

# NEWSLETTER

Department of  
Informatics



No. 10/2018  
26<sup>th</sup> October 2018



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

## Dear colleagues,

There is a strong focus on artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science these days. The signals from our own government and from the research councils around Europe indicate that this is an area which will require a lot of research and education focus in the near future. At our department we are in the fortunate situation that we are rapidly building up a research group in machine learning. This comes in addition to the fact that we have been teaching machine learning for many years already, and our research groups in bioinformatics and visualization have been heavy users and developers of machine learning tools for a long time. At the same time, there are solid machine learning initiatives at the Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Medicine, and Bergen University College, as well as more general artificial intelligence research at the Faculties of social sciences and humanities. You have been informed about email lists and various lectures and presentations within AI and ML in our newsletters. Right now, together with other departments we are in the process of joining forces to coordinate and make visible all these initiatives at our own university.



A good way to become stronger and more visible is to join forces with other universities and research institutions. This is exactly what our university has done recently, [by forming NORA](#) (Norwegian Artificial Intelligence Research Consortium) together with Universities of Oslo, Oslo Met, Tromsø, Agder, Life Sciences, and Simula. New members are expected to join as well in the near future. [The tasks of NORA](#) will be to make publicity about AI and ML research at member institutions, organize workshops and research schools to help researchers across these institutions to meet and collaborate, to help find relevant funding sources, as well as keep in touch with the government and the funding authorities. As a complement to Norwegian Open AI Lab, which is a collaboration between NTNU, SINTEF and a number of large industrial partners, NORA is an academic collaboration focusing on fundamental and applied research within AI, ML and robotics. Together, Norwegian Open AI Lab and NORA give an excellent coverage of the various aspects of research and development in this area. There is and will be good collaboration across the two consortia, there might be competition between them for national funding, and definitely opportunities to join forces to apply for funding from European funding agencies. There is no doubt that NORA makes both Norway and our own university more visible and robust in the AI and ML arena.

Back to our own department, with all our ongoing and upcoming machine learning activities, it is natural for us to play a leading role for the machine learning initiatives in Bergen. A workshop gathering all machine learning forces in Bergen is expected in the near future. We are in an exciting period with a lot of new things happening, and I am looking forward to all that it will bring.

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.

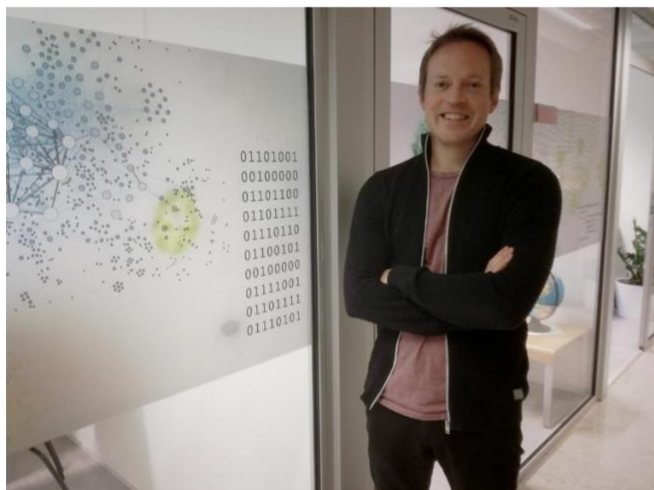
His latest postings: [Gunn Mangerud går inn i dekanatet](#) - [Det er her hovedkvarteret ligger](#) - [Frå skrivebordsøvingar til verkeleg krise](#) - [Et godt omdømme bygges i det hverdagslige](#)



**Congratulations Eivind Valen - new member of the Academy for young researchers!!**

## Han skal representere UiB i Akademiet for yngre forskere

Eivind Valen mener vi lever i en gullalder for molekylærbiologi. Som medlem i Akademiet for yngre forskere vil han jobbe for kontinuitet og rekruttering.



UiB-REPRESENTANT I AKADEMI: Eivind Valen blir en av de åtte nye medlemmene i Akademi for yngre forskere. Foto: Linda Vagtskjold, UiB

Please find [the UiB news here](#) and [the full interview here](#).

## Picture report from Faculty & Staff lunch 17<sup>th</sup> October



Happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Uwe!



Happy 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jaakko!



**Next Faculty & Staff lunch: 14th November.**

## Restructuring of the telephone service at UiB: Information meeting 1<sup>st</sup> November

We have important information from the IT department! From November 9, everyone at the entire MN faculty will use Skype for Business and our old phones will be disconnected. Everyone will get access to Skype for Business (SfB), but only permanent employees will retain phone numbers (common policy at all MN departments). However, everyone will be able to call from SfB to SfB / Skype. The reason for this is that it will no longer be possible to share a telephone number of more employees as we do at joint offices today. Skype for Business is free for anyone to use, but a license for SfB with phone number is personal and costs the same as a phone license today.

