Vera C. Rubin Observatory Data Management

# Virtual Rubin Algorithms Workshop.

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#### Abstract

In March 2020, Rubin Observatory hosted a workshop on the topic of image processing algorithms for the Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST). (Rubin Algorithms Workshop (2020)). The workshop was originally planned as an in-person event of about 80 people at Princeton University. Two weeks prior to the planned start date, in light of the uncertainty around the evolving coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and with the health and safety of all attendees first and foremost in mind, the SOC took the decision to convert the workshop to an all-virtual format. This technical note describes how we modified and ran that all-virtual workshop, and provides advice on how to organize similar such online workshops, meetings and conferences.

## Change Record

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# **Rubin** Observatory

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## Virtual Rubin Algorithms Workshop.

## **1** Introduction

In March 2020, Rubin Observatory planned to host a workshop on the topic of image processing algorithms for the Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST) (Rubin Algorithms Workshop (2020)) for about 80 people at Princeton University. Given the increasing health risks and anxiety associated with the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the time, the SOC felt strongly that the only responsible course of action was to not hold a primarily inperson based workshop. Rather than canceling or postponing the event, the workshop was converted to an all-virtual format. Holding a virtual online workshop rather than cancelling allowed us to still achieve many of the goals of the original in-person workshop.

### 2 Workshop format

One of the biggest challenge for any all-virtual meeting is accommodating the many timezones across which participants are located. Rubin Algorithms Workshop participants were located across all US time zones, Europe, Australia and Asia. This was the strongest factor in redesigning the workshop for an all-virtual format was the need to accommodate many time zones. The best compromise that allowed us to accommodate all US and European timezones in a tolerable time-friendly block, we shortened the day from 8hrs as planned for the in-person workshop to 5.5 hours. Unfortunately this was was not a time-friendly for Asia-Pacific time zones, but it is not possible to accommocate the world and this was the best possible)

#### 3 Workshop Infrastructure

A combination of several online collaboration tools were used to make this workshop a success

**Zoom** Zoom was chosen as the platform for the virtual workshop.

Slack

**Google drive** Google drive was used to share documents with all the workshop participants. "Participants Shared Drive" to share essential information with all participants in one place. This included all the presentations and any supporting information, the Zoom connection details, the agenda and the documents for taking live notes. The live notes were set up in advance and all participants were invited to contribute.

**Website** The Rubin Algorithms Workshop website, <sup>1</sup> was used for registration, to convey organizational information, especially ongoing updates related to the COVID-19 situation and to serve the archived presentations and recordings and recordings to the public after the event. It was provided by the Rubin communications team.

#### 4 Before the workshop

#### 5 During the workshop

**Roles and responsibilities** 

Controlling the workshop flow

#### 6 After the meeting

A feedback survey was sent out to all participants following the workshop to solicit feedback on what did and did not work. Advice received has been incorporated into this technote. Specific feedback was sought on how well the virtual experience worked and ways to improve it, both from the techniology standpoint and the tools, meeting procedures and processes.

the choice, format and logistics of an all-virtual workshop as well as on its scientific value.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>https://ls.st/law

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many complements on the handling of the logistics and the Zoom meeting format. Nevertheless, the feedback did reveal some areas for improvement.

Active participation: I just really struggled to participate in the way I would have done had it been in person.

Breakout discussions were an integral part of the original program. The modified format could not include breakout sessions and the became more of a series of preenttions from the projec rather than a workshop. missed the whole interaction/face-to-face aspect that this meeting was supposed to be all about... This makes the necessity of follow-up unconference style sessions even more important.

## 7 Conclusions

#### 8 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank, Rubin Observatory communications team for their help with the website and support in converting this workshop to an all-virtual format at short notice, NOIRLab IT for technical support and for being on call during the workshop in the event of any network problems, SLAC for the use of their Zoom system, and Arjun Dey, NOIRLab and Richard Dubois, SLAC for their advice on running and all-virtual meeting.

## A References

## References

Rubin Algorithms Workshop, 2020, URL https://ls.st/law

## **B** Acronyms