

IOI Talks: New Initiative for Publishing Presentations, Events, Interviews, Book Recommendations and Videos of Interest to the IOI Community

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Abstract. Most of the activity of the IOI community occurs during the International Olympiad in Informatics (and a couple of weeks around the event). In this report we present “IOI Talks” which is a new initiative to occasionally publish presentations, events, book recommendations, interviews and videos that can be of interest to the broader IOI community. Additionally, we will give an overview of the content for the first event.

Keywords: IOI, IOI talks, competitive programming, IOI event.

1. The Motivation for “IOI Talks”

For the most part, the activity of the IOI community occurs during the International Olympiad in Informatics. This was the main parameter that we had in mind when we proposed a project on the IOI Call for Projects 2019/2020, to organize an online event (codename “IOI Weekend”, which was later updated to “IOI Talks”). The key idea was to organize one or more events for the IOI community that will feature presentations, interviews, tasks, videos, book and site recommendations and more. This event (or events), timewise, will not be tied to the IOI and will be organized during a completely different period of the year – i.e. the idea is to keep the community active outside the actual IOI competition.

The Initial Format of “IOI Talks”

Originally, the plan was to stream the events on YouTube, and feature video interviews (and presentations) with past successful IOI participants, talks with other people that will be interesting to the IOI community (like, for example, people who can present how to move from competitive programming into a successful software development job), presentations by book authors, talks on what IOI Hall of Famers are doing at the moment (or how they are involved with the IOI), videos with highlights from previous IOI Olympiads, notes about the next Olympiad (locations, photos, how the organization is going, etc), then presentations on how to get started with competitive programming and the International Olympiad in Informatics (i.e. where to learn programming, with some examples of easier IOI subtasks), and more. The plan also featured Q&A sessions and gathering feedback from participants via an online form.

As part of the application for the IOI Call for Projects 2019/2020, it was indicated that the resulting content will be of very high quality, and highly interesting and engaging for the community involved with the International Olympiad in Informatics. The plan outlined that we will be targeting and preparing videos that are interesting to both competitors, teachers, and team leaders. Everything outlined above, including contacting content editors, past contestants, and interviewees, as well as video production and hosting, was to be delivered as part of this project.

Clearly, it is possible to organize even more presentations (for example, gathering questions, presenting discussions and answers to those questions by IC members or the IOI president), as well as other content, topics or features depending on interest and availability.

Finally, as mentioned in the previous sections, one of the main goals of the project is to engage the competitive programming community (and especially people interested in the IOI) outside the Olympiad itself – so that there are discussions, surveys, talks and buzz around the International Olympiad in Informatics outside the month when the actual competition takes place.

The Final Format of “IOI Talks” and its 2020 Edition

After the acceptance of this project, as well as the positive feedback and response from the IC committee and other parties who were contacted to gather their early thoughts, we decided on a slightly different format than initially proposed.

Currently, the content of the first IOI talks is reachable by registering on the IOI website by following this link: <https://ioinformatics.org/event/july-2020/signup>, and some of the interviews are directly available on the homepage of the International Olympiad in Informatics.

The final implementation aims to give team leaders and other members of the IOI community as much freedom as possible, so after registering, they get a link that allows them to view the content themselves, share the link with their team or friends so they can view the talks and presentations on their own time, or (what we recommended in the announcement of the project) is to use the content and videos during other contest/camp activities and events to stimulate interest in the IOI, or to create an online event where people watch or go through the content together (we didn't want to stream everything at a specific time/day, because of all the different countries and time zones – and instead wanted to give everyone an opportunity to organize things themselves, and to be able to watch any of the videos/interviews in any order they want). We might reconsider a different approach/strategy in the future.

In the first edition of IOI Talks, we featured interviews and presentations with Benjamin Qi – the winner of IOI 2018 and 2019, Martin Mares – the chair of the ITC, Petr Mitrichev – one of the best competitive programmers, IC members, various discussions on topics such as introducing Honorable mentions at the IOI, a booklet featuring solutions to past IOI problems (IOI 2018), and more. We would like to thank everyone who participated.

In the registration form and on the event page, participants are allowed to share any feedback or comments they might have. We would highly appreciate input from the readers. The initial feedback from the other participants is very encouraging.

Finally, we can proudly announce that although the IC of IOI approved funding for this project, we have implemented the first edition of IOI Talks for free, using our personal funding. Similarly, the work that was done as part of this project will help the actual website of the International Olympiad in Informatics in the near future, as it now supports publishing interviews, videos, streaming, event content with feedback, and a lot more. If you like to be featured in an interview, prepare a video presentation or share anything else you believe would be interesting to the IOI community, feel free to send us an email.

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