



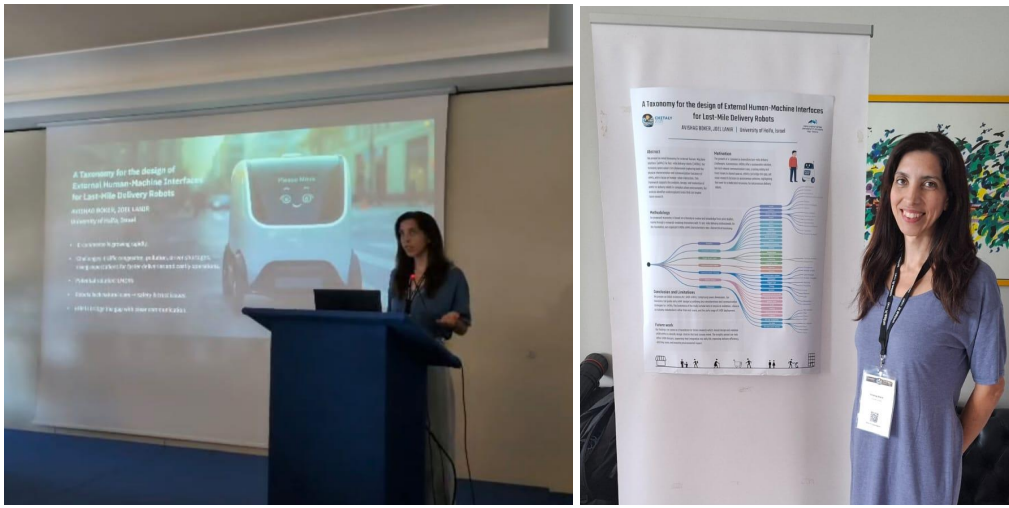
**Subject: Letter of impression from CHITALY 2025,
16th Biannual Conference of the Italian SIGCHI Chapter, “Technologies and
Methodologies of Human-Computer Interaction in the Third Millenium“
(Salerno, Italy)**

The [CHItaly 2025 Conference](#), held in Salerno, Italy, was an inspiring and enriching experience. The event covered a wide range of topics in the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), with a special session dedicated to transportation and, in particular, passenger empowerment.

The conference featured 40 full papers and 33 short papers, organized into 16 thematic sessions, in addition to a poster session and an interactive demo track. The venue, Grand Hotel Salerno, provided an excellent environment for presentations, discussions, and networking.

I presented a poster at the conference, which included a one-minute oral presentation and two poster presentation sessions.

The video of my presentation can be viewed [here](#).



The conference hosted three excellent keynote lectures that provided valuable insights and inspiration:

1. Prof. Nuno Nunes – “The Role of Digital in the New European Bauhaus”
This talk explored the digital dimension of the *Bauhaus of the Seas* initiative, emphasizing sustainable and inclusive interactions with coastal and maritime ecosystems. It presented inspiring examples of how digital tools can foster participatory design and community engagement. Personally, I found it particularly inspiring for my current line of thinking, exploring biomimicry-inspired design for autonomous vehicles and robots.
2. Prof. Pablo Cesar – “Social Extended Reality: Achieving Presence and Togetherness through Immersive Realistic Experiences”. This keynote focused on Social VR and immersive technologies that create a sense of “being there together.” One fascinating example presented was a VR-based telemedicine clinic where doctor and patient interact through realistic avatars. It sparked thoughts about applying similar concepts to vehicle teleoperation, e.g., using immersive XR for remote inspection or operator–passenger interaction.
3. Prof. Ann Blandford – “Working at the Interface Between HCI and Health: Tales of Challenges and Triumphs”. The talk addressed the opportunities and challenges in designing impactful digital health technologies such as AI systems, telemedicine, wearables, and robotics. I found her reflections on chronic disease management tools particularly interesting.

I attended several sessions, among them a session focused on passenger empowerment, including one fascinating study examining how vehicle interior design (humanlike elements vs. nature-inspired ones, such as a waterfall) influences passengers’ sense of safety. Interestingly, the natural element was found to be more calming than the humanlike one.

Among the poster presentations, several stood out:

- A poster examining pedestrian perception of path safety, exploring not only the objective safety but also the subjective sense of security using dual-environment comparisons.
- A Human–Robot Interaction (HRI) study using a robotic arm controlled by GPT-generated responses and mirrored in a digital twin environment - highly relevant to my research on large mobile robots where safety is critical.
- Another poster introduced synthetic participants capable of simulating stress indicators (heart rate, temperature, pulse), offering a scalable method for evaluating human-robot interactions. I discussed with the authors a potential collaboration involving synthetic participants for LMDR stress testing.

The demo track included two innovative projects from a Maltese research group, presenting alternative UI navigation methods for users with disabilities based on gaze tracking and neural sensors. I tried the eye-tracking version which was promising but still imprecise, while the EEG-based version did not function reliably yet. Despite that, the technology was intriguing. Another demo featured a social robot designed as an AI-based assistant for older adults, combining empathy with automation in elderly care.

During the [MedCHI](#) panel, important questions were raised about making the conference more inclusive for the entire Mediterranean region and supporting participation from students in developing countries. The discussion highlighted the need for broader access and financial support to strengthen regional collaboration in HCI research.

Participating in CHIItaly 2025 was a rewarding and stimulating experience. I gained new perspectives on sustainable and social HCI, met researchers working in related areas, and identified opportunities for future collaboration.

I am sincerely grateful to the ISTRC for awarding me the travel grant that made this experience possible. The conference has not only expanded my professional network but also deepened my understanding of the intersections between mobility and human-robot interaction, areas I intend to continue exploring in my ongoing research.

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