

Expanding the Space of Cognitive Science

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The CogSci2011 slogan “Expanding the Space of Cognitive Science” capitalizes on a fundamental tenant of the field of cognitive science: the bringing together of researchers from psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, and artificial intelligence in a forum that encourages multi-disciplinary and multi-method approaches to common problems. To illustrate the benefits of such a tenant, we use **spatial thinking** as a case study. Understanding the objects and events that make up the space in which we live can help to structure human thinking across the range of cognition, from basic perceptual processing to representations of space and spatial relations in language to decisions about navigation and wayfinding. Space also helps to structure how we communicate and learn about complex, non-spatial concepts, ranging from informal social relations to time to formal education in science. Thus, space offers an inclusive theme to illustrate the value of interdisciplinary research.

We draw our keynote speakers and our invited symposia from a domain with a long and successful history of bridging diverse research traditions, and a dedicated international network of researchers. Our keynote speakers are leading researchers in neuroscience, linguistics and cognitive science. Our symposia encompass both basic and applied research, with one focused on navigation through a combination of robotics, computational modeling, decision-making, perception, and spatial thinking approaches, and the other focused on real world problems of spatial cognition from the domains of medicine, architecture, and geosciences. Together, these elements of the program emphasize the idea that the space occupied by the field of cognitive science is ever expanding, as also reflected in the key image chosen for our poster – a 3D rendering that turns our familiar cognitive science symbol into a navigable maze.

We are also honored to include in the program the Governing Board Symposium entitled “The Biology of Language.” The Governing Board Symposium is designed to showcase timeless and foundational issues in Cognitive Science, including distinguished speakers who represent a wide variety of disciplines within Cognitive Science. In addition, this year we also offer a brief tribute to honor the memory of David Rumelhart, a founding figure in our field who passed away this past year; this will occur immediately following Judea Pearl’s Rumelhart Lecture. Finally, we are pleased to continue the tradition of presentations by recipients of the Heineken Prize for Cognitive Science with this year’s plenary by Michael Tomasello.

In addition to these special features, the main elements of the program remain strongly in place: the talks, posters, and workshops and tutorials draw from the wide range of traditional and emerging domains of inquiry in cognitive science. This attests to the health and vibrancy of the cognitive science community. The table below shows the breakdown of the number of submissions and accepted presentations, broken down by type. We received a record number of submissions in all categories.

Submission type	# submitted	# accepted as talks	# accepted as posters	# accepted as symposia, workshops or tutorials
6 page papers	733	232 (32%)	316 (43%)	---
Member abstracts	213	---	210 (98%)	---
Symposia	22	---	---	15 (68%)
Workshops	10	---	---	6 (66%)
Tutorials	14	---	---	10 (71%)

We look forward to meeting you in Boston, and we wish you a wonderful conference.