



vCHEP2021 Experience and Summary

Benedikt Hegner, Graeme Stewart

GDB, 9. June 2021

vCHEP

unusual conference in unusual circumstances

- In fall 2020, CHEP2021 at JLab got postponed to 2022
- That would have resulted in a very large gap between two CHEPs
 - ⇒ **Purely virtual event** in 2021: [vCHEP 2021](#)
 - ⇒ Actual planning started Oct/Nov 2020

I will summarize a bit the perspective from the organizers/program committee point of view

And show the participants' reaction to our post-conference survey

Quite a few differences

Being a virtual event we made a few (partially controversial) changes:

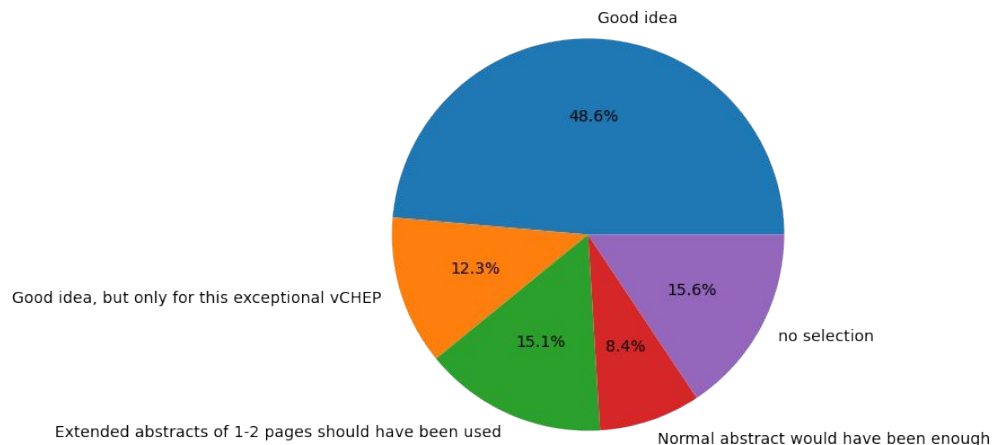
- Paper submissions upfront
 - Increase the quality of submissions
 - Limit 'empty' and forward-declaration submissions
- Promote some submissions to journal publication
- Programme organized in themes, not only not tracks
 - No boundary in physical rooms allows flexibility
 - Submitter could select theme and track
- Focus on community topics in plenaries
 - Plenary sessions are purely made of submissions of special interest or quality
 - In particular no sponsor talks

Paper submissions upfront

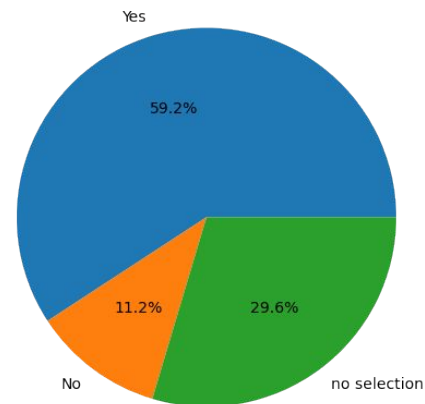
- Full submission only unusual in *our* field!
- Helped to build a solid and diverse scientific program, but created quite some extra work
 - I think it was worth it!
- We accepted 205 contributions (30 plenary, 175 parallel)
- 11 of them will be published in [Computing and Software for Big Science](#) by Springer

