

Preface from the NTCIR - 18 General Chairs

Welcome to the Eighteenth NTCIR Conference (NTCIR-18 Conference).

NTCIR is a series of collective evaluation efforts designed to enhance research on diverse information access technologies, including, but not limited to, cross-language and multimedia information access, question-answering, text mining and summarisation, with an emphasis on East Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, as well as English. Launched in the late 1997 NTCIR has attracted hundreds of research groups from well over 20 different countries and regions. Each NTCIR conference concludes the researchers' efforts over the course of 18 months or so, in the form of official results and future work items.

The first NTCIR Conference was held in the summer of 1999, consecutively with the IREX Workshop, another shared task evaluation on Information Retrieval and Extraction. Since then, a wide variety of tasks have been conducted through NTCIR. More than 1,200 teams have participated in NTCIR tasks, and, as of December 2024, 5,444 research groups are using NTCIR test collections for their research.

NTCIR-18 plays host to ten tasks as listed below. These are coordinated in parallel by some forty task organizers, who operate under the central coordination of the program co-chairs, Qingyao Ai, Chung-Chi Chen, and Shoko Wakamiya.

- Automatic Evaluation of LLMs (“AEOLLM”)
- The Second Fair Web Task (“FairWeb-2”)
- Temporal Inference of Financial Arguments (“FinArg-2”)
- Personal Lifelog Organisation & Retrieval Task (“Lifelog-6”)
- Medical Natural Language Processing for AI Chat (“MedNLP-CHAT”)
- Natural Language Processing for Radiology (“RadNLP”)
- Resource Transfer Based Dense Retrieval (“Transfer-2”)
- Hidden Causality Inclusion in Radiology Report Generation (“HIDDEN-RAD”)
- Searching Unseen Sources for Historical Information (“SUSHI”)
- Unifying, Understanding, and Utilizing Unstructured Data in Financial Reports (“U4”)

NTCIR conference is a venue for task participants and organizers to discuss the official task results, open problems and future task designs. The NTCIR-18 Conference is operated by the NTCIR-18 Organizing Committee and the National Institute of Informatics (NII). We sincerely thank MegaTech.AI Inc., LY Corporation, and Japan System Applications Co., Ltd., for sponsoring the conference, and SECOM Science Foundation for their generous support. We also thank Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. for their support of the AEOLLM task.

We are grateful to the Program Committee of NTCIR-18, and to the NTCIR-18 task organizers and their affiliated institutions. In addition, the NTCIR-18 task organizers served as the editors of this volume and/or provided feedback on the papers submitted by the participants. Many of the task participants volunteered to help with the dataset creation, and we appreciate their great contribution to this community-based activity. We would like to express our gratitude to Maarten de Rijke and Douglas W. Oard for giving the keynote speeches at NTCIR-18, to Mark Sanderson for planning and moderating the panel session, and to panelists Charles L. A. Clarke, Ian Soboroff, and Rikiya Takehi. We also thank Ian Soboroff, Martha Larson, and Gareth Jones for sharing news from related conferences. Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank the people who worked behind the scenes—especially Yoko Harada, Tomoko Ohsuga, Wakana Kuwata, Huu-Long Pham, Koki Mongaki, Yuki Nakanishi, and Maho Kinoshita for their continued effort throughout the course of the NTCIR-18.

The Center for Dataset Sharing and Collaborative Research (DSC) was launched in NII in April 2015, to encourage the close collaboration with various data providers and enhance the research based on the dataset including NTCIR. This center has provided a solid foundation for NTCIR activities. In April 2025, NTCIR became one of the research projects at Research Center for Knowledge Media and Content Science (KMCS) in NII, enabling the accumulated academic resources of NTCIR to be provided to a wider range of users.

We sincerely hope that all participants will enjoy presenting and discussing their research results at the NTCIR-18 conference, socializing on the virtual conference platform and that it serves as an opportunity for new research collaborations.

We would like to thank all the participants, organizers and contributors, and would like to think and envision a fruitful enhanced next 10 years and future together with all of you in the NTCIR/EVIA community.

June, 2025

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