

Editorial: Transactions on Affective Computing – Affective Computing in the Times of Pandemics

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IN the last year, all of us have witnessed the challenges arising from the Covid-19 crisis. The changed life conditions during Covid-19 have led to an increase of negative sentiment in the population with a detrimental effect on people's mental health. Affective Computing technologies may contribute to a better understanding of people's affective responses to the Covid-19 crisis, which is an important prerequisite to develop appropriate intervention strategies. Research to detect and alleviate affective disorders during pandemics is gaining increased attention, and it is very likely that we will see more submissions on this topic to the *IEEE Transactions of Affective Computing (T-AC)*. If ethical, legal and social implications are addressed appropriately, Affective Computing technologies may bring a real benefit to society by monitoring and improving people's mental health. The multidisciplinary nature of the *IEEE Transactions of Affective Computing (T-AC)* leaves plenty of space for a multi-faceted consideration of a topic that goes beyond pure technical innovation.

Despite the Covid-19 crisis, the last year also gave us reason for joy. Wonderful news is the recent Impact Factor of our journal. According to the Journal Citations Report (JCR) by Clarivate Analytics, the official latest 2019 Impact Factor (IF) has risen (again) to 7.51 in the 2019 JCR (from 6.288 in the 2018 JCR). Likewise, our journal ranks 2nd out of the IEEE Computer Science journals in the 2019 JCR by IF. These are impressive results and show the raising impact of the field of Affective Computing.

It is also to be recognized that the Covid-19 crisis had no negative effect on the submission-to-publication time despite a slightly increased number of submissions (361 original submissions and 187 revised manuscripts in 2020). As in the previous years, the Associate Editors and reviewers have been working hard to provide high-quality reviews. I am most grateful for their excellent services in these difficult times.

The expertise of our longer-running Associate Editors was and is excellently complemented by six new members that joined us in 2020. It is with great pleasure to announce that we could win the following highly esteemed colleagues for the editorial board of T-AC: Carlos Busso, University of Texas at Dallas (USA), Guillaume Chanel, Université de Genève (Switzerland), Chi-Chun Lee, National Tsing Hua University (Taiwan), Ronald Poppe, Utrecht University (The Netherlands), Kun Qian, The University of Tokyo (Japan) and Ramanathan Subramanian, IIT Ropar (India).

Despite the Covid-19 crisis, the service by the IEEE staff has been very reliable as usual. In particular, I would like to thank Desiree Noel, Robin Baldwin, Jennifer Carruth, Carrie Clark, Christopher Perry, and Kimberley Sperka for their excellent support.

Special thanks also goes to the steering committee members: For the IEEE Computer Science Society: Aladdin Ayyesh (Chair), Jonathan Gratch (recently followed by Joost Broekens), Peter Robinson, and Mohammad Soleymani (Secretary), for the IEEE Systems, Man and Cybernetics Society: Naoyuki Kubota and Andreas Wendemuth and for the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society: Bao-Liang Lu (recently followed by Marie-Jeanne Lesot).

Finally, I am delighted to have been re-elected for the second period as the journal's Editor in Chief. It is a privilege to collaborate with such a fantastic team to shape the future of the Transactions on Affective Computing as the leading journal of our research community.

Stay safe and healthy

Elisabeth André
Editor-in-Chief
IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing