EACL 2021: What you should know about Virtual Chair (Gather.Town)

EACL 2021 is almost here!

We hope you are all excited for the main component of EACL 2021 which starts **Monday, April 19th**. By now you should have registered at https://2021.eacl.org/registration/ ; if you have not please do so ASAP.
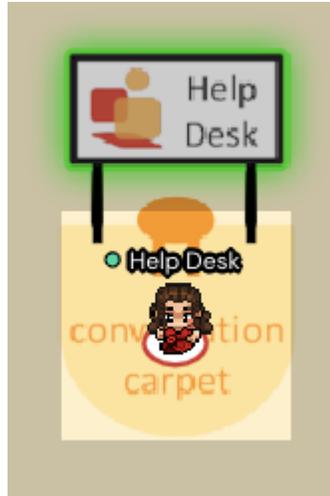
EACL 2021 is hosted in part by Virtual Chair on the Gather platform. You will be able to connect to events on the Gather platform using either Firefox or Chrome. (If you use a non-compatible browser, you won't be able to enjoy the audio-video capabilities needed to interact with other attendees). Please ensure that you are not connected to a VPN when joining.

To begin, please preview the instructions on navigating the site as presented in this Welcome Video or via the access link (aka "landing page") below. You'll also find images of important features and a few tips after the signature of this message.
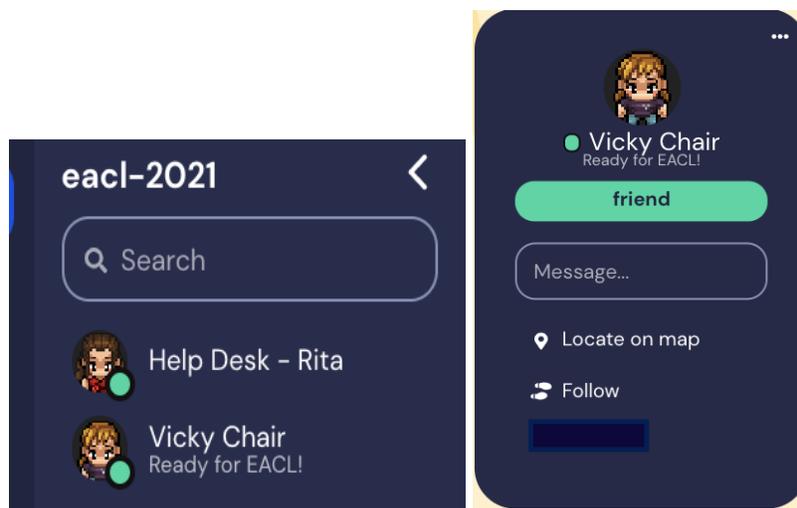
As early as 06:00 UTC-0 on April 19th, you will have access to begin exploring the online event space using the following link: https://www.virtualchair.net/events/eacl-2021

During the programmed hours of the event, members of Virtual Chair's staff will be available to assist participants who have any questions about navigating the site. Please feel free to contact them in one of the following ways:

- **Email** the Virtual Chair staff to alert them if you are trouble navigating the event space on gather.town; they are available at help+eacl-2021@virtualchair.net.

- **Walk** to a virtual Helpdesk to discuss your question directly. The helpdesk will be located in the lobby of the online event space. Even if an attendant is not present, you can press 'X' to view common troubleshooting tips.

- **Chat** one-on-one with a Helpdesk staff member by scrolling through the participant list and clicking on their name, then sending them a message (find participants in the bottom-left corner of your screen when connected to the online event space).

In order for Virtual Chair's Helpdesk team to best assist you, it is recommended that you confirm which browser you are using, and provide either a screenshot or a description of the specific webpage where you encountered an issue. Specific information on troubleshooting audiovisual connection issues is available by clicking here.

During the event, there will also be EACL volunteers available to assist participants who have any questions about the conference programming or other platforms being used. You can speak with them face-to-face by locating the "Welcome Desk" and walking your avatar over to talk.

If you have questions but have not yet registered and so don't have access to the website, please visit https://2021.eacl.org/registration/

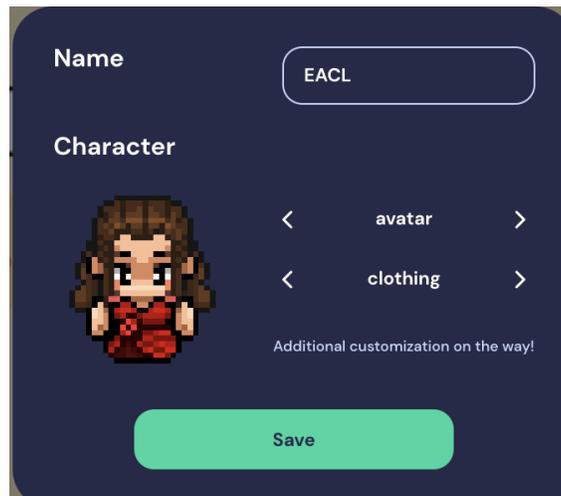If you have already registered, then ask your questions at the RocketChat HelpDesk:

#helpdesk: This channel can be used by all EACL2021 attendees to request tech support for the EACL2021 virtual conference. Please attach a relevant tag before your question, so we know who to direct it to:

- [Zoom] question about Zoom usage
- [RocketChat] question about RocketChat usage
- [Website] question about website usage
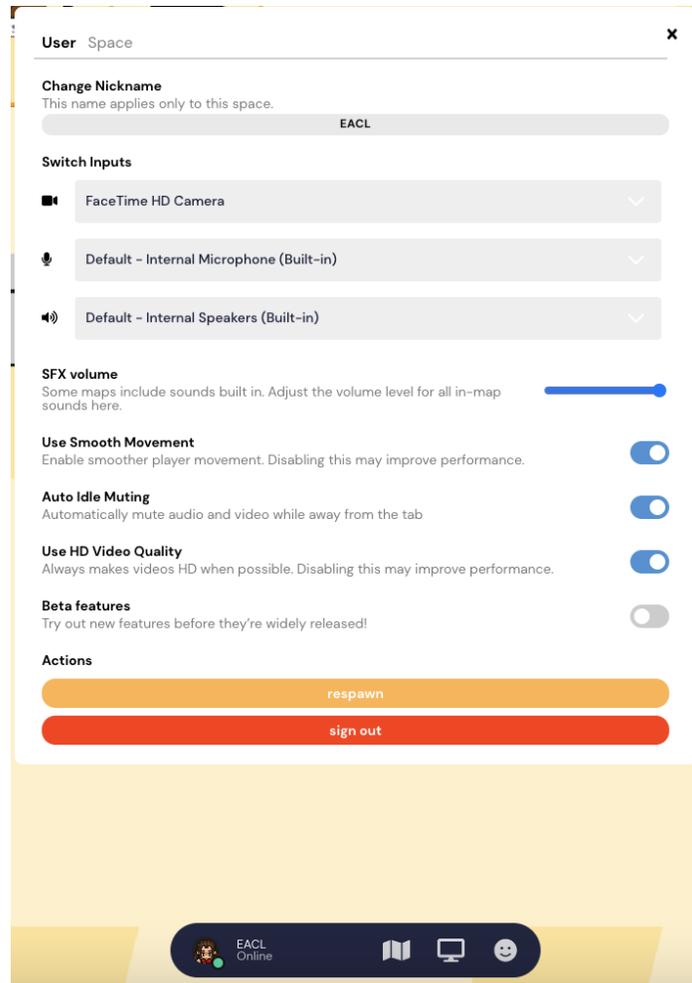- [Other] other questions

