

EACL 2009

**Proceedings of the
12th Conference of the
European Chapter
of the
Association for
Computational Linguistics**

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Preface: General Chair

Welcome to the 12th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics—EACL 2009. This is the largest ever EACL in terms of the number of papers being presented. There are also ten workshops, four tutorials, a demos session and a student research workshop. I hope that you will enjoy this full and diverse programme.

This is the first time that an EACL conference that is not held jointly with ACL has had a General Chair. Having a General Chair is the EACL Board's strategy for ensuring continuity in the organisation of their conferences, now that the triennial EACLs are not synchronised with the biennial changes to personnel on the board. My job as General Chair is to liaise between the organising team and the EACL board, and to offer advice when needed. What an easy job it has been! And that is thanks wholly to the fantastic people who have done all the hard work to make this conference happen. I could not have asked for a better team of people. I would like to thank them all.

First, the Programme Committee, chaired by Claire Gardent and Joakim Nivre, attracted a record number of submissions. Thanks to their efforts, we have our largest ever main programme. I am very excited by the sheer breadth of topics and methodologies that are to be presented at this conference. It was a total pleasure to deal with the Programme Chairs – Joakim especially often offered me valuable advice on many matters concerning the conference, particularly electronic publication. I can't thank Claire and Joakim enough for all they have done to make this EACL conference a success. I would also like to thank Ann Copestake and Franciska de Jong for agreeing to be the keynote speakers.

For the first time, the three ACL conferences coordinated the call for workshop proposals. This gave proposers more flexibility in choosing the location for their workshops. The Workshop Chairs for EACL, Miriam Butt and Steve Clark, coordinated with the workshop chairs for NAACL 2009 and ACL 2009 in reviewing all the workshop proposals. This coordination inevitably makes the task more complex. But the whole process ran very smoothly thanks to their careful and diligent work. I'm very grateful to Steve and Miriam for putting together a very exciting and broad workshop programme for EACL.

As is traditional, the student research workshop was organised by the student members of the EACL board – Vera Demberg, Yanjun Ma and Nils Reiter. Their job is very demanding; they essentially do everything that programme chairs do, only on a slightly smaller scale. They issued the call, organised a fantastic team of reviewers, assigned papers, coordinated and mediated among reviewers, and finally constructed a schedule consisting of four parallel sessions. They did a brilliant job, and with very little help from me. I owe them a huge debt of thanks.

The Tutorial Chairs, Emiel Krahmer and David Weir, could be viewed as victims of their own success! Their efforts to attract tutorial proposals produced a record number of submissions; many more excellent proposals than we could accommodate. We have a very strong programme of four tutorials, and I thank the tutorials team for all their careful and thoughtful work.

The task of producing both the electronic and hard copy versions of the conference materials has become extremely complex as the conference has increased in size and diversity. The Publications Chairs, Kemal Oflazer and David Schlangen, somehow make it look easy. Thanks to them and Ion Androutsopoulos, the member of the local organising team who liaised with them, we have all the materials delivered on time and in good order.

In these depressing economic times, being a Sponsorship Chair is a challenging task, and for the most part a thankless one. This year, for the first time, the three ACL conferences coordinated applications for sponsorship funds. This allowed companies to sponsor ACL, EACL and NAACL in one package. The Sponsorship Chairs are Josef van Genabith and Philipp Koehn for Europe, Hitoshi Isahara and Kim-Teng Lua for Asia, and Nicolas Nikolov for the US. They issued hundreds of applications to companies all

over the world. While sponsorship income is generally lower than in previous years, I am convinced it would be much lower still, if they had not coordinated their efforts this way, and done such a thorough job of asking everyone and anyone for money. I am really grateful to them.

We received a record number of submissions to the demos session, making it necessary for the Demos Chair, Jörn Kreutel, to recruit additional reviewers at the last minute. I would like to thank him for overcoming the reviewing problems so quickly and efficiently, and thank also the team of reviewers for doing such a great job.

I would also like to thank Priscilla Rassmussen, who has been a very valuable source of information and advice for me over the last 3 years. I have really appreciated her thoughtful suggestions and her help in keeping me informed about ACL protocols.

Last, but definitely not least, the local organising team have been nothing short of spectacular. The Local Chair, Vangelis Karkaletsis, has been working for over two years on an overwhelming number of tasks, ranging from finding the conference venue and liaising with its management, through dealing with special dietary requirements, to acquiring local sponsorship. Vangelis has always been accessible to me, to other members of the organising team, and to delegates. I simply don't know where he gets his energy from, but I wish he could bottle it and sell it. Thanks to him, my job as General Chair has been stress free. I owe him a huge debt.