Paper submissions feedback

Full draft papers in advance

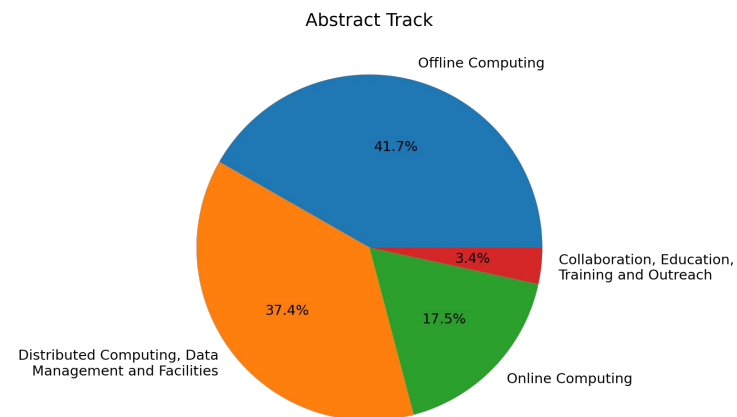
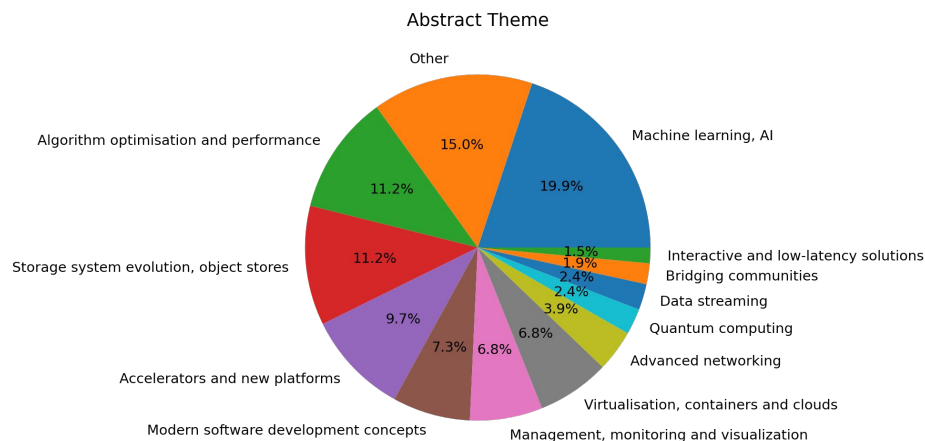


Was proposing CSBS publication for a few papers a good idea?



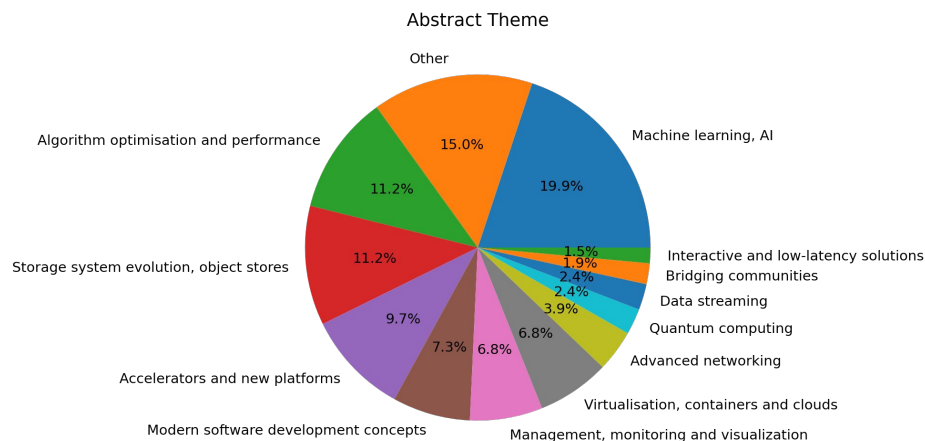
Tracks, Themes and Sessions

Without tracks/sessions defined upfront,
tasks can obviously not be split according to tracks...



