

INLG 2021

**The 14th International Conference
on Natural Language Generation**

Proceedings of the Conference

20-24 September 2021
Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

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Preface

We are pleased to present the Proceedings of the 14th International Natural Language Generation Conference (INLG 2021). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the conference was primarily held online on 20-23 September 2021.

INLG 2021 was organised by the University of Aberdeen. The event took place under the auspices of the Special Interest Group on Natural Language Generation (SIGGEN) of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL).

The INLG conference is the main international forum for the discussion of all aspects of Natural Language Generation (NLG), including applications, evaluation, models, and resources.

The conference started on 20 Sept with a tutorial by David M. Howcroft on Crowdsourcing Experiments and Platforms.

The main conference took place over three days (21-23 Sep). We received 76 submissions (excluding Generation Challenges), of which 23 were accepted as long papers, 7 as short papers, and 1 as a demo paper.

Generation challenges is a set of shared tasks which are presented at INLG. This year results of 2 challenges were presented:

- Shared Task on Evaluating Accuracy in Generated Texts
- The ReproGen Shared Task on Reproducibility of Human Evaluations in NLG

The proceedings include a summary paper for each challenge, and 8 short papers describing submissions to the challenges. We also received 5 proposals for 5 new challenges for 2022, 4 of which were accepted and are included as short papers in the proceedings.

We were very grateful to our two keynote speakers:

- Tim Bickmore (Northeastern University, USA), who spoke on Health Counseling Dialogue Systems: Promise and Peril
- Natalie Schluter (Google Brain and IT University Copenhagen, Denmark), who spoke on Fresh Eyes on the Tough Problem of Automatic Summarisation

We are also grateful to the four members of our panel on What Users Want from Real-World NLG:

- Adam Sam (Monok)
- Ross Turner (Arria)
- Robert Weißgraeber (Ax Semantics)
- Michelle Zhou (Juji)

INLG would not have been possible without the generous financial support we received from our sponsors:

- ADAPT Centre
- Arria NLG
- Ax Semantics
- Google
- Hugging Face

We would also like to thank Abbey Conference Management for their hard work on delivering INLG 2021 online. Finally would also like to extend our gratitude to all speakers, (area) chairs and reviewers for their excellent work.

Anya Belz
Angela Fan
Ehud Reiter
Yaji Sripada

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Invited Speakers:

Tim Bickmore (Northeastern University, USA)
Natalie Schluter (Google Brain and IT University Copenhagen, Denmark)

Panel Members:

Adam Sam (Monok)
Ross Turner (Arria)
Robert Weißgraeber (Ax Semantics)
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Zhirui Zhang (University of Science and Technology of China)
Yinhe Zheng (Alibaba)
Qingyu Zhou (Tencent)
Yanyan Zou (JD)
Ingrid Zukerman (Monash University)

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Conference Program

Monday, 20 September 2021

Big Science Workshop (co-located event)

14:00–16:00 *Tutorial: Crowdsourcing Experiments & Platforms*
David M. Howcroft (Edinburgh Napier University)

Tuesday, 21 September 2021

Opening Plenary

12:00–12:10 *Welcome to INLG 2021*

12:10–13:00 *Invited Talk: Fresh Eyes on the Tough Problem of Automatic Summarisation*
Natalie Schluter (Google Brain ; ITU Copenhagen)

13:20–14:40 Oral Session 1: Models & Questions

Generating Diverse Descriptions from Semantic Graphs

Jiuzhou Han, Daniel Beck and Trevor Cohn

Neural Methodius Revisited: Do Discourse Relations Help with Pre-Trained Models Too?

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Towards Zero-Shot Multilingual Synthetic Question and Answer Generation for Cross-Lingual Reading Comprehension

Siamak Shakeri, Noah Constant, Mihir Kale and Linting Xue

Tuesday, 21 September 2021 (continued)

14:40–15:40 Mid-afternoon Break

15:40–16:40 Poster Session 1

Chefbot: A Novel Framework for the Generation of Commonsense-enhanced Responses for Task-based Dialogue Systems

Carl Strathearn and Dimitra Gkatzia

Predicting Antonyms in Context using BERT

Ayana Niwa, Keisuke Nishiguchi and Naoaki Okazaki

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Generating Racing Game Commentary from Vision, Language, and Structured Data

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Tuesday, 21 September 2021 (continued)

17:00–18:00 Birds of a Feather Sessions

18:00–19:00 Social Hour

Wednesday, 22 September 2021

12:00–13:20 Oral Session 2: NLG Tasks, Evaluation, & Explanation

Explaining Decision-Tree Predictions by Addressing Potential Conflicts between Predictions and Plausible Expectations

Sameen Maruf, Ingrid Zukerman, Ehud Reiter and Gholamreza Haffari

Formulating Neural Sentence Ordering as the Asymmetric Traveling Salesman Problem

Vishal Keswani and Harsh Jhamtani

Underreporting of errors in NLG output, and what to do about it

Emiel van Miltenburg, Miruna Clinciu, Ondřej Dušek, Dimitra Gkatzia, Stephanie Inglis, Leo Leppänen, Saad Mahamood, Emma Manning, Stephanie Schoch, Craig Thomson and Luou Wen

What can Neural Referential Form Selectors Learn?

