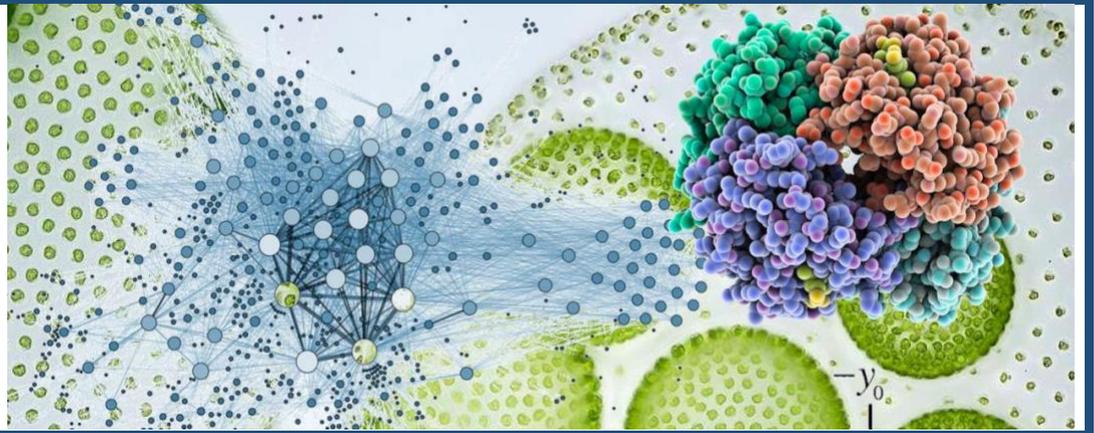


NEWSLETTER

Department of
Informatics



No. 9/2020
8th May 2020



Editor-in-chief: Pinar Heggernes. Editor: Linda Vagtskjold. Contributions or comments to the newsletter are very welcome.

Dear colleagues,

How wonderful news to enter the weekend: it looks like Norway is winning the fight against COVID-19! [The reproduction number \$R\$](#) is steadily going down, and it is now reported to be below 0.5. The government announced yesterday [a plan for gradually pulling back the restrictions](#) that we have been living under since March 12.

For universities, though, there will not be much change yet, [as we are still to work from home and conduct remote education and remote assessment for the rest of this semester](#). Since last week, employees who are not able to conduct their work from home can ask for access to their offices. We have today around 20 colleagues who are using their offices, most of them occasionally. This is about 13% of our work force at the department. The government opens now for students who are being delayed in their studies due to lack of access to campus to be allowed into study areas. Unfortunately, we already know that the bachelor study halls in our building will remain closed. However, it looks like we will be able to open some of our master study halls and grant access to some of our master students who are struggling to work from home. We are in touch with our students and keeping them informed, although the details are yet to be fixed.



Keeping in touch with our students has been both a main priority and a main challenge during this time. Right now, our students are quite worried about their exams, especially practical issues around these. We receive a lot of questions of the type “How will I be able to contact my lecturer if I need help during the exam?” and “What will happen if I get technical problems?”. I trust each of our lecturers to have a clear plan for this and inform your students about it as early as possible. If you need advice, please contact the study administration. Together, we have worked out a set of possible solutions and suggestions that are flexible and easy to apply for all courses and exams. Let me take this opportunity to again thank all of our lecturers for the wonderful work that you are doing, and our study administration who have been working extremely hard and delivering excellently under a lot of pressure during the past weeks.

One of the reasons for the extra strain both on the study administration and on Fredrik, Linda and myself, is that the government has announced a number of measures that might have a significant impact on our future. There are possibilities for [one-time increase of study slots](#) just for the coming academic year, [permanent increase of study slots, more PhD positions, and more postdoctoral positions](#). All this has been coming with very short notice and requiring substantial effort from our part on each of the measures.

I am very happy and proud that our government is investing so much on higher education and research in this time of crisis, and especially happy about the focus on mathematics, natural sciences and technology. I am very much hoping that we will get the means to educate a larger number of excellent computer scientists at all levels: bachelor, master and PhD. We are ready to do so! We have both the research excellence and the ability to quickly increase capacity. Even more importantly, businesses, companies, industry, public administration and academia of Norway are desperate to employ more of our master and PhD graduates.