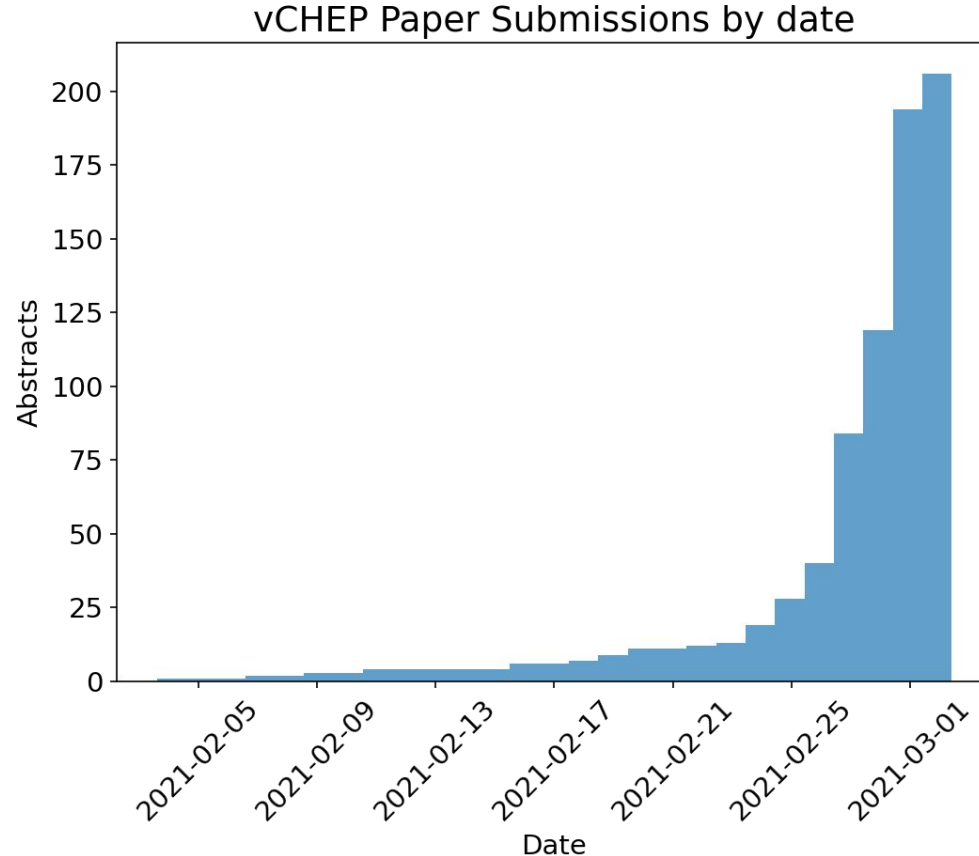
Tracks, Themes and Sessions

The resulting sessions



- 6 Artificial Intelligence
- 4 Software
- 4 Storage
- 4 Facilities and Networks
- 3 Algorithms
- 2 Education/Training/Outreach
- 2 Monitoring
- 2 Accelerators
- 2 Virtualization
- 1 Online
- 1 Streaming
- 1 Distributed Computing
- 1 Quantum Computing

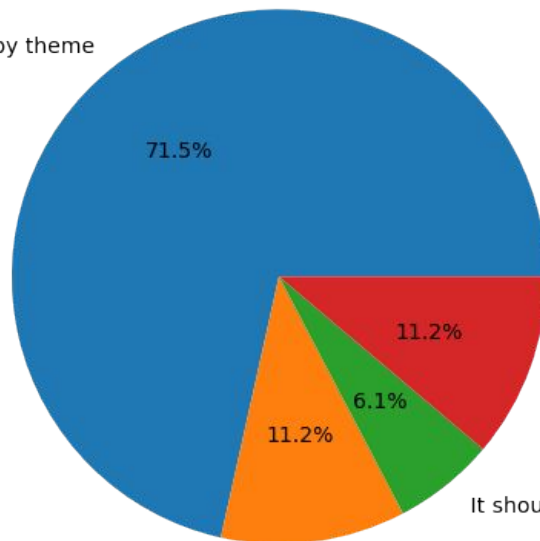
A complicating factor ;-)



Themes feedback

Was having organization by theme good idea?

It was good to organise by theme



no selection

It should be more mixed up, to encourage more diverse sessions

A more traditional track organisation would have been better

Let's talk about the virtual nature of the event...



- 47 Countries over 6 continents
- 1140 registrants
- 507 on mattermost
- Time zones from Brisbane, UTC+10, to Honolulu, UTC-10

5,254

Total sum of meetings duration (minutes)

A virtual event of that size poses multiple challenges



- People in different time zones
- Quite big sessions and unknown chat discipline
- Technical issues can kill an entire session
- How can one preserve the interesting discussions around the presentations?

Our (partially over-engineered) approach

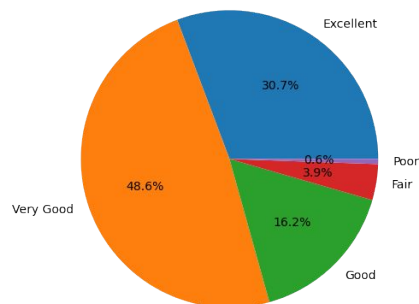


- Explicit online etiquette and presenter instructions
 - Obviously not read by everybody, but things went smoothly
 - Was important to have consistency across sessions
 - No implicit conventions for online-conferences yet!
- Sessions had two components
 - Zoom for presentations / question time
 - Mattermost for question time and asynchronous discussion
- Each session had three people running it:
 - Zoom chair
 - Mattermost chair
 - Technical person (“1st officer”)
 - *In retrospect that was a bit too much*
- We decided not to have additional social-interaction platforms due to the additional complications expected
- Sessions were recorded and are available online

