

Preface

This workshop, a follow-up to the successful first Simulated Learners workshop held at AIED 2013, is intended to bring together researchers who are interested in simulated learners, whatever their role in the design, development, deployment, or evaluation of learning systems. Its novel aspect is that it isn't simply a workshop about pedagogical agents, but instead focuses on the other roles for simulated learners in helping system designers, teachers, instructional designers, etc.

As learning environments become increasingly complex and are used by growing numbers of learners (sometimes in the hundreds of thousands) and apply to a larger range of domains, the need for simulated learners (and simulation more generally) is compelling, not only to enhance these environments with artificial agents, but also to explore issues using simulation that would be otherwise be too expensive, too time consuming, or even impossible using human subjects. While some may feel that MOOCs provide ample data for experimental purposes, it is hard to test specific hypotheses about particular technological features with data gathered for another purpose. Moreover, privacy concerns, ethics approval, attrition rates and platform constraints can all be barriers to this approach. Finally, with thousands of learners at stake, it is wise to test a learning environment as thoroughly as possible before deployment.

Since this is a follow-up to the 2013 workshop, we build on some of the ideas that emerged there (see proceedings at: <http://goo.gl/12ODji>).

The workshop explores these and other issues with the goal of further understanding the roles that simulated learners may play in advanced learning technology research and development, and in deployed learning systems.

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