Helsinki Institute for Information Technology HIIT is a joint research institute of Aalto University and the University of Helsinki for basic and applied research on information technology. HIIT's mission is to conduct top-level research, seamlessly moving between fundamental methods and technologies to novel applications and their impact on people and society. HIIT is a strategic partnership of the two universities to take Helsinki IT to the world class and keep it there. HIIT's research is interdisciplinary, operating across departments and with industry. The current foci of research are computational modelling and data analysis, and ubiquitous ICT in the modern networked world.

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HIIT was founded in 1999 and now has a budget of over 10 million euros, realising in total about 134 person-years of work by almost 300 researchers. HIIT is located in two different sites in the Helsinki Metropolitan area: at Aalto University’s Otaniemi campus and University of Helsinki’s Kumpula campus, co-located with several departments at both places. HIIT’s operating principle is that it adds to other departments’ activities, instead of competing with them. The institute is led by Professor Samuel Kaski until July 2015 and by Professor Petri Myllymäki from August 2015 onwards. HIIT’s research is funded by Aalto University, the University of Helsinki, Tekes, the Academy of Finland, the European Union, private companies, and foundations financing Finnish hi-tech research. The research by HIIT has been assessed and deemed excellent by its Scientific Advisory Board in 2008 and 2012; in the Aalto University Research Assessment Exercise in 2009; and in the Evaluation of Research and Doctoral Training at the University of Helsinki in 2011.

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HIIT in brief

Helsinki Institute for Information Technology HIIT is a joint research institute of Aalto University and the University of Helsinki for basic and applied research on information technology. HIIT’s mission is to conduct top-level research, seamlessly moving between fundamental methods and technologies to novel applications and their impact on people and society. HIIT is a strategic partnership of the two universities to take Helsinki IT to the world class and keep it there. HIIT’s research is interdisciplinary, operating across departments and with industry. The current foci of research are computational modelling and data analysis, and ubiquitous ICT in the modern networked world.

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Review of Year 2014

Augmented research, health and knowledge work, and other IT

Two main goals of HIIT are to (1) conduct high level strategic research bridging the two universities, and (2) coordinate big common ICT issues across departments to form a common “Helsinki ICT”. Year 2014 again witnessed success along both lines.

In 2014 HIIT contributed to three Centres of Excellence of the Academy of Finland: Computational Inference (COIN, with key contributions from HIIT’s CI programme’s groups), Inverse Problems, and Cancer Genetics.

Tekes’s strategic research openings are visionary and challenging projects aiming to make serious breakthroughs that will lay the foundation for entirely new areas of business in the future. The first strategic openings were chosen in 2013 when Re:Know, Revolution of Knowledge Work, was one of the two. Re:Know is coordinated by HIIT and the partners are University of Helsinki, Aalto University and Institute for Occupational Health. In 2014, Tekes funded three new strategic openings, two of which HIIT’s researchers participate in: Digital Health Revolution and Living Factories. The vision of the Digital Health Revolution initiative is that future healthcare will allow citizens to control and make use of their personal data. The goal of Living Factories is to realise the full potential of Synthetic Biology in Finland. Synthetic Biology is based on the design and engineering of new-to-nature biological systems.

Professor Hiroshi Mamitsuka from the Institute for Chemical Research, Kyoto University, Japan, was selected as a FiDiPro Professor funded by Tekes, and he started at HIIT in the beginning of 2015.
Nominations

Dr Matti Järvisalo got Academy of Finland’s 5-year Academy Research Fellow funding for his research on “Decision Procedures for the Polynomial Hierarchy, Boolean Optimization, and Model Counting (PHantoM)”. Dr Tuukka Ruotsalo got Academy of Finland’s 3-year Postdoctoral Researcher funding for his research on “Multisource Intent-prediction for Interactive Information Retrieval” which is closely tied to HIIT Wide Focus Area. Dr Alexandru Ioan Tomescu also got Academy of Finland’s 3-year Postdoctoral Researcher funding for his research where the aim is to provide novel and unifying models and efficient and accurate algorithmic solutions for the multi-assembly of genomic sequences. Dr Antti Ukkonen was awarded the Frontier Prize at the 13th International Symposium on Intelligent Data Analysis (IDA 2014) for his work on estimating the distribution of shortest path lengths in real-world social networks.

