

Report on the 8th ACM SIGIR Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval (CHIIR 2023)

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Abstract

The CHIIR 2023 conference was conducted as a hybrid event in Austin, TX, USA, attracting over 110 attendees both physically and virtually. The main conference program spanned over three days and comprised of single-track presentations. Two workshops were organized on the day prior to the main conference, while the doctoral consortium and tutorial took place one day after the main event. This report has been prepared by the conference General Co-Chairs.

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Website: <https://sigir.org/chiir2023/>.

1 Introduction

CHIIR is a multi- and interdisciplinary meeting of the international community engaged in research at the intersections of human-information interaction, human-computer interaction, information retrieval, and information behavior. The eighth ACM SIGIR Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval (CHIIR) was held in Austin, Texas, USA in hybrid format. It followed three online CHIIRs (2022, 2021 and 2020), and four onsite CHIIRs in Glasgow, Scotland, UK (2019), New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA (2018), Oslo, Norway (2017), and in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA (2016). It is an emerging area of interest to many researchers and to industry, We blame the coronavirus pandemic for the lower attendance this year.

2 Conference Organization

We assembled a great team of volunteers to help us with the conference. The main conference was held at the AT&T Conference Center and Hotel on the University of Texas at Austin campus, while the satellite events took place in the School of Information at UT Austin.

The hybrid solution we opted for was “relatively” light weight. It consisted of two components: Zoom connections with additional cameras and a dedicated Slack messaging channels.

Accommodating remote participants involved a blend of strategies. For main sessions such as the opening and closing ceremonies, paper presentations, and keynote addresses, which were held in a sizable auditorium, we utilized two Owl 360 cameras linked to a pair of dedicated laptops, which were, in turn, connected to the conference Zoom. For smaller gatherings, including workshops, the doctoral consortium, and the tutorial, a single Owl 360 camera was adequate. The poster and demo session used several dedicated laptops to support remote presenters, while an independent Zoom meeting was made accessible to all attendees to facilitate interaction and conversations between in-person and virtual attendees. This equipment complemented the standard audio/visual equipment available in the conference rooms.

3 Technical Program

The submission categories included full and perspective papers, short papers, demonstrations, doctoral consortium papers, workshops, and tutorials.

A total of 66 Full/Perspective paper submissions were received, with 26 accepted and presented across nine sessions, resulting in an acceptance rate of 39.4%. Among the 26 Full papers, four were Perspective papers. The Perspective papers are intended to systematically present novel ideas or insights about approaches, key challenges, or theoretical or methodological issues with the potential to spark in-depth discussions and contribute to significant advancements in the field. There were 53 short paper submissions, out of which 20 were accepted for presentation as posters, yielding an acceptance rate of 37.7%. In the demonstration category, 10 submissions were received, with eight demos accepted. Short papers and demonstrations were presented in the poster session. While a few full paper and poster presentations were conducted remotely, the majority took place in-person. The proceedings are published in the ACM Digital Library [Gwizdka and Rieh, 2023].

The diverse range of contributed papers, short papers, demos, and doctoral consortium papers showcased the unique value this forum holds for researchers. We are delighted to see an expanding array of topics and organizations represented in the CHIIR program.

3.1 Keynotes

Two keynote speakers delivered captivating and revitalizing presentations. The initial plenary session featured Elizabeth Churchill, Senior Director of UX at Google, who shared insights from her previous work on content creation and annotation, as well as social and collaborative information searches across various domains. She also pondered the future of information seeking and inventive decision-making in the ever-changing world of AI-powered information exploration. The second keynote presenter was J. Stephen Downie, Associate Dean for Research and Professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's School of Information Sciences, as well as the Illinois Co-Director of the HathiTrust Research Center (HTRC). He discussed notable parallels between Music Information Retrieval (MIR) and HTRC retrieval tasks, touching on topics such as collection versus item retrieval, pleasure and genre-oriented retrieval objectives, and the importance of human-driven search iterations.