Please follow the instructions below to find more information and link to the e-learning course. There is also an information meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

### Information from the IT Department

By the end of 2018, UiB will move from having mostly ordinary analog office phones to a unified communications platform called Skype for Business (SfB). This tool allows users to communicate through text chat, voice calls, video calls and online meetings. For the vast majority, this will mean a transition to SfB as the primary phone, and thus a transition from traditional phone to headphones.

Employees at Marineholmen will be transferred to SfB on November 5<sup>th</sup>. We have planned an [information meeting where we cover the basics of using SfB at Marineholmen, November 1st at 14.15, Datablokken, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, large auditorium.](#)

Following the rollout, BRITA will have increased support for common issues that might occur. There may be minor issues with audio device settings on the machine, but this is also something we cover at information meetings and as we have [instructions here](#). You will also find a step- step-by-step guide, and link to an e-learning course to get started with SfB (it's available in English, but you may have to scroll down)

SfB are already installed on all client machines at UiB, so feel free to try out most of the functionality, except dialing external phones. After the transition, you can make external calls and there is free access to make calls abroad.

We cover the initial cost of headphones for all employees, and you may choose from 2 standard models: Plantronics Blackwire C310 and C3220 in mono (single-ear) and stereo respectively. These will be available at the reception at your institute on November 1st. The standard models will meet the needs of most people. Other models are available, but the department has to cover the cost.

For most of you, this change will not be too challenging, even if you have not tried Skype or similar technology before. We only recommend that you go through the e-learning course, and we hope to see you at the information meeting.

## Academic affairs and PhD Updates

**There are two new PhDs in town – congratulations Siddhartha Kumar and Sergej Stoppel!!**



### PhD defense Ute-Alexandra Schaarschmidt



Ute-Alexandra Schaarschmidt will defend her thesis *"Multiple time–scale dynamics of stage structured populations and derivative–free optimization"* on Friday 2 November at 10:15, Large Auditorium, Datablokken, HIB. All are welcome!

- Opponent: Professor, Docent Mårten Gulliksson, Örebro University
- Opponent: Associate Professor, Dr. rer. nat. Christina Kuttler, Technische Universität München
- Committee member: Professor, Dr.rer.nat. Jan-Joachim Rückmann, Department of Informatics, UiB
- Custos/ Leader of the defense: Professor Igor A. Semaev, Department of Informatics, UiB

Please find [the press release here.](#)



## Faglig pedagogisk dag: February 1, 2019

On this day, 1st February 2019, high school teachers come to our university to listen to talks given by our lecturers. All faculty and scientific staff can propose a 45 min lecture on a topic that they would like to talk about. Please consider contributing to this day; it is a wonderful long term student recruitment opportunity! If high school teachers become enthusiastic about our discipline, they will more often encourage their pupils to start their university education at our department. Information can be obtained from Ida, and also from [this page](#).

## Online course for PhD supervisors

The course includes rules, regulations and procedures for the PhD programme. Everyone appointed as main supervisor or co-supervisor for PhD candidates at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences from 1 December 2018 must complete the online course. To be appointed as supervisor the course must have been completed the past three years.

Take the course in [Norwegian](#) or in [English](#)

Please make sure you verify the completion of the course when it is completed.

## Event for first semester students on 29 October Velkommen til "halvveis i første semester"!

Møt aktuelle arbeidsgivere, nyutdannede informatikere, viderekomne studenter og bli oppdatert på relevante nyheter ved ll sammen med dine medstudenter mandag 29. oktober fra kl. 16.00 og utover.



En av bedriftene som deltar på arrangementet er Vizrt.  
Produsent: Joakim Birkelund

Our department is organizing an event «Halvveis i første semester» on 29 October for our first and second year students in informatics.

The program is composed of presentations by companies (Vizrt, Miles, Bouvet), fresh graduates, senior students, and more.

We encourage all faculty to show up in the Sammen Cafeteria on the ground floor from 6 pm on to socialize with our fresh students and have some food.

[See the full program here.](#)

## Research, Science, and Seminars

### Temadag klima og energiomstilling 5<sup>th</sup> November

The faculty of mathematics and natural sciences invites all its departments to come together and discuss how we can all collaborate and contribute towards our faculty's focus area climate and energy conversion (Klima og energiomstilling (KE)). Several from our department have already signed up for the theme day on 5 November.

We encourage everybody to sign up and listen to at least parts of the program. It will be important for us to find out where and how we can contribute and collaborate with others within this field in the future.