Augmented research

Augmented search, research, and knowledge work are the main themes of the HIIT-wide research initiative that is a strategic research focus of HIIT. The project investigates how Human-Computer Interaction and Machine Learning can be combined to a loop that will increase, by an order of magnitude, the effectiveness of search and more generally knowledge work. Since 2011, this HIIT-wide focus area builds on HIIT’s existing excellences and touches most of HIIT’s research topics. The work focuses on two case studies: general augmented research, and computational cumulative biology. The focus area is now in full speed, accompanied with several big multi-group projects: Tekes big strategic opening “Re:Know”, EU FP7 funded “MindSee” project and Academy of Finland’s “Multivire” project. We have e.g. developed a technique called interactive intent modeling that allows humans to direct exploratory search. The technique has been implemented in a real-world search engine SciNet. The search engine anticipates user’s search intents and visualizes them on a novel “Intent Radar” screen.
Collaboration

HIIT collaborates actively both within Helsinki area and internationally, and acts as a link between researchers, companies and public administration.

Collaboration in Helsinki IT

HIIT coordinates common activities of computer science research at Helsinki area in several ways: education, recruitments, and joint initiatives.

In doctoral education, HIIT coordinates the Helsinki Doctoral Education Network in Information and Communications Technology (HICT). HICT is a collaborative doctoral education network hosted jointly by Aalto University and the University of Helsinki, that continues the successful tradition of collaboration in Helsinki area. Altogether 55 supervisors and over 200 students belong to the network that operates at three departments at Aalto University and one department at University of Helsinki.

HIIT also collaborates with Institute for Molecular Medicine Finland (FIMM) in recruiting PhD students to rotate between research groups at FIMM and HIIT. The collaboration is part of the Nordic EMBL Partnership for Molecular Medicine and the call is able to attract a large number of excellent doctoral candidates from all over the world.

Data Science is a big research focus for the whole HIIT, spanning over several application areas. It is a new discipline whose objective is to provide the underlying theory and the necessary tools to cope with the current data revolution. The education in this area has been boosted by several education programmes such as the Master’s Programme in Machine learning and Data mining (Madacamia) at Aalto and Data Science study profile at University of Helsinki. For interdisciplinary studies, Analytics and Data Science is a new minor topic available for all MSc students at Aalto, jointly coordinated by professor Aristides Gionis from HIIT and professor Pekka Malo at Aalto BIZ. The goal of the minor is to educate students on how to become proficient in making sense of such big data, and how to apply data analysis skills on their own domain of expertise.

Recruitment is an important mean to boost collaboration. HIIT arranges joint Helsinki IT postdoc and senior researcher calls together with several departments in the field of computer science at Aalto University and University of Helsinki. These joint calls leverage on and further enhance the brand of Helsinki as a hub of computer science, and attract a wide range of high-level applicants.

Helsinki Distinguished Lecture Series on Future Information Technology, coordinated by HIIT, continues to attract world-class speakers and a wide audience. Speakers during 2014 were Corinna Cortes, Head of Google Research, New York; Professor Roderick Murray-Smith from University of Glasgow; and Professor Wojciech Szpankowski from Purdue University. The first speaker of 2015 was Mikko Hyppönen, Chief Research Officer of F-Secure.
Digi Platform is Aalto University’s new collaborative initiative in the field of ICT and digitalization, to maximize Aalto’s internal synergies in a non-exclusive manner, and to increase Aalto’s external visibility. In the Digi platform, expertise across Aalto is brought together to maximize the potential of IT to boost other sciences, technologies and society. Currently in Aalto the field is very large but scattered, and the platform aims to coordinate and raise the profile of Aalto. HIIT coordinates the Digi Platform, and University of Helsinki participates in the platform via HIIT.

HIIT is active in the ICT SHOK Digile (Strategic Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation), shaping the collaboration between universities and companies in Finland. Professor Sasu Tarkoma is the academic coordinator of Digile’s research programme Internet of Things, and Professor Petri Myllymäki is the academic coordinator of Data to Intelligence D2I programme. HIIT researchers participate also in the Health field SHOK SalWe.

International collaboration

All HIIT’s activities are inherently international, mostly in a bottom-up manner. Cooperation with key international research institutes and universities is active: Berkeley (ICSI and UC Berkeley), MIT, Centre for Computational Statistics and Machine Learning (CSML) at UCL, European Bioinformatics Institute EBI, Human Technology Lab (HTLab) at University of Padova, and Waseda University, to name a few.

HIIT coordinates Aalto University’s and University of Helsinki’s strategic partnership with NSF Science and Technology Center for Science of Information (SoI). The member universities of the SoI center are Purdue (leader), Bryn Mawr, Howard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford, Texas A&M, UC Berkeley, UCSD and Urbana-Champaign. Other strategic partners in Europe are ETH (Zürich, Switzerland) and the LINCS network (Paris, France).