3.2 Best Paper and Poster Awards

The CHIIR conference has a tradition of selecting the best paper (full or perspectives paper), runner-up and the best short paper. This year’s winners are:

- **Best Paper:** “SearchIdea: An Idea Generation Tool to Support Creativity in Academic Search” by Catherine Chavula, Yujin Choi, and Soo Young Rieh [[Chavula et al., 2023](#)].
- **Runner Up:** “Driven to Distraction: Examining the Influence of Distractors on Search Behaviours, Performance and Experience” by Leif Azzopardi, David Maxwell, Martin Halvey, and Claudia Hauff [[Azzopardi et al., 2023](#)].
- **Best Short Paper:** “Mapping dementia caregivers’ comments on social media with evidence-based care strategies for memory loss and confusion” by Ning Zou, Yuelyu Ji, Bo Xie, Daqing He, and Zhimeng Luo [[Zou et al., 2023](#)].

3.3 Workshops and Tutorials

We accepted two workshops and one tutorial to be part of CHIIR 2023. Both workshops were a continuation from previous years:

- “Made to Measure: A CHIIR 2023 Workshop on Human-centred Metrics for Information Seeking”¹ organized by George Buchanan, University of Melbourne, Australia, Dana McKay, University of Melbourne, Australia, Charles Clarke, University of Waterloo, Canada.
- “IWILDS’23: The 4th International Workshop on Investigating Learning During Web Search”² organized by Anett Hoppe, TIB – Leibniz Information Centre for Science & Technology, Germany, Ran Yu, University of Bonn, Germany, Jiqun Liu, University of Oklahoma, USA, Nilavra Bhattacharya, University of Texas, USA.

The tutorial offered at CHIIR 2023 was titled “Qualitative Research in Information Interaction” and conducted by Dana McKay, University of Melbourne, Australia, Stephann Makri, City, University of London, and George Buchanan, University of Melbourne, Australia.

3.4 Doctoral Consortium

Doctoral Consortium (DC) chairs (Drs. Yan Zhang and Charles L A Clarke) did an amazing job managing a complex mixture of in-person and remote presentations and mentors. There were ten doctoral consortium papers accepted for presentation and conversations with mentors on the last day of the conference. The DC Chairs organized a stimulating hybrid meeting for doctoral students with mentors. Ten doctoral students were matched with 18 mentors. The mentors were: Vivien Petras, Orland Hoerber, Stephann Makri, Damiano Spina, Ian Soboroff, Chirag Shah, Maria Gäde, Johanne Trippas, Tina Du, Nicholas Belkin, Claudia Hauff, Paul Thomas, Yubin Kim, Dania Bilal, Jiqun Liu, Ian Ruthven, Jaime Salvador Arguello, Elliott Hauser) with whom they met in-person or online.

¹<http://www.iirmetrics.com>

²<https://iwilds2023.wordpress.com>

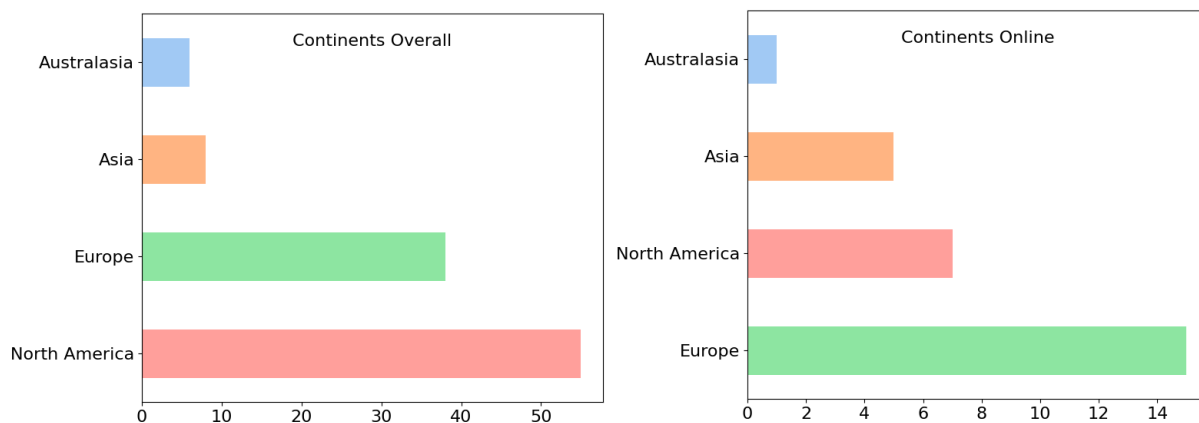


Figure 1. Number of attendees by continent. Overall and online only.

