

The 1st ACM SIGSPATIAL International Workshop on Geospatial Data Access and Processing APIs (SpatialAPI 2019) Chicago, IL, USA - November 5, 2019

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With the increasing amounts of geospatial data, there is a growing demand on by developers and researchers to analyze geospatial data efficiently. The SIGSPATIAL community is both a provider of new systems with cutting edge technology on maintaining and processing geospatial data, and a user for all these systems. The SpatialAPI workshop is designed to help the SIGSPATIAL community by growing the knowledge of the existing well-established systems that are available for accessing and processing geospatial data. This includes, but is not limited to, web APIs, programming libraries, database systems, and geospatial extensions to existing systems.

This year, we had a public call for two-page proposals for tutorials. Each proposal included a summary of the tutorials and an outline of the topics covered by the tutorial. We also identified top leaders to serve as advisory board to help steering the workshop. We received a total of six tutorials which were reviewed by the Chair and the advisory board to select five of them. In the selection process, we considered the quality of the tutorial proposal, the diversity of the proposals, and the goals of the workshop. We had a total of 11 registrations for the workshop which includes the Chair and the speakers.

During the workshop, we had a morning plenary session where each speaker gives a five-minute presentation for each tutorial. During that session, there were 17 attendees in the room. After that, we split the room into two parts where two tutorials are running in parallel, two in the morning and three in the afternoon. The total number of attendees in both sessions was around 15-18 during the entire day. To avoid lengthy session, we instructed the speakers to split each tutorial into two 45-minute parts, instruction and development. The instruction part (45 minutes) gives an overview of the topic, the functions covered in the tutorial, and prerequisites to run the development part. The development part (45 minutes) gives hands on experience with actual code development and system interaction. Most of the audience were ready with their laptops to engage into the experience.

At the end of the day, we had a discussion about the workshop with the presenters and attendees to improve the workshop in the future. In general, the feedback was positive and everyone thought they had a good experience in the workshop. They also liked the mix of instruction and development parts in the tutorials and some of them mentioned it would be better to give more flexibility with the length of these two parts rather than the 45-45 minutes structure. The attendees also mentioned it would be better to have a single track rather than two parallel tracks as many of them wanted to attend all the tutorials but were not able to. From the organization perspective, we think that the workshop was well-executed and the presenters did a good job in preparing and presenting the tutorials. One issue we would like to address in the future is to work more with the presenters to make sure there is a well-structured development part that the audience can follow. Some of the tutorials required a lengthy setup process and if the audience missed it or could not do it, they missed most of the development experience.