

2019 Annual Report

Gothenburg Artificial Intelligence Alliance

GAIA is Born

On October 2, 2018, Gothenburg Artificial Intelligence Alliance (GAIA) was formed as a non-profit organisation. But, the new organisation built on the previous meetup group Machine Learning & Data Science (Gbg) and the first GAIA Conference, held in April the same year. Forming the non-profit organisation was the logical step to allow GAIA to grow and prosper for many years to come.

During the first year, much has happened. We have increased the pace of the meetups. We have grown the conference and raised the quality across the board. In this report, we describe the year that passed and our outlook for the coming year.

Board and Auditor

During the year, the GAIA board has consisted of Jakob Andersson (chairman), Josef Lindman Hörlund (treasurer), Josefin Ondrus (secretary), Amanda Nilsson, Elin Romare, and Daniel Langkilde. Viktor Olsbo has been the auditor.

Members

One can join GAIA as a member by registering through the webpage and paying the membership fee. Since this was the first year since the founding, GAIA began the year without any members. As of the end of the first year (2019-09-30), the association had 61 members.

The GAIA Brand

During the year, the board worked together with Sara Sandström to put GAIA's basic values into text. The values will guide the organisation onwards and make sure we stay true to our purpose. Through a series of workshops with the board and research of similar organisations, Sara concluded that GAIA is different to most organisations and conferences in AI. Instead of signalling "tech" and "future", preferably with blue colours, our core is "togetherness", "progress", and "curiosity". We are bottom-up and communicate through warm, earthy colours. The resulting values and story are listed below.

The next step in building the GAIA brand is to transform the core values into a more refined graphical profile. The current graphical profile is on the right path, but need some more professional touches to reach the next level. It is up to the board of the coming year to finish that work.

Togetherness

We believe in the power of together. We believe in listening, sharing, and lifting each other. We don't believe that lasting change is created merely by individuals but by all of us together.

Progress

We always strive to be at the front edge, where progress is made. However, we don't see it as a purpose in itself to be first. Our main focus is that what we do must be good for all of us, thus creating faith in the future.

Curiosity

We are curious. About each other and about the world in which we live and work. And of course, we're constantly curious about new techniques and exciting collaborations.

Story

We believe in the power of together. Right here at our back yard. And out there in the vast universe. We believe we have the courage to be fantastic but not perfect. We believe in sharing progress and instigating change. Change for a better tomorrow.

We are curious, hungry and perhaps a little bit crazy.

We are GAIA.

The 2019 GAIA Conference

On April 9, we hosted the second GAIA Conference. We returned to Lindholmen Conference Centre, and with 550 participants sold a full house. 14 companies partnered with us, enabling us to keep the ticket prices low to enable people to come without getting their companies to sponsor. The 21 talks, split into two tracks, covered everything from ethics in AI to quantum deep learning.



The GAIA Conference has succeeded to establish itself as the main machine learning and data science event in Gothenburg for practical people working in or studying the field. We continue to push topics we consider important, but sadly are less requested, like ethics to educate the community. GAIA is not only about hosting interesting events, but we also have the agenda to build Gothenburg as an AI region and that requires all aspects.

Building on the first two years, the ambition for the 2020 conference can be raised further. The board want to thank Alan Said, Andreas Falkovén, Anna Katarina Wisakanto, Daniel Sääf, Margareta Carlerös, Marko Cotra, Niklas Antoncic och Viktor Olsbo who joined in forming the Organisation Committee.

Smaller Events

During the year, we have hosted 5 meetups and 1 after work. We have discussed topics from machine learning in the healthcare and legal challenges of AI to using deep learning for equation solving and model interpretation. The events have on average had 63 registered attendees. The venues have, however, been the limiting factor since the waiting list has often been of the size of the attendee list. That said, we have had trouble with too many registered not showing up to the events and thus blocking someone else from joining. Solving that problem will be a goal for the board in the coming year.

Finance

The finances of GAIA are dominated by the conference. The smaller events are almost always paid by the hosting company. The finances outside of the conference thus consist of two parts: the membership fees and expenses for running the organisation.

The 2019 conference was a great financial success being sold-out in both tickets and partnership slots. In result was 127,509 kr, which is a margin of 21.6%. GAIA is a non-profit organisation so we should not make any profit long-term, but in the first few years, it is important to build a buffer to prevent liquidity problems during the year as the incomes are funnelled to a brief period around the conference and to mitigate the financial risk in the organisation. Already moving the 2020 conference to Svenska Mässan stresses the importance of a buffer since bigger venues expect payments up to a year in advance.

All in all, the organisation is well off of the first year and the outlook is bright.

Final Words

By forming the non-profit organisation, GAIA took a big step to enable its longevity. The purpose is to strengthen the Gothenburg region within machine learning and data science. During a similar timeframe, other big initiatives – most notably the establishment of AI Innovation of Sweden and CHalmers AI Research Centre – has put the spotlight on Gothenburg as an AI centre. We believe GAIA has an important role to fill alongside government and academic initiative. For Gothenburg

to become an impactful AI region enabling both startups and large corporations, an energetic and well-rounded community is needed. We intend to fill that role. The outlook for GAIA is bright.

Gothenburg, 2019-10-07

Jakob Andersson
Chairman

Josef Lindman Hörlund
Treasurer

Josefin Ondrus
Secretary

Amanda Nilsson
Board Member

Elin Romare
Board Member

Daniel Langkilde
Board Member