EIT ICT Labs is an European initiative intended to turn Europe into a global leader in ICT innovation. It aims to fulfill this mission by establishing a new type of partnership between leading companies, research centres, and universities in Europe. One of the 5 nodes is Helsinki, and Professor Marko Turpeinen of HIIT is Helsinki Node Director. Several HIIT researchers have research projects with EIT ICT Labs and are thus contributors to the establishment and ramp up of the EIT ICT Labs activities in Helsinki.

HIIT’s researchers are active in organizing high-profile international conferences and workshops: the most recent ones are 17th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics (AISTATS 2014), IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM 2014), 13th International Symposium on Intelligent Data Analysis (IDA 2014), and Discovery Science (DS 2014).
**Societal impact**

HIIT’s researchers and alumni establish approximately one startup company per year, one of the newest ones being Etsimo whose mission is “discovery beyond search”.

HIIT aims to boost the competitiveness of the Finnish information industry and information society in the long run by linking scientific research with the long-term high-risk research and development of the information industry, and by contributing to the development of the information society. HIIT both anticipates developments of the information society and influences them. New technologies developed at HIIT are taken into use at the ICT sector or other fields in the commercial and public sector.

HIIT researchers have been active in issues related to public policy having the profile of a vocal and visible participant in the public debate related to various important themes of information society, especially the discussion on emerging social forms of media use, immaterial rights, privacy and trust in the network society.

**Views for 2015**

A new Board of HIIT was nominated in early 2014, as described in more detail in Chapter 3 of this Annual Report. One of the first tasks of the Board was to open a call for a new Director in Autumn 2014. The selection was made in early 2015, and Professor Petri Myllymäki, a HIIT group leader and programme director, will start as a new Director in August 2015. Professor Samuel Kaski’s 5-year term will end in July 2015.
Helsinki Institute for Information Technology

HIIT Board
Chair Risto Nieminen

Scientific Advisory Board

HIIT Board
Director
Samuel Kaski
Vice-director
Patrik Florén

Administrative services

Steering Group
HIIT Director, Vice-director, Programme directors; Secretary: research coordinator Ella Bingham

Algorithmic Data Analysis (ADA)
Director
Aristides Gionis

Parsimonius Modelling
Jaakko Hollmén

Neuroinformatics
Aapo Hyvärinen

New Paradigms in Computing
Petteri Kaski

Genome-Scale Algorithms
Veli Mäkinen

Data Mining
Aristides Gionis

Kernel Machines, Pattern Analysis and Computational Biology
Juho Rousu

Discovery
Hannu Toivonen

Combinatorial Pattern Matching
Esko Ukkonen

Computational Inference (CI)
Director
Petri Myllymäki

Bayesian Statistics
Jukka Corander

Statistical Machine Learning and Bioinformatics
Samuel Kaski

Complex Systems Computation
Petri Myllymäki

Computational Logic
Ilkka Niemelä

Distributed and Mobile Cloud Systems (DMC)
Director
Keijo Heljanko

Participating professors:
Andrei Gurtov
Keijo Heljanko
Jussi Kangasharju
Sasu Tarkoma
Antti Ylä-Jääski

Network Society (NS)
Director
Giulio Jacucci

Ubiquitous Interaction
Giulio Jacucci

Social Interaction and Emotion
Niklas Ravaja

Digital Content Communities (HIIT-EIT)
Marko Turpeinen

HIIT-Wide Focus Area
Research

Algorithmic Data Analysis (ADA) Programme

The mission of the Algorithmic Data Analysis research programme at HIIT is to develop useful algorithmic data analysis methods for other sciences and for industry. The work involves both basic research in computer science and applied work on problems arising from applications. The research focuses on the algorithmic and modeling problems of combinatorial pattern matching, data mining, and machine learning. The work is strongly interdisciplinary. Developing new concepts and algorithms is an iterative process consisting of interacting extensively with the application experts, formulating computational concepts, analyzing the properties of the concepts, designing algorithms and analyzing their performance, implementing and experimenting with the algorithms, and applying the results in practice. The main application areas of ADA are in biology, medicine, environmental studies, creativity, social networks, and neuroscience.
Combinatorial Pattern Matching,  
Professor Esko Ukkonen

The combinatorial pattern-matching group develops combinatorial algorithms and probabilistic modeling techniques for pattern search and synthesis problems in sequential and higher-dimensional data. The team is interested in the basic research of the theoretical aspects of the area as well as in various applications such as genome structure, gene regulation, and information retrieval.

