Gather.Town Instructions
L4DC 2021
June 7 - June 8, 2021

Introduction

This year, the annual Learning for Dynamics & Control (L4DC) conference will take place on the Gather.Town virtual platform. In Gather.Town you will be able to bump into colleagues and friends, have chance encounters with other conference attendees, and strike up conversations with your fellow researchers, just like you would at an in-person event. You will be able to join the oral presentations, keynotes, poster sessions, and social activities all in one place, while walking in and out of conversations, just as you would in real life. As you move around the space with your keyboard arrows, the webcam video and microphone audio of the other people in the room increases or fades based on your distance to their avatar, mimicking walking the hallways at an in-person conference.

During the conference, feel free to use the available private and public spaces to organize ad-hoc meetings, run into friends, meet new friends, or just hang out at the beach or social areas. There are tables and chairs located throughout the main and socializing areas that can provide space for private conversations. In the main area, there are additional meeting rooms equipped with whiteboards for more technical discussions.

Info: The conference is split into Halls A & B in order to accommodate all the participants. The maximum number of participants allowed in one hall is 500. In case either Hall A or B is full, you will receive a message from a moderator and will be kindly requested to switch to the other hall.

You can access Gather.Town by following these links:

Hall A  
Hall B

Gather.Town will open its virtual doors on June 5, 2021. Please enter Gather.Town once prior to the conference to make yourself familiar with the platform.

Important Upon entering the space, you will be asked to verify the e-mail address you provided during registration. Please make sure to use the same e-mail address that you used to register! This will generate an email with a “magic link” that you can use to access the space. Magic link emails may take a few minutes to arrive, or may get caught by the spam filter. Please allow some extra time the first time you enter the space and check the spam folder!

Attention Unfortunately, Gather.Town is only supported by the desktop versions of Chrome and Firefox. If you usually use a different browser or a mobile version, please make sure to either use the desktop versions of Chrome or Firefox to attend the conference. Additionally, Gather.Town requires a fast internet connection in order to provide a smooth user experience. Please make sure to use the fastest and most reliable internet connection available to you.
1 General Information

1.1 Basic Commands

Upon entering Gather.Town for the first time, you will be asked to complete a brief tutorial, which provides you with an introduction to the basic commands. These basic commands are performed by pressing a specific key on your keyboard and are listed below:

- **up, down, left, right arrows**: press to move around the space,
- **x**: press to interact with active objects (videos, posters, white boards; these objects are highlighted in yellow),
- **g**: press to walk through or on top of another person ("ghosting"), this allows you, e.g., to enter a poster booth which is already crowded with people,
- **z**: hold to make your avatar dance.

1.2 Messaging/Chat

You can chat with a specific person, those "nearby", or "everyone". Please refrain from spamming other participants. The chat will be moderated during the conference and participants behaving in an unacceptable manner will be banned indefinitely.

1.3 Video Chat

As you get close to other participants, their camera view will appear in the video carousel on the top of your screen. As soon as that person’s video is connected, you can start chatting with them.

1.4 Find a fellow Participant

You can search for a specific person with her/his name in the “Participants” list in the control bar on the left. There are three ways to contact them:

- select “Message” to chat directly,
- use “Locate on map” to see a path to reach the person,
- use “Follow” and the system will automatically take you to the person.

**Info:** You can only find people who are within the same hall. If you can not find someone, you might need to switch from Hall A to B or vice-versa. See Section 1.6 for more information on switching between halls.

1.5 Private Spaces

When you step into a private space, a note will appear at the bottom of your screen stating: “You have entered a private space”. A private space mimics a private meeting, i.e., you can only video chat with the people in the same private space. Private spaces are indicated by an underlying shadow. All private meeting rooms in the main area, all chairs and table arrangements, and all poster booths are private spaces.
1.6 Switching between Halls

There are two halls for the conference: Hall A and Hall B. At the north side of each hall there is a door, which will take you to the other hall. Walking through the door the message below will appear and you will be asked to press the "enter" key.

This portal will direct you to another space!
Press the enter key to continue.

