

ACM UMAP 2022 Report - 30th ACM Conference on User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization

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ACM UMAP is the premier international conference for researchers and practitioners working on systems that adapt to individual users, to groups of users, and that collect, represent, and model user information. For the first time in the history of the conference, UMAP 2022 ran in a hybrid mode, with the opportunity for speakers and attendees to participate onsite or online. Besides, in this edition, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of UMAP, which started as a workshop on User Modeling in 1986. In this report we comment on the conference organization and attendees' experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

ACM UMAP (User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization) is the premier international conference for researchers and practitioners working on systems that adapt to individual users or to groups of users, and that collect, represent, and model user information. ACM UMAP is sponsored by ACM SIGCHI and ACM SIGWEB, and organized with User Modeling Inc. as the core Steering Committee, extended with past years' chairs. UMAP is the successor of the biennial User Modeling (UM) and Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-based Systems (AH) conferences that were merged in 2009.

For the first time in the history of the conference, ACM UMAP 2022 ran in hybrid mode, with the opportunity for speakers and attendees to participate onsite or online, hosted at the University Pompeu Fabra, Spain. We received 115 submissions – with no distinction between long and short papers – coming from 761 authors from 41 countries. We had 164

registered participants, including 72 students and 3 invited speakers, from 32 countries. We also had 24 student volunteers and 11 session chairs.

The conference ran from July 4 to 7, with the classic tracks that characterize it, spanning from papers, workshops, tutorials, late breaking results, and a Doctoral Consortium. Details about the organizers and contributions can be found in the corresponding main and adjunct proceedings [Bellogin *et al.* 2022a,b]. This edition was very special because we celebrated the **30th anniversary of UMAP** in terms of editions, as explained in the Opening of the conference (see below). The seed of UMAP was a workshop organized by Wolfgang Wahlster and Alfred Kobsa in Germany in 1986 where 24 researchers from 7 countries spent several days sharing their ideas on how systems could model the users [Carberry, 1987]. In 1994, the User Modeling (UM) workshop became a conference, and since 1997, it has been organized biannually. In parallel, in the year 2000, a conference on Adaptive Hypermedia (AH) was created. These two conferences (UM and AH) lived together in alternative years, until they decided to merge in 2009 and created UMAP, the User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization conference.

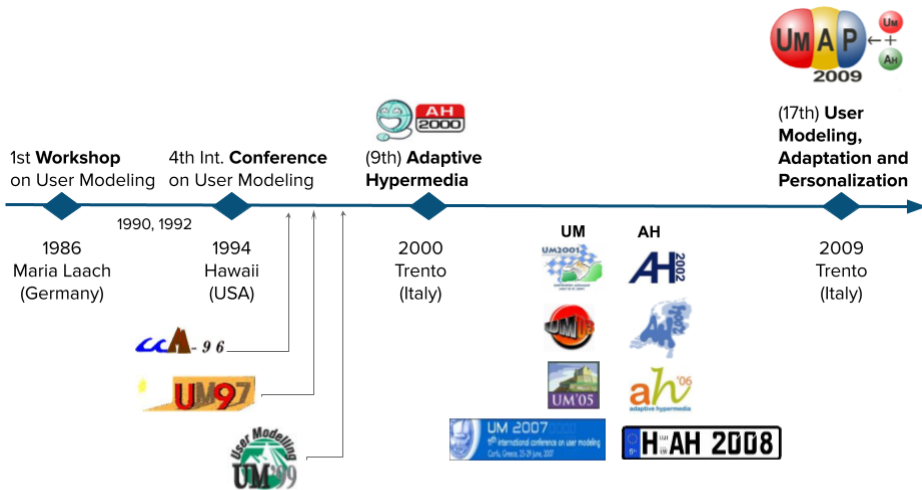


Figure 1. Chronology of UMAP conference series from 1986 to 2009

Thus, since 2009, we are enjoying the UMAP conference every year. And since 2016, with the support of ACM.



Figure 2. Chronology of UMAP conference series from 2009 to 2022

And this is how we arrived in Barcelona, celebrating the 30th edition of the UMAP conference!