[Learn more and sign up here.](#)



## Department of Informatics



# 'Topological data analysis in machine learning'



Trial lecture in connection with recruitment for tenure track position in machine learning:  
Nello Blaser  
Tuesday 30.10.2018 at 11.15  
in room 510N3 5th floor.

Refreshments will be served.

### Abstract:

The goal of topological data analysis is to find structure in data with a focus on topological features such as shape and connectivity. Persistent homology is a method to quantify topological features using a multiscale approach. This has the advantage that in addition to finding features in data, persistent homology also finds the scales at which these features occur. On the other hand, this multiscale approach can be computationally expensive.

In this talk we will give an introduction to persistent homology, show how approximation algorithms can be used to reduce the computational cost and how topological data analysis can be used together with other machine learning algorithms for clustering, dimensionality reduction and classification. Finally we will highlight some open questions.

### Reminder: popular science writing course for researchers on 16th January

The course focuses on writing suitable texts about research and showing you how these can be used and adapted to different genres and media. The course is free of charge, and will be held in English. The target group is scientists from PhD-students to Professors and science communicators.

The course participants will receive personal coaching on their own texts, both during the course and for the next two weeks. A draft should be submitted one week before the course and can be up to one page long. Submitting text is recommended, but not mandatory. Our goal is that every participant will end up with a published text.

[Sign up here](#) Deadline: 31st December

Questions? Please contact Asbjørn Leirvåg, ph. 41423341, [asbjorn.leirvag@uib.no](mailto:asbjorn.leirvag@uib.no)

## Building Bridges - Interdisciplinary Collaborations for Innovation - 6<sup>th</sup> December

The Centre for the Science of Learning & Technology (SLATE) is hosting a one-day, international symposium that aims to unravel some of the mystery around interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. Participants are local and international experts working within the field. They will share their knowledge regarding recent developments in this exciting area of research and engage in discussions about future directions. The location is new Faculty of Art, Music and Design at UiB. More information: <https://www.slate.uib.no/building-bridges>

## Funding opportunities

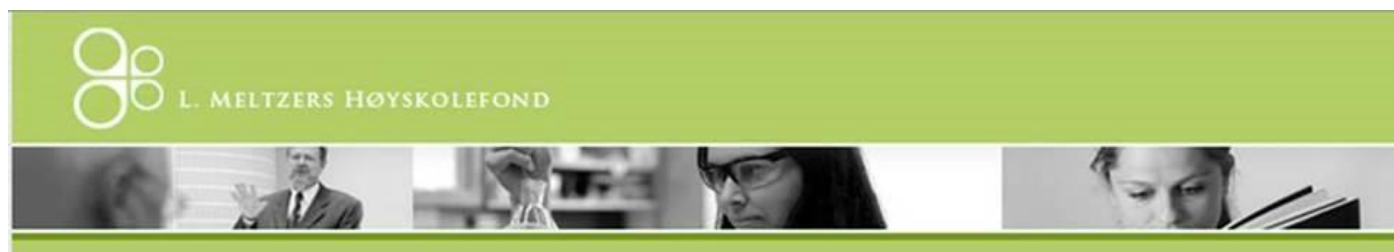
### Meltzer Research Foundation – funds for travels: Application deadline December 1

Did you know that our own university has a foundation granting support for travels and small projects? The Meltzer Research Foundation awards research prizes, funding for small projects and travel stipends for faculty, researchers, and PhD students. In particular, PhD students can apply for larger amounts to fund several research travels or stays abroad. Faculty can also apply for financial support in connection with sabbaticals. The Funds are awarded every year on Lauritz Meltzer's birthday, on March 8. Please see the following web pages for details:

<https://meltzerfondet.w.uib.no/>

<https://meltzerfondet.w.uib.no/hovedsiden/english/>

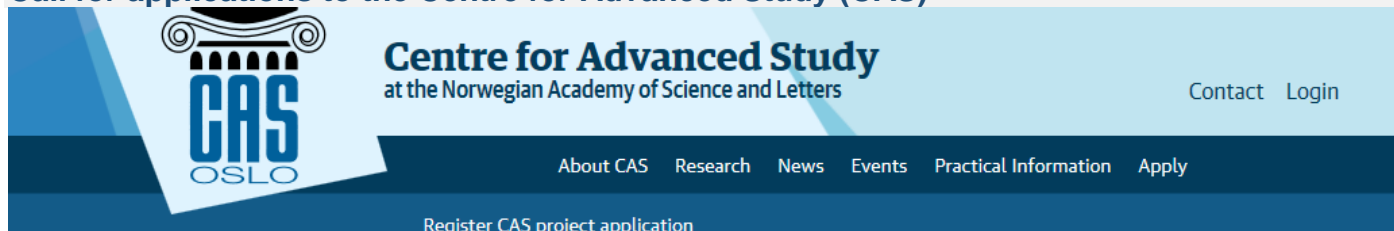
The applications must be submitted via [a web-based system](#). The deadline is December 1.