Key publications:


Data Mining, Professor Aristides Gionis

The data-mining group focuses on developing novel methods to extract knowledge from data, designing algorithms to summarize large volumes of data efficiently and effectively, and exploring new ways of using the extracted information. Specific areas of interest include: pattern discovery, clustering and outlier detection, graph mining, social-network analysis, analysis of information networks and social-network dynamics, and analysis of smart-city sensor data.

Key publications:

Discovery Group: Data Mining and Computational Creativity, Professor Hannu Toivonen

The Discovery group develops novel methods and tools for data mining and computational creativity. Our focus is on algorithmic methods for discovering links and patterns in data, and recently also on their use in creative systems. Computational creativity is interesting on its own right but also as an application area for data mining methods. We work on verbal creativity, i.e., computational poetry and humor, and also on automatic composition of music. Our emphasis is novel methods that minimize the need for manually coded or language-specific knowledge.

Key publications:

Neuroinformatics,  
Professor Aapo Hyvärinen

Neuroinformatics is widely defined as the cross-fertilization of information-processing and mathematical sciences on the one hand, and neural and cognitive sciences on the other.

Our group works on different aspects of neuroinformatics related to machine learning. We model the visual system in the brain by analyzing the statistical structure of the natural input images. We apply machine learning models on neuroimaging data, in particular MEG. We also develop the relevant theory of statistical machine learning, typically unsupervised.

Key publications:

Parsimonious Modeling,
Dr. Jaakko Hollmén

The research group Parsimonious Modelling develops novel computational data analysis methods and applies these methods on two application fields: cancer genomics and environmental informatics. Parsimonious modeling aims at simple, compact, or sparse models as a result of learning from data in the presence of very little or no a priori information about the modeled problem. Simplicity of the models facilitates understanding of the problem domain by humans.

Both application fields present similar challenges to the data analysis problems: the high dimensionality of observed data and the presence of moderate or large noise levels are both factors that bear fundamental problems for any data analysis. Seeking new areas of application and interfacing the newest application domains with lots of novel types of generated data helps in finding new, unsolved settings of problems.

Key publications:


Kernel Machines, Pattern Analysis and Computational Biology, Professor Juho Rousu

The group develops machine learning methods, models and tools for computational sciences, in particular computational biology. The group focuses on kernel methods and regularized learning for multiple and structured targets, multiple views and ensembles. Applications of interest include network reconstruction (Pitkänen et al, 2014) and labeling, gene functional classification, metabolite identification (MIDAS, Academy of Finland grant, 2013-2017) and synthetic biology (LiF, Tekes strategic opening, 2014-2016). In our most recent approach in metabolite identification from tandem mass spectrometric data, an important bottleneck problem in metabolomics, we combine molecular fragmentation models with multiple kernel learning, thus achieving state-of-the-art predictive performance (Shen et al. 2014). In machine learning, in collaboration with University College London and Laval University, Canada, we have developed new methods for multilabel classification, based on ensemble learning on a collection of random output graphs imposed on the multilabels, and a kernel-based structured output learner as the base classifier (Marchand et al. 2014). Another example of our recent work is structured prediction for predicting subgraphs of a network responding to a stimulus (Su et al. 2014).

Key publications:


 Genome-Scale Algorithms,  
Professor Veli Mäkinen

We develop algorithms and data structures for the analysis of genome-scale data. Such data is abundant due to modern molecular biology measurement techniques like high-throughput sequencing. We are especially interested in applications of compressed data structures, that make it possible to analyse the often highly redundant data within the space of their information content. We also study other scalability aspects like distributed computation/storage around genome-scale data.

Key publications:

New Paradigms in Computing, 
Professor Petteri Kaski

The group performs basic research at the intersection of core computer science (algorithm design and analysis) and discrete mathematics, with an emphasis towards novel techniques and less studied models of computation. We invest substantial effort to high-risk, high-yield research problems of relatively broad theoretical interest, selected on both problem and method driven basis. However, we also aim at rapid publication of more specific, smaller observations. We particularly seek and value solid results with mathematical elegance and simplicity.

The current research themes of the group are threefold. (1) Exploring the interplay between algebraic, combinatorial, and geometric techniques in the design of exact deterministic algorithms. For example, many combinatorial problems can be cast in algebraic form, whereby a nontrivial algebraic algorithm yields a more efficient solution compared with direct combinatorial tools. (2) Restricted models of computation and tradeoffs in resources and/or objectives. For example, one fundamental limitation in modern large-scale distributed systems is the infeasibility of central control. In practice, the system must be operated by a distributed algorithm in which each computational node operates based on the information available in its local neighbourhood only. Assuming this setting, is it possible to achieve globally optimal or near-optimal operation? What is the tradeoff between the available information and the degree of approximation for the optimum? (3) While we are a theory group, we occasionally engage in practical algorithm implementation. Examples include attacks on combinatorial classification problems and applications in computational geometry.

