

COINS Steering Committee

Meeting 2021-06-18

Minutes: Urszula Nowostawska

Time: 13.00 – 13.45

Place: Zoom

Participants:

- Steering Committee (SC) members: Hanno Langweg (Scientific Director COINS), Chunming Rong (University of Stavanger), Vladimir Oleshchuk (University of Agder), Ragnar Soleng (University of Tromsø), Stephen Wolthusen (NTNU, Gjøvik), Lise Millerjord (Student), and Urszula Nowostawska (Activity Management Office).

Apologies:

- Stig Frode Mjolsnes (NTNU, Trondheim).



Agenda

1. Agenda
2. Meeting minutes of SC meeting 2020-06-10: <https://coinsrs.no/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/COINS-Steering-Committee-Meeting-Minutes-2020-06-10.pdf>
3. This week: summer school 14-18 June online: <https://coinsrs.no/coins-summer-school-2021-in-metochi-or-online/>
4. Looking back: COINS 2013-2021
5. Looking forward: Networking of information security Ph.D. students in Norway after COINS
6. Miscellaneous

Agenda

First COINS steering committee meeting in 2021 and the last meeting of the steering committee. COINS' funding will finish in 2 weeks. Welcome new students representative Lise Millerjord. No modification or any changes to the agenda. Agenda was approved.

Meeting minutes 2020-06-10

There was no modification to the previous meeting minutes, the meeting minutes were agreed.

Summer school 2021 (14-18 June 2021)

Due to pandemic situation most of the activities were cancelled last year, only digital COINS PhD student seminar took place 23 November 2020, which was "co-located" with digital NISK conference.

Finse winter school was canceled this year also. People would only participate at the winter school physically.

This week we have a COINS summer school, unfortunately not in Greece this year. The summer school is fully digital, but we had a virtual trip around the monastery in Metochi. Staff in Metochi showed us around the place. The monastery has been nicely renovated since our last visit. Even though the school was digital, Hanno tried to keep the original concept of the school, including the time schedule of the lectures, sightseeing (virtual) and meetings. There were four-hour sessions in the morning, 2-hour sessions in the afternoon and one session after dinner. Half of the participants usually disappeared in the evening, but we had the same trend in Metochi.

This year we have lots of participants at the school, including many from Sweden, our partner SWITS research school. There were 26 students registered, but only 20 are showing regularly during the sessions: 14 from COINS (mostly NTNU) and 6 from SWITS. Out of 26 registered students, 6-7 did not attend any sessions, there were also some students who attended only one session across the whole week. This is, however, a typical problem of the Zoom meetings.

It was nice to have Dieter Gollmann as an invited speaker at the last COINS summer school, since he was our invited speaker at the first Finse winter school.

Breakup rooms were working only at the beginning, towards the end people preferred to have a long break away from the computer. During the lectures students have their cameras switched off, they only switched them on when they ask questions at the end, but it looks like they are listening the lectures, since the questions are good.

Looking back: COINS 2013-2021

Stephen heard only positive feedback about the COINS research school. Students enjoyed all aspects of COINS activities, especially lectures, but it also created a nice community as whole. The school covered the whole representation of our students.

Chunming also thinks that it was helpful for some of the PhD students. He also received a very good feedback from those who participated actively. The topic of the lectures was very interesting. There is an appetite for more of these kinds of activities and we should build on the experience and let the RCN know that the activities are very much appreciated by the students. Even though RCN does not allow us to continue the same activities, but we should try to find different activities and build on this what we already have. We would have to consider processes above and below the existing situation. Perhaps this time we should focus on societal security. Security is a process not a solution. This time we could focus on robustness, resilience, block chain and cryptocurrency.

By running the COINS research school, we have uncovered how many information security students we have in Norway. The number is over 100 students and almost the same number of supervisors. This is much higher than in Sweden. SWITS only have 70 members including supervisors. Even though COINS have many partners as research institutions and few private companies, the idea of short research stay/ internship at the partner's institution did not work as it was intended. Only one student at the end of school went to KTH. There were about 5 students who have applied for internships in the past, but not with COINS partners and thus we could not approve it.

Chunming suggested that we should perhaps focus on the activities around AI, cyber security in daily services we are using. This seems to be a hot topic for EU applications.

Ragnar recommended to focus on the final report and describe well the success of the school, the fact that it brought up the whole information security together, we had opportunities to know each other and thus know where people are if needed. It is very important to highlight the huge success of both summer and winter schools, enjoyed by many due to both interesting lectures and wonderful location. PhD research schools may not continue in the future as it was in the past. According to the latest report from RCN, they did not receive what they planned by financing the research schools. It may not make sense to lose time on applications.

Hanno pointed out that different PhD programs had different needs. There are research schools that have much more structured programme than ours. We do not need it; our institutions have a very good PhD program already. Students mostly use the research school for networking and ECTS credit points.

Stephen was interested in the bibliometric data and joint publications across COINS students. These results, however, would be difficult to extract. There is a possibility to check active supervisors in Cristin, but the data might not be accurate.

If we want to develop this program further and sustain it, perhaps we should focus on a mobility grant and visit one of our institutions so the students could write a joint publication

together. So far, we could only see that many of our former students often look for a post-doc positions at the partner institutions.

Vladimir also reflected that the research school was a very valuable opportunity for students. Without the research school, students might never find out about the others who worked in the same field. The networking played a huge part in the success of the school.

Lise, unfortunately, did not have a chance to participate physically in any of the COINS activities, but she admitted that she joined the school because the organization seemed to be very interesting and useful. The idea of meeting lots of new people at the exciting locations was very appealing to her.

Looking forward

COINS former student Vasileios Gkioulos has started a new activity where also Stephen is part of. The application to RCN will not be ready on time this year, but there is a plan to have an internal activity at NTNU. In order to avoid further cancellation due to pandemic, as well as digital meetings, they plan to have an internal summer school at NTNU next year. Students who experienced the COINS summer school have enjoyed it a lot and they have an appetite for more. Unfortunately, the RCN is not keen on an existing form of the research school and thus would not allow us to continue it directly. There is a discussion about the internal funding, possible collaboration and person who would lead it. We would like to continue with the ECTS credit points. There is no budget for the school defined yet, thus it is difficult to say if the school could be open for other institutions, but that perhaps could be an option with the additional cost.

There is an idea to extend the IMT6003 course code. The PhD programs at NTNU will be reviewed in autumn, thus this may allow us to reuse the course code in the future. The course will intend to look like the COINS course, and it will be approved as equivalent of COINS course. The question is if we are going to host it on campus or rather somewhere else. NTNU has found the course very valuable and it seems to be a need to continue it.

Miscellaneous

COINS mailing lists will most probably stay open after the end of the research school. We hope to keep the networking.