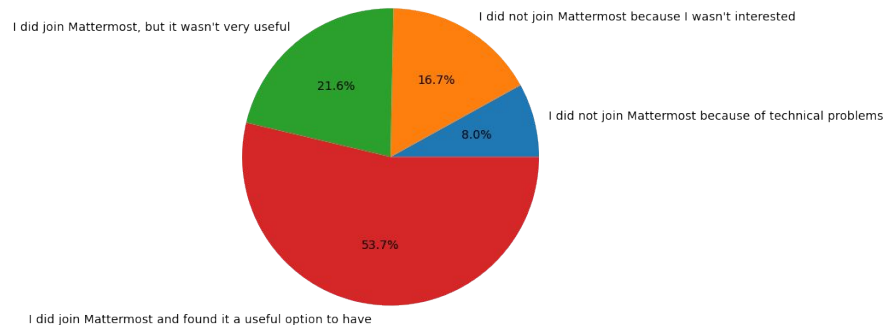
*A bit simplified the
chosen model
should work for
any virtual
conference*

How well was it received?

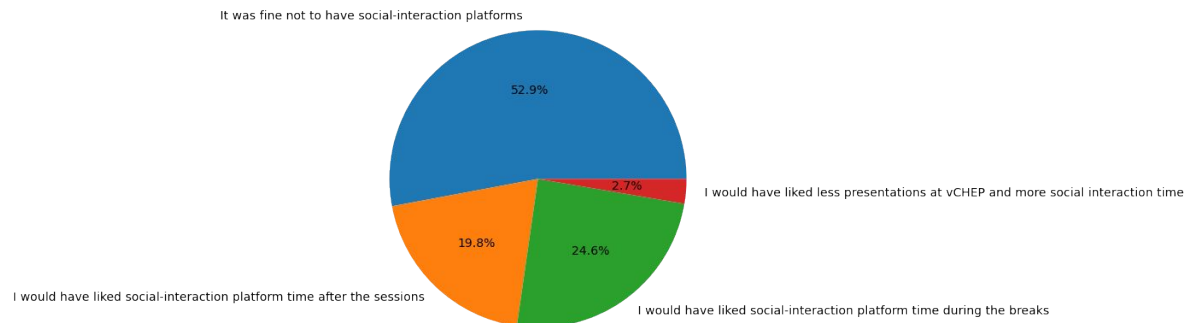
How would you overall rate vCHEP as a virtual event?



