

## Information Theory Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Dear information theory community member,

As part of several efforts to improve inclusivity in the information theory community, we ask that you fill out this demographics and inclusion survey. This should take about 5 to 15 minutes.

**Why?** The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee in the Information Theory Society (ITSoc) is very interested in knowing how we can improve in ways that make everyone feel welcome and included. We are also collecting demographic information (following NCWIT and CRA-W) so that we can (a) understand where we stand as a community, and (b) identify areas in which the society can improve and develop strategies to address challenges that exist.

**Privacy:** All questions are optional and this survey is anonymous.

The ITSoc D&I Committee has appointed a sub-committee consisting of Nihar Shah, Stark Draper, and Tara Javidi to conduct this survey. The raw (anonymous) survey data will only be accessed by this subcommittee. Only aggregate statistics will be made public, and only statistics about groups that include at least 25 individuals to ensure privacy. Any information from text boxes will be anonymized and aggregated and only reported in ways that protect your identity.

Please contact Nihar Shah ([nihars@cs.cmu.edu](mailto:nihars@cs.cmu.edu)) or Stark Draper ([stark.draper@utoronto.ca](mailto:stark.draper@utoronto.ca)) or Tara Javidi ([tjavidi@eng.ucsd.edu](mailto:tjavidi@eng.ucsd.edu)) with any concerns or questions.

**Note:** This survey will remain open until August 31, 2021. If you wish to fill the survey in more than one sitting, you may edit it even after you submit it (by hitting "Done" at the end) later from the same computer and browser (surveymonkey uses cookies to enable this). The survey does not track any IP addresses etc. for privacy.

**Acknowledgements:** Parts of this survey are based on the NeurIPS 2018 diversity and inclusion survey, and are used here with permission.

We value your time and your candor in responding to this survey. Thank you very much.

## Information Theory Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Page 1/6: Involvement in the Information Theory Community

The first set of questions deals with the ways in which you have been involved in the information theory community. This will aid our understanding of our community and better contextualize your responses throughout the survey. Please keep in mind that all questions are optional.

**1. How much of your professional identity is aligned with the information theory community?** (Please select all options that apply)

- I am a member of the IEEE Information Theory Society (ITSoc)
- Most or all of my activities and contributions are related to the information theory community
- I only occasionally participate in information theory events and/or occasionally publish in information theory venues
- I am largely not involved in the information theory community
- Other (please specify)

**2. When did you first start to participate in the information theory community as one of your intellectual activities (e.g., submit papers or review or attend)?**

- 1960s or earlier
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
- 2000s
- 2010-2015
- 2016-present

**3. In what other ways would you like to participate, but have not yet got a chance to do so?** Our goal is to design channels to facilitate participation based on your responses here. Since the survey is anonymous, we will not handle individual requests here, but intend to follow up with specific programs based on the survey outcomes. (Please select all options that apply)

- Serve as TPC member for an ISIT or an ITW
- Serve as a reviewer for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory or the IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory (JSAIT)
- Serve as an Associate Editor for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory
- Serve on a committee or as a committee volunteer (<https://www.itsoc.org/people/committees>); please provide details below if you have a specific interest
- Other (please specify)

The questions in this section are aimed at helping us understand the background of our community members. All questions are optional. In subsequent sections, we are interested in knowing about any challenges you may have faced participating in or feeling welcome in the information theory community, and your answers in this section will help us better contextualize those responses.

**4. In what sector are you currently employed?**

- Undergraduate student
- Master's student
- PhD student
- Postdoc
- Faculty
- Industry – Research Lab
- Industry – Other
- Government
- Other (please specify)

**5. What is your gender?**

**6. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etc.) community?**

- Yes
- No

**7. How do you identify along race/ethnicity/ancestry lines?** (For example, in the US context this could be "African American" or "Native American" etc. Feel free to leave this blank if this question does not apply to you.)

**8. What is your current country of residence (where you live most of the time)?**

**9. What is your country/countries of primary education?**

10. Do you consider yourself a native English speaker or functionally equivalent to a native English speaker?

- Yes
- No

11. Are there other demographics with which you identify that you believe are relevant to our goal of inclusivity?

## Information Theory Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Page 3/6: Possible Barriers

We are interested to know any challenges you may have faced participating in the information theory community, particularly so that we can work on strategies for improving it. Please remember that all questions are optional.