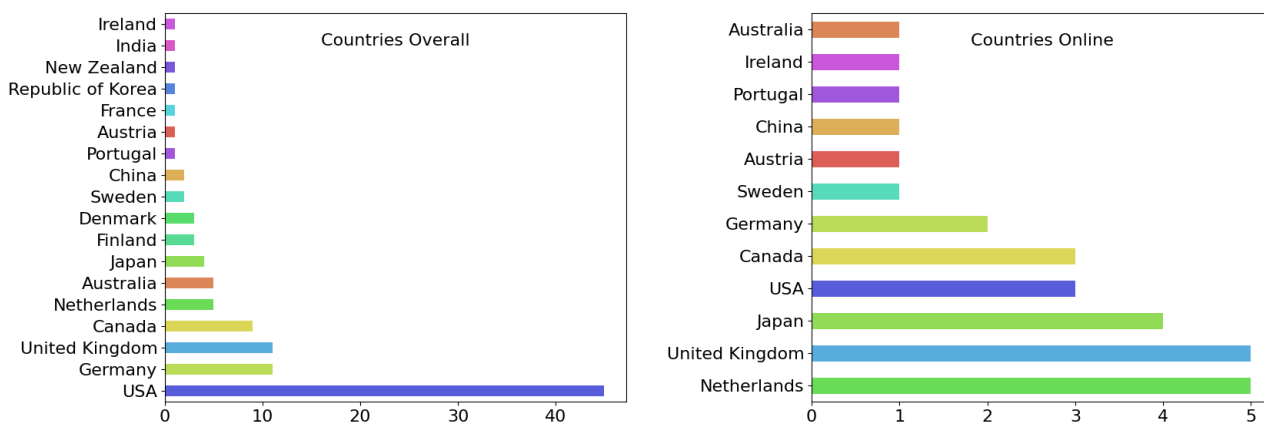


Figure 2. Number of attendees by country. Overall and online only.

4 Participation Statistics

Overall, CHIIR 2023 had 83 in-person and 30 online participants. The latter includes two participants who registered for workshops or tutorials only. The number of attendees in 2019 (i.e. the last pre-pandemic in-person conference) in Glasgow was 163. The number of attendees during the first two online CHIIRs in 2020 and 2021 was 188 and 216, respectively. The peak attendance of 260 was in 2022 at the online edition of the conference. In 2023 we had 113 attendees in total (83 in-person + 30 online). That level of attendance represents a drop of about 50%. Undoubtedly, this was partly influenced by the impacts of the Corona-Virus pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions.

The figures illustrate several interesting phenomena. It is evident that providing a remote attendance option was especially beneficial for colleagues from various European countries (as seen in Figure 1 and 2), as well as for students (Figure 3). Around 41% of attendees from Europe and 35% of students participated online. This highlights the shifts in our new P.CV.P (Post Corona-Virus Pandemic) World, where many individuals might hesitate to travel, compounded by potential visa and funding constraints.