I wish you all a very nice weekend,
Pinar

The Dean's Blog – Helge K. Dahle

The Dean's blog aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at the Faculty of [Mathematics and Natural Sciences](#).

His latest postings: [Alle konkurrerer mot alle. Dei som taper må bygge ned aktivitet](#) - [_Realfag – et smart sted å begynne!](#) - [_Støtt opp om uavhengig grunnforskning](#) - [_Sosial distansering](#)



Welcome new colleagues!



Christoffer Hindlycke

Christoffer is from 1st May our new PhD student in machine learning. Both Nello and Pekka will be his supervisors. He will also be associated with CEDAS.

Christoffer is Swedish. He finished his Master's in mathematics at the Uppsala university in 2019 and has held a Lecturer position there until he entered into his new position with us. About his research interests, he says: I greatly enjoy most aspects of algebra, such as group/ring/field theory, representation theory (the subject of my master thesis), algebraic geometry and category theory. However, it is another area of my interests that aligns well with this particular position: that of stochastic processes in particular and probability theory in general.

Congratulations colleagues!



Helwig Hauser, Fedor Fomin, Saket Saurabh, and Daniel Lokshtanov

Helwig, Fedor, Saket and Daniel are listed among the world's most influential Artificial Intelligence researchers for the coming decade!

<https://www.aminer.org/ai2000/visualization>

<https://www.aminer.org/ai2000/theory>



Kirill Simonov, Olav Røthe Bakken, and William Lochet

Team Kirill, Olav, William, and Vasily Alferov (who was visiting us in November – January from Russian School of Economics) were ranked as 12 at the [Google HashCode](#)



Inge Jonassen

Inge and the director of the Research Council of Norway, John-Arne Røttingen, had a very interesting opinion piece about data sharing at forskning.no and in Universitetsavisa.

<https://forskning.no/biologi-data-informatikk/deler-data-og-regnekraft-for-a-nedkjemping-koronaviruset/1663513>

<https://www.universitetsavisa.no/ytring/2020/04/28/Kampen-mot-korona-er-avhengig-av-C3%A5pne-data-21689418.ece>

Current Issues [På Høyden - Khrono](#) – [News from NFR](#) – [News from UiB](#) – [Informatics on Facebook](#)

Welcome to join our daily Teams lunch!

Every weekday at 12:00, some colleagues (some from the administration and some professors) meet for lunch on Teams, and every Thursday we run a Kahoot quiz. [Please feel free to join us whenever you would like!](#)

Corona – some updates

Check the UiB Corona webpage

It is utmost important that everybody checks [the coronavirus information page of the UiB](#) frequently.

Access to department offices

With reference to Pinar's emails to all employees on April 30 and May 4: If you are not able to perform your work tasks at home or experiencing other difficulties in your home office situation, and therefore would like to have access to your office at the Department of informatics, please follow these four steps:

1. Read thoroughly the April 30 and May 4 emails from Pinar.
2. Take [this course](#) You must pass the test at the end of the course.
3. Fill out and submit [this form](#)
4. Wait for a reply! Only people who get a written confirmation from Linda or Pinar are allowed to our department areas. Please do not go there before you have a very clear access grant, and please do not let other people into the building.

If you are in need for only a short visit to your office, please ask Linda for an appointment. If there is a technical urgency or you cannot connect to our local servers, please contact Stanislav for help.

Measures for PhD Candidates and Postdoctoral Fellows

Up until now, there has been some confusion about contract extensions for PhD candidates and postdocs, but now you will find [updated and correct information here](#). Questions can be addressed to Lene and/or Linda.

PhD updates

WOW – there are three new PhDs in town! Congratulations Srimathi, Torstein and Daniel! 🎉

We conducted three online defenses in the past two weeks with great success and many participants.



Srimathi Varadharajan

Srimathi successfully defended her thesis "Hard mathematical problems in cryptography and coding theory" on April 28.

[Here you can learn more about her project.](#)

Congratulations to Srimathi, the Selmer group and Simula UiB and to her supervisors!





Torstein Jarl Strømme

Torstein successfully defended his thesis "Exploiting graph structures for computational efficiency" on May 7.

[Here you can learn more about his project.](#)

Congratulations to Torstein, the Algorithms group and to his supervisors!