Key publications:

Computational Inference (CI) Programme

The four groups of the CI programme are all members of the Finnish Centre of Excellence in Computational Inference Research (COIN), and the objectives of the programme are closely intertwined with those of COIN.

The main objective of CI is to develop methods for transforming the data produced by the current data revolution into useful information. The key methodology for achieving this goal is statistical and computational inference based on the data. The emphasis is on large data collections and computationally demanding modelling and inference algorithms. Our mission is to push the boundary towards both more complex problems, requiring more structured data models, and towards extremely rapid inference. We address a set of carefully chosen interdisciplinary “grand challenge”-level problems with high societal impact where solving the data intensive problems requires novel methodologies that can only result from combining the expertise of separate subfields.

Our mission brings up four partially overlapping methodological focus areas: Learning of massive data-driven models; Learning from multiple sources; Statistical inference in highly structured stochastic models; and Extreme inference engine.

In applied research our work is also motivated by the big data and ubiquitous computing vision, where adaptivity, context-awareness and personalisation are key enablers. We see that our four methodological research areas support strongly each other, and they all address from a different perspective the key technological problems we face in our future “big data” information society. In our applied research we link our strong basic research work in machine learning and constraint reasoning to well-motivated applied research activities involving prototype applications and real-world deployments.
Statistical Machine Learning and Bioinformatics,
Professor Samuel Kaski

We develop new methods for machine learning, computational inference, and probabilistic modeling. We focus on models for learning from multiple data sources, including multi-view learning and multi-task learning, and methods combining mechanistic models and probabilistic inference. Our primary application areas are computational systems biology and medicine, bioinformatics, user interaction, data visualization, as well as neuroinformatics. Our main lines of work include Bayesian methodologies for data integration and modeling dependencies between multiple data sets with co-occurring samples, model-driven methods for retrieving and visualizing data sets, and Gaussian process models of genomic time series as well as quantitative analysis of sequencing data.

Key publications:


Bayesian Statistics,  
Professor Jukka Corander

We do research on theoretical and applied machine learning, biometry, bioinformatics and forensic statistics. Some specific areas of interest are clustering (see e.g. Blomstedt et al. 2014, IEEE TPAMI) and statistical inference in highly structured stochastic models (see e.g. Numminen et al. Royal Proceedings B). Our main application area is computational biology, in particular models for evolution and transmission of bacteria and viruses, with several highlight publications published in Nature Genetics and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. These findings have been enabled by our better scalable Bayesian inference methods for the analysis of bacterial whole-genome data that are several orders of magnitude faster than recent other methods based on standard Bayesian computation. For further details and complete publication list see www.helsinki.fi/bsg

Key publications:

Complex Systems Computation (CoSCo),
Professor Petri Myllymäki

The Complex Systems Computation Research Group investigates computational modeling issues in complex systems, and the related implementation aspects, focusing on prediction and model selection tasks. The work has both a strong basic research component, being at the intersection of computer science, information theory and mathematical statistics, and an applied component where the results have been used for solving problems in various areas from social and historical sciences to criminology, ecology, medicine and industrial engineering.

The research areas addressed include probabilistic modeling and data analysis, information theoretical approaches to inference, constraint reasoning and ubiquitous computing. Central themes in the applied research include information retrieval, user modeling, context-awareness and data visualization.

Key publications:


Computational Logic,  
Professor Ilkka Niemelä

The group develops automated reasoning techniques for solving challenging computational problems in engineering and science. The current focus is on developing efficient computational methods for large constraint satisfaction problems solved, e.g., as Boolean satisfiability problems (SAT) or using rule-based constraints of answer-set programming (ASP). The group has a strong track record in research on verification and testing of automation systems and software, as well as applying formal methods in the analysis of distributed systems.

Many knowledge representation tasks involve trees or similar acyclic structures as abstract datatypes. In 2014 our research concentrated on compact encodings of acyclicity properties in terms of constraints. In addition to tree structures, the encodings developed enable the description of directed acyclic graphs and chordal graphs such as the one illustrated by the side. The applications of acyclicity constraints are manifold and it is worth mentioning graphical models in machine learning. Their structure can be compactly described so that constraint solvers with optimization capabilities can be harnessed for machine learning tasks. To implement efficient reasoning in the presence of acyclicity constraints, we developed a new extension of SAT solvers with effective propagation mechanisms for acyclicity. This extension provides an alternative way to implement ASP and we developed a new translation from ASP to SAT for this purpose. In addition, we devised new techniques for the normalization of weight rules to better support extended rule types in ASP translations. Our research on constraint-based planning and scheduling focused on automated methods for analyzing temporal models. The main outcome was a novel, very general algorithm for extracting invariants from temporal models. The invariants represent dependencies between variables in the model.