2 Your Settings & Avatar

2.1 Location

When you first enter Gather.Town you will be at the north end of the main room in either Hall A or B (see overview maps on Page 2). From there you can access the keynote room, the different poster session rooms, and the social areas (for an overview see the maps on Page 2). Gather.Town does not allow you to zoom out and see the entire space at once. However, you can select the map icon in the bottom menu bar and an overview map will pop up and give you the general location of where you are. This map only shows the outline of the room you are in and does not show the full overview, please refer to above maps for a complete overview.

2.2 Enable/disable your audio and video

After signing in, you will see yourself in the bottom right corner of the window. This is where you can enable/disable your audio/video. Please keep in mind that if you turn these off, others will not be able to hear/see you even if they are nearby.

2.3 Enable/disable the audio or video of fellow participants

You can also enable/disable the audio or video of other participants. You can do this by pressing the microphone and/or video icon on their video window. If you disable another participant, you will not hear/see them even if they are nearby; they will of course be able to communicate with other nearby participants.

2.4 Change Avatar

Upon entering the space, you will be able to customize your avatar. If you should decide to change your avatar later on, click the avatar icon in the bottom menu to select another one.

3 Conference Items

The conference agenda is published on the conference website and can be accessed by following this link: https://l4dc.ethz.ch/#agenda

In Table 1 you find the locations in which each agenda item will take place.

Info: The brainstorming session on future L4DCs at the end of day 1 will take place in the keynote room of Hall A only.
### Agenda Item Location

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Table 1: Location of the main events

### 3.1 Poster Sessions

The poster sessions of the first conference day (1.A, 1.B) and of the second conference day (2.A, 2.B) are held in separate rooms located at the north end of each hall (see the overview maps on Page 2). The rooms are labeled accordingly. Please note that the sessions 1.A & 2.A are held in Hall A and sessions 1.B & 2.B in Hall B. Therefore, you might need to switch halls during the poster sessions, for instructions on how to switch halls, see Section 1.6.

Below, you will find the information and an overview for the poster sessions for each day:

**Poster Session Day 1 (1.A & 1.B)**

After entering a poster booth, you can press $x$ to view the poster in full screen. In the full screen mode, three control buttons appear on the right side of your screen:

- **YouTube Link**: This button only appears if the poster has an accompanying YouTube video. If this is the case, pressing this button will show you the link to the video.

- **Presenter Mode**: Pressing this button allows you to control a virtual pointer, which can be seen by everybody who is viewing the poster. Double clicking on a specific point on the poster will show a red circle on the other participants’ screens. This feature can e.g. be used by poster authors during the poster presentation.

- **Zoom**: Allows you to zoom in and out on the poster.

We strongly encourage poster presenters to join the Gather.Town space well before the start of the session, to familiarize themselves with the space, the location of their poster, and the Gather.Town functionalities.

### 3.2 Oral Presentations & Keynotes

The oral paper presentations and the keynotes are live-streamed on YouTube and shown in the keynote rooms located at the west end of the main area in both Halls A and B (see the overview maps on Page 2). Upon entering the keynote rooms, the live-stream will open in the lower left corner of your screen. Pressing the live-stream window maximizes the video. Alternatively, you can directly watch the oral presentations and the keynotes on YouTube using the following links:

**Stream Day 1**

**Stream Day 2**

During the presentations and keynotes, you will be able to ask questions directly through the chat of YouTube and Gather.Town (on the latter, please address such questions to “Everyone”; see Section 1.2 for more details). Moderators will be available to convey the questions to the speakers. **Please stay muted during oral presentations on Gather.Town, remember those around you can hear and see you (as they do in a physical auditorium)!**

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1. **Info**: Delays on the video stream in the Gather.Town may vary depending on your connection and the occupancy of Halls A and B. If you experience problems, we kindly ask you to use the direct YouTube link and chat to improve your conference experience.
3.3 Sponsor Booths

The sponsor booths are located in the main areas of Halls A and B. Representatives of our sponsors will be present and you are welcome to approach them during the coffee breaks or the times between events.

3.4 Socializing

If you opted-in to meet new people during the conference, you will receive a separate e-mail, which contains the number of a private space located in the social areas of Halls A & B. During the first coffee break of each day (9:30AM – 9:45AM PT), find the numbered private space you received, see who you got matched with, and have a coffee together.

3.5 Proceedings

The conference proceedings are available as Volume 144 of the Proceedings of Machine Learning Research.

3.6 Twitter

For up-to-date information before, during, and after the conference please follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/L4DC2021