12. Have you ever felt like any of the factors listed in the previous section, or any other demographic attributes, have led to challenges in participating fully in the information theory community or in feeling excluded from the community?

- Yes
- No

Please describe how.

13. Do you know where to report in case of any issue of discrimination or harassment at an Information Theory Society event (such as ISIT or ITW)?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

14. Information about the reporting process and other D&I resources is available here <https://www.itsoc.org/diversity-and-inclusion> Please let us know if you have any comments in this regard.

## Information Theory Diversity and Inclusion Survey

### Page 4/6: Information Theory Events

We are interested to know about any challenges you may have faced participating in events in the information theory community, particularly so that we can work on strategies for improving it. Please remember that all questions are optional.

15. Is your participation in information theory events impacted by accessibility challenges? Please consider providing details in the text box below. (Please select all options that apply)

- Vision-related challenges
- Hearing-related challenges
- Mobility-related challenges (e.g., climbing stairs)
- Any other accessibility challenge (please describe below)

16. Some previous ISITs/ITWs have provided childcare options. If you have childcare responsibilities (or may have in the near future), we would like to better understand their impact on participating in information theory events. (Please select all options that apply)

- This question is not applicable to me
- I am a parent, but my childcare responsibilities have not prevented my participation in any information theory events
- My childcare responsibilities have prevented my participation in some information theory events
- If childcare options are provided at information theory events I would (or might in the future if I am not currently a parent) make use of such options

Please detail any further thoughts about the childcare options that previously have been offered at the ISITs and ITWs, and/or options you would like to see offered in the future.

17. The ITSoc Conference Committee recently sent out a survey about the future of the ISIT conference. Have you completed this survey?

- Yes
- No

18. The longer-form format of this D&I survey allows us to collect more open-ended feedback that the conference committee survey did not. You can answer this question irrespective of whether or not you answered the conference committee survey.

**The pandemic has dramatically changed the landscape of conferences. It presents us with various possibilities for their format going ahead: in-person vs. virtual vs. hybrid. Please let us know if you have a preference on formats, and if you have faced any challenges in any particular format.**

Feel free to either simply indicate your preference, e.g., “I prefer [format]” or provide detailed thoughts on the pros/cons of any format.

19. **There is debate between two forms of peer review: single blind (reviewers know identities of authors) and double blind (reviewers don't know identities of authors). Information theory publication venues are currently single blind. We wish to understand your perspectives and preferences on this.** (Assume that double blind will not impose any other restriction regarding posting on arxiv etc., as followed in NeurIPS/ICML/AAAI conferences. Please select all options that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that evaluations of my papers have been influenced by my (the author's) identity | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer single blind reviewing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer double blind reviewing  | <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that evaluations of my papers have not been influenced by my (author's) identity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to try out double blind at an ITW or ISIT on a trial basis                    | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a preference between single and double blind                                  |

Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding single vs. double blind:

20. **Have you participated in activities organized by the Student and Outreach Subcommittee (e.g., meeting the Shannon lecturer, mentoring events, ISIT student video exposition) or Women in Information Theory (WITHITS) in the past 3 years?**

Yes

No

If **"YES"**, in your experience which activities have been most helpful? What suggestions do you have for improvement?

If **"NO"**, is there any barrier to engaging in Student & Outreach activities?

21. **What recommendation(s) would you make to the Student and Outreach Subcommittee and WITHITS leadership to represent the interests and needs of students, women, and groups currently underrepresented in ITSoc better, or to facilitate interactions among students and other members of the information theory community, or to make our community more inclusive?** (Please feel free to draw on examples from other scientific communities, and/or ITSoc chapters, that you may be a member of.)

## Information Theory Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Page 6/6: Final Comments

**In this final section, please let us know if you have any other feedback for us. All questions are optional.**

22. **If you have any additional feedback about how information theory could be a more inclusive community, or any other comments pertaining to the topics of this survey, please let us know.**

23. **If you have any feedback on this survey in particular (e.g., other things we could have asked in the survey), please let us know.**