

## Call for Proposals

Dear company representatives, dear Professors,

Almost half a year after the first, very successful VIS convention – VIScon – we are in the middle of planning a second one: a VIScon that will be even bigger, more colorful and most importantly, more diverse. It will be taking place from October 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in the CAB building at ETH in downtown Zürich. Like last year, VIScon consists of a three-day hackathon combined with a one-day symposium (on Saturday, the 12<sup>th</sup>).

The VIScon Symposium will be packed with talks, workshops and plenty of opportunities to network. For the first time, we will also plan to have an exhibition where students can experience computer science hands-on. We are looking forward to creating a program aimed at interested and motivated students, eager to learn more about the computer science happening outside the lecture halls. This year, we're expanding our audience and also inviting students from other natural sciences and engineering departments of ETH as well as computer science students from other universities in the area. Therefore, we are seeking for inspiring and fun speakers from various companies and backgrounds to talk about what they do and how they got where they are.

The symposium will consist of three tracks:

- A *Technical Computer Science* track with focus on the latest and greatest research as well as its uses and implementations in the real world. Talks and workshops on this track are aimed at computer science students and should dive into deeper technological details.
- An *Entrepreneurship* track aimed at students interested into getting more insights into topics like how to develop an idea, improve one's soft skills to how to start and run a business.
- This year's new track: *Computer Science in Engineering*. This track is aimed at students from other fields of study like natural sciences and engineering who are interested in computer science. For instance, people of diverse backgrounds could give talks detailing their experiences working in the industry. Technical talks that don't require much initial knowledge would also be a possibility. Especially companies or labs that cover interdisciplinary fields are welcome to participate in this track.



Creating a schedule that takes into account the speaker's needs and wishes as well as ours takes a lot of time and requires some planning. We have defined some guidelines to streamline the proposal application process and give everyone the same framework to propose their topic.

Since it is an *application process*, we unfortunately cannot guarantee that every single idea and/or topic you suggest will be selected for the final schedule. We will strive to include as many speakers and companies as we can. However, it increases your chances enormously if you submit as many talks as possible on different topics. This allows us to make the timetable as varied as possible. Please note that there is a limit of **two units** (1 unit = 1 workshop, talk, or spot at the exhibition) per company and/or speaker for the symposium. Thus, feel free to highlight your favorite ideas. Also, please be aware that as a student organization, we are unable to pay the speakers and workshop presenters. However, there are no participation fees for the companies.

**The call for proposals will be open until May 31st. Please make sure to have entered all proposals up to this date.**

Please reach out to us if you have any questions regarding the symposium! We want to make this process and journey as easy and hassle-free as possible for you.

Best regards

Celina Rhonheimer  
Head of VIScon Symposium





## Proposal Guidelines

For each proposal, we will need the following information:

- Full name and short bio of the speaker
- Type of proposal (talk, workshop, or exhibition)
- Track (*Technical Computer Science, Entrepreneurship or Computer Science in Engineering*)
- Short text (can be bullet points) describing the topic. Should be exhaustive and detailed enough for us to get a good understanding of what you would like to present. Feel free to include technical details.
- Exhibition only, please write these specifications as a note on your submission:
  - description of the object you want to bring
  - weight
  - required space
  - need of electricity / water / ...

Please submit your ideas - as many as you want - online at <https://symposium.vis.ethz.ch>.

On this page, you can create an account as a speaker and manage your talks and available time slots. There, you can also edit your talk descriptions and ideas easily. If this isn't an option for you, please send an email to [symposium@vis.ethz.ch](mailto:symposium@vis.ethz.ch) and we will send you a Word template to fill in and send back to us.

**Please note that all talks and workshops will be held in English.**

This year, we will create the opportunity for speakers and students to get to know each other better. The Networking Lunches are a great opportunity for speakers to share more detailed information about their subjects or your company with attending students. Every speaker who signs up for the Networking Lunches will be paired with 3-8 students to share their lunch together. In our experience, this makes for a relaxed and more open environment and guarantees interesting conversations.

Additionally, speakers and workshop hosts will have the opportunity to get in touch with attendees throughout the day. The Aperó after the closing ceremony provides an excellent opportunity to get together with the students for a last time. We gladly welcome all speakers and representatives to it. For each talk, a company can send at most one additional representative besides the speaker. The number of representatives for workshops and the exhibition is negotiable, but it is very important to us that these representatives are computer scientists or engineers in order to provide an atmosphere where the participants can get in touch about technical topics.

