

Leading a discussion session at the 17th Cloud Control Workshop

As part of the core of the workshop program, we are including 20 discussion sessions, each spanning 80 minutes, scheduled in 5-way parallel sessions. These sessions are most often aimed to either gain and spread knowledge about an area of interest to the participants (where the leader(s) is already rather knowledgeable) or to jointly with the participants elaborate on some research problem in order to better understand or make progress towards solving the problem. That said, discussion topics are not restricted to these two types but suitable for anything relating to Cloud Control that interests sufficiently many people to create a dynamic discussion.

When selecting a topic and preparing the session, strive to identify questions that stir discussions rather than can simply be looked up in literature. Strive to see the discussion itself as part of the goal. It is of course not necessary to maintain a discussion along the route that you have planned in advance, but it is good to have a plan in case discussion dies out or totally diverge into something else (which may not be what the participants anticipated).

Also, strive to get the group to be as engaged as possible. Sometimes a discussion session is more of a question-driven lecture, but when not, the goal should be to have the group talking and the leader directing them. Often these sessions turn out great when the discussion leader(s) manage to enter a role that combines being a moderator and being one of the active participants and the session turns out as an informal panel discussion where the participants are the panel.

It is often beneficial to be two or even three people leading and planning a discussion session. If you know participants you want to engage as co-organizers, please get in touch with them. In case you are interested in sharing but have no person in mind, we are happy to help out finding relevant candidates.

A discussion topic leader is expected to:

- Provide a title and an abstract (up to 2500 char including spaces), enough to catch the interest of the participants.
- Start by asking people not to engage in emails and other laptop activities, as explicitly passive participants reduce energy in the room.
- Introduce the topic. This may range from explaining the area in one minute to giving a short (say 5-10 minutes presentation)
- Prepare and present a few questions to be discussed on the topic.
- To chair the discussion and make sure the group makes progress and make sure that the group talks and not only listens (if possible).
- To save the results for history, you may optionally also write an “abstract-style” summary of the discussion short after the session.