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Robert M. Corless · Jürgen Gerhard · Ilias S. Kotsireas (Eds.)

# Maple in Mathematics Education and Research

4th Maple Conference, MC 2020 Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, November 2–6, 2020 Revised Selected Papers



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#### **Foreword**

As a global pandemic has been gripping the world for over a year now, many aspects of our lives have changed: The way we work; the way we play; the way we meet friends and family. And so the way the Maple community gathered on November 2–6, 2020 was very different as well. We met virtually. And so there was no conference dinner, no coffee breaks, no handshakes or hugs with friends that we had not seen in a while.

But we coped. Our social event was a virtual tour of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery. We met at informal breakfast and lunch "tables" to chat with old and new members of the community. We were fortunate to have some brilliant keynote speakers like Dr. Gabor Domokos who took us behind the scenes of the discovery of the Gömböc and Dr. Juana Sendra Pons who introduced us to the magic of Bohemian matrices.

And indeed, despite the difficult circumstances that the world finds itself in, some things were better. With no constraints from travel budget and week-long scheduling conflicts, an unprecedented proportion of the Maple community was able to participate, making the event more engaging and inspiring than ever with a large number of excellent contributions drawn from research to education to interesting and novel applications of Maple. In addition, the new format of combining pre-recorded talks with live Q&A sessions allowed participants to watch presentations at their own pace and to have the time to absorb the material before bringing thoughtful questions and comments to the authors during the live session.

What is driving us at Maplesoft is the belief that Math Matters, stemming from the realization that mathematics drives the world around us. Our mission is to build engaging tools that help gain insight into mathematical concepts and that not just provide solutions but also provide the inspiration to dig deeper and discover not only the usefulness but also the beauty of mathematics. With this in mind, it was great to see another first for a Maple Conference: We hosted a very lively and interesting panel discussion with a group of social media influencers that share our vision of making math accessible and enjoyable. Sneak peeks at our Maple Calculator Mobile App as well as our new online solution for learning and teaching math, Maple Learn, rounded out this part of the program.

The virtual format also allowed a record number of Maplesoft staff from around the world to attend the conference and share their expertise with all attendees. There is always something new to discover in the world of Maple and I would go out on a limb and say that every participant learned something new in the course of this week.

Overall, we had an exceptional event and it was great to see the Maple community come together. I was able to greet many familiar faces and introduce myself to an even larger number of people that attended for the first time.

Finally, I would like to express a huge thank you to the Program Chairs Rob Corless and Jürgen Gerhard and the rest of the Program Committee as well as to the countless people at Maplesoft who made the event a resounding success.

#### **Preface**

The Maple Conference 2020 happened under stressful circumstances, mostly to do with the global COVID-19 pandemic, but important political events (all over the world) also happened during the conference. Political events are not usually explicitly acknowledged in the proceedings of any scientific conference, on the basis that science is above politics, or else on the basis that mathematics and science are apolitical. The truth of a mathematical theorem or the functioning of a piece of software is indeed normally independent of what any given group of humans has decided to do.

As always, the truth is more complex. The science and engineering that gets accomplished by a community depends strongly on how that community is organized. It depends in a long-term way—on a cycle of decades at least—on how the members of the society are educated, and on the intellectual infrastructure and social capital available to thinkers, educators, and doers—who may or may not be the same people.

The Maple Conference 2020 happened at a time of severe crisis. Millions of people were being struck down, and many dying, of an infectious disease. The personal impact of this crisis was of course huge, and continues to be huge: we swim in grief for family, friends, loved ones, even for people we do not know. To protect vulnerable people and medical institutions, many governments imposed Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) which, among other impacts, forbade or reduced travel and in-person interactions.

