

Preface to the proceedings of the 4th Italian Workshop on Italian Artificial Intelligence for Cultural Heritage (IAI4CH 2026)

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Abstract

In 2022, the AI*IA Steering Board approved the establishment of a Working Group on “Artificial Intelligence for Cultural Heritage.” Back then, this workshop represented the first opportunity to gather interested researchers and practitioners and form the working group’s initial core. Now it became a yearly event where the group members meet to exchange ideas, foster cooperation, and get in touch with other stakeholders. In this fourth edition, eleven contributions were presented from different research groups.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence, Cultural Heritage

1. Preface

There is a growing need for advanced technological solutions for the preservation, restoration, valorization, and fruition of Cultural Heritage (CH). Artificial Intelligence (AI) has traditionally provided successful solutions to CH practices and is likely to contribute even more in the future, taking on an increasingly relevant role. On the other hand, CH challenges in the digital era may provide relevant application domains and tasks to AI research.

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In the last two decades, the advent of digital technologies on a large scale has paved the way for applying AI technologies to the study, preservation, and accessibility of CH. On the one side, the availability of digital data can push forward the study of heritage, improving our understanding of the past and our capability to preserve and transmit it to new generations; on the other side, it can reduce the gap between heritage and its audiences, leading heritage to the role of engine of cultural and societal progress envisaged by the FARO Convention since 2005. In CH, the development of applications usually requires the involvement of an interdisciplinary team and is often constrained to standard formats and frameworks elaborated by national and international institutions. This multidisciplinary approach represents, at the same time, a challenge and an opportunity for AI since it calls for the development and formalization of original models, the refinement of existing tools and technologies, and the creation of novel ones.

The AI*IA workshop on Artificial Intelligence for Cultural Heritage (IA4CH26) brought together researchers, policymakers, professionals, and practitioners to explore the main issues concerning the application of AI to CH. In particular, this forth workshop aimed at fostering interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research on tangible and intangible CH, promoting the use of AI models, methodologies, and tools for the study, research, preservation, and dissemination of CH content.

The workshop emphasized the exchange of experiences and transfer of good practices within the vast and varied community revolving around CH computing and AI to extend the results achieved by projects, case studies, and applications at the national and international levels. At the same time, the workshop encouraged discussion on the ethical aspects and sustainability issues involved in the management, delivery, and conservation of CH, with a specific focus on the involvement of all kinds of stakeholders to represent the different perspectives and communities involved in CH practices. An effort is made to create synergies with other relevant events in the field, such as TPDL (Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries) and IRCDL (The conference on Information and Research science Connecting to Digital and Library science, formerly the Italian Research Conference on Digital Libraries).

The topics of interest for IAI4CH26 were:

- Cultural Heritage Ontologies and Vocabularies
- Linked Data and Knowledge Graphs for Cultural Heritage
- Multimedia and Multilingual Data Management
- Semantic Social Networks in Heritage Data
- Intangible Heritage Representation and Processing
- Intelligent Management Systems in CH
- Learning and Reasoning on CH Data
- Mining and Indexing of CH Contents
- Use of Large Language Models in Cultural Heritage
- Generative AI for Cultural Heritage
- Deep Learning, Vision Transformers and Foundation Models for CH Analysis
- LLMs for Cultural Heritage Documentation, Interpretation and Public Engagement
- LLM-based Tools for Archives, Museums, Libraries and Heritage Collections

- Language Technologies for Cultural Heritage
- Document Processing
- Acquisition, Conservation and Restoration
- Workflow Management in Cultural Heritage
- Preservation and Long-Term Accessibility
- DRM and Legal Issues
- Visualization Techniques and Extended Reality
- Gamification and Storytelling in CH
- Accessibility and Inclusion in CH
- Museum and Exhibition Applications
- Libraries and Archives in CH
- Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Tourism
- Tools for Education, Documentation and Training
- Societal, Professional and Ethical Guidelines

IAI4CH 2026 accepted a total of 11 papers distributed as follows: 4 full papers (with a minimum of 10 pages), 7 short papers (up to 9 pages) suitable for presenting work in progress, software prototypes, extended abstracts of doctoral theses, and project papers for the general overviews of research projects. Each of the twelve received papers was reviewed by at least two program committee members.

2. Organization and committees

The organizers and program chairs of the workshop were:

- Rossana Damiano, University of Turin, Italy
- Manuel Striani, University of Piemonte Orientale, Italy
- Stefano Ferilli, University of Bari, Italy
- Maria Angela Pellegrino, University of Salerno, Italy
- Gianmaria Silvello, University of Padua, Italy

The program committee members were:

- Alex Falcon, University of Udine, Italy
- Andrea Brunello, University of Udine, Italy
- Anna Maria Marras, University of Torino, Italy
- Beatrice Portelli, University of Udine, Italy
- Giorgio Maria Di Nunzio, University of Padova, Italy
- Laura Pandolfo, University of Sassari, Italy
- Leonardo Candela, National Research Council – CNR of Pisa, Italy
- Marco Bertini, University of Firenze, Italy
- Paolo Manghi, National Research Council – CNR of Pisa, Italy
- Simone Marinai, University of Firenze, Italy
- Tsvi Kuflik, University of Haifa, Israel