

## Message from the ISMAR 2021 Science and Technology Journal Program Chairs and TVCG Guest Editors

---

Daisuke Iwai  
Osaka University, Japan

Denis Kalkofen  
Graz University of Technology, Austria

Guillaume Moreau  
IMT Atlantique, France

Tabitha Peck  
Davidson College, USA

In this special issue of *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (TVCG)*, we are pleased to present the journal papers from the 20th IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality (ISMAR 2021), which will be held as a virtual conference between October 4 and 8, 2021. ISMAR continues the over twenty year long tradition of IWAR, ISMR, and ISAR, and is the premier conference for Mixed and Augmented Reality in the world.

There are 24 papers in this special issue, which were selected from 122 submissions, for an acceptance rate of 19.67%. Of these 122 submissions, 3 submissions were desk rejected and 1 submission was quick rejected. These papers were either not anonymized or did not contain enough detail to replicate the work. In total, 118 papers went out for full review. 114 papers received four reviews plus a meta review, and 4 papers received five reviews plus a meta review. Each paper has an overall score calculated as the mean of the reviewers' scores. Reviewers rated each submission on a scale from one to six. The overall mean paper score was 3.08 (SD=.95), 75% of the submissions received a mean score below 3.75, and 84% a mean score of 4.25 and lower.

As program chairs we aimed for the highest possible reviewing standards and conducted a decision process that aimed for final decisions in a fair, rigorous, and transparent way. There was a single paper submission category, papers from 4 to 9 pages in length, plus 2 pages of references. All submissions underwent a review process that encompassed two reviewing stages, overseen by a coordinator from the Program Committee (PC), which comprised 40 internationally renowned experts from the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, and Europe. After PC members had declared their conflicts and provided their preferences, the program chairs assigned coordinators. For every PC member, as well as the program chairs, for every paper where they had a conflict of interest, both the reviewer assignments and reviewer names were hidden. We used a double-blind process to allow for a fairer reviewing process. Thus, the external reviewers were not aware of the identity of the authors.

After all reviews were received, authors were permitted, though not required, to submit a rebuttal. During the rebuttal phase reviewers were able to read other reviews. After the rebuttal phase an online discussion phase among the reviewers started, in which the reviewers for each paper came to a consensual initial recommendation for that

submission among the three possibilities: conditionally accept, reject, or discuss with additional readers. For each of the papers that were recommended for discussion, an additional reviewer from the PC was assigned to provide an extra review. After additional reviews were received the program chairs convened for a video-chat meeting, where a consensus agreement was reached on bulk rejected submission. The bulk reject category consisted of submissions below a defined average score and no single score higher than a defined threshold. All remaining submissions were discussed among the chairs in further video-chat meetings. Where necessary, the primary reviewer was included in the discussions. Note that, for each submission, only program chairs without a conflict of interest with the paper joined the discussion.

Following its conditional acceptance, each paper then went through a minor revision cycle, and was assessed a second time by its primary reviewer and the program chairs to check whether the final version satisfactorily addressed reviewer concerns. Wherein, two papers were asked to add content by which the paper lengths exceed our original page limit. All papers were then subjected to a thorough IEEE CrossCheck review to check for plagiarism. Finally, the papers recommended for acceptance to IEEE *TVCG* were forwarded to the *TVCG* board for their consideration and approval.

Many individuals have contributed a great deal of time and energy towards making the technical program of ISMAR 2021 a success. We would like to thank the authors of all submitted papers, the members of the Program Committee, and the 265 external reviewers. We also wish to acknowledge James Stewart for his outstanding support with the PCS system, and we would also like to thank the Publications Chairs Mohammed Safayet Arefin and Maite Frutos-Pascual for collecting materials and assisting in the production of this special issue. We warmly thank the members of the ISMAR Steering Committee for their continuing support, Klaus Mueller and Doug Bowman for support and advice as TVCG liaisons, the General Chairs, Joe Gabbard, Michele Fiorentino, Antonio Emmanuele Uva, Veronica Teichrieb for their support throughout the entire process, and all the ISMAR community members. We also thank the previous IEEE ISMAR and IEEE VR program chairs for their contributions to the selection process and this message.