Key publications:

**Distributed and Mobile Cloud Systems (DMC)**

The focus of the programme is to bridge the gap between mobile devices and the cloud based server backend systems into a single seamless distributed and mobile computing platform. The main motivation behind this is that mobile devices are by their very nature very resource constrained in available battery power, CPU, memory, network, as well as storage capacity compared to the server hardware available in the cloud backend systems. Thus mobile devices need to be tightly integrated to the cloud backend systems in order to do computational tasks that are too heavy for them. However, this basic setup is not yet sufficient for highly interactive applications. The wide area network (WAN) communication latencies between the mobile device and the possibly quite physically remote cloud backend can often be too large for interactive mobile applications, e.g., for interactive augmented reality applications such as Google Glass, as well as computationally intensive mobile intelligent information access applications. Therefore, sometimes an additional layer of computing called cloudlets is called for, that is a collection of local cloud servers that acts as local computing service for mobile devices in its own network neighborhood area. This idea is also known as cyber foraging in the literature.
Distributed Networking and Security, 
Professor Antti Ylä-Jääski

Distributed networking and security research group is working on two research areas, namely (a) energy aware computing and communications and (b) distributed systems and services.

Energy-aware computing and communications is a very timely and important topic. Energy consumption is a concern with today's mobile devices. While the capabilities of the devices have improved rapidly over the last ten years transforming also the way these devices are being utilized, battery technology has not been able to keep up with this evolution. As a consequence, there is an increasing gap between the battery capacity and the amount of energy required for typical usage. We address these challenges by building models of energy consumption through experiments and measurements based on which we develop new more energy-efficient protocols and services.

Distributed systems and services address architectures, platforms, and protocols for flexible, scalable, and easily usable services. Cloud computing uses virtual resources in the Internet for computing and storage, and is able to elastically scale to match changing resource needs. Merging cloud technologies with mobile domain has potential to offer new technology innovations and business opportunities for operators, vendors, and developers, as well as novel services for end users. Mobile cloud computing provides versatile research topics varying from the virtualisation layer up to the service layer.

Key publications:


Distributed Computing,  
Associate Professor Keijo Heljanko

The group has two main research topics: distributed computing and development methods and tools for distributed systems. On the distributed computing side the main focus is on Big Data processing and cloud computing, together with the underlying distributed algorithms and technologies, allowing the creation of novel applications in key areas of science and engineering. On the development methods and tools for distributed systems side the group focuses on automated tools for analysis of distributed systems, including dynamic symbolic execution based testing techniques, parallel and distributed verification methods, and techniques for the development and quality assurance of safety critical systems.

Key publications:

Mobile Computing, 
Professor Sasu Tarkoma

The group investigates different aspects of wireless and mobile communications. The group has a strong focus on Internet of Things, urban analytics and energy awareness. Recent research of the group pertains to energy modeling and optimization, wearable devices, and urban mobility.

Our vision consists of cognitive devices, applications, and networks that are aware of user intents and the properties of the computing environment. These smarter systems adapt to changing conditions and deliver enriched user experience. A key challenge is how to distribute service functionality and logic in the distributed environment. The aim of our work is to enable efficient, secure, always-on, and reliable connectivity irrespective of the access network and terminal device. Moreover, service access and usage must be personalized and adapted to the current operating context.

Our central research items include mobile data analytics, energy efficiency, Internet of Things, and more recently secure wearable systems.

Key publications:


Collaborative Networking,  
Professor Jussi Kangasharju

The Collaborative Networking (CoNe) group’s research focuses on large-scale distributed systems and network applications which are based on nodes cooperating voluntarily. Examples of such systems are information-centric networks and mobile opportunistic networks. The work focuses on investigating architectures and mechanisms for designing, prototyping, and testing of future networks. The goal of the work is to understand how future networks should be designed and built. The group has also worked on data center energy efficiency and green networking.

