Introduction to the 34-th international conference on logic programming special issue

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This special issue of Theory and Practice of Logic Programming (TPLP) contains the regular papers accepted for presentation at the 34-th International Conference on Logic Programming (ICLP 2018), held in Oxford, United Kingdom, from July 14th to July 17th, 2018.

ICLP 2018 was part of the Federated Logic Conference 2018, (FLOC 2018), as the premier conference on foundations and applications of logic programming, including but not restricted to answer-set programming, non-monotonic reasoning, unification and constraints based logic languages, constraint handling rules, argumentation logics, deductive databases, description logics, inductive and co-inductive logic programming.

Papers were solicited on:

- **Foundations**: semantics, execution algorithms, formal models.
- **Implementation**: virtual machines, compilation, memory management, parallel execution, foreign interfaces.
- **Language Design**: inference engines, type systems, concurrency and distribution, modules, metaprogramming, relations to object-oriented and functional programming, logic-based domain-specific languages.
- **Software-Development Techniques**: declarative algorithms and data structures, design patterns, debugging, testing, profiling, execution visualization.
- **Transformation and Analysis**: assertions, type and mode inference, partial evaluation, abstract interpretation, program transformations.
- **Applications and Synergies**: interaction with SAT, SMT and CSP solvers, logic programming techniques for type inference and theorem proving, horn-clause analysis, knowledge representation, cognitive computing, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, information retrieval, web programming, education, computational life sciences, computational mathematics.

Three kinds of submissions were accepted:

- **Technical papers**, which include technically sound, innovative ideas that can advance the state of logic programming;
• Application papers, which describe interesting application domains;
• System and tool papers, which emphasize novelty, practicality, usability, and availability of the systems and tools.

In addition to the presentations of accepted papers, the technical program has included invited talks, the doctoral consortium, and several workshops.

ICLP implemented the hybrid publication model used in all recent editions of the conference, with journal papers and Technical Communications (TCs), following a decision made in 2010 by the Association for Logic Programming. Papers of the highest quality were selected to be published as rapid publications in this special issue of TPLP. The TCs comprise papers which the Program Committee (PC) judged of good quality but not yet of the standard required to be accepted and published in TPLP as well as dissertation project descriptions stemming from the Doctoral Program (DP) held with ICLP.

We have received 63 submissions of abstracts, of which 49 resulted in full submissions. The Program Chairs, acting as guest editors of the special issue, organized the refereeing process, which was undertaken by the PC with the support of external reviewers. Each paper was reviewed by at least three referees who provided detailed written evaluations. This enabled a list of papers to be short-listed as candidates for rapid communication. The authors of these papers revised their submissions in light of the reviewers’ suggestions, and all these papers were subject to a second round of reviewing. Of these candidates papers, 25 were accepted as rapid communications, to appear in the special issue. In addition, the PC recommended 15 papers to be accepted as TCs, of which 14 were also presented at the conference (1 was withdrawn). These TCs, together with the presentations from the Doctoral Consortium, were published by Dagstuhl Publishing in Volume 64 of their OpenAccess Series in Informatics (OASIcs), available at http://www.dagstuhl.de/oasics.

The 25 rapid communications that appear in this special issue are listed below, in alphabetical order of the first author:

• Mario Alviano, Carmine Dodaro and Marco Maratea. Shared aggregate sets in answer set programming
• Mario Alviano, Carmine Dodaro, Matti Järvisalo, Marco Maratea and Alessandro Previti. Cautious Reasoning in ASP via Minimal models and Unsatisfiable Cores
• Joaquín Arias, Manuel Carro, Elmer Salazar, Kyle Marple and Gopal Gupta. Constraint Answer Set Programming without Grounding
• George Baryannis, Ilias Tachmazidis, Sotiris Batsakis, Grigoris Antoniou, Mario Alviano, Timos Sellis and Pei-Wei Tsai. A Trajectory Calculus for Qualitative Spatial Reasoning Using Answer Set Programming
• Angela Bonifati, Stefania Dumbrava and Emilio Jesús Gallego Arias. Certified Graph View Maintenance with Regular Datalog
• Pedro Cabalar, Jorge Fandiño, Luis Fariñas Del Cerro and David Pearce. Functional ASP with Intensional Sets; Application to Gelfond-Zhang Aggregates
• Pedro Cabalar, Roland Kaminski, Torsten Schaub and Anna Schuhmann. Temporal Answer Set Programming on Finite Traces
• Angelos Charalambidis, Panos Rondogiannis and Ioanna Symeonidou. Approximation Fixpoint Theory and the Well-Founded Semantics of Higher-Order Logic Programs
After consultation with the PC, the paper *Exploiting Answer Set Programming with External Sources for Meta-Interpretive Learning* by Tobias Kaminski, Thomas Eiter and Katsumi Inoue was awarded the best paper prize. The best paper was selected by the PC from those submissions with the joint highest aggregate score, as assigned by the reviewers. Each member of the PC was awarded 2 marks that they could divide between these candidate papers. In addition to the presentations of accepted papers, the technical program of ICLP 2018 included two invited talks:

- Elvira Albert. Avoiding redundancies in the exploration of concurrent programs
- Thomas Eiter. Answer Set Programs go 30: Past and Future
The conference technical program was augmented by two Test-of-Time papers, the Doctoral Program, organized by Paul Fodor and Neda Saeedloei, and by several workshops. The Test-of-Time papers were ranked by using citations as a proxy for impact. The web portals Scopus, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar and Google Scholar were used for collecting citations; care was taken to remove self-citations and check for citations that were split between a conference paper and a follow-up journal paper.

We would like to thank the organizers of these affiliated events for their contributions to the conference as a whole. We are also deeply indebted to the Program Committee members and external reviewers, as the conference would not have been possible without their dedicated, enthusiastic and outstanding work. The Program Committee members were:

 Mario Alviano  Hassan Aït-Kaci  Marcello Balduccini
 Mutsunori Banbara  Pedro Cabalar  Mats Carlsson
 Manuel Carro  Michael Codish  Alessandro Dal Palù
 Marina De Vos  Thomas Eiter  Esra Erdem
 Thom Frühwirth  Marco Gavanelli  Martin Gebser
 Gopal Gupta  Michael Hanus  Amelia Harrison
 Manuel Hermenegildo  Tomi Janhunen  Angelika Kimmig
 Ekaterina Komendantskaya  Nicola Leone  Michael Leuschel
 Yuliya Lierler  Vladimir Lifschitz  Barry O’Sullivan
 David Pearce  Enrico Pontelli  Ricardo Rocha
 Chiaki Sakama  Vitor Santos Costa  Tom Schrijvers
 Tran Cao Son  Theresa Swift  Peter Szeredi
 Mirek Truszczynski  German Vidal  Jan Wielemaker
 Stefan Woltran  Roland Yap  Jia-Huai You

The external reviewers were:

 Weronika T. Adrian  Sandra Alves  Joaquín Arias
 João Barbosa  Zhuo Chen  Md Solimul Chowdhury
 Carmine Dodaro  Gregory Duck  Wolfgang Faber
 František Farka  Mário Florido  Michael Frank
 Daniel Gall  Gregory Gelfond  Jurriaan Hage
 Markus Hecher  Arash Karimi  Emily Leblanc
 Jan Maly  Fumio Mizoguchi  Eric Monfroy
 Michael Morak  Falco Nogatz  Adrian Palacios
 Javier Romero  Elmer Salazar  Zeynep Saribatur
 Sebastian Schellhorn  Peter Schüller  Farhad Shakerin
 Nada Sharaf  Jon Sneyers  Finn Teegen
 Pedro Vasconcelos  Alicia Villanueva  Yisong Wang
 Philipp Wanko  Fangkai Yang

We would also like to express our gratitude to the full ICLP 2018 organization committee, namely Marco Gavanelli who acted as general chairs; Enrico Pontelli, who served as workshop chair; Enrico Pontelli, who acted as publicity chair and designed the web pages; Paul Fodor and Neda Saeedloei, who jointly chaired the Doctoral Program of ICLP; and
Paul Fodor, who organized the programming contest. Our gratitude must be extended to Torsten Schaub, who is serving in the role of President of the Association of Logic Programming (ALP), to all the members of the ALP Executive Committee and to Mirek Truszczyński, Editor-in-Chief of TPLP. Also, to the staff at Cambridge University Press, especially Richard Horley, and to the personnel at Schloss Dagstuhl-Leibniz Zentrum fur Informatik, especially Michael Wagner, for their assistance. We would also like to thank the staff of the EasyChair conference management system for helping the Program Chairs with their prompt support. We wish to thank each author of every submitted papers, since their efforts keep the conference alive and the participants to ICLP for bringing and sharing their ideas and latest developments.

Finally, we would like to thank to the FLOC 2018 conference general chair: Moshe Y. Vardi and to the FLOC 2018 co-chairs Daniel Kroening and Marta Kwiatkowska for their help and guidance to make ICLP part of this outstanding scientific event.