

# Harnessing Human Intellect for Computing

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The border between what computers and people are able to do has been shifting over time. How might computers and people work together to solve difficult problems? In recent years, interest has been growing in the emerging interdisciplinary area of Human Computation, a field that explores principles and applications around giving computing systems programmatic access to human intellect to perform some aspect of computation, whether involving individuals or groups of people (“the crowd”).

Several workshops have been held in the past on human computation, but not a dedicated academic conference. The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence ([AAAI Conference on Human Computation and Crowdsourcing \(HCOMP-2013\)](#)) will bring several fields together in the first major academic conference on this topic. The conference will take place November 7-9, 2013 in Palm Springs, California. The paper submission deadline is May

1, and there will also be workshops, tutorials, posters, and demonstrations.

Eric Horvitz, from Microsoft Research, past president of AAAI, and a current Computing Community Consortium council member, worked with other leaders in the area of human computation, to propose that AAAI take this on as a core conference.

“It’s interesting how new disciplines evolve, often rising at the intersecting borders of established fields. This is a young but maturing direction in computer science with deep relevance to research on machine intelligence, human-computer interaction, and computational economics,” said Horvitz. “Human computation centers on incorporating people into problem solving when machines cannot tackle the problem alone—and on computational methods for coordinating and fusing the contributions of groups of people to achieve goals.

Horvitz agreed to serve as program co-chair for the first conference along with Björn Hartman, UC Berkeley. With the program committee, they seek to build a high-quality academic conference that will embrace efforts in theory and practice across multiple disciplines, span a broad spectrum of interests and efforts in human computation, including such topics as methods and experiences with crowdsourcing, uses of machine learning, combining machine and human perception, extending the competency of databases, preferences and mechanism design, and games with a purpose, like [Foldit](#).

“We’ve been working with leaders in human computation and crowdsourcing across several disciplines to create a new interdisciplinary meeting for computer science. Our goal is to establish a new and long-lasting home for this young community to meet and exchange ideas.”



*Photo Courtesy of Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism*