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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jim Ormond
212-626-0505
ormond@hq.acm.org

AMID COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, WORLD'S LEADING COMPUTING SOCIETY RELEASES REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Report Serves as Comprehensive Resource for Organizing and Running Virtual Conferences

New York, NY, April 16, 2020 – Science and technology conferences are engines of innovation—essential to the incubation of new ideas, the dissemination of research, and the spawning of new technologies. But this year, with no warning, conferences around the globe are finding themselves in uncharted waters as the global COVID-19 pandemic makes physical meetings impossible. To help organizers cope, the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) has issued a new report, “[Virtual Conferences: A Guide to Best Practices](#),” on how to replace face-to-face conferences with virtual ones during the pandemic.

The report is the output of a task force convened by ACM President Cheri M. Pancake to help ACM conference organizers navigate the virtual conference landscape. Composed of heavy users of online technologies, and of researchers responsible for developing them, the ACM community is well positioned to offer advice to other groups dealing with the same problems.

“This report is designed for organizers who must grapple with quickly modifying the format of upcoming conferences or planning future events without relying on traditional face-to-face meetings,” explained ACM President Cheri M. Pancake. “Our task force included ACM members with experience organizing online conferences and conducting virtual planning sessions. They developed a practical handbook that will be useful to newcomers and provide helpful pointers to those who already have some experience with virtual conferences. It is particularly timely given the COVID-19 situation. Our hope is that the report will also encourage conference organizers to think about reducing their reliance on face-to-face meetings in the future.”

The “Virtual Conferences” report, linked from the website as a PDF document, provides concrete advice for events of all sizes. It is a practical guide that covers a wide array of topics that organizers face,

including needed technology, high-level planning, accessibility, fostering social interaction, navigation and finances.

Because this is a rapidly evolving topic, the report has been designed as a living document that the task force will periodically update and revise. Conference organizers are encouraged to share their own experiences, make comments or ask questions.

The ACM Presidential Task Force on What Conferences Can Do to Replace Face-to-Face Meetings is led by Co-chairs Crista Videira Lopes (University of California, Irvine) and Jeanna Matthews (Clarkson University) and Executive Editor Benjamin Pierce (University of Pennsylvania). Task force members are Francois Guimbretiere (Cornell University), Srinivasan Keshav (University of Cambridge, UK), Rob Lindeman (University of Canterbury, New Zealand), Blair MacIntyre (Georgia Tech), and Gary Olson (University of California, Irvine).

About ACM

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery (www.acm.org), is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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