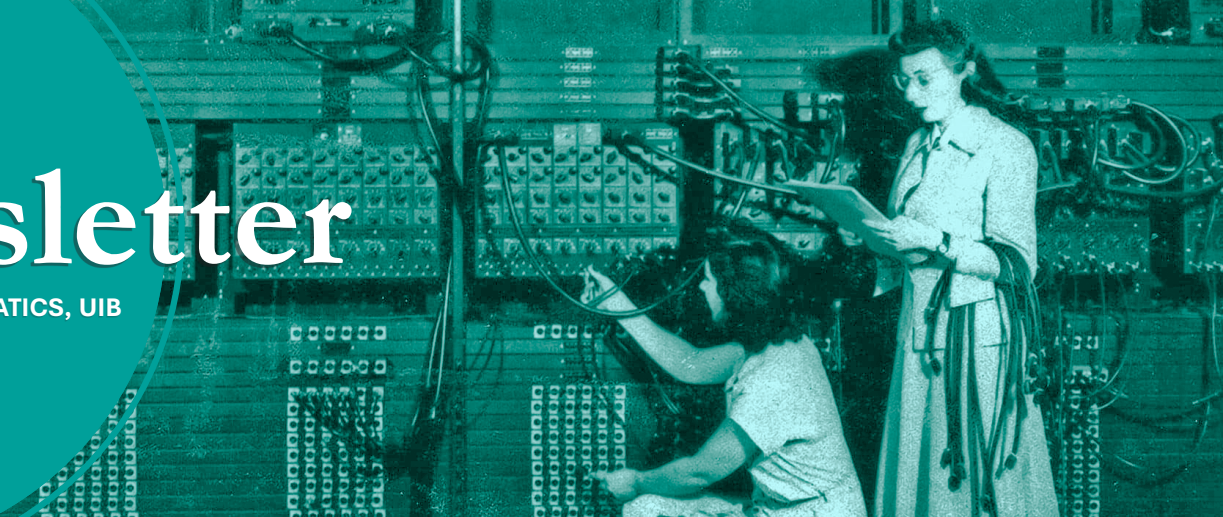


Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS, UiB

No.17/2023, 30.10.2023



Editor-in-chief: Inge Jonassen. Editor: Randi Heggernes Eilertsen.
Contributions or comments to the newsletter are very welcome.
Old newsletters can be found [here](#).

Dear Colleagues,

As you may know the government announced in September that they plan an extra investment in research on Artificial Intelligence. The announcement was made by our prime minister and had a high profile. The plan is to spend one billion (“AI milliarder”) NOK to “contribute to a better understanding of the societal consequences of the technology development” and “to increase knowledge about digital technologies and possibilities for innovation in the industry and in the public sector” (my translation). For our department, investments in “digital technology as a research field in itself” is the most relevant part – in which we find AI, digital security, next generation ICT, new sensors, and quantum technology. The description is very vague and there has been a lot of discussion, including opinion pieces published in Khrono and elsewhere, about what should be of highest priority.

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) has been given the responsibility of working out a more concrete plan and they want to involve the research sector (along with other sectors) in this process ([RCN page with more information](#)). They have appointed a working group with 13 members, including seven from Norwegian universities. We are happy that Jill Walker Rettberg from UiB and Klas Pettersen from NORA are among the members. Klas is the CEO of [NORA](#) where I’m chairing the board. The rest of us can express our opinions by making suggestions in writing (by Nov 9th) and by taking part in meetings on November 6th,

7th or 8th. Our faculty will submit a written response and have asked heads of departments for input by November 2nd. I’ve asked the group contacts to provide input, and you can talk with your group contact – or directly with me – if you have good ideas or opinions. My understanding is that the process will result in a call for proposals around February with a deadline in the spring. It’s important that we are active in providing input and in preparing for submitting proposals. I will do my best both through NORA and the UiB channels to work for a good call, and I hope several of you will also engage!

I would also like to remind you that we are approaching the time for the [annual appraisal interviews](#) – that I prefer to call co-worker conversations (which is closer to the Norwegian term “medarbeidersamtale”). These are important meetings between each member of staff and his/her leader, where we talk about the work situation in the coming period. It’s an opportunity for both employee and leader to take up issues and challenges. I look forward to these conversations with many of you, and I hope you do too!

Inge



The Dean’s Blog - Gunn Mangerud

[The Dean’s blog](#) aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Her latest posts:

- [Ikke krise, men alvorlig for realfagsrekrutteringen](#)
- [Vivat Academia](#)

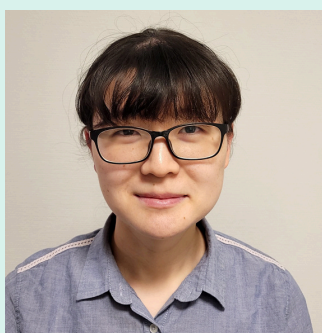


Greetings from Flåm!