Daniel Hernandez Escobar

Daniel successfully defended his thesis "Strong stability of C-stationary points for mathematical programs with complementarity constraints", today 8th May.

[Here you can learn more about his project.](#)

Congratulations to Daniel, the Optimization group and to his supervisors!



NORBIS Annual conference - SAVE THE DATE!

NORBIS Annual conference will be arranged November 2-4th, 2020! If the national guidelines allow, we will gather at beautiful Ullensvang Hotel in Hardanger for student talks, poster sessions, invited speakers and other fun activities.

The conference aims at bringing together students and researchers, fostering collaboration between groups. The participants will learn about each others' research, discuss science, be inspired by keynotes from leading researchers, and improve their scientific network. In particular the meeting gives an opportunity for the students to work on their presentation skills as each student gets feedback on her/his presentation from an appointed panel.

The conference is open for everyone. We cover travel and accommodation costs for all PhD students, while master students and post docs can apply for support. We also want to encourage supervisors and other researchers to join our meeting, both to facilitate discussion across several levels of experience, to inspire our students, and to increase your own national network. [More information at our website](#)



NORBIS NORBIS NORBIS NORBIS

NORBIS course: Sequence comparison and database search (NORBIS901)

This course provides insight into methods for aligning biological sequences. Its goal is to present an overview of the basic concepts of sequence alignments and some of their applications with a strong emphasis on homology based multiple sequence alignment modelling, one of the most widely used method in biology. Registration deadline is May 15th. [More information and registration here](#)

ICT Research School Annual Meeting 2020: Save the date & call for volunteers

To all PhD students at the Department of Informatics,

As every year, we would like to encourage you to organize and participate in the annual meeting of the department's ICT research school!

This year's meeting has been scheduled for **26-27 October 2020 in Park Hotel Vossevangen**. We hope that these dates will be suitable for (most of) you. Due to the current outbreak of the Coronavirus we had to react fast and change already existing hotel reservations for other events (for April) in order to avoid huge financial losses. As not all of these events are "repeatable" at a later time of the year, we decided to use some of the existing bookings for the ICT Research School Annual Meeting.

We will, of course, closely monitor the situation and follow all rules and recommendations set by the Norwegian government and university leadership in relation to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. The meeting will only be held (at those dates in Voss) if it is safe for you and other department members, as well as potential presenters from outside the department joining the event, to participate! If this should not be the case, then we can still consider to hold a virtual meeting.

At this point, we would like to ask for **2-3 volunteers** who would like to contribute to **organizing the Annual Meeting 2020** (agenda, registration, website etc.)! To ensure continuity and sharing of best-practice routines, we would like to suggest that at least one former meeting participant is among the members of the organizing committee.

If you are interested in contributing to the organization of the event in 2020, then please send an email by **24 May 2020** to Stefanie.Meyer@uib.no with the following details: your name; the research group you belong to; I have participated in a previous annual meeting of the ICT research school yes/no; I would like to volunteer as organizer of the ICT research school Annual Meeting 2020.

For those of you who are not (yet) familiar with the research school's activities: The aim of the annual meeting is to strengthen networking and collaboration among the department's PhD candidates. Depending on the PhD candidates' own ideas, the program can include one to several keynote talks from local, national and/or international researchers, but the main part of the program is dedicated to presentations from fellow PhD candidates. The latter are usually held as "seminar/lecture on [an] individually selected subject", which contribute to the dissemination part of the training component.

Research, Science and Seminars ScienceNorway.no - forskning.no

Department seminar Thursday May 14 at 14:15 on Zoom: Ethics in computer science education by Marija Slakovik



The seminar will be conducted via Zoom.

[More details are to be found on the web calendar of UiB.](#)

Ethical issues like privacy, biased algorithms, and unintended discriminating behavior from software are increasingly central in algorithm design and software development. At the department of informatics, there is no single course handling these issues; we try to incorporate these in all our courses, and it is so far left by large to the course lecturer. How can we achieve a more coherent and unified education and training in ethical issues in all our bachelor programs?

[Marija Slakovik](#) is an associate professor at the Department of information and media sciences of our university. Her specialty is within the areas of machine ethics, logic reasoning, collective reasoning and decision making. Her background is from computer science and informatics, with a specialization in computational logic. She has extensive collaboration with our machine learning group, and she has co-supervised students with the optimization group.