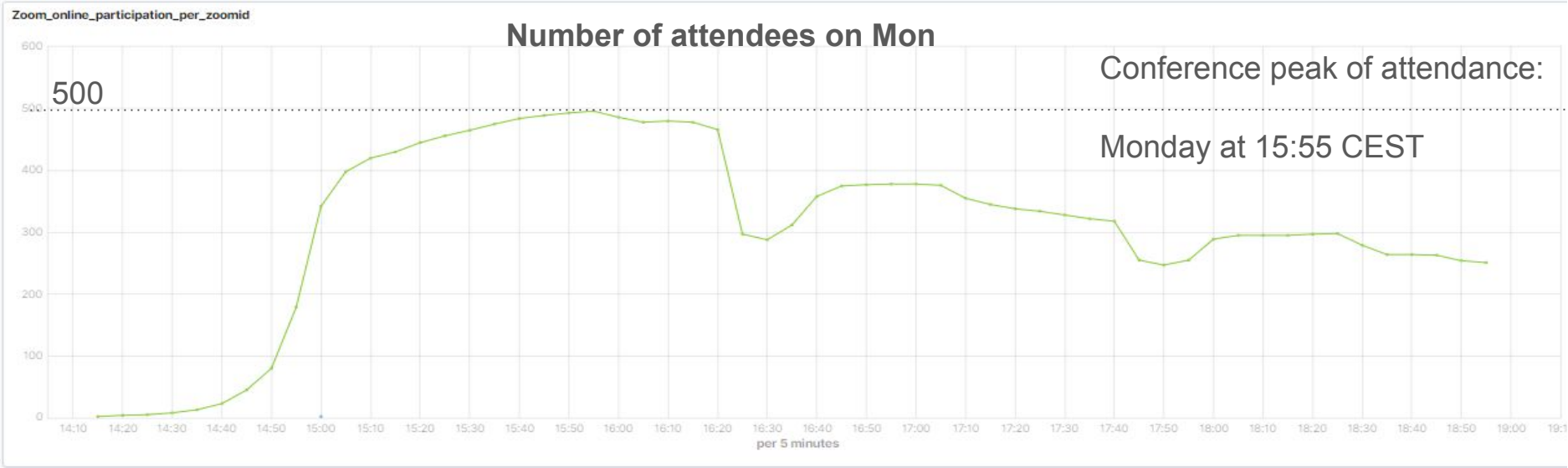
Mattermost



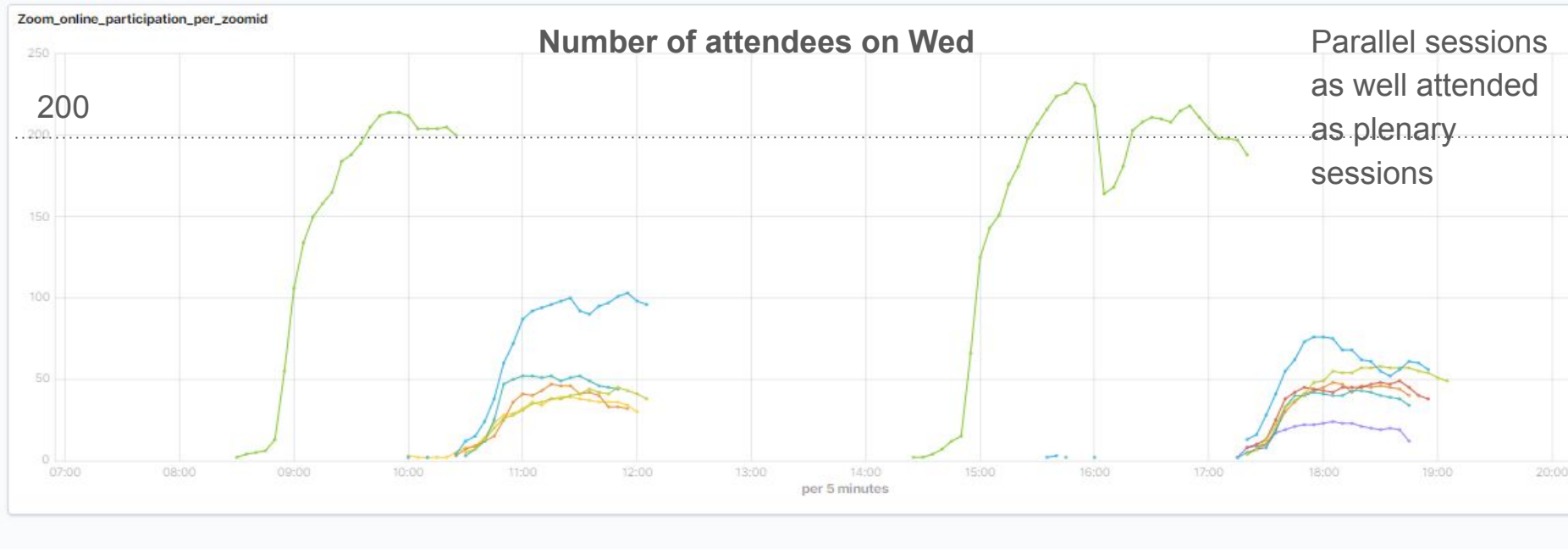
Social interaction platforms



Conference attendance

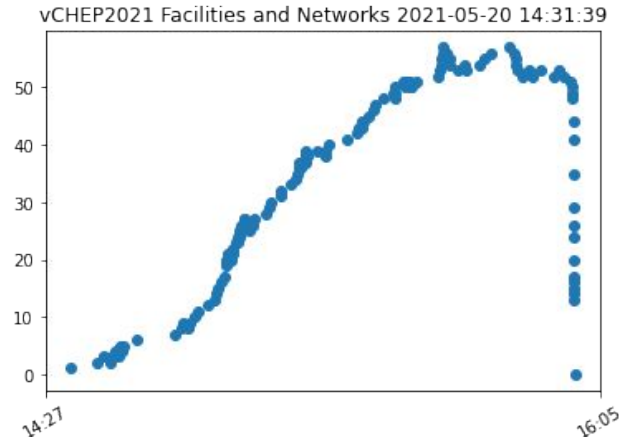


Conference attendance



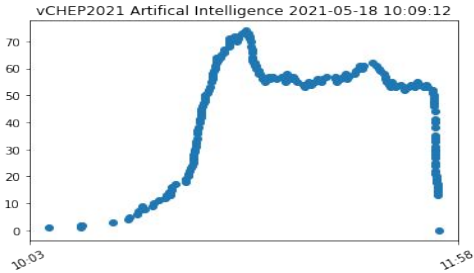
Attendance in the various sessions

- Attendance rather equally distributed
 - 40 - 60 people max in most parallel sessions
 - Most sessions have a ramp up, which is a combination of
 - Start ramp up
 - People connecting for a particular talk and then often staying connected

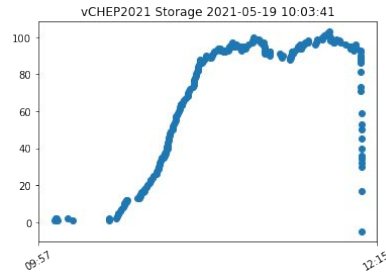
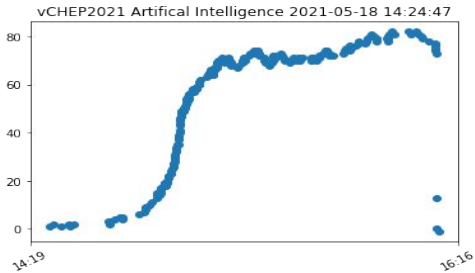
