Message from the Program Committee Chairs
JCDL 2021

Welcome to JCDL 2021, the 21st conference since the IEEE and ACM joined forces to present a single Digital Libraries focuses conference. The 21st year of the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries has perhaps been the strangest in its history. The global COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant disruptor throughout the conference process, from before the first call for papers through to the conference itself, which has been planned for the first time as an online-only event. It is running in September, for the first time since 2014 (when it ran as a combined conference with Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries).

With great challenges come great opportunities, though: the general and program chairs are distributed across three continents; thank you Stephen and Alaine for all those early rises. Also, for the first time, the program chairs are both indigenous to and residents of the southern hemisphere. Changes in the way we work also meant greater inclusion in decision making: the program committee meeting was held over an 18 hour timeframe in two sessions, meaning that there was an opportunity for people in every time zone to contribute during their working hours.

We are delighted to have two excellent keynote speakers. Safiya Noble is challenging the discipline of Information Retrieval to reflect on the biases inherent to and hidden in the algorithms we take for granted. Michael Twidale has been part of and a leader of the community since its inception.

This year's conference attracted 76 full paper submissions, of which 22 were accepted (for an acceptance rate of 29%). Of 41 short papers, we accepted 14, for an acceptance rate of 34%. Each paper was reviewed by at least three reviewers and a metareviewer, and all papers were discussed at the program committee meeting. We attracted authors from all 6 inhabited continents, spanning 29 countries; all six continents are represented in work accepted to the conference. We accepted work on a diverse range of topics, including digital humanities, machine learning, mis- and disinformation and user studies. The diversity of this year's conference is another unlooked-for advantage of COVID: online participation allows those who cannot travel to participate. We thank every single author who submitted to JCDL 2021, whether they were successful or not. It is your effort and intellectual rigor that allow us to present a diverse, high quality program each year.

Our Organizing and Program Committees reflected the geographic diversity of our author pool. Again, all 6 inhabited continents were represented, and 32 countries. We thank all of the track chairs and reviewers for their time, thoughtfulness, commitment and constructive comments. We know reviewing is an additional, often thankless, task and doing it in a year where the additional burdens we face are already numerous is a great service to our community. You have ensured the intellectual and scientific rigor of JCDL continues for another year.

We have worked carefully to ensure that this JCDL will offer something for everyone, no matter their time zone or interest in digital libraries. From current concerns such as news media bias to concerns as old as the discipline, such as name disambiguation, this JCDL covers a range of interests. We look forward to seeing you online.

Hussein Suleman and Dana McKay
JCDL 2021 Program Committee Chairs