Vangelis has been backed by the Co-chairs Stelios Piperidis and Ion Androutsopoulos. Stelios also has boundless energy and his effortless charm makes him very effective at persuading people to part with money (what an asset!). I am particularly impressed with the achievements of Vangelis and Stelios in attracting local sponsors, achieving their sponsorship targets even in the current financial climate. Ion's responsibilities have centred largely on publications and publicity, in particular liaising with the Publications Chairs. In spite of the sheer complexity of the task, thanks to him everything has run smoothly. Ion's careful attention to detail has been a really valuable asset on many fronts. The Local Chair and Co-chairs have been backed up by a strong team of local organisers; there are just too many of them for me to thank individually here. I have always felt that the conference has been in excellent hands; every member of the local organising team is highly competent, unflappable, and professional to the last. I thank them all.

We have also received unwavering support from the academic institutions to which our three local co-chairs belong: NCSR Demokritos, Athens University of Economics and Business, and the Institute for Language and Speech Processing. These institutions have subsidised expenses directly that are associated with secretarial work and the travel costs of invited speakers and tutors. They have also provided all sorts of support that are essentially hidden costs, in administration, publicity, web design and maintenance, and much much more. This conference simply wouldn't happen without this help, and I thank them all.

I very much hope that EACL 2009 offers you the opportunity to engage in stimulating debate with fellow researchers in computational linguistics. And I hope to see you again next year in Uppsala at the jointly held meeting with ACL.

Alex Lascarides
General Chair
March 2009

Preface: Program Chairs

We are delighted to present you with this volume containing the papers accepted for presentation at the 12th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics, held in Athens, Greece, from March 30th till April 3rd 2009.

EACL 2009 received yet another record-breaking number of submissions, with 360 valid submissions against 264 for EACL 2006 and 181 for EACL 2003. Thanks to the new policy adopted by EACL regarding modes of presentation, we were nonetheless able to accept 100 papers (of which 2 were later withdrawn), achieving a healthy acceptance rate of 28% against only 20% in 2006 and 27% in 2003. Indeed, in 2009, the EACL conference will renew its format by having the main conference papers presented either as regular talks or as posters, with posters getting both a ten-minute quick-fire presentation in a thematic session and a one-hour discussion period in a traditional poster session. EACL 2009 will thus feature 41 posters and 57 talks, all with equal status in terms of quality and appearance in the proceedings. Not only does this move towards a balanced mix of traditional talks, quick-fire presentations and poster sessions allow us to maintain a reasonable acceptance rate, we also believe that it will increase interaction between researchers and contribute to a more lively scientific exchange.

The increased number of submissions naturally comes with an increased reviewing load and we are greatly indebted to the 11 area chairs who recruited 449 reviewers and managed the reviewing process in their areas. Each paper submission was reviewed by three reviewers, who were furthermore encouraged to discuss any divergences they might have, and the papers in each area were ranked by the area chair. The final selection was made by the program co-chairs after an independent check of all reviews and discussions with the area chairs.

In addition to the main conference program, EACL 2009 will feature the now traditional Student Research Workshop, 10 workshops, 4 tutorials and a demo session with 18 presentations. We are also fortunate to have Ann Copestake, University of Cambridge, and Franciska de Jong, University of Twente, as invited speakers. Ann Copestake will speak about “Slacker semantics: why superficiality, dependency and avoidance of commitment can be the right way to go” and Franciska de Jong will discuss “NLP and the humanities: the revival of an old liaison.”

An event of this size is a highly collaborative effort and we are grateful to all those who helped us construct the main conference program: the authors for submitting their research results; the reviewers for delivering their reviews and discussing them whenever there was some disagreement; and the area chairs for managing the review process in their area.

Thanks are due to the START people, Rich Gerber and Paolo Gai, for responding to questions quickly and for modifying START whenever this was needed, and to the local organizing committee chairs, Vangelis Karkaletsis, Ion Androustopoulos and Stelios Piperidis, for their patient cooperation with us over many organisational issues. We are also grateful to the Student Research Workshop chairs, Vera Demberg, Yanjun Ma and Nils Reiter, and to the NAACL HLT program chairs, Michael Collins, Lucy Vanderwende, Doug Oard and Shri Narayanan, for smooth collaboration in the handling of double submissions.

Finally, we are indebted to the General Chair, Alex Lascarides, for her lively guidance and support throughout the whole process, and to the two Publication Chairs, David Schlangen and Kemal Oflazer, for putting together the conference proceedings.

Wishing you a very enjoyable time at EACL 2009!

Claire Gardent and Joakim Nivre
EACL 2009 Program Chairs

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