

SWG Chairs Telecon 19-January-2021

Notes: Anna Bonaldi

Participants: SWGs: Abhirup Datta, Adriano Ingallinera, Andrei Mesinger, Françoise Combes, George Heald, Jason Hessels, Josep Miquel Girart, Laura Wolz, Mark Sargent, Nathasha Hurley-Walker, Paolo Serra, Sarah Blyth, Sebastien Muller, Stefano Camera

Apologies: Divya Oberoi, Valentina Vacca, Willem van Straten

SKAO: Anna Bonaldi, Cassandra Cavallaro, Philippa Hartley, Robert Braun, Tyler Bourke

A video series curated by SKAO containing material from the SWGs

Robert: Introducing Cassandra Cavallaro, from the Comms team at SKAO, who has been looking at options to support the request of a video repository for SWG content.

Cassandra: An option could be a series on the SKA YouTube channel. This could be curated by us using your material. A potential issue is restrictions for Chinese colleagues to access YouTube, that needs to be investigated. We also need to correctly target the videos for different types of audience (whether it is general public or a specialist audience).

Jason: The YouTube channel could be very good for relatively short videos directed to the general public. CoL also has interest in ways to archive the content of the seminar series we are running so that they could be accessed later, however these are longer videos (40 min) and directed at a specialist audience.

Could the Astronomers website be used for those?

Cassandra: WordPress (the current SKA web site software) does not cope well with large video files; it tends to crash. So, we typically load the videos in YouTube and then add a link to the YouTube video in WordPress.

Natasha: What about Vimeo?

Cassandra: Need to check about restrictions for China. However, SKAO does not have a channel there so it would be a large overhead for us to curate it there. Need to check if it could be simply mirrored from YouTube. Please also let us know what volume of video we are talking about.

Josep Miguel: For CoL, around 1h per month.

Abhi: For EoR we also have a seminar series that runs monthly, however I would not use YouTube videos longer than 5-10 minutes, which is the typical attention span.

Agreed that Cassandra would look into some possibilities based on this input and report back with some suggested way forward.

Transition to SKA Observatory

Robert: Last Friday (15 January 2021) the Observatory entered into force as a legal entity. Staff transition and budget will happen in May. First council meeting 3-4 February to start the process. Council meeting June/July will have opportunity to approve SKA construction. Everything builds on a long process of preparation that happened over the last years.

Science Road Map

Robert: Science Road Map preparation plan for the Observatory Development Programme is being written into a document and distributed for comments. Once finalised, nominations for the Science Advisory Group will be opened.

Jason: Is the call through SWG or advertised more broadly?

Robert: It will be advertised more broadly. We would like people that are not particularly tied to a specific SWG but instead have broader experience. However, the SWG can be a good conduit to recruit suitable people. Interested candidates will be able to self-nominate.

SKA Contract preparation

Robert: The process of preparing document packs for each of the major SKA construction contracts underwent an internal review last week to make sure it is progressing as needed. Over the coming months there will be a "Contract Readiness Review" of each one by a "red team" that were not involved in preparing the materials. Science contacts to support the contracting process are Tyler for Mid-telescope contracts, Jeff for Low-telescope contracts, and Anna for the software contracts.

Robert: Evan Keane has moved to a different role in Ireland. His SWG support roles have been distributed amongst the existing science team. The slide shows who is the contact person for each of the SWGs.

Science Meeting 2021:

Anna: We are ramping up the organisation of the science meeting. Abstract submission closes tomorrow, and we will open imminently registration and launch the website. The program will include plenary contributed and invited talks, that will be pre-recorded and streamed appropriately for multiple time zones. It will also include dedicated poster sessions and splinter meetings organised by the SWGs.

Jason: Are the invited talks to complement the plenary program?

Anna: Once we see what's the program emerging from the abstract selection, we might invite some further contribution if we see an obvious gap or if we think a review could improve a session.

Paolo: Can abstracts that were not selected for the plenary be chosen for the splinters?

Anna: Yes. We will offer a poster presentation, but organisers of the splinters will be given details of the abstracts not selected for plenary in their category, so that they will have the option of inviting those for their splinter session.

Mark: Is there a limitation on the number of participants for the splinter sessions?

Anna: I will confirm the numbers, however they should be large enough not to pose a limitation, based on our SWG sizes

Mark: When will we know which abstracts were not selected and what's the program for the plenary, so that we can fit in the splinters?

Anna: The selection of abstracts for the plenary will be complete by 15th Feb, 1 month in advance of the conference. In the last month before the conference, we will work together with the SOC on the program, to arrange plenary and splinter sessions that fit our needs.

Science data challenge 2

Philippa: Timeline for SDC2 has slipped a couple of weeks however the processing due to start on 1st Feb. The map of the registrations shows 276 participants with great geographical spread, organised into 40 teams. Thanks also for the SWGs for helping advertising. The SDC2 data products will be hosted on 8 computational partners, which are hosting the teams based on preferences expressed during registration. This challenge is also a good opportunity for us to test some elements of the proto-SRC model.

Besides the full cube that will be accessed through the partner computational resources, we have available some mini-cubes, one of which is non-blind (truth catalogue provided). We will make available dedicated scoring module that will be accessible to the teams to see how they are doing all the way along. Reproducibility awards will also be given, based on compliance with a checklist for reproducibility and reusability of code. At the end of the challenge, a team of assessors will score the solutions against the checklist to select the teams to receive this award.

Reports from recent meetings/seminar from SWGs:

Stefano and Laura: Last week there was the Cosmology science group meeting. 1/3 of the group attended, 30-40 people for every session. We focussed on Focus Group science. Tyler was invited and reported on the SODP. Talks of precursor science covering IM and continuum were very interesting and well received. Science talks from a process of abstract submission to encourage early science participation. We also discussed the Cosmology SWG splinter for the march meeting, and a suggestion was made to organise it commensally with other splinters.

Josep Miguel: CoL just had a monthly webinar. Claudio Codella covered large molecules in proto-planetary disks. 40 people attended. The next webinar is on 15 Feb on radio exoplanets and low-mass stars.

George: We didn't have an ongoing series of science meetings, but this past year we wanted to increase communications and fill a gap in science meetings due to travel restrictions. The series is intended to run every 2-3 months. Very good response to our call for talks, so we now have a good line up.