Guanyi Chen, Fahime Same and Kees van Deemter

13:40–14:40 Poster Session 2

HI-CMLM: Improve CMLM with Hybrid Decoder Input

Minghan Wang, GUO Jiaxin, Yuxia Wang, Yimeng Chen, Su Chang, Daimeng Wei, Min Zhang, Shimin Tao and Hao Yang

Using BERT for choosing classifiers in Mandarin

Jani Järnfors, Guanyi Chen, Kees van Deemter and Rint Sybesma

Enriching the E2E dataset

Thiago Castro Ferreira, Helena Vaz, Brian Davis and Adriana Pagano

Goal-Oriented Script Construction

Qing Lyu, Li Zhang and Chris Callison-Burch

Wednesday, 22 September 2021 (continued)

Single Example Can Improve Zero-Shot Data Generation

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SAPPHIRE: Approaches for Enhanced Concept-to-Text Generation

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Contextualizing Variation in Text Style Transfer Datasets

Stephanie Schoch, Wanyu Du and Yangfeng Ji

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15:40–16:20 Generation Challenges: Results

Generation Challenges: Results of the Accuracy Evaluation Shared Task

Craig Thomson and Ehud Reiter

The ReProGen Shared Task on Reproducibility of Human Evaluations in NLG: Overview and Results

Anya Belz, Anastasia Shimorina, Shubham Agarwal and Ehud Reiter

16:30–17:10 Generation Challenges: Posters from the Accuracy Shared Task and RePro-Gen

Text-in-Context: Token-Level Error Detection for Table-to-Text Generation

Zdeněk Kasner, Simon Mille and Ondřej Dušek

Shared Task in Evaluating Accuracy: Leveraging Pre-Annotations in the Validation Process

Nicolas Garneau and Luc Lamontagne

Automatic Verification of Data Summaries

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Tadashi Nomoto

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Christian Richter, Yanran Chen and Steffen Eger

17:20–18:00 Generation Challenges: New Challenges

DialogSum Challenge: Summarizing Real-Life Scenario Dialogues

Yulong Chen, Yang Liu and Yue Zhang

Quality Evaluation of the Low-Resource Synthetically Generated Code-Mixed Hinglish Text

Vivek Srivastava and Mayank Singh

Shared Task on Feedback Comment Generation for Language Learners

Ryo Nagata, Masato Hagiwara, Kazuaki Hanawa, Masato Mita, Artem Chernodub and Olena Nahorna

The SelectGen Challenge: Finding the Best Training Samples for Few-Shot Neural Text Generation

Ernie Chang, Xiaoyu Shen, Alex Marin and Vera Demberg

Wednesday, 22 September 2021 (continued)

18:00–19:00 SIGGEN Business Meeting

Thursday, 23 September 2021

12:00–13:00 Oral Session 3: Emotions & User Adaptation

Affective Decoding for Empathetic Response Generation

Chengkun Zeng, Guanyi Chen, Chenghua Lin, Ruizhe Li and Zhi Chen

Controllable Sentence Simplification with a Unified Text-to-Text Transfer Transformer

Kim Cheng SHEANG and Horacio Saggion

SEPRG: Sentiment aware Emotion controlled Personalized Response Generation

Mauajama Firdaus, Umang Jain, Asif Ekbal and Pushpak Bhattacharyya

13:20–14:40 Panel Discussion

Adam Sam (*Monok*), Ross Turner (*Arria*), Robert Weißgraber (*Ax Semantics*), & Michelle Zhou (*Juji*)

14:40–15:40 Mid-afternoon Break

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15:40–16:40 Poster Session 3

Biomedical Data-to-Text Generation via Fine-Tuning Transformers

Ruslan Yermakov, Nicholas Drago and Angelo Ziletti

Decoding, Fast and Slow: A Case Study on Balancing Trade-Offs in Incremental, Character-level Pragmatic Reasoning

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Exploring Structural Encoding for Data-to-Text Generation

Joy Mahapatra and Utpal Garain

Attention Is Indeed All You Need: Semantically Attention-Guided Decoding for Data-to-Text NLG

Juraj Juraska and Marilyn Walker

Closing Plenary

17:00–17:50 *Invited Talk: Health Counseling Dialogue Systems: Promise and Peril*

Tim Bickmore (Northeastern University)

17:50–18:00 *Closing Remarks*

Friday, 24 September 2021

Excursion to Dunottar Castle