The ICT annual meeting in Flåm this year was an engaging event in a friendly atmosphere. The strong focus on PhD students and activities beyond just the individually presented topics made it a great opportunity to connect, learn about each other's research, and learn new things from interesting talks and workshops. Through group discussions, we were able to find ways to improve our social life as PhDs in this department.

Thanks to the remarkable organizers who made this happen!

PhD updates



We have a new PhD in town....

Congratulations, Hyeongji Kim!

Hyeongji Kim successfully defended her thesis "On the Significance of Distance in Machine Learning" on the 23rd of October.

Congratulations, Hyeongji!



Upcoming defence

Pierre Gillot

Pierre Gillot will defend his thesis "Scalable Learning of Bayesian Networks Using Feedback Arc Set-Based Heuristics" on the 10th of November at 10:15 in Lite Auditorium on the 2nd floor (Høyteknologisenteret).

[Read the announcement here.](#)

Welcome, new colleagues!



Mateo Espitia Ibarra

Mateo is originally from Colombia, where he did his master's degree at the Universidad de Antioquia. He has now started as a PhD candidate at the optimization group on the Ocean Charger project.

Welcome, Mateo!

Current Issues

Holiday

Autumn is upon us and soon it will be 2024! Whether you are planning to spend the rest of your 2023 vacation days under the sun or in the snow, there is one thing you must do immediately: Register your remaining vacation days for 2023 in [Selvbetjeningsportalen](#)! It is a requirement that everyone register their vacation, and it is the general rule that all vacation days have to be taken out within the calendar year.

Not certain when you wish to take some days off? Register them now anyway (you can change the dates later) and avoid risking that someone else decides when you're taking your holiday. You will also avoid follow-up via emails and visits from the administration.

So, if you have any vacation days left, please make it your priority to register these now!

Further information on how to register holiday can be found here (in Norwegian): [Universitetet i Bergen :: Medarbeiderhåndbok :: ferie \(compedia.no\)](#). If you have any questions regarding holiday or how to register this in [Selvbetjeningsportalen](#), you are welcome to ask your local HR contact, Karoline Skudal Christiansen.



Christmas dinner - Save the date!

The annual Christmas party will be held on the 15th of December from 19:00 at Grand Hotel Terminus.

We can't promise a bouncy castle, but we can promise loads of food and fun!

More details to come.



“AI, Misinformation, and Covid 19 Conspiracy Theories”

A distinguished lecture by Johannes Langguth

02.11.2023 - 12.45–14:00

Large auditorium, 2nd floor, Høyteknologisenteret

Abstract: “We present a holistic approach on detecting and tracing Covid-19 related conspiracy theories in online social media, discussing both the AI tools and the data sets used for this purpose. We show how different narratives evolve over

time, and investigate the forces driving individual narratives. We then discuss the topic as well as commonly believed misconceptions in the wider context of the misinformation landscape today.”

The talk starts at 13:00, coffee will be served from 12:45. Please help us cut down waste by bringing your own mug.

[Event page: “AI, Misinformation, and Covid 19 Conspiracy Theories”](#)



”Example-Driven Interactive Specification of Database Queries”

A distinguished lecture by Balder ten Cate (University of Amsterdam)

30.11.2023 - 12.45–14:00

Large auditorium, 2nd floor, Høyteknologisenteret

Abstract: Examples can be a useful tool when a formal specification must be synthesized or communicated.

They sometimes provide a more convenient medium for communication than the formal specification itself. We all know this from daily life: think about teaching someone a card game. Simply reading out loud the rules of the game is not an effective way of doing this. Instead, what works best in practice is to give examples of valid and invalid game plays.

In data management, data examples have been proposed and used in the context of schema design and the interactive specification of schema mappings, as well as database query synthesis, refinement and debugging. [...]

[Read full abstract on the event page: “Example-Driven Interactive Specification of Database Queries”](#)

UiB AI

Seminar: Hva skal vi med en milliard til kunstig intelligens?

Tid: 24. november 2023, kl. 10.00

Sted: Universitetsaulaen i Bergen

UiB AI samarbeider med NORA om et Cutting Edge AI seminar i Bergen den 24. november i Universitetsaulaen. Bli med på en debatt om hvordan vi bør bruke KI-milliarden som nå er lovet av regjeringen. For hva skal vi egentlig med en milliard til kunstig intelligens?