Marija is regularly teaching a master level course on ethics in AI, and she is a frequent invited speaker on ethical dilemmas in computer science, especially in AI. She is a member of several national and international organizations involved in AI and multiagent systems, and she is a member of the educational forum of [NORA](#).

Marija will share with us her experiences with teaching ethics to information science students, and she will show us examples of unwanted behavior of software and unintended biases in algorithms design, which are very useful for informatics students to learn about and reflect upon. We hope that we will have a lively discussion at the end of the seminar about how we can achieve a more consolidated effort in educating our students on these ethical problems.

Department seminar Thursday May 28 at 14:15 on Zoom: Student peer assessment as an educational tool by Roy Andersson



At our department gathering which was to take place in Voss April 27-28, we had planned a series of talks on educational issues. One of these was a tutorial by Roy Andersson. We are delighted to be able to offer a part of this tutorial as a department seminar via Zoom instead.

How can we help our students get the most out of lectures and exercise sessions? This is a question we have been focusing quite a lot on at our department recently. In this seminar we will learn about student peer assessment as a useful tool in this direction.

[Roy Andersson](#) is a senior lecturer at Lund University, Sweden, associated with both the Department of computer science and the Center for engineering education of that university. At the same time he holds an adjunct associate professorship at the Department of biology of our university, associated with the bioCEED center of excellent education.

In this seminar, Roy will teach us about "Student peer assessment" and how it can be used as an educational tool in lectures as well as in exercise sessions. "Peer assessment is a powerful meta-cognitive tool which increases students' learning. By activating students in peer assessment, the students have to reflect and critically evaluate their peers and thereby also their own knowledge and performance." says Roy.

The seminar will be held on Zoom, and the link will appear [on the web calendar](#) in due time. This is going to be an active seminar, where we will get tasks to perform during Roy's lecture. The seminar will last 60 minutes.

Everybody is most welcome!

Data management plan workshops for PhDs, postdocs and researchers



A data management plan (DMP) describes how data in a research project will be collected, processed and made available.

The Norwegian Research Council and Horizon 2020 require projects to submit a DMP. They and many scientific journals also require that the research data is made openly available to others. A DMP will help you to consider every aspect of sharing your data at an early point of the project and thereby save time in the publishing process.

This workshop introduces you to *what* a data management plan is, *why* you need it, and *how* to write one.

The same workshop is held twice: [19 May](#) and [26 May](#)

NIKT 2020 - Invitation and Call for Papers

NIKT 2020

23rd - 25th Nov. 2020

Norwegian Conference for ICT Research and Education (NIKT) 2020

23–25 November 2020, Sundvolden

<https://nikt2020.usn.no/en/index.php>

University of South-Eastern Norway will arrange Norwegian Conference for ICT Research and Education (NIKT) from 23.-25. November 2020 in Sundvolden. The conference consists of four tracks: NIK (Norwegian Informatics Conference), NOKOBIT (Norwegian Conference for Organizations' Use of Information Technology), NISK (Norwegian Information Security Conference) and UDIT (Norwegian Conference for Education and Didactics in IT subjects).

NIKT is a broad national conference aimed at being an important national venue for discussions, networking and dissemination of research and advanced development work in information and communication technology, computer science, information science and information systems. Each of the four tracks on the conference has its own call for papers. [More information](#)

VISUM 2020 is going fully digital! CALL FOR APPLICATION: 2 DAYS TO THE DEADLINE!



In light of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak and following health guidance from WHO, and our local health authorities, the organizing committee and the lecturers are stepping up to the challenge and the **VISUM 2020** summer school will now be **fully digital!** Although the social component of the school will necessarily be reduced by hosting a digital edition, we believe that we have the opportunity to reach more people and, in this way, continue contributing to the community.

The 8th edition of the Vision Understanding and Machine Intelligence (VISUM) summer school is now taking place between the **6th and the 10th of July 2020** with a **unique fee of €75** for every participant. Because we are focused on delivering a high-quality summer school, we have a **limited number of seats**. So, don't miss the **application deadline, May 10th**.

