Introduction

The manuscripts included in this special issue, grew out from the 21st EANN (Engineering Applications of Neural Networks) and 16th AIAI (Artificial Intelligence Applications and Innovations) Joint International Conference, that was held virtually (due to COVID), June 5th–June 7th, 2020. The joint conference received 238 submissions overall (149 in AIAI and 89 in EANN). One hundred and twelve (112) papers were accepted as full, for presentation and publication in the conference proceedings published by Springer series leading to an acceptance rate of near 47%. The authors of the papers considered to be the most innovative and original in terms of computing and information technologies were invited to submit "*substantially extended and updated manuscripts with additional original computational materials based on their most recent research*" for possible publication in this issue. Each submitted extended manuscript underwent through at least two cycles of the journal's rigorous review process, using the journal review form. They received between 5 and 10 reviews. The six manuscripts included in this issue are a selection of representative articles dealing with some recent advances in this field. We hope that they can serve to highlight the exciting work conducted in this area of research and can be also helpful to inspire enthusiastic young minds to join the quest.

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