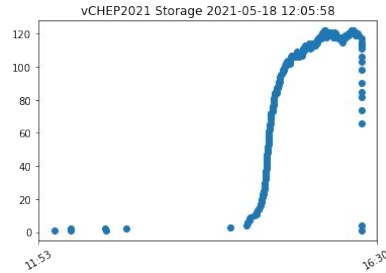


Attendance in the various sessions

AI one of the important themes



Storage by far the biggest ones

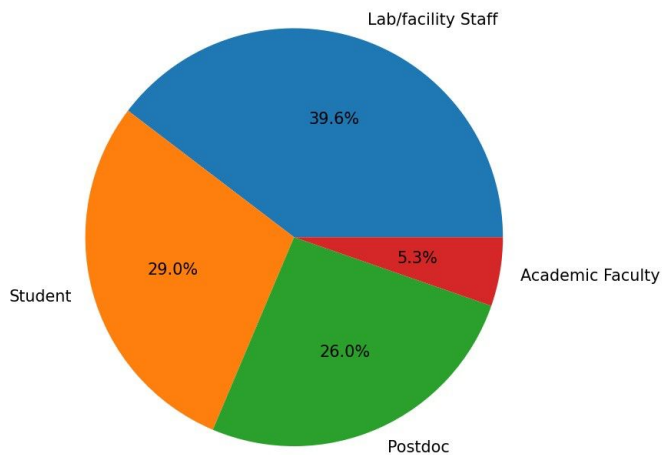


One more thing...

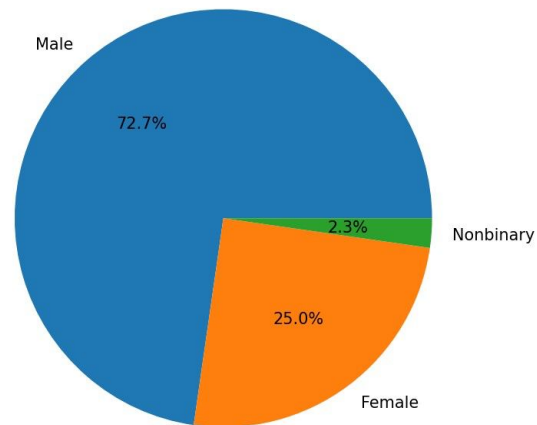


Author statistics

VCHEP2021 Presenter Career Stage



VCHEP2021 Presenter Gender - Student Speakers



Summary



vCHEP was the first (and hopefully last) fully virtual CHEP

We managed to set up in rather short time a well received
conference

There are lessons to learn for future virtual events

Still, I am looking forward to the next in-person conference
at JLab