The online courses, with both **theoretical & practical sessions**, will be conducted by world-renowned experts, covering the topics:

- **Introduction to Machine Learning and Computer Vision** | by Jaime Cardoso, Faculty of Engineering, University of Porto (PT)
- **Machine Learning on Kubernetes (hands-on)** | by Markus Bauer, Institute for Applied Informatics, University of Leipzig (DE)
- **Action Recognition in Video** | by Pascal Mettes, University of Amsterdam (NL)
- **Optimal Transport in Computer Vision** | by Nicolas Courty, IRISA (FR)
- **Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)** | by Mauricio Reyes, Insel Gruppe (CH)
- **Deep Learning and Kernel Machines** | Johan Suykens, KU Leuven (BE)
- **Information Security** | by Marta Gomez-Barrero, da/sec (DE)
- **AI: More than Human (talk)** | by Pedro Saleiro, Feedzai, Lisboa (PT)

Aside from the opportunity to learn with top-notch speakers, you will have the opportunity to put what you have learned into practice, in a **competition** organized by VISUM and Abyssal S.A., **awarded** with an **Amazon digital voucher** plus the **registration for VISUM 2021!**

For further details, please visit our website visum.inesctec.pt and stay tuned!

Publishing Open Access

The University of Bergen Library has prepared very good websites on the current status of local, national and international open access (OA) policies as well as their services related to OA publishing. Please have a look at their websites and make yourself familiar with the different policies as well as the existing publishing deals with several of the academic publishers. Furthermore, UiB has a publication fund for OA that can cover the article processing charges (APC) when publishing in eligible open access journals.

Before you (your group) pay(s) any fees for making an article openly available, please consult the webpages to see if you are entitled to a discount, may get the fees refunded through the publication fund, or maybe don't even have to pay anything based on an existing agreement with the publisher!

If you have questions, please contact the department's research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#).



**Publication fund for
Open Access at UiB**



**Open access
publishing deals**



**Open Access - what,
why and how**

Upcoming funding opportunities

On a monthly basis, the department releases a comprehensive overview over [upcoming funding opportunities](#) on its website for [research support services](#). Please inform research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#) about all planned and ongoing funding applications! **This includes both applications you coordinate yourself, and those where you are included as a partner/collaborator!** At this point, we would like to highlight the following upcoming calls and funding/research-related events:



Collaborative and Knowledge-building Project.

The Research Council has pre-announced calls for Collaborative and Knowledge-building Projects that aim at “promot[ing] cooperation to develop R&D expertise and capacity in areas of importance to society and business and industry”.

- Collaborative Project to meet Societal and Industry-related Challenges: topics from energy, climate, ocean, health, biotechnology (and more) are included
- Knowledge-building Project for Industry: topics from renewable energy, oceans (and more) are included

“The calls [are] open to approved Norwegian research organisations in binding cooperation with relevant actors from public sector entities, non-governmental organisations, trade and industry and/or other private organisations.” Two or more of the project partners have to come from outside academia. **Application deadline: 2 September 2020.**



Researcher Projects 2020. To support scientific renewal and development in research, the Research Council has opened the following calls for researcher projects:

- Researcher Projects for Scientific Renewal,
- Researcher Projects for Young Talents,
- Three-year Researcher Projects with International Mobility.

“Researcher projects are to contribute to important new insights, scientific publication, researcher training and international research collaboration.” In addition, each of the three calls has a special set of requirements and objectives that have to be taken into account when writing a grant application. **Application deadline: 20 May 2020.**



IKTPLUSS. The Research Council has an open call on Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Autonomous Systems. “The objective of this call is to further develop expertise and capacity in artificial intelligence, robotics and autonomous systems. Efforts are to help to move the research front, build vital competence and create new opportunities for people and society in the short and long term.”

Please note that these are collaborative projects where two or more of the project partners have to come from outside academia (i.e. the private or public sector), and have to stand for at least 10% of the effort. **Application deadline: open-ended.**



ERC Advanced Grant. “Are you an established, leading principal investigator who wants long-term funding to pursue a ground-breaking, high-risk project? The ERC Advanced Grant could be for you. Applicants for the ERC Advanced Grants [PIs] are expected to be active researchers who have a track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years. The [PIs] should be exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions. No specific eligibility criteria with respect to the academic requirements are foreseen.” **Application deadline (not yet officially announced): 26 August 2020.**



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships. The [MSCA Individual Fellowships](#) are highly attractive mobility grants for experienced researchers as they actively support the individuals' careers. Researchers from all scientific disciplines can apply, and funding includes an allowance to cover living, travel and family costs as well as costs for training, networking, research, management and indirect costs. Find out more about MSCA-IF on [this website](#) as well as here ([webinar](#) from the Research Council of Norway). **Application deadline: 9 September 2020.**

Did you know?

