Editorial—The HRI Spring: Shaping Our Future From a Foundation of Diverse Scholarship

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As we publish our first issue of 2019, we welcome the start of a new spring where the sun is shining, the birds are chirping, and the trees are getting ready to blossom. The start of spring is often a time to look forward to new beginnings in anticipation of the warm months to come. Spring also invites us to reflect on days past as we begin our spring cleaning. Spring's duality of looking forward while remembering our past is well timed for the annual gathering of the human-robot interaction community at the 14th annual IEEE-ACM International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI 2019) in Daegu, South Korea. ACM THRI is excited to have the opportunity to showcase a selection of the excellent scholarship we have published over the past 12 months in a special session of the conference. This special session gives exposure to the journal articles among a broad international readership and expands the breadth of ideas and perspectives represented at the conference. As we gear up for HRI 2019, we want to take this opportunity to consider the relationship between the conference and the journal in terms of our initial trajectory of ACM THRI and our future aspirations.

The ACM/IEEE HRI conference and ACM THRI share a common ancestry. The modern HRI research community owes much of its progress to trailblazers who saw that the human dimensions of robotics needed greater attention and exploration. From earlier notions of “supervisory control” and “human-machine systems,” there were many fundamental questions, both technological and empirical, about how people would work with robotic systems that were unaddressed and under-considered. Our modern ideas of HRI grew through the convergence of people seeking to address these compelling questions about robotics from across many disciplines.

We particularly note the forethought and pioneering efforts of Alan C. Schultz (May 9, 1957 to January 20, 2019), a pillar in the foundation of the HRI community and the preeminence of the HRI conference. Alan was a catalyst for HRI coalescing from a loose collection of like minds into a true research community with considerable impact. Beyond Alan's leadership, many of us have been touched by his mentorship, inclusion, friendship, and unique knack for interesting culinary experiences. His infectious joy of sushi produced many fun stories that will live on as legends in HRI. Alan's passing is a loss of a significant voice in our community, but his impact will live on through the many future generations of HRI research and development.

ACM THRI, through its predecessor *The Journal of Human-Robot Interaction* (JHRI), was founded on the community that Alan helped build for the HRI conference. In 2006, Alan was a principal organizer of the inaugural meeting of HRI 2006. He worked alongside many of our good friends and colleagues who made instrumental contributions to establish the flagship meeting for HRI research, and later its flagship journal. We can trace several common members among the organizing and program committees of the HRI conference and the journal's editorial board. The development of both the conference and the journal has been overseen and supported since its inception by the HRI Steering Committee. The journal's commitment to open access publishing and to a wide interdisciplinary scope was established in its discussions. The journal owes a tremendous debt to

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several of Alan's fellow founders who have served on the Steering Committee, including Julie Adams, Holly Yanco, Michael Goodrich, and Sara Kiesler, and the work of innumerable volunteers and esteemed scholars in its 8 years of operation. HRI Steering Committee members provided not only advice on how to build up the journal but also encouraged their own students and other scholars to contribute manuscripts to this new and initially unknown venue.

In addition to their common lineage, there are also key structural similarities between the journal and the conference. The interdisciplinary journal submission sections of ACM THRI (Social and Behavioral, Design, Mechanical, and Computational HRI) and the conference themes explicitly invite diverse scholarly viewpoints. HRI has also grown a more global community of scholarship. It is therefore through the combined efforts of HRI scholars from all over the world that the journal has become what it is today. We are highly energized by the continual growth of both the conference and the journal to serve the broadening HRI community.

The annual THRI journal session at the conference serves to re-establish these ties. At the same time, the editors of ACM THRI and the program chairs of HRI see it as an opportunity to further widen the scope of the conference by presenting scholarship that goes beyond the disciplines, themes, and methods more commonly represented at the conference. Although the HRI conference is interdisciplinary by nature and the organizers consistently work to expand its reach and inclusivity, there are limits to what is possible to achieve given tight conference review timelines and other program constraints. The extended journal review and revision process allows us to give authors more time and flexibility to develop their diverse viewpoints on HRI research into publication-ready manuscripts. ACM THRI is also committed to incorporating voices from scholars who certainly contribute to HRI envisioned broadly but do not necessarily participate in the HRI conferences. These include researchers in mechanical engineering, haptics, artificial intelligence, linguistics, healthcare, and entertainment—the list is open, and we are always excited to see new approaches and frameworks that can be brought into the discussion about HRI.

Looking at this first issue of the eighth year of the HRI journal, we can see the continuity and complementarity of ACM THRI and ACM/IEEE HRI on display. “[Empathic Robot for Group Learning](#)” by Alves-Oliveira et al., which will be presented at the journal special session at HRI 2019, describes how an autonomous robot with empathic competencies can support student learning in an educational environment. “[Reflecting on the Presence of Science Fiction Robots in Computing Literature](#)” by Mubin et al. takes previous publications from the HRI conference, among others, as its source material in exploring how our imagination about robotic futures affects the technical and philosophical development of robots. In “[Communicating Dominance in a Nonanthropomorphic Robot Using Locomotion](#),” Li et al. show that the design of motion cues for non-anthropomorphic robots can affect people's interpretations of their intelligence and status. Finally, in “[Blossom: A Handcrafted Open-Source Robot](#),” Suguitan and Hoffman describe the design of a robot that was presented in the demo session at HRI 2018 and received an overwhelmingly positive audience response.

As they develop further, ACM/IEEE HRI and ACM THRI will no doubt grow apart in some ways and stay connected in others. As editors-in-chief, we are motivated by the knowledge that these two venues for interdisciplinary HRI scholarship will continue to support each other and the broadening HRI community over the coming years. We look forward to the future developments in the HRI conference and the ACM THRI journal, and we welcome the surprises and delights that your contributions will make to both.