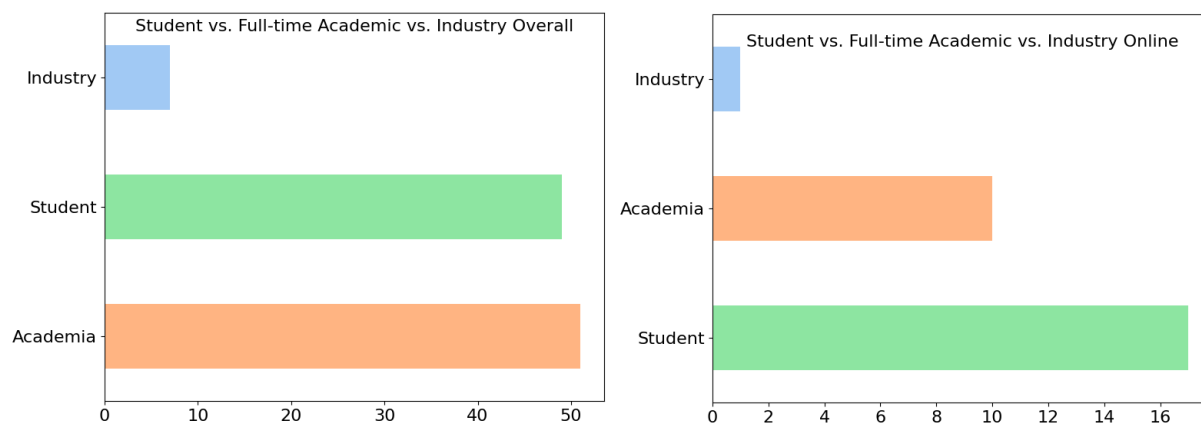


Figure 3. Attendees from Industry, Academia (full-time) and Students. Overall and online only.

5 Reflections

Reflecting on the conference hosted in a hybrid format for the first time, we acknowledge that it was a semi-successful endeavor. While it is true that the number of attendees decreased compared to previous online conferences, we are pleased to report that the overall execution of the conference went smoothly without major technical hitches or disruptions. The utilization of Zoom connections with additional 360° cameras, dedicated laptops, and Slack messaging channels contributed to a seamless flow of communication and presentation delivery. The incorporation of such technologies facilitated engaging discussions and interactions between in-person and virtual attendees, helping bridge the gap between physical and remote participation. The hybrid format allowed us to accommodate both in-person and remote presentations and participation, offering a broader reach and accessibility to individuals who may have otherwise been unable to attend. This inclusivity was an important advantage of the hybrid approach.

While the lower attendance was a drawback, it is important to consider the unique circumstances that likely influenced this outcome. Factors such as travel restrictions, budget constraints, and individual preferences regarding in-person versus remote participation during the P.CV.P era may have contributed to the reduced number of attendees.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, CHIIR has proven to be more than just a conference—it is a tightly-knit, collegial, and collaborative community. Throughout the event, participants have consistently expressed their comfort in asking questions, engaging in discussions, and providing valuable feedback to the presenters. The core value and culture of CHIIR, which fosters an inclusive and supportive environment, have been instrumental in creating this positive atmosphere. Participants feel encouraged to share their insights, exchange ideas, and build relationships with fellow researchers.

As we move forward, it is essential to preserve the welcoming and inclusive nature of CHIIR while attracting top-notch researchers, promoting knowledge sharing, and fostering meaningful collaborations. By upholding these values, we can ensure that CHIIR remains a vibrant and

supportive conference, enabling attendees to maximize their learning experience, establish valuable connections, and contribute to the advancement of human information interaction and retrieval research.

Looking ahead, we can also build upon the lessons learned from this hybrid conference experience. By exploring strategies to enhance virtual engagement and actively promoting the benefits of hybrid participation, we can aim to attract a larger and more diverse audience in future conferences. The CHIIR community will use this valuable experience to continuously refine and optimize future hybrid conference implementations.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the CHIIR Steering Committee for trusting us with organizing the CHIIR 2023 conference and for guidance. We are additionally grateful to ACM SIGIR and ACM for support and helping us to handle the many administrative aspects of the conference.

We would like to acknowledge the organization team, without whom CHIIR 2023 would not have been possible. Program Co-chairs: Katriina Bystrom, Chang Liu, and Dan Russell; Short Paper Co-Chairs: Irene Lopatovska and Dirk Lewandowski; Doctoral Consortium Co-Chairs: Yan Zhang and Charles L A Clarke; Workshop and Tutorial Co-Chairs: Cathy Smith and Hideo Joho; Demo Co-Chairs: Jiyin He and Matt Lease; Treasurer Michael Cole; Sponsorship Chair: Kathy Brennan; Industry Day Chair: Don Turnbull; Proceedings Chair: Richard Kopak; Local Arrangements Chair: Catherine Chavula; Volunteer Chair: Yujin Choi; Website Design and Development: Han-Hsuan Lin and Nilavra Bhattacharya. In addition we would like to acknowledge indispensable role in the peer-review process of the 23 members of the Senior Program Committee members and of all Program Committee members. Last but not least, we thank the 26 wonderful student volunteers.

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