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). RRI is an important concept within research and innovation. In general, RRI “implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organisations, etc.) work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society.” [1] RRI encompasses actions on “public engagement, open access, gender equality, science education, ethics, and governance”. [2]

Find out more about RRI and its value for research and innovation by following the links above.



Data Management Plan Workshop (UiB). This workshop introduces you to what a data management plan is, why you need it, and how to write it. **Dates: 19 May & 26 May 2020.** **Registration deadlines: 18 May (noon) & 25 May 2020 (noon).**

Applied Artificial Intelligence Conference. The conference will be a virtual/online conference. **Event: 11 May 2020.** **Registration deadline: 10 May 2020.**

How to write competitive ERC StG & CoG Grant applications. The University of Bergen, together with Enspire Science and The Research Council of Norway, organize a workshop about ERC Starting and Consolidator Grant writing. **Event: 2 December 2020.** **Registration deadline: 26 November 2020.**

Corona update

It is important that you assess if the global outbreak of the Coronavirus has any implications for the implementation of your project. Please inform the department's [research coordinator](#) about all such cases.

Information from the Research Council of Norway: [RCN's service updates related to COVID-19](#)

Information from the EU (Horizon 2020): [FAQ on COVID-19](#)

Information from the EU (ERC): [Coronavirus - business continuity measures at the ERC](#)

Information from the Trond Mohn Stiftelse: [Information for PIs and partners](#)

Information from the University of Bergen: [Externally funded projects influenced by COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Data Portal: “EMBL-EBI and partners have set up [the COVID-19 Data Portal](#), which will bring together relevant datasets submitted to EMBL-EBI and other major centres for biomedical data.”

Need help?

Please contact research coordinator Stefanie Meyer if you have questions with regard to your planned and ongoing funding applications! In addition, you can have a look at our websites for research support services. There you will find a list of our services as well as a comprehensive overview over upcoming funding opportunities.

*NB: Please also inform our research coordinator about all ongoing **contractual work** (contracts with funding sources, collaboration agreements with other institutions related to externally funded projects)! The department has to (co-)sign, and therefore needs to be informed about and approve, all agreements!*

Vacant positions

Førsteamanuensis i informatikk fagformidling og utdanning (informatikk-fagdidaktikk)

Please find the announcement [here](#). Closing date: 25.05.2020.

Health, Safety and Environment

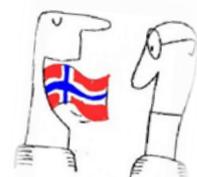
Kakeklubben online!



Kakeklubben is a social initiative for all colleagues who would like to practice their Norwegian language skills. The meetings are in Norwegian, at a pace that is easy for everyone with basic skills in Norwegian to follow and participate.

Kakeklubben meets every Wednesday at 12:00. In normal settings, we meet at the 4th floor lunch room, and the department orders cake. In the current situation, we are meeting on [Skype](#) at 12:00 every Wednesday.

[Please do join us!](#)



New application period for the cottages at Ustaoset and Tingviken - Autumn 2020



It is now opened to apply for U-heimen, Ottesheimen and Butten at Ustaoset and Tingviken at Utne for the autumn period from 16th August until 18th October 2020.

Please use the [UoB electronic cabin system](#) by logging in with your normal username and password.

The application deadline is **12th June**. Drawing will be done 17th June.

Follow us on social media – like and share!

Social media channels are important for both recruiting new students and communicating our work. By following us and liking or sharing our content (or simply watching it, in some cases), you can help lift our brand and reach more people and potential future students. At the same time, you will keep yourself informed about our outreach activities.



If you use these media, please follow us there:

[Department of informatics at UiB on Facebook](#)

[Department of informatics at UiB on Instagram](#)

[Department of informatics at UiB on Twitter](#)

[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on YouTube](#)

[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on Facebook](#)

[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science at UiB on Instagram](#)

[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on Twitter](#)