### Bergen Universitetsfond – financial support for organizing conferences and workshops

If you are planning to organize a conference or workshop in Bergen, you may apply to Bergen Universitetsfond for financial support. Support is given in general for dissemination and publication of research results and for the organizing scientific conferences, workshops etc. [Learn more here](#). The application deadline is December 1.

### Call for applications to the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS)



The Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) invites researchers to pursue excellent, fundamental, curiosity-driven research for a year in Oslo. [CAS is accepting applications for the 2021/22 academic year. Click here to register and apply.](#)  
**Deadline: 14 January 2019. [Learn more.](#)**

### CET Accelerator Funds - extended deadline 1. November 2018

Our own university's Centre for Climate and Energy transformation - CET now invites proposals for the second round of [CET Accelerator](#) funds. The CET Accelerator is a funding mechanism to stimulate activity within the overall scope of the CET centre. Eligible applicants are researchers that have become a [CET Affiliate](#). We realize that our original announcement did not reach out broadly, and have extended the deadline until **November 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, 24:00 hrs CET**.

## Vacant positions

### PhD position in Software Language Engineering

Closing date: 31.10.2018. Please find [the announcement here](#)

### Associate professor in optimization/operations research

Closing date: 07.11.2018. Please find [the announcement here](#)

### Tenure Track Associate Professor in software

Closing date: 25.11.2018. Please find [the announcement here](#).

## Health, Safety and Welfare [sikresiden.no](http://sikresiden.no) – [UiB welfare offers](#)

Welcome to the Department of informatics Christmas Dinner and Party  
23 November at 19:00 in [Scandic Hotel Ørnen](#)

**Please sign up here**



Program details will be emailed to those who sign up. If you have questions, you can contact Ingrid.

## Defibrillator – course 8 November



Thursday November 8<sup>th</sup> at 14.00 we invite you all to a course in how to use the defibrillator. The course will take place in the meeting room in 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

We encourage everyone who can to join the course.

For more information, please contact [Marta Lopez](#).



## Basic first aid course 5<sup>th</sup> November

**INTENSION:** The participants shall be able to examine a person regarding respiration and circulation, and take action accordingly

**TARGET GROUP:** Foreign employees at The University of Bergen

**CONTENT:**

- Scene assessment, safety
- Emergency services
- Basic assessment and actions sick/injured person
- Free airways
- Unconscious person, recovery position
- CPR
- Bleeding, internal, external
- Foreign body airway obstruction

**DATE AND TIME:** Monday 5 November 2018, at 1230 – 1530

**LOCATION:** Museplassen 1 – lower ground floor – Entrance from Prof. Keyserstgt.

**NUMBER:** Max. 20 participants

**COURSE PROVIDER:** Rescue Partner

**REGISTRATION:** [heidi.fretheim@uib.no](mailto:heidi.fretheim@uib.no)

## Reminder: Yoga on Wednesdays!

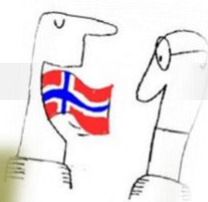
Yoga is a great way to reduce stress and tensions from work.

Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 pm at the Meeting room in 5<sup>th</sup> floor.



Our professional yoga instructor, Kjersti Næss, is teaching in English. No signing up, and no participatory fee will be charged. Please bring your own yoga mat. We also have some mats for loan.

## Reminder: Kakeklubben on Mondays



Kakeklubben aims to help our international colleagues to practice Norwegian while spending nice time together with people across group borders. Club meetings are held on Mondays at 12 o'clock in the lunchroom, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. You bring your own lunch, and we share a cake. We hope for volunteers among the club members to bring cakes, and we plan to make a department cake recipe book after some time. All are welcome!

We hope to see you there, both internationals and Norwegians!

## Have you registered vacation days?

Autumn is upon us and soon we are entering a new year. And whether you are planning on spending the rest of your 2018 vacation days under the sun or in the snow, please remember to register the remaining of your vacation days for 2018 in PAGA. It is a requirement that everyone registers their vacation, and it is a general rule that all vacation days have to be spent within the calendar year.

Further information on how to register vacation can be found here (in Norwegian): <http://pagaweb.b.uib.no/ansatte/5-ferie/> If you have any questions regarding vacation or the registration of vacation I PAGAWEB, please contact your local HR professional at your department, [Lene Engelsgjerd](#).