17th Italian Research Conference on Digital Libraries: Information and Research Science connecting to Digital and Library Science

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Foreword to the IRCDL 2021 Proceedings

Since 2005 the *Italian Research Conference on Digital Libraries* (IRCDL) is a yearly date for researchers on Digital Libraries (DL) and related topics, organized by the Italian Research Community. Over the years IRCDL has become an important national forum focused on digital libraries and associated technical, practical, and social issues.

IRCDL encompasses the many meanings of the term "digital libraries", including new forms of information institutions; operational information systems with all manner of digital content; new means of selecting, collecting, organizing, and distributing digital content; and theoretical models of information media, including document genres and electronic publishing. Digital libraries may be viewed as a new form of information institution or as an extension of the services libraries currently provide. Representatives from academia, government, industry, research communities, research infrastructures, and others are invited to participate in this annual conference. The conference draws from a broad and multidisciplinary array of research areas including computer science, information science, librarianship, archival science and practice, museum studies and practice, technology, social sciences, cultural heritage and humanities, and scientific communities.

IRCDL sets itself as a national component of the DL ecosystem that comprehends the European DL conference called "Theory and Practice of Digital Libraries" (TPDL), the International Conference on Asia-Pacific Digital Libraries (ICADL), the ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries and the International Journal of Digital Libraries.

The world of DLs is going through profound transformations, and IRCDL 2021 (`http://ircdl2021.dei.unipd.it/`) has the aim of embracing these changes to design the next future of DL. The purpose is to enlarge DL's scope and open

up to new research communities and stakeholders. Hence, this year IRCDL's focus is on bridging the broad field of Research and Information Science with DL's related field. Indeed, IRCDL historically approached on "Digital libraries" embracing the field at large also comprehending three key areas of interest that can be synthesized as scholarly communication (e.g. research data, research software, digital experiments, digital libraries), e-science/computationally-intense research (e.g. scientific workflows, Virtual Research Environments, reproducibility) and library, archive and information science (e.g. governance, policies, open access, open science).

In this spirit of innovation, this year IRCDL moved to a free of charge open access publishing scheme thanks to the CEUR Workshop Proceedings (CEUR-WS.org) system. IRCDL accepted research papers, describing original ideas on the listed topics and on other fundamental aspects of digital libraries and technology. Moreover, short papers on early research results, new results on previously published works, and extended abstracts on previously published works were also welcome. We accepted ten research papers and eight short papers/extended abstracts. Most of the papers are authored by Italian researchers, but this year we are happy to welcome authors also from Denmark, Portugal and Sweden. All papers were reviewed by three program committee members selected in the research community.

The conference keynote was by Prof. Carole Goble (University of Manchester, UK) on "The swings and roundabouts of a decade of fun and games with Research Objects".

The conference also included a panel entitled "From IRCDL to IRCDL" about the future of the conference, where the role of DL in the current world of research is discussed and the future of IRCDL is re-designed. The panel intends to involve the DL community in an ample debate about what IRCDL should become to remain current as well as to maintain its roots planted back in 2005.

Finally, we want to highlight that IRCDL 2021 had to be held at the Department of Information Engineering of the University of Padua (Italy) on 18-19 February 2021. Due to the continuous emergency state due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes an online only event.

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February 2021
The Program Chairs

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