During the Opening, we had the opportunity to watch a video from the very same Alfred Kobsa talking about his memories of that first UM workshop in 1986. There was also another video contribution from Judy Kay, who has been very active in the UMAP community since she attended the second UM workshop in 1990. We also presented the dashboard¹ created by Anthony Jameson, another pioneer of the User Modeling field, to keep the UMAP memories alive. So please, feel free to contribute on the dashboard if you have some memories to share!

Since no celebration can be done alone, ACM UMAP 2022 was co-located with ACM WebSci 2022 and ACM Hypertext 2022, running also in Barcelona a few days before the conference. UMAP even shared a track on Personalized Recommender Systems with Hypertext with the same program committee and call for papers across the two conferences.

¹ <https://to-do.tips/#umap>

2. ACM UMAP 2022 EXPERIENCE

The main challenge we faced for this UMAP edition was how to balance the online and onsite interactions. Thus, to support this hybrid format, we used the Zoom video conferencing system for the online part, complemented with the Slack messaging tool, so attendees could ask questions or continue the discussion after the presentations (or even before if they wanted, since most of the papers had a short video available in the ACM DL). In this way, we could support the 72 (43.9%) online participants (as well some of the onsite participants that at some point decided to take some of the sessions from their hotel). Based on a post-conference survey, we observed that most people felt that Slack was not integrated with the rest of the event, so they preferred to ask questions via voice through Zoom: they reported that this promoted the feeling that online attendees were part of the conference. In any case, it was great to see that 92 participants (the remaining 56.1%) decided to come to Barcelona and enjoy the in-person networking onsite. It is worth noting that many of these attendees were students (41 out of 92) and, in fact, most of the students (but also faculty and participants from developing countries) applied to grants and support funds which covered travel and/or registration.

Both online and onsite participants were offered a four-day program, where workshops ran in the mornings and the conference sessions followed in one single-track afterwards. In this way, we aimed to accommodate in the best possible way the time zones of most of the online participants. Moreover, this scheme was appreciated by those who replied to our survey: 79.4% liked this format, which is exactly the same number that endorsed the single-track configuration for the main sessions. We continued this configuration in ACM UMAP 2022 as it had been frequently employed in past editions of the conference.

We also invited three keynote speakers that talked about relevant perspectives from the human side of personalization. On July 4th, Ben Shneiderman talked about human centered artificial intelligence and the trade-off of ensuring human control while increasing automation. On July 6th, Nuria Oliver presented her experience to help fight COVID-19 by modeling human behavioral data. Finally, on July 7th, Francesco Ricci discussed how recommender systems can be developed to help humans make better choices.

The talks of the conference were recorded and will remain archived on the SIGWEB Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/ACMSIGWEB/>).

Finally, during the banquet dinner, the UMAP awards² were announced. In particular, the Best paper award (“Walking with PACE – Personalized and Automated Coaching Engine”), the James Chen Best Student Paper Award (“How to Ask for Donations? Learning User-Specific Persuasive Dialogue Policies through Online Interactions”), and the best reviewers. And we also blew candles for the 30th anniversary of UMAP and sang songs from the countries of the participants, as has been a tradition at UMAP for many years.

To conclude, here is a picture from the closing of the conference, with onsite and online participants:



Figure 3. Some of the 92 onsite and 72 online participants of ACM UMAP 2022

We thank the presenters and attendees very much for their participation. We look forward to continuing to celebrate many UMAP anniversaries together, sharing the progress in the state of the art and discussing new research directions of the user modeling, adaptation and personalization field. The collaborative and enthusiastic atmosphere that exists in the UMAP research community has kept people coming year after year to present their latest findings. The 33 participants who responded to the post-conference survey were satisfied with the hybrid experience and thanked us for organizing it, although they also identified things to improve and gave some ideas to be taken into account in the next edition. We hope that our experience will make the next hybrid events easier to organize and more inclusive for participants, in particular thinking of the organization of ACM UMAP 2023, which will take place in Limassol, Cyprus, next year. We hope to see you there!

² <https://www.um.org/umap2022/awards/>

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