

Preface

This volume contains the papers presented at the 18th International Conference on Similarity Search and Applications (SISAP). The conference was held in Reykjavík, Iceland, from October 1 to 3, 2025. Reykjavik University hosted SISAP 2025, continuing the tradition of offering an annual forum to researchers and application developers in the area of similarity data management.

Efficient data management is more crucial than ever for applications that process large-scale data, as digital data continues to grow. Complex data domains such as images, geometric shapes, biometric data, and texts in natural languages do not allow for natural ordering of data items that would preserve pairwise similarities. The similarity, as perceived by humans, must be modeled and treated considering particular data items as reference objects. That is, processed data items can only be clustered or sorted based on their similarities to a given reference data item.

The contemporary explosion of machine learning techniques causes an increasing demands on data processing. Contemporary data sets, therefore, require innovative approaches to similarity management and processing to meet the growing user expectations. SISAP is the main scientific conference that focuses on similarity management mostly considering (1) the similarity foundations, i.e., similarity learning, modeling, similarity functions, local intrinsic dimensionality, and distance densities; (2) data processing based on similarities of data items, i.e., data organization, searching, retrieval, indexing, filtering, and clustering; and (3) applications of similarity-based approaches in various fields such as multimedia processing, biometrics processing and searching, computer vision, big data processing, and data mining.

SISAP 2025 hosted the third SISAP Indexing Challenge, the fifth Doctoral Symposium on Similarity Search and Applications, a demonstration track, and a special session titled “IRMC: Interactive Retrieval for Multimedia Collections”. It also featured three distinguished keynote speakers, Kai Uwe Barthel (HTW Berlin, Germany), Franco Maria Nardini (CNR-ISTI, Italy), and Ari Jónsson (Videntifier Technologies, Iceland), who provided diverse theoretical, practical, and applied insights. The abstracts of their invited talks are included in these proceedings.

This year, SISAP received 47 submissions for the SISAP main track and special session, 6 submissions for the SISAP Indexing Challenge, 3 demonstration proposals, and 2 submissions for the Doctoral Symposium. The authors of these 58 articles were affiliated with institutions in 24 countries. These numbers represent a significant increase, with the highest values seen at SISAP since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In total, 29 regular and special session papers were accepted, of which 18 were both submitted and accepted as full papers, 2 were submitted and accepted as short papers, and 9 were submitted as full papers but accepted as short papers. The acceptance rate among the

VI Preface

full regular and special session papers was 43 % (18 out of 42), and an additional 21 % of full articles were accepted as short ones.¹

The Indexing Challenge was organized by Eric S. Tellez (CICESE, Mexico), Edgar Chavez (CICESE, Mexico), Martin Aumüller (ITU Copenhagen, Denmark), and Vladimir Mic (Aarhus University, Denmark). It contained two different tasks to promote the dissemination of best practices throughout the community and allow an honest comparison of competitors in a predefined environment. Similar to previous editions, the Indexing Challenge offered public datasets and allowed full reproducibility via GitHub actions. This year, it welcomed 7 participating teams. The authors submitted 6 explanatory articles, and 5 of them were accepted for publication in these proceedings. In addition, the proceedings feature an invited overview paper by the organizers, providing a detailed summary of the Indexing Challenge.

The Doctoral Symposium provided a forum for PhD students to present their research ideas and receive feedback from senior members of the research community. The goal of the Doctoral Symposium was to foster a collaborative environment and encourage students to participate in constructive discussions to share their ideas. SISAP 2025 received 2 submissions to the Doctoral Symposium, and both were accepted.

The Demonstration Track received 3 high-quality submissions, all of which were accepted. The evaluation took into account both academic aspects, such as novelty and technical challenges, and practical considerations, including how engaging and impactful the demonstrations would be for attendees during the conference. At SISAP 2025, these demonstrations were presented in a dedicated session, integrated with the conference reception, creating an interesting and engaging social atmosphere.

The IRMC special session on Interactive Retrieval for Multimedia Collections, organized by Omar Shahbaz Khan (Reykjavik University, Iceland), Rachel Arnold (University of Basel, Switzerland), Fabio Carrara (CNR-ISTI, Pisa, Italy), and Ujjwal Sharma (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), attracted 3 submissions. Two of these submissions were accepted and presented in a dedicated conference session, complemented by a lively panel discussion.

The SISAP 2025 Program Committee had 56 members from 20 countries. A high commitment to the conference is illustrated by the fact that all PC members provided all the reviews requested. Consequently, each regular paper received at least 3 reviews, and articles submitted to the special sessions received at least 4 reviews. For special session submissions, two of the four reviews were proposed by the special session organizers, and two were from the ordinary PC committee. All reviews of regular and special session papers were conducted in a double-blind manner. Additionally, reviewers were unaware of the identity of the other reviewers evaluating the same article. Doctoral Symposium, Demonstration, and Indexing Challenge papers, on the other hand, were reviewed in a single-blind fashion, as most appropriate for these categories of papers.

¹ Two papers were subsequently withdrawn by their authors due to travel and registration issues.

We express our deep appreciation to all members of the Program Committee for their commitment, detailed interest in the submitted articles, and their support of the SISAP conference. We believe that detailed and high-quality reviews of the articles maintained the high scientific and academic standards of the SISAP conference.

The proceedings of SISAP 2025 are published by Springer in the Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS) series. The editors of these proceedings express their gratitude to Springer for continued support and for sponsoring the SISAP Awards. Following tradition, authors of selected outstanding papers were invited to submit extended versions of their work for publication in a special issue of the Information Systems journal published by Elsevier.

We would like to thank all the authors who submitted papers to SISAP 2025. We also extend our gratitude to the members of the Organizing Committee for their work and pleasant collaboration, and to our sponsors and supporters for their generosity.

October 2025

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