Preface: The First Workshop on User Modelling in Conversational Information Retrieval (UM-CIR)

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Conversational Information Retrieval (CIR) in which a user engages in a multi-step dialogue with a search system has attracted growing interest in recent years. This attention has expanded further since the emergence of conversational agents that leverage generative AI methods. Within the information retrieval community, a substantial body of research has emerged, particularly centred around initiatives such as the TREC Conversational Assistance Track (CAsT)[1] and Interactive Knowledge Assistance Track (iKAT)[2]. These tracks have been instrumental in providing datasets that facilitate research in CIR and enable a comparative analysis of various approaches to conversational search. Most of the existing efforts within these tracks have concentrated on the interactive dialogue between the searcher and the CIR system. The tasks generally overlook the potential contribution of User modelling for effective CIR.

Recognizing the importance of this dimension the goal of the workshop was to create a collaborative framework for investigating user modelling and its evaluation in the context of CIR. Participants were invited to share their insights and proposals regarding User modelling in CIR, particularly in relation to algorithm design, system personalization, and the methods through which these models can be simulated and assessed. By fostering dialogue and collaboration among researchers and practitioners, we aim edto deepen the community's understanding of how effective User modelling might enhance conversational search experiences and lead to more refined and user-centred retrieval systems.

The workshop included a keynote presentation entitles "Immersive Personalisation for Conversational Information-seeking: The Future of Interactive Information Retrieval" by Johanne R. Trippas, RMIT University, Australia, three reviewed paper presentations, and structured discussion between the workshop participants.

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[1]https://www.treccast.ai/
[2]https://www.trecikat.com/