Key publications:

Networking Research,
Professor Andrei Gurtov

We study a wide range of data communication problems, starting from the medium access control, traffic analysis, multicast and IP mobility up to hierarchical peer-to-peer architectures and distributed algorithms. Our particular focus is security aspects and game-theoretic approach to model selfish user behavior in the modern Internet. We are actively involved in Internet Engineering and Research Task Force events contributing to creation of Internet standards. We carry out projects on Internet-of-Things security and medical ICT, the locator/identifier split, web security and trust among Internet users, and smart spaces. The group collaborates tightly with top-notch scientists from the International Computer Science Institute (ICSI) in Berkeley. The latest directions include fair bandwidth allocation in datacenter networks and resilient routing. In 2014, Dmitriy Kuptsov defended his PhD thesis on “Improving dependability of networks with penalty and revocation mechanisms”. According to ResearchGate portal, the group leader was the most downloaded author of HIIT.

Key publications:

Network Society (NS) Programme

The mission of the Network Society research programme is to empower ubiquitous users with transparent and resourceful ICT with the following overarching objectives:

- Multimodal interaction and adaptive information: resources are provided to users to interact with information ubiquitously. This includes studies of modalities such as manual ergonomics and skills, tactile interaction and cross modal rendering. Adaptation and situated computing is pursued to contribute to issues such as data deluge and persuasion.

- Emergent social media platforms and practices. The study of emergent forms of ICT including gaming, basic studies of practices and behavior in social media with special attention to knowledge work, privacy and self expression.

- Experience of Mediated Interaction. Emotional and cognitive processes during mediated social interaction and the neuroscience of social ICT.

While there are three research groups their research objectives contribute to a common agenda.

These three challenges are integrated to solve in an adjacent or combined way problems or anticipate future ICT. As examples new ubiquitous or multimodal interaction can contribute to novel forms of social media such as public and pervasive displays. The neuro-psychology of mediated interaction can contribute to understanding social media practices.

NS collaborates with other programmes, in particular in the HIIT wide focus area focusing on information exploration and knowledge work.
Digital Content Communities,
Professor Marko Turpeinen

The goal of our research is to enable and encourage people to belong to communities of content creators, to develop service design methodology and business model development for social media, to study how people interact with each other using digital content, and to understand what new business opportunities and social structures emerge around community-generated content and technology. One of our strong focus areas is the rapidly expanding social forms of gaming and how to apply the findings from online games to other non-gaming domains. This includes virtual economies and virtual consumerism, and applying economics and business studies in virtual worlds.

Another viewpoint is legal. In relation to future technologies, it is not enough to be able to apply only traditional jurisprudencial methods, but we must also collect and analyze empirical data. Therefore, in addition to conventional legal studies that focus on the analysis of statutes, court cases, etc, we also seek to understand practices and business reasons, as well as availing of user studies to find real human, business, and societal needs. Likewise, futures research methods, e.g. user scenarios, may give us important information on forthcoming issues. Digital Content Communities is a joint research group of both HIIT and EIT ICT Labs Helsinki node.

Key publications:

Social Interaction and Emotion (SIE),
Professor Niklas Ravaja

The mission of SIE is to increase our understanding of ICT-mediated social interaction. Our studies focus on: (a) emotional and cognitive processes during mediated social interaction, including mediated touch, interaction with virtual humans, and knowledge work, (b) the neuroscience of social ICT, (c) socially-mediated behavioral phenomena in SNSs, (d) the use of gamification to support the adoption of healthier lifestyles, and (e) user experience of ICT.

We use a wide methodological approach, from surveys and qualitative methods to neurophysiological recordings (e.g., EEG), to study users in the laboratory as well as in real-life contexts. By providing both fundamental and applied insight into social interaction, we help to create ICT and services that take the human social and emotional processes into account.

**Key publications:**


Ubiquitous Interaction (UiX), Professor Giulio Jacucci

Ubiquitous Interaction studies the design, development and evaluation of interactivity with users in ubiquitous and mobile computing systems. The research is carried out coupling in-depth user studies with design in the area of novel interfaces. The goal is to contribute to technology development efforts by deepening understanding of human and design perspectives. Currently, research is conducted in different areas: multitouch displays, adaptive and affective interfaces, multimodal interaction, exploratory search and social computing. Application areas range from sustainability and environmental awareness, home computing, walk-up-and-use display, information exploration, art and culture, scientific and knowledge work.

Key publications:


• Giulio Jacucci, Luciano Gamberini, Jonathan Freeman, Anna Spagnolli (Eds.), Symbiotic Interaction, Third International Workshop, Symbiotic 2014.


