubis, Heinrich Heine University, Germany
Tiancheng Zhao, SOCO.AI, United States
Mingyang Zhou, Ph.D. Student at University of California, Davis, United States
Ingrid Zukerman, Monash University, Australia


Invited Speakers:
Julia Hirschberg, Columbia University, USA
Raymond J. Mooney, University of Texas, USA
Jason Weston, Facebook AI & NYU Visiting Research Professor, USA
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July 29, 2021

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Raymond J. Mooney

22:30–03:00 Special Session: Summarization of Dialogues and Multi-Party Meetings (Summ-Dial)

22:00–00:15 Special Session: Safety for E2E Conversational AI (SafeConvAI)

July 30, 2021

12:00–13:00 Paper Session P1

Understanding and predicting user dissatisfaction in a neural generative chatbot
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Kai-Hui Liang, Patrick Lange, Yoo Jung Oh, Jingwen Zhang, Yoshimi Fukuoka and Zhou Yu
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13:00–14:30 Paper Session P2

*ARTA: Collection and Classification of Ambiguous Requests and Thoughtful Actions*
Shohei Tanaka, Koichiro Yoshino, Katsuhito Sudoh and Satoshi Nakamura

*Integrated taxonomy of errors in chat-oriented dialogue systems*
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*A Simple yet Effective Method for Sentence Ordering*
Aili Shen and Timothy Baldwin
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*Topic Shift Detection for Mixed Initiative Response*
Rachna Konigari, Saurabh Ramola, Vijay Vardhan Alluri and Manish Shrivastava

*Improving Unsupervised Dialogue Topic Segmentation with Utterance-Pair Coherence Scoring*
Linzi Xing and Giuseppe Carenini

**14:30–15:00 BREAKOUT**

**15:00–16:00 Paper Session P3**

*Fundamental Exploration of Evaluation Metrics for Persona Characteristics of Text Utterances*
Chiaki Miyazaki, Saya Kanno, Makoto Yoda, Junya Ono and Hiromi Wakaki

*Multi-Referenced Training for Dialogue Response Generation*
Tianyu Zhao and Tatsuya Kawahara

*Contrastive Response Pairs for Automatic Evaluation of Non-task-oriented Neural Conversational Models*
Koshiro Okano, Yu Suzuki, Masaya Kawamura, Tsuneo Kato, Akihiro Tamura and Jianming Wu

*How does BERT process disfluency?*
Ye Tian, Tim Nieradzik, Sepehr Jalali and Da-shan Shiu

*Hi-DST: A Hierarchical Approach for Scalable and Extensible Dialogue State Tracking*
Suvodip Dey and Maunendra Sankar Desarkar

*Dialogue State Tracking with Multi-Level Fusion of Predicted Dialogue States and Conversations*
Jingyao Zhou, Haipang Wu, Zehao Lin, Guodun Li and Yin Zhang

*Recent Neural Methods on Dialogue State Tracking for Task-Oriented Dialogue Systems: A Survey*
Vevake Balaraman, Seyedmostafa Sheikhalishahi and Bernardo Magnini
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16:00–17:00  Demo Session

Scikit-talk: A toolkit for processing real-world conversational speech data
Andreas Liesenfeld, Gabor Parti and Chu-Ren Huang

ERICA: An Empathetic Android Companion for Covid-19 Quarantine
Etsuko Ishii, Genta Indra Winata, Samuel Cahyawijaya, Divesh Lala, Tatsuya Kawahara and Pascale Fung

A multi-party attentive listening robot which stimulates involvement from side participants
Koji Inoue, Hiromi Sakamoto, Kenta Yamamoto, Divesh Lala and Tatsuya Kawahara

A Cloud-based User-Centered Time-Offset Interaction Application
Alberto Chierici, Tyeece Kiana Fredorcia Hensley, Wahib Kamran, Kertu Koss, Armaan Agrawal, Erin Meekhof, Goffredo Puccetti and Nizar Habash

17:30–19:00  Panel

19:00–20:00  Virtual Tour (ALL) and Dinner (Physical only)

