

# Preface

Omar Alonso<sup>1</sup>, Marc Najork<sup>2</sup> and Gianmaria Silvello<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Instacart, 50 Beale St Ste 600, San Francisco, CA 94105 USA

<sup>2</sup>Google Research, Google LLC 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway Mountain View, CA 94303 USA

<sup>3</sup>University of Padua, Department of Information Engineering, Via Gradenigo 6/b, Padova, 35131 Italy

## Abstract

This is the preface to the proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Design of Experimental Search & Information REtrieval Systems (DESIREs) that run in Padua (Italy) from 15 September 2021 to 18 September 2021.

## Scope of the Conference

DESIREs (*Design of Experimental Search & Information REtrieval Systems*) is a systems-oriented conference, complementary in its mission to the mainstream Information Access and Retrieval conferences like SIGIR, ECIR, and other symposiums focusing on specific aspects of IR such as ICTIR or CHIIR, emphasizing the innovative technical aspects of search and retrieval systems.

DESIREs gathers researchers and practitioners from both academia and industry to discuss the latest innovative and visionary ideas in the field. The goal of this new conference is to provide the IR community with a venue for presenting innovative search systems architectures and a publication opportunity. DESIREs does not compete with the established conferences presenting rigorous treatises in established areas; instead its goal is to air radically new ideas.

DESIREs mainly encourages papers about innovative and risky information access and retrieval system ideas, systems-building experience and insight, resourceful experimental studies, provocative position statements, new application domains. DESIREs also welcomes contributions focusing on implementation details, successful or failed reproducibility attempts, technological breakthroughs, and new uses of old ideas.

Traditionally, program committees in our IR field reward scholarship on narrow ideas, operate by consensus, discard “loosey-goosey” papers, including half-baked ideas and submissions that resemble war stories from the field. The major IR conferences usually reject such submissions because they are not scientific. However, these

are often papers that offer long-term value to the field and should be widely disseminated. DESIREs values innovation, experience-based insight, and vision.

DESIREs is about discussing, learning, and thinking about new ideas. Hence, no discussion will be shut off with the “let’s take this offline” key-phrase; if we discuss longer than expected, we just slightly reschedule the following talks.

DESIREs is a single-track conference, and to encourage authors to submit only their best work, each person can be an author or co-author of only a single paper or prototype (plus one abstract). That is, authors can submit only one paper.

There are four kinds of contributions:

**Full papers** Papers usually lack rigorous frameworks, simulations of performance, or prototype implementations but present a radical departure from conventional approaches that enable new applications.

**Prototypes** The prototype descriptions generally are a detailed report on successes and mistakes.

**Abstracts** Ideas that are too half-baked for a paper or demo proposal are good candidates for an abstract.

**Open Problems in IR** This is a new track. We are looking for abstract-like papers framing an important but unsolved problem in IR. “Open-Problems” papers are expected to have a single author. Any author of a paper, prototype demo, or abstract may additionally submit one “Open-Problems” paper.

Originally, DESIREs were designed to run every other year in a retreat-like fashion (around the time of the *European Summer School in Information Retrieval* (ESSIR)); ESSIR runs on odd years, DESIREs on even years.

The first edition took place in 2018 in Bertinoro (Italy), but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DESIREs 2020, initially planned in Venice (Italy), has to be postponed to Padua (Italy) in 2021.

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✉ oralonso@gmail.com (O. Alonso); marc@najork.org (M. Najork); gianmaria.silvello@unipd.it (G. Silvello)

🌐 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/omar-alonso-8a5235/> (O. Alonso);

<https://research.google/people/MarcNajork/> (M. Najork);

<http://www.dei.unipd.it/~silvello/> (G. Silvello)

🆔 0000-0003-4970-4554 (G. Silvello)

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## Forward to the Proceedings

These proceedings contain the papers selected for presentation at the *Second International Conference on Design of Experimental Search & Information REtrieval Systems* (DESIRES 2021).<sup>1</sup> The conference was held from September 15 to September 18, 2021 at the Department of Information Engineering of the University of Padua<sup>2</sup>.

DESIRES 2021 received a total of 38 submissions in two broad categories: 22 full papers and 16 short papers (abstracts, prototypes and open problems).

All the papers were reviewed by at least two members of an international Program Committee formed by experts from industry and academia. Of the papers submitted to the conference, 18 full papers and 10 short papers were accepted for oral presentation. The accepted contributions represent the state of the art in information retrieval, cover a diverse range of topics that we organized in six main tracks: systems, search domains and applications, explorative search and querying, conversational search, search and user-generated content and neural models.

There were 58 unique authors with papers accepted at DESIRES 2021 with the following geographical distribution (affiliation): 15 authors from the USA (25.9%), 10 from Germany (17.2%), 6 from The Netherlands (10.3%), 5 from Austria, Canada, and Italy (8.6% each), 2 from Belgium, Japan, Norway and Switzerland (3.4% each), and 1 from Australia, Denmark, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom (1.7% each).

There are three keynotes:

- *Apple Media Products Search*, Brian Johnson, Apple, USA.
- *Humans Learn From Task Descriptions and So Should Our Models*, Hinrich Schütze, University of Munich, Germany.
- *A hitchhiker's guide to Ontology*, Fabian M. Suchanek, Télécom Paris University, Paris, France.

DESIRES 2021 has been held under the patronage of the Department of Information Engineering of the University of Padua and the University of Padua.

Finally, DESIRES 2021 would have not been possible without the financial support from the ExaMode H2020 EU project (gold sponsor), Bloomberg and Google (silver sponsors) and the Padova Convention and Visitors Bureau (bronze sponsor).

## Organization

DESIRES has been conceived by the general chairs with the support and suggestions of the advisory board.

<sup>1</sup><http://desires.dei.unipd.it/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.unipd.it/en/>

Advisory board members have been selected amongst the top senior members of the IR community seeking for balance between industry and academia. We thanks the advisory board members for their work and contribution to the conference.

We thank all Program Committee members for their time and effort in ensuring the high quality of the DESIRES 2018 program.

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