In the following, you will find more details about the exhibition, types of talks and workshops we would like provide to our attendees.





## Talks

In their talks, speakers can analyze a topic or technology and talk about its current use in the industry or just give a quick but enticing overview of the field and its potential.

Talks can have one of the following formats:

Long Talks:

45 minutes of presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of Q&A

Medium Talks:

30 minutes of presentation, followed by up to 10 minutes of Q&A

Lightning Talks:

15 minutes of presentation

Below, we listed a couple of our ideas for talks. You are more than welcome to use those ideas as an inspiration, but feel free to propose something completely different!

*Technical Computer Science track:*

- Present a specific bleeding-edge technology and analyze its impact as well as possible current and future applications / explain how you rolled it out in the company
- Talk about a widespread technology used in your day-to-day business and what challenges came up while using it. Feel free to “show and tell” and include funny anecdotes / explain problems you encountered doing so – something students do not learn in lectures.
- “How we got pwned (hacked) and how we handled it”

*Entrepreneurship track:*

- Roadmap on how to go from idea to minimum viable product (MVP) to initial funding and first customers
- What to take into consideration when creating your first product, team, company, release or similar
- How to make open source a business

*Computer Science in Engineering track:*

- How computer science impacts today’s engineering
- How my engineering topic suddenly turned out as an IT-Topic
- e.g. “How I managed to get along in computer science as a non-computer-scientist”





## Workshops

Workshops will be held in the afternoon and are open to 20 to 30 participants depending on room availability, the type of workshop being offered, and its degree of difficulty.

### Hands-on workshops:

These will last approximately 2 hours and are intended to be technical. They could, for example, be the perfect setting to introduce systems, frameworks and technologies used on a daily basis in your company. You could also grant access to architectures or data that students usually do not get at ETH. Make sure you can provide the infrastructure if any is needed.

### Interactive workshops:

These 1.5-hour workshops are ideal for group work, case studies and soft-skill development. For instance, students could work on skills that are important in the business world but might be overlooked in a university setting.

We've listed a couple of our ideas for workshops, but we can't wait to see what you come up with on your own!

#### *Technical Computer Science track:*

- Container technology / Git / other tools that every student of computer science should learn nowadays
- Specific technologies that are used within your company, but are not taught at university. This could include non-public access to data and infrastructure
- Tinkering with sensors, drones and microchips

#### *Entrepreneurship track:*

- How to make your voice heard / appear more confident in different business situations
- How to pitch a product / company, including mock pitches in groups
- How to form a team and perform in difficult situations



## Exhibition

Our initial vision of an exhibition at VISCon is a space filled with drones, robots and people wearing virtual reality headsets. It should be a hands-on area where students can experience and maybe even try out these objects live.

Usually these amazing products attract students immensely, so if your company works with such products on a daily basis, we would love to invite you to join the exhibition. It will provide a perfect opportunity to get in touch with students. A spot at the exhibition can also be paired with a talk or a workshop to supply background knowledge on your exhibit.

The idea of the exhibition isn't fully shaped yet, so we would be thrilled to get your suggestions on any items you would want to display. Please be aware, however, that we don't want the exhibition to be a room filled with screens on which companies present themselves. It really should be hands-on, so there should be a physical product or something interactive to try out.

## Considerations

At the beginning of a talk or workshop, speakers are encouraged to introduce themselves and their companies. Please make sure to keep this introduction short and simple. *Talks, workshops, and exhibits should not be perceived as advertisement/recruitment, but truly focus on the topic.* It is very important to us that the sessions are presented in a fun and interesting way and we would love the speakers to embody these values as well.

You can define prerequisites for students for each of your sessions. However, keep in mind that students are free to attend any talk or workshop. While attendees are expected to have the required background, sessions requiring a lot of specific skills might attract fewer students.

## Keynote speaker

We are looking for a keynote speaker to close the symposium.

We want someone to talk about all the things the attendees learned during the day and bring together all tracks of the symposium. They should inspire the next generation of computer scientists to innovate, push the boundaries of what is possible in our field and make them into visionaries who will make a difference after completing their studies and going out into the world.

There is so much more about computer science than what could possibly be covered in lectures. Computer science is all about innovation, constantly leading to new fields of research. We would love a keynote that could reflect those aspects.

Get in touch with us if you think someone you know or work with could be the visionary we need!