

# Letter from SIGecom Executive Committee

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Dear SIGecom community,

This has been quite a year. But with 2020's challenges have come opportunities to both reinforce our strengths and evolve as a community. We are incredibly proud of how everyone in the SIG has risen to the occasion.

For the first time ever, we held EC virtually: The 21st ACM Conference on Economics and Computation (EC'20) was held online from July 13–16, 2020, with a number of events in the surrounding weeks. In designing the EC'20 experience, we first identified three main goals that informed every decision: wide dissemination of research results, extensive and meaningful interaction, and broad participation. The three most novel features of the program that facilitated these goals were (1) open pre-recording sessions (allowing the public to preview content at a relaxed pace prior to the main event), (2) hosting all the conference's main events on the Gather platform, and (3) interactive poster sessions featuring every paper. Because of the broad accessibility afforded by the virtual format, we shattered previous attendance records: 1044 researchers registered for the virtual conference (up 81% from last year)—and thanks to the virtual world of Gather, those people actually got to meet each other, sparking new SIG friendships and collaborations literally around the world. We are deeply grateful to the program chairs, Michael Ostrovsky and Ariel Procaccia; the original general chair, Péter Biró; the virtual general chair, Jason Hartline; and the virtual local chair, Yannai Gonczarowski. They joined forces to take EC virtual on incredibly short notice, and produced an amazing EC'20 experience.

Tragic events in the middle of 2020 also saw cause for us to reaffirm our individual and communal commitments to providing an environment free from hate, racism, discrimination, harassment, and bias. For the SIG to flourish, we need an environment that recognizes the inherent worth of every person and group, that embraces diversity, and that fosters dignity, understanding, and mutual respect. To help unify and guide the SIG's efforts in this regard, we have appointed Rediet Abebe as SIGecom's Diversity and Inclusion chair; we greatly appreciate her service.

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Also new this year, we ran an initiative on Global Challenges in Economics & Computation (GCEC) led by Eric Sodomka, Katrina Ligett, and Katie Bernhard. With financial backing from Facebook, this initiative supported a number of new research programs in economics and computation that address the UN’s sustainable development goals—and include researchers from low- and middle-income countries as lead PIs. That work led into a new GCEC workshop, co-located with EC’20, as well as a Global Outreach Mentor–Mentee program co-run by Abebe and Sodomka.

We have also undertaken a new effort to collect and analyze data on the SIGecom participant community and its impact. Building on preliminary efforts conducted as part of EC’19, we are aggregating information on our community’s membership and starting to track the long-run outcomes of EC papers. We will report more broadly on this effort in the future, but in the meantime here are a couple of fun facts:<sup>1</sup>

- EC has a surprisingly large amount of year-on-year author variation: 142 out of the 196 EC’18 authors didn’t publish in EC’17; 222 out of the 286 EC’19 authors didn’t publish in EC’18; and 210 out of 262 EC’20 authors didn’t publish in EC’19.
- Plus 34% of EC’17–20 authors have a prime number of letters in their name.

And as we look forward to 2021: We are excited that Shuchi Chawla and Federico Echenique are serving as Program Chairs, and Péter Biró as General Chair, of next summer’s EC, which is set to be co-located with the (rescheduled) World Congress of the Game Theory Society in Budapest. We hope to see you in 2021—virtually or physically, as circumstances dictate.

In the meantime, you can keep up with SIG news via our new Twitter account: [@AcmSIGecom](https://twitter.com/AcmSIGecom).

Your SIGecom executives,

Nicole Immorlica (chair), Scott Duke Kominers, and Katrina Ligett

<sup>1</sup>All evidence preliminary and subject to adjustment as we refine de-duplication algorithms and similar. Special thanks to our data project research assistants, Lucy Li and Dakota Passage!