Påmelding og mer informasjon:

<https://www.uib.no/ai/165579/hva-skal-vi-med-en-milliard-til-kunstig-intelligens>

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ staff mobility for training

All employees at the University of Bergen can receive a grant for a mobility to an institution, organization or university in Europe through Erasmus+.

Contact the administration or your group leader if you wish to travel on an Erasmus staff training. The application must come from the head of the department/faculty or leader, and should be sent to Erasmus institutional coordinator, Division of Student and Academic Affairs in ePhorte. Expenses that are not covered by the Erasmus grant must be covered by the department/faculty/unit or other funding sources.

UiB has two applications deadlines a year: September 15th and January 20th.

[Read more about Erasmus+ staff mobility](#)

Reminder: Guest routine

Inviting and hosting guest researchers is a natural and welcomed part of our academic work. It is still crucial to act according to our routines and procedures when planning to invite a guest.

If you are inviting a guest researcher to our department, you must follow the guest routine found [here](#).

Vacant positions

- [Senior Engineer/ Chief Engineer \(Research software development\)](#)
- [Studiekonsulent \(seniorkonsulent\)](#)
- [PhD Research Fellow in generative machine learning with geoscience applications \[Distinguish\]](#)

[See all open positions at UiB](#)



“UiB Ferd supports early stage researchers in their career development”

UiB Ferd Career Centre supports doctoral candidates, postdoctoral fellows, researchers and associate professors. We offer a range of services designed to help you develop your career within or beyond the university.

[You can sign up for the UiB Ferd newsletter here.](#)

Upcoming UiB Ferd events include:

03.11.23: [How can you make your research data open and FAIR?](#) (Course)

Registration deadline: 02.11.2023 at 12:00

08.11.23: [Brainbugs](#) (Course)

Registration deadline: 01.11.2023 at 23:55

15.11.23: [Talk about your research in media](#) (Course - communication)

Registration deadline: 03.11.2023 at 23:55

16.11.23: [Boost your career by building international networks](#) (Course)

Registration deadline: 10.11.2023 at 16:00

16.11.23: [Interdisciplinary research - why should I bother?](#) (Presentation)

17.11.23: [Finding & reusing research data](#) (Course)

Registration deadline: 16.11.2023 at 12:00

20.11.23: [MN Faculty: Academic English](#) (Course - language)

Registration deadline: 06.11.2023 at 23:55

The UiB University Library and its [Digital Lab](#) offer a wide range of interesting courses and events – please find more information in the [calendar](#).

International Newsletter

UiB has a newsletter made especially for internationals, where you can find useful tips and news about upcoming events.

If you have moved to Bergen from a different country, we highly recommend subscribing to the newsletter [here](#).

You can also follow the International Centre calendar to find events that are of particular interest to international staff and students.



Teacher's retreat

Save the date: 21th of March

To all teachers at the faculty

For the third time, the Faculty welcomes you to the MN teacher's retreat. The seminar will be held on 21 March on campus at UiB Læringsarena.

More information on the program and theme will be published later.

Yoga

Yoga is back!

You can join a relaxing yoga session every Wednesday from 14:30 to 15:30. If you don't have your own mat, you can borrow one there.



Multimedia screen

The department has acquired a 55-inch screen on wheels, for the purpose of having presentations in rooms which lack multimedia equipment.

If you are interested in using this for an event or presentation, please contact Randi H Eilertsen for details.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Please contact research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#) if you plan to apply. All applications need to be approved by the department leadership before submission. By following the link, you can find out more about our [research support services](#).



Forskningssrådet

FRIPRO: The Research Council of Norway has published the upcoming FRIPRO (groundbreaking research) calls on their website.

- [Researcher Project for Experienced Scientists \(FRIPRO\)](#)
- [Researcher Project for Early Career Scientists \(FRIPRO\)](#)
- [Three-year Researcher Project with International Mobility \(FRIPRO\)](#)

Application deadline: open-ended (to be opened on 18 October)



New Young CAS Grant: “The [Young CAS Grant](#), (previously known as the Young CAS Fellowship), is the funding opportunity offered to early career scholars below the age of 40. Recipients of a Young CAS Grant receive funding and support for their research project and gain valuable experience in organising multiple workshops and a two-month research stay at the Centre.”

Application deadline: 9 December 2023



TMS Starting Grants 2024 - Nomination of applicants at the Department of Informatics: The [TMS Starting Grant programme](#)

is a highly competitive and prestigious funding mechanism designed to help UiB in recruiting and/or retaining talented young researchers. The application process has several stages, starting with the nomination of applicants by the department (and faculty). We ask all research groups to send their suggestions for applicants to the head of department, who will select up to two candidates that will get the opportunity to apply for a TMS Starting Grant the following year (2024).

