**Computational neuroscience with global accessibility**

An international group of experts in computational neuroscience have developed a new online school: the Neuromatch Academy1. Started in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, their goal is to provide an inclusive education in the philosophy and methods of computational neuroscience.

True to its mission, the first course was run in parallel over three major time zones in July 2020. More than 1700 students from 64 countries took part and another 5000 students followed the course within a self-paced option1. Specific effort to include individuals from countries across geopolitical borders included a successful last minute license from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control to allow the inclusion of Iranian residents1. Students came from a range of backgrounds as the only prerequisites were introductory neuroscience, basic mathematics and some familiarity with programming. This course was achieved at a fraction of the cost of conventional teaching platforms: with academic and industry support either modest registration fees adjusted to reflect median-wage differences for each country, or waivable fees were offered. All content also remains freely available online.

The 3-week course was taught with interactive code based tutorials, interspersed with short explanatory and accessible videos. In addition, students were organised into groups based on time-zone preferences, language, and interests for supervised projects. Daily project work led to hands-on experience with real data or theoretical projects with many groups solving complex problems from scratch. Despite the intensity of the programme, a healthy work ethos was also encouraged, with virtual social hours and yoga classes. The quality of the content and teaching was exemplary and the palpable sense of community was remarkable given its online format. Indeed, more than 87% of students completed the course (compared with the 5–10% commonly achieved for other open online courses) and 94% of students said that they would recommend the experience to a fellow student1.

Neuromatch conferences by the same group also innovate the organisation of online conferences. For example, social encounters at traditional conferences, which allow networking and enable new collaborations, can be simulated (and optimised) with algorithmic matching of attendees to other like-minded scientists for 15 min chats2. With such advances online conferences can approximate or better legacy conferences and have none of their disadvantages, such as massive carbon footprints, high cost and time-consuming nature3.

The Neuromatch Academy offers a brilliant training in computational neuroscience underwritten by an inspiring and inclusive scientific philosophy. Their exploitation of opportunities presented by the online medium also provide a range of tools by which to transform education, collaboration and communication. There are exciting decades ahead if such methods and principles can be collectively used to understand the brain and its disorders.

We declare no competing interests.

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