

# Research Method Track: Message From the Chairs

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In 2017, REFSQ hosted for the third time a research method track, organized by the authors. It aims providing a forum for the discussion of ideas and experiences about the application of empirical methods to Requirements Engineering.

This track does not seek mature research results (REFSQ main track is probably a better place for this type of contributions). In turn, we are interested in e.g., research proposals, discussions of different research methodologies' benefits and perils, reflections about data collection and analysis procedures, etc. Papers with a focus on the adoption, or adaptation, of methods and theories used in other disciplines (e.g., health sciences, sociology, psychology, and engineering) to RE are also welcomed. These different themes configure the categories of contributions described in the *Call for Papers*:

- **Regular contributions:** Research method papers and Lessons learned reports (published in the Springer LNCS proceedings).
- **Interaction contributions:** Research methods mini-tutorials, Plans for research studies, and Live studies (published in the CEUR proceedings).

We received three regular and two interaction contributions. The numbers are in line with past edition (four regular and three interaction contributions). All contributions were independently reviewed by 3 members of the Program Committee, who provided recommendation for acceptance, shepherding, or rejection. As a result of this process, two regular contributions were accepted for inclusion in the LNCS proceedings and presentation at the conference:

- *Specifying Software Requirements for Safety-Critical Railway Systems: an Experience Report*, by Luciana Provenzano and Kaj Hänninen, reports the authors' experiences in introducing a safety compliant method of writing safety software requirements for railway projects in a distributed organization.
- *Using Human Error Identification Tool for Detection of Requirements Faults: An Empirical Investigation*, by Vaibhav Anu, Gursimran Walia, Gary Bradshaw, Wenhua Hu and Jeffrey Carver, discusses the effectiveness of the Human Error Abstraction Assist (HEAA) tool and Human Error Taxonomy

(HET) in helping inspectors identify human errors and resulting faults during the requirements inspection.

One interaction contribution was selected for inclusion in the CEUR proceedings and to be conducted at the conference. In *Understanding Human Errors In Software Requirements: An Online Survey*, Wenhua Hu, Jeffrey Carver, Gursimran Walia, Vaibhav Anu and Gary Bradshaw propose a survey to identify which type of human errors and related faults requirement engineers make on real projects, and which methods they use to prevent them. This study will be conducted online during the conference.

The aforementioned study by Hu et al. takes no actual time during the conference sessions. Thus, we invited Anu et al. to adapt their paper *Using Human Error Identification Tool for Detection of Requirements Faults: An Empirical Investigation* to be conducted as a live study in the conference. This proposal titled *Using Human Error Abstraction Method for Detecting and Classifying Requirements Errors: A Live Study*, is strongly related to the online study. It aims evaluating the use of the Human Error Abstraction Assist (HEAA) tool in helping inspectors correctly abstract and classify human errors responsible for requirement faults. This proposal is also included in the CEUR proceedings.

Although the number of submissions was lower than we expected, we hope that the Research Method Track program will satisfy all REFSQ attendees. We also wish to thank the members of the Research Method Track Program Committee for their support and professional work:

Kristian Beckers	Technische Universität München, Germany
Travis D. Beaux	Carnegie Mellon University, USA
Maya Daneva	University of Twente, Netherlands
Karen Elliott	Newcastle University Business School, UK
Katsyarina Labunets	University of Trento, Italy
Ignacio Panach	Universitat de València, Spain
Lutz Prechelt	Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
Maria Riaz	North Carolina State University, USA
Riccardo Scandariato	Chalmers University and University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Last, but not least, we gratefully acknowledge the support from the local organizers.