

Selected papers from the COMMA 2018 workshops *Argumentation & Society* and *Argumentation & Philosophy*

Katie Atkinson^a and Jacky Visser^b

^a *Department of Computer Science, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom*
E-mail: k.m.atkinson@liverpool.ac.uk

^b *Centre for Argument Technology, University of Dundee, Dundee, United Kingdom*
E-mail: j.visser@dundee.ac.uk

As part of the Warsaw Argumentation Week in September 2018,¹ we organised two new workshops at the 7th International Conference on Computational Models of Argument (COMMA): *Argumentation & Society* (chaired by Atkinson), and *Argumentation & Philosophy* (chaired by Visser). Taking place on 11 September 2018, the two workshops attracted 35–40 participants throughout the day, who engaged with a total of 17 presentations, including a keynote by Michał Araszkiewicz and Marcin Koszowy on reasoning and argumentation, and a panel discussion on the opportunities and challenges for exploiting argumentation research in applications for society.

Both workshops were aimed at showcasing ongoing research and work-in-progress, leading to lively debate on topics ranging from the role of argumentation in society to the potential concerns of deployment of Artificial Intelligence applications. The *Argumentation & Society* workshop was focused on the impact of argumentation research on society at large – creating links with the social sciences such as theoretical and experimental psychology, sociology, media and communication studies, law, medicine, politics and education. The *Argumentation and Philosophy* workshop brought together computational approaches to argumentation and the traditional sub-disciplines of philosophy, such as ethics, epistemology and logic.

The current special segment of *Argument & Computation* showcases two selected papers from the *ArgSoc* and *ArgPhil* workshops. These papers detail research presented at the workshops that has since been significantly extended and revised, and further peer-reviewed as part of the rigorous process undertaken for their appearance in the journal.

In “*Ethical Challenges in Argumentation and Dialogue in a Healthcare Context*”, Mark Snaith, Rasmus Nielsen, Sita Kotnis and Alison Pease describe the challenges involved in the development and deployment of dialogue-based e-health systems. The challenges they describe centre mostly on the collection and handling of health data, and the level of trust that users have in the system. The authors emphasise the importance of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in such high-stakes application domains, where inappropriate intervention by the software can have direct and severe adverse consequences for the (patient-)user. The paper culminates in six practical recommendations focusing on

¹See <http://waw2018.argdiap.pl/>.

such topics as the consent-gathering process, conflict resolution, referral to medical professionals, and the distinct roles of explanation and argumentation within the context of advice giving in healthcare. As academic research on computational argumentation is increasingly applied in consumer software, the importance of RRI, ethics and domain-specific regulations increases with it. The considerations and recommendations set out in this paper constitute a solid reference point for thinking about such issues in future applications of argument technology.

In “*Ranking Comment Sorting Policies in Online Debates*”, Anthony Young, Sagar Joglekar, Gioia Boschi and Nishanth Sastry show how argumentation theory can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of policies for sorting comments in online debates, in terms of displaying the winning arguments to a reader who may not have read the whole debate. They address this challenge by applying argumentation theory, data mining and statistics to build a pipeline that compares comment sorting policies by measuring the number of actually winning arguments each policy displays to a reader who has only read a part of the debate. They then show how this pipeline is applied to evaluate policies on Kialo debates. The paper provides an excellent exemplar of research being undertaken to make use of argumentation techniques in the online debating setting that is highly relevant for today’s online societal interactions.

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