

26th International Conference on Algorithms for Bioinformatics

WABI 2026, August 31–September 2, 2026, L'Aquila, Italy

Edited by

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Preface

This volume comprises the proceedings, extended abstracts, and invited talks presented at the 26th International Conference on Algorithms for Bioinformatics (WABI 2026). The 26th iteration of WABI was held at the Department of Human Studies and at the “San Basilio” Congress Centre of the University of L’Aquila, Italy, from August 31st to September 2nd, 2026.

These proceedings mark the 26th anniversary of the conference, which was established in 2001. The focus of WABI is, and has been, on the introduction of new algorithms, data structures, and methodological approaches and their application to important problems in molecular biology. The emphasis is on algorithms founded on sound models, that are computationally efficient, and that provide evidence of their potential usefulness in practice. The conference provides a venue for presenting methods that improve the state-of-the-art in tackling well-studied problems and for exploring and investigating exciting new ideas and future research directions, including significant works-in-progress. Many interesting and innovative computational approaches, that later see large-scale adoption and application, have previously received their introduction at WABI.

WABI 2026 received 68 manuscript submissions (out of 70 initial abstract submissions), representing a 70% increase compared to last year. Of these submissions, 31 papers were ultimately accepted for inclusion in the conference proceedings. Submissions and reviews were managed using the EasyChair system. Each submission underwent a rigorous review by the program committee, composed of experts, and by the co-reviewers they appointed. Nearly all submissions received three reviews, with an average of 3.13 reviews per submission. A discussion period followed the initial review deadline to reach a decision on each paper, striving to understand the nature of any substantial discrepancies between reviews and to provide authors with the best possible feedback. The range of expertise of the program committee was wide, as were the set of topics of submitted papers and those ultimately accepted for the proceedings, including RNA structure prediction, phylogenetic trees and networks, pangenomics, DNA indexing, sequence and structure alignment, tumor Evolution and more. In addition to the proceedings papers, the conference also welcomed two keynote speakers: Benjamin J. Raphael, from Princeton University, presented “Algorithms for Cell Lineage Tracing: From Trees to Differentiation Maps”, and Nadia Pisanti, from the University of Pisa, presented “Algorithmic Toolkits for Pangenomes”.

As is customary, selected papers from WABI 2026 have been invited for special consideration, in an extended form, in a thematic series in the journal “Algorithms for Molecular Biology” (AMB), published by BioMed Central.

Finally, we would like to thank all of those without whom this conference would not have been possible. We thank the WABI steering committee for their guidance and feedback in organizing and framing this iteration of the conference, and in helping to tackle challenges that arose. We are also deeply grateful to all of the authors who submitted their exciting work to WABI 2026. This proliferation of research is a source of innovation that advances knowledge in the field of computational biology, creates synergy among members of this research community, and fuels their future projects. Of course, we are also thankful to the outstanding program committee and their nominated sub-reviewers for their substantial efforts in thoroughly reviewing all of the submitted work, and for their diligence in completing their reviews and engaging in fruitful and enlightening discussions that ultimately led to the final selection of the work included in these proceedings.

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We thank our keynote speakers, Dr. Benjamin J. Raphael and Nadia Pisanti, for their engaging and enlightening talks. We also extend our gratitude to Davide Bilò, Gianlorenzo D'Angelo, Luciano Gualà, Stefano Leucci, and Guido Proietti, the local conference co-chairs, for all of their efforts in helping to organize, plan, and prepare the venue for the conference. At last, we would like to thank all of the conference participants, speakers and student volunteers, whose ideas, discussions and engagement define the scientific character of the WABI community.

Previous WABI proceedings appeared in LNCS/LNBI volumes as follows: 2149 (WABI 2001, Aarhus), 2452 (WABI 2002, Rome), 2812 (WABI 2003, Budapest), 3240 (WABI 2004, Bergen), 3692 (WABI 2005, Mallorca), 4175 (WABI 2006, Zurich), 4645 (WABI 2007, Philadelphia), 5251 (WABI 2008, Karlsruhe), 5724 (WABI 2009, Philadelphia), 6293 (WABI 2010, Liverpool), 6833 (WABI 2011, Saarbrücken), 7534 (WABI 2012, Ljubljana), (WABI 2013, Sophia Antipolis), 8701 (WABI 2014, Wroclaw), 9289 (WABI 2015, Atlanta), and 9838 (WABI 2016, Aarhus). Beginning in 2017, they appeared in LIPIcs volumes: 88 (WABI 2017, Boston), 113 (WABI 2018, Helsinki), 143 (WABI 2019, Boston), 172 (WABI 2020, held virtually in Pisa), 201 (WABI 2021, held virtually in Chicago), 242 (WABI 2022, Potsdam) and 273 (WABI 2023, Houston), 312 (WABI 2024, Egham, United Kingdom) and 344 (WABI 2025, Maryland, USA).

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