In spite of the impact of this crisis and of the NPIs taken to mitigate the impact, not all of these impositions seem to have been wholly bad for science in general, or for the Maple conference in particular. Perhaps as a side effect of going virtual, the Maple Conference 2020 had over 700 registrants, the most of any Maple conference to date. On any given day of the conference, which took place during November 2–6, 2020, we might have had 400 people actively participating. By all normal measures, the conference was a resounding success. For this we have to thank the efforts of many working behind the scenes: specifically Kathleen McNichol, Eithne Murray, Jen Iorgulescu, and Rochelle Angyal. Their very hard work and adaptability made the virtual conference a success, both by long preparation ahead of time and by putting out the inevitable "last-minute" fires with the software platform we were using. As a result, the conference ran very smoothly.

One concludes in general that the impact of the crisis on science is as yet unclear, because people have worked so hard to adapt. Because of these efforts, we now know that remote collaboration and conferencing are not only possible but have some advantages, as this conference proved. New tools for remote learning—such as Maple Learn, perhaps—may help even more in the future.

This proceedings provides a tangible archive of that success. In this volume you will find a selection of papers based on work presented at the conference: on mathematical research, applications of Maple, and on mathematics education. There is another archive: all the talks were recorded and they are, at the time of writing, still available on

the original website; after November 2021 they will move to a YouTube channel. We encourage you to watch the videos of the talks, not just read the papers in these proceedings.

In particular, the invited talks by Professor Gabor Domokos, Professor Juana Sendra Pons, and Dr. Laurent Bernardin all remain available, and we highly recommend watching them. We thank all of them for their discussions of fascinating work. Professor Sendra Pons also contributed a paper to the proceedings, for which we also thank her.

The "Meet the Developers" panel, consisting of Laurent Bernardin, Paulina Chin, Paul DeMarco, Jürgen Gerhard, Erik Postma, Karishma Punwani, and Andrew Smith, was lively and engaging, and we thank them all for their time and expertise.

The rise of YouTube "influencers", among them Online Kyne, Bobby Seagull, and Tom Crawford (The Naked Mathematician), was possibly predictable but the reality is so amazing—they have not contributed to the proceedings but we urge you to watch the panel discussion in the video on the conference website—that we would actually be shocked had anyone predicted it, or predicted just how popular math and science videos would turn out to be. We thank these influencers for their very entertaining and thought-provoking panel discussion.

The three workshops, presented by Paulina Chin, Erik Postma, and Stephen Forrest, were well-attended and extremely valuable. These workshops are not part of the formal proceedings, and are not attached to the video record of the conference, but we thank the presenters for their contributions to the conference at the time.

Several Maplesoft personnel gave presentations at the conference and these are part of the video record: Dr. Robert Lopez, "Analytic Approximation for the Dirichlet Problem;" Thomas Richard, "Application of the Identify Command to Special Functions;" Valery McKay-Crites, "Generate Captivating Visualizations with Maple;" Karishma Punwani, "Introducing Maple Calculator and Maple Learn; "Dr. Stephen Forrest, "Machine Learning in Maple;" Samir Khan, "Maple Whiteboard - tactile, responsive calculations for science, engineering and technical analysis;" and Samir Khan and Karishma Punwani, "Our Favorite Things: Maple 2020 Gems You May Have Missed." These presentations were extremely useful and enlightening, and are still available; we hope that at least some of them will be reprised at the Maple Conference 2021!

We thank our Program Committee and all the reviewers for all their hard work, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Refereeing is one of the most critical, but thankless, jobs of an academic. Everyone is just expected to do it. Our referees put in a very significant amount of work, providing feedback to our authors and presenters, going well above the norm which made a significant difference to the quality of the papers.

Of course, we also thank all our presenters and authors. They, too, worked hard; in preparing their videos (sometimes for the first time ever for a conference), in taking questions, in writing their papers, and in taking the constructive criticism of the referees and using it to improve their papers.

Science takes time, and social stability, and education, and other things. That the Maple 2020 Conference went so well, with participants from 70 countries, from Australia to Zambia, is a mark of hard work and persistence, and of the resilience of the

supporting institutions and personal resilience of the participants. We believe that these proceedings show evidence of this high-water mark, and we hope that all the participants feel justified pride in their achievements in the face of the truly difficult circumstances that they faced.

May 2021

Robert M. Corless Jürgen Gerhard Ilias S. Kotsireas

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