HIIT-Wide Focus Area: Augmented Science, Dr. Antti Honkela, Dr. Tuukka Ruotsalo (Coordinators)

The advances in science depend on effectively building upon the results that others have achieved, which are based on previously collected data. This brings to the forefront a challenge for computational science to better utilize the massive explosion in digital scientific data, whether it is scientific literature, or raw measurement data from previous studies. HIIT has begun focusing resources on a HIIT-wide focus area, titled Augmented Science, which builds on the existing excellences and touches most of HIIT research topics. Augmented science develops information technology methods and pilot applications for making the data-driven fields such as modern biology cumulative, and revolutionizing the way we search and access scientific resources and literature. Much of the most interesting biomedical data comes from individual people. We are developing methods that ensure the privacy of these sensitive data while allowing their use. Improving the general problem solving method of science, in collaboration with the other fields, is the best way for HIIT to contribute to solving the grand challenges of the humanity.

We aim to support scientific information access by enabling better coordination of communicating ideas and scientific results within the scientific community. Results of scientific efforts are traditionally published as articles and communicated personally as presentations or other related materials. The rapid communication of knowledge between researchers is a key success factor to enable better science. The volume of scientific output is estimated to be millions of publications worldwide per year; the growth rate of PubMed alone is more than 1 article per minute. The problem of communication that the scientific community is facing is shifting from publishing and sharing the information to finding and filtering the suitable materials to support every day work of researchers. We aim to help scientists to better find and manage the content that they use in their everyday work.

Key publications:


Administration

Personnel and funding

HIIT is a joint research institute of Aalto University and the University of Helsinki. At Aalto University, HIIT researchers currently work in the Department of Computer Science or HIIT’s own “department” at Open Innovation House; at University of Helsinki, our operations are at the Department of Computer Science, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and Department of Social Sciences. The personnel of HIIT are employed by the two parent universities. Many of HIIT’s personnel have double or even triple affiliations. Most common is an affiliation with other Departments of one or both of the parent universities, but there are also some who share their time between HIIT and some other organisation. Thus the total number of HIIT affiliated personnel (about 275, of which 39 per cent are of foreign origin) is much higher than the number of person-years, 134.

The total funding of HIIT in 2014 was 10.5 MEur, of which 82 per cent was competitive. The main funding sources were Academy of Finland, Tekes, EU and the mother universities. More details will be given in the Facts and Figures document found via http://www.hiit.fi/abouthiit

Board

The highest decision-making body of HIIT is the Board. It decides on HIIT’s overall research strategy and research programmes. The statutory tasks of the Board are to approve the annual budget and activity plans, and follow up and comment on the work of HIIT through regular activity updates given by the Director of HIIT. In 2014 the Board convened four times.

The HIIT Board consists of nine members who are appointed for four years at a time. Each university appoints four board members, two of which are university staff and two are not employed by the university, and personal deputies to each of them. The staff of HIIT selects one board member and his or her deputy from among their colleagues. A new Board for the term 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2018 was nominated in early 2014, and the Board now consists of the following members (personal deputies in parentheses):

• Chairman: Dean, Professor Risto Nieminen, Aalto (Vice Dean, Professor Jouko Lampinen, Aalto)
• Vice chairman: Dean, Professor Jouko Väänänen, UH (Vice Dean, Professor Esko Ukkonen, UH)
• Professor Pekka Orponen, Aalto (Professor Lauri Savioja, Aalto)
• Professor Jukka Paakki, UH (Professor Jyrki Kivinen, UH)
• Vice President Hannu Kauppinen, Nokia Oyj (Director Jyri Huopaniemi, Nokia Oyj)
• Docent Kari-Pekka Estola (Innovation Director Ville Peltola, IBM)
• Director Mervi Karikorpi, The Federation of Finnish Technology Industries (Director Petri Vasara, Pöyry Management Consulting Oy)
• Principal Scientist Harri Valpola, Zenrobotics (CEO Kimmo Kiviluoto, Enreach Solutions)
• Personnel representative: Docent Antti Honkela, HIIT (Dr. Antti Jylhä, HIIT)

The Director of HIIT Samuel Kaski was responsible for preparing and submitting propositions to the Board. Board Secretary was Research Coordinator, Docent Ella Bingham.

Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

The SAB consists of internationally prominent scholars who are invited by the HIIT Board. The SAB convened in 2012 and its recommendations were actively taken into account during 2013 and 2014. SAB Members in 2012 are listed in the following.

• Professor Randy Katz, University of California at Berkeley, Chairman of SAB
• Professor Alberto Apostolico, Georgia Tech
• Professor Christos Faloutsos, Carnegie Mellon University
• Professor Jodi Forlizzi, Carnegie Mellon University
• Professor Bengt Jonsson, Uppsala University
• Professor Martin Kersten, University of Amsterdam and CWI
• Professor Kari-Jouko Räihä, University of Tampere
• Professor Mart Saarma, University of Helsinki
• Professor John Shawe-Taylor, University College London