-- EACL 2021 organizing committee

P.S. Here are a few extra pro-tips, offered by our partner Virtual Chair:
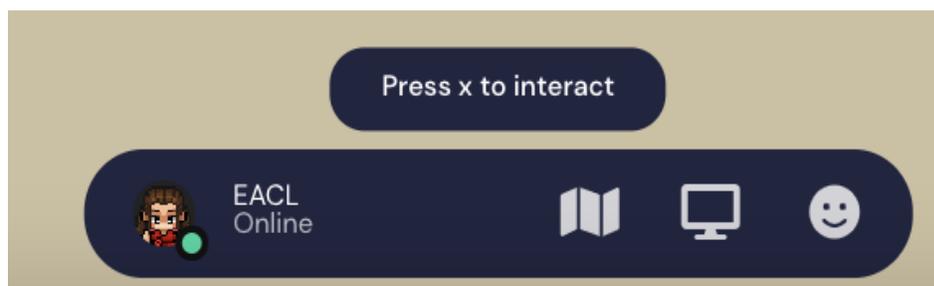
- Click on the avatar on the very left of your dark blue menu bar (located in the bottom-center of your screen) to select a character to represent you.
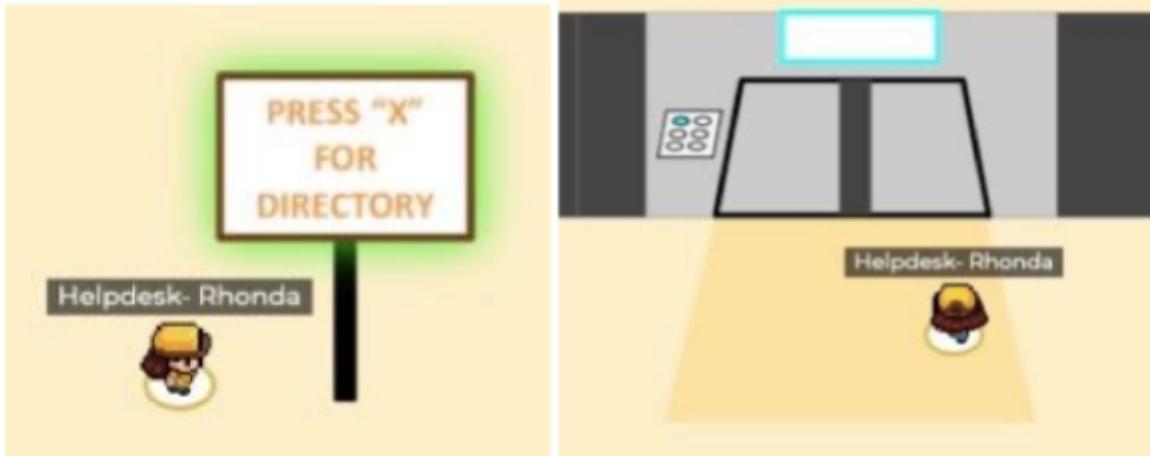

- Clicking on your name in the toolbar and selecting "User/Video Preferences" will allow you to view your audiovisual tools which are currently being used (please note that you will not be able to modify your name, which for security reasons is that used on your event registration).

- Type "X" on your keyboard to view posters or any time you see the message below:

- Directories in the Lobby will let you know where current and upcoming activities are happening. Once you know which room you're going to, walk into the elevator which is labelled with the name of the room you'd like to enter.

- Visit the sponsor booths, which will be located on the North side of the central bank of elevators. It looks like this:

x

- Screenshare by clicking the computer icon in the dark blue menu bar; you will need to authorize your browser access to share another application or browser tab.
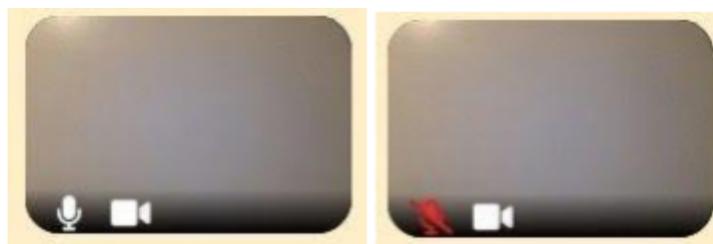
- Don't forget to click the icon again when you've finished to turn your screenshare off:

- Stand on the rug behind a podium to speak and/or share your screen with everyone in the same room; Moderators or Q&A participants may stand at another microphone in order for the entire room to hear your interaction.

You have stepped on a spotlight square! Now broadcasting to the whole room.

- Mute another participant's microphone by clicking on it (this does not change what other participants hear and only applies to your own sound).

- Enlarge videos by clicking on them (including videos of people you're talking to).

- If you're having bandwidth issues, try turning off your or others' videos by clicking on the video camera icon superimposed on the video (it won't impact the views of others). Similarly, if someone's background noise is disturbing you, you can mute them for yourself (again without impacting whether others can hear them). It may also help to deselect "Use Smooth Movement" in the User/Video Preferences section (found by clicking on your name in the dark blue toolbar at the bottom-center of the screen)
- Curate a "friends" list by clicking the name of another participant and sending a private chat message; they will appear in your chat list thereafter.
- Check out people's name badges. You can click on their name in the video chat and a badge pops up with their affiliation.
- Don't stand in doorways; it blocks others. And if you get stuck in traffic, hold down "G" on your keyboard to turn into a ghost and walk through the avatars who block your way.
- Bring your virtual dance shoes and try dancing by holding down "Z" on your keyboard. No one has two left feet in Virtual Chair!