Welcome Message from the ICDAR 2017 Technical Program Chairs

We are very pleased to present the technical program for the 14th IAPR International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition. In this edition of ICDAR, we received 409 full-paper submissions from 43 countries across 5 continents: Africa (3 countries / 23 papers), Americas (3 countries / 48 papers), Asia (20 countries / 192 papers), Australia (1 country / 5 papers), and Europe (16 countries / 141 papers).

This edition of the conference introduced some changes in the reviewing process with the goal of enhancing the overall technical quality. For the first time in the ICDAR series, we introduced double blind reviewing. Reviewers and Area Chairs did not have access to the author information while making their recommendations. We are happy to observe that the community responded well to this change aimed at reducing potential bias in the reviewing process.

The concept of Area Chairs was introduced in ICDAR 2015. In the 2017 edition, Area Chairs were not associated with a single thematic area. Rather, they had expertise overlapping in multiple subareas of ICDAR. We employed 23 Area Chairs covering the broad topics of interest to the ICDAR community. Each submission was managed by an Area Chair and reviewed by three reviewers. The program committee was composed of 23 Area Chairs and 226 PC members from 32 countries, while 123 more sub-reviewers were called upon during the review process. A total of 1,243 reviews were received. Authors had a chance to respond to factual errors in the reviews through a rebuttal process. The Area Chairs stimulated and mediated the discussion between reviewers during the rebuttal phase, before producing a meta-review for each of the papers assigned to them.

The assignment of submitted papers to reviewers took place in two stages. In the first stage, the three Program Chairs assigned papers to the Area Chairs based on their expertise as measured by the relevance of their own work. Relevance scores were computed based on a variant of the Toronto system by automatically analysing their recent publications. We thank Professor Bill Triggs for helping us with this. Papers co-authored by Area Chairs were handled by another, different Area Chair. In the next stage, Area Chairs recommended a ranked list of reviewers from the pool of Program Committee members. This was made easier by providing the relevance scores. Final assignment was done based on Area Chair recommendations, conflicts, relevance, and the review load per person. The average load per area chair was 18 papers and the average review load per PC member was 5 papers.

To suit the new review process, the program committee was expanded to be more inclusive and diverse, reflecting the range of researchers who have been contributing to ICDAR over recent years. The program committee of ICDAR used to have a more executive role, with each PC member being responsible for generating reviews for a large number of papers. With the changes introduced in ICDAR 2017 we are moving towards a structure with a small number of area chairs coupled with an enlarged list of reviewers, each of which had to perform a limited number of reviews.

Taking into account the recommendations of the Area Chairs, we selected 52 papers for oral presentation and 160 papers for poster presentation, while 197 papers were rejected. This
translates to an overall acceptance rate of 51.8% (an oral acceptance rate of 12.7%, and a poster acceptance rate of 39.1%).

The number of oral tracks of the conference has been reduced from three to two, focusing on a smaller number of high quality oral presentations. The program of the conference comprises 12 oral sessions of 4 or 5 papers per session, and 3 poster sessions.

Given the lower acceptance rate compared to previous editions of the conference, the main conference notification and workshop submission dates were coordinated to provide more opportunities to authors to have a paper in a satellite event of the conference.

In this edition of ICDAR, we will be re-introducing “outstanding reviewer” awards (implemented once in 2013) to acknowledge those who performed their tasks exceptionally well. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the reviewers for their tremendous effort in producing careful reviews for our submissions. A special thanks should go to the Area Chairs - their deep involvement in the process, and their insightful comments, have enabled us to manage a complex reviewing process and improve both the quality of the feedback given to authors, as well as the overall technical quality of the conference itself.

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ICDAR 2017 Technical Program Chairs