More detailed information has been sent to all scientific staff and Postdocs at the department via email.

Deadline: 1 December 2023. Please send the required documentation via email to the head of department, cc head of research section.



Forskningssrådet

New Researcher projects (thematic calls): The Research Council of Norway has published preliminary information about researcher project calls for [early career scientists](#), [experienced scientists](#) and [large interdisciplinary projects](#) for a variety of pre-defined topics.

Application deadline: 6 March 2024 (tentative)

NORBIS activities

Course open for registration!

Microbial comparative genomics

– phylogenetics, genome sequencing, genome annotation, antimicrobial resistance, comparative genomics

Time: April 8-12, 2024

Place: University of Bergen, Computational Biology Unit

Course responsible: [Anagha Joshi](#) and [Tom Michoel](#)

Invited lecturers: Dr. [Grigorios Amoutzias](#), [Marios Nikolaidis](#)

Suggested amount of ECTS: 5

Number of participants: Max. 20

Registration form: [Here](#) **Registration deadline:** March 8th.

Course description

The course will be given over a week (5 days Monday-Friday) with lectures (34 hours including discussions) in the mornings and practical hands-on sessions in the afternoons. On the last day there will be a summing-up session where the students can provide feedback. The students will receive a reading list before the course and are expected to prepare well for the course. The students will do a project after the course and deliver a report within two weeks after finishing the course. Students must bring a laptop running a UNIX-Like operating system (any flavor of Linux, UNIX or Mac) to the course and will receive software installation instructions along with the reading list.

Link to course site: <https://norbis.w.uib.no/sequence-analysis...arative-genomics/>



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES: SAVE THE DATE!

Course: Metabolic pathway analysis

Time: January/February 2024, two weeks

Place: University of Bergen, Biomedical Institute

Course responsible: Ines Heiland

Course description: This course will provide an introduction to the computational analysis and reconstruction of both small and genome-scale metabolic networks. The main goal is to familiarize students with relevant state-of-the-art computational tools and databases, as well as to provide the students with hands-on experience in metabolic modelling approaches. Furthermore, we will cover the mathematical basis of constraint-based analysis of genome-scale metabolic models and provide a foundation for stability and control analysis of dynamic models.

For more information about courses, see: <https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/courses/>

Workshop: Comparing genomes: Genome assembly and annotation, and hypothesis testing in comparative genomics.

Time: 1-5 April, 2024

Location: University of Oslo or University of Bergen

Workshop responsible: José Cerca (UiO), Ole Tørresen (UiO), Inge Jonassen (UiB)

Workshop description: In this workshop, we will cover the technical principles of genome assembly, annotation, and genome comparison. We will explore the techniques related to genome sequencing, the software and strategies used for genome assembly and annotation. Following that, we will delve into comparative genomics, focusing on fundamental concepts such as genomic structural features (transposable elements, genes, centromeres), orthologs, and functional characterization of genes. Through this, participants will gain the necessary skills to test hypotheses in the field of comparative genomics.

For more information, visit our workshop website: <https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/workshops/>

Workshop: Genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graph

Time: April/May 2024

Location: Drøbak Research Station (Tollboden)

Workshop responsible: José Cerca (UiO) and Ole Kristian Tørresen (UiO)

Workshop description: The Genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graph workshop (GARG'w) is a comprehensive 3-day program designed to introduce participants to the fascinating world of population genomics and how recombination events shape genomes. This hands-on workshop will focus on utilizing the tskit environment, a powerful tool for simulating and analyzing genomic data (whole-genome resequencing data), to explore and understand complex inheritance patterns within populations. Join us for this immersive 3-day workshop to gain valuable skills and insights into the world of genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graphics using tskit. Unlock the secrets hidden in genetic data and discover the historical events that have shaped the genetic ancestry of species and populations.

In addition we have soft skills courses available that are organized with other national research schools. Please visit <https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/transferable-skills/> for more information.

Travel funding from NORBIS

Are you NORBIS member and in need funding to go to an international course or conference? NORBIS are happy to announce that we have a limited fund available for travel for our members for these activities. If you like to know more, please visit our website: <https://norbis.w.uib.no/travel-funding-f...-and-conferences/>

Funding for arranging courses and workshops

Do you have a course you like to organize under the NORBIS umbrella but in need of funding? Our call for courses is open now: <https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/proposals/>

For more information, please see our webpage: <https://norbis.w.uib.no>