20:00–21:00  Sponsor Session SPS1

21:00–22:15  Keynote 2: A journey from ML and NNs to NLP and Beyond: Just more of the same isn’t enough?
Jason Weston
July 30, 2021 (continued)

23:00–00:00  Paper Session P4

*Telling Stories through Multi-User Dialogue by Modeling Character Relations*
Wai Man Si, Prithviraj Ammanabrolu and Mark Riedl

*Summarizing Behavioral Change Goals from SMS Exchanges to Support Health Coaches*
Itika Gupta, Barbara Di Eugenio, Brian D. Ziebart, Bing Liu, Ben S. Gerber and Lisa K. Sharp

*Rare-Class Dialogue Act Tagging for Alzheimer’s Disease Diagnosis*
Shamila Nasreen, Julian Hough and Matthew Purver

*CIDER: Commonsense Inference for Dialogue Explanation and Reasoning*
Deepanway Ghosal, Pengfei Hong, Siqi Shen, Navonil Majumder, Rada Mihalcea and Soujanya Poria

*Where Are We in Discourse Relation Recognition?*
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*Annotation Inconsistency and Entity Bias in MultiWOZ*
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*On the Need for Thoughtful Data Collection for Multi-Party Dialogue: A Survey of Available Corpora and Collection Methods*
Khyati Mahajan and Samira Shaikh

*How Should Agents Ask Questions For Situated Learning? An Annotated Dialogue Corpus*
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Erik Ekstedt and Gabriel Skantze
July 31, 2021 (continued)

21:00–22:00 Paper Session P6

A Task-Oriented Dialogue Architecture via Transformer Neural Language Models and Symbolic Injection
Oscar J Romero, Antian Wang, John Zimmerman, Aaron Steinfeld and Anthony Tomasic

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Shikib Mehri and Maxine Eskenazi

Schema-Guided Paradigm for Zero-Shot Dialog
Shikib Mehri and Maxine Eskenazi

22:00–22:30 BREAKOUT

22:30–23:45 Keynote 3: Whom Do We Trust in Dialogue Systems?
Julia Hirschberg

00:00–01:00 Business Meeting and Closing Ceremony
Special Session: Summarization of Dialogues and Multi-Party Meetings (SummDial)

22:30–22:45  Opening

22:45–23:30  Keynote 1: Who discussed what with whom: is meeting summarization a solved problem?
Klaus Zechner

23:30–23:35  Break

Zhengyuan Liu, Ke Shi and Nancy Chen

23:55–00:15  Weakly Supervised Extractive Summarization with Attention
Yingying Zhuang, Yichao Lu and Simi Wang

00:15–00:35  Incremental temporal summarization in multi-party meetings
Ramesh Manuvinakurike, Saurav Sahay, Wenda Chen and Lama Nachman

00:35–00:45  Break

00:45–01:45  Panel Discussion: Dialogue and Meeting Summarization: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead
Ani Nenkova, Klaus Zechner, Diyi Yang, and Chenguang Zhu

01:45–01:50  Break

01:50–02:10  Mitigating Topic Bias when Detecting Decisions in Dialogue
Mladen Karan, Prashant Khare, Patrick Healey and Matthew Purver

02:10–02:30  Creating a data set of abstractive summaries of turn-labeled spoken human-computer conversations
Iris Hendrickx and Virginia Meijer

02:30–02:50  Dynamic Sliding Window for Meeting Summarization
Zhengyuan Liu and Nancy Chen
02:50–03:00  Closing

Special Session: Safety for E2E Conversational AI (SafeConvAI)

22:00–22:10  Welcome by the organisers
Verena Rieser

22:10–22:50  Keynote
Laurence Devillers

22:50–23:00  Coffee break

23:00–23:30  Paper presentations

Assessing Political Prudence of Open-domain Chatbots
Yejin Bang, Nayeon Lee, Etsuko Ishii, Andrea Madotto and Pascale Fung

Large-Scale Quantitative Evaluation of Dialogue Agents’ Response Strategies against Offensive Users
Haojun Li, Dilara Soylu and Christopher Manning

Panel discussion
Pascale Fung, Pilar Manchon, Ehud Reiter, Michelle Zhou, Emily Dinan (session chair)