



**Association for
Computing Machinery**

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Austrian Trailblazer Receives Top Award for Women in Computing

Monika Henzinger Shaped Modern Information Retrieval and Theoretical Computer Science

New York, NY, May 13, 2026 – ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, today named Monika Henzinger of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) as the 2026-2027 ACM Athena Lecturer. Henzinger is recognized for outstanding contributions to the fields of dynamic graph algorithms and web algorithms, and for dedicated mentoring and service to these communities.

Initiated in 2006, the ACM Athena Lecturer Award celebrates women researchers who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. The award includes a \$25,000 honorarium provided by Two Sigma.

Dynamic Graph Algorithms and Web Algorithms

Monika Henzinger's research focuses on the design and analysis of efficient algorithms for processing large, dynamic data. Her work spans fundamental areas of computer science, including graph algorithms, data structures, information retrieval, and web search technologies, and many of her contributions have made their way into standard textbooks. She developed the first linear-time algorithms for a variety of algorithmic problems such as computing shortest paths in planar graphs.

She has made significant contributions to dynamic algorithms, which maintain solutions efficiently as data changes, particularly in network and graph settings; establishing, for example, the first poly-logarithmic upper and lower bounds in the time per operation for the fundamental problem of graph connectivity.

A major theme of her research is handling massive, real-world datasets such as web graphs and social networks. She contributed to early developments in web search and link analysis, helping shape modern search engine technology. For her contributions, she was awarded the SIGIR Test of Time Award in 2017 and she is the co-inventor of over 80 patents in that field. More recently, her work has expanded to privacy-preserving data analysis, developing algorithms that ensure strong protection of individual information through differential privacy. Her research also addresses algorithmic challenges in distributed systems, network optimization, and approximation

algorithms. Ultimately, her work bridges theory and practice, advancing fundamental algorithmic theory while applying it to large-scale, real-world problems.

Leadership Within the Field

In addition to her technical contributions, Monika Henzinger is a prominent leader in the research community. She has laid the foundations for several research fields such as data streams, web search algorithms, and the empirical evaluation of dynamic graph algorithms, co-initiated major conferences such as the ACM Conference on Web Search and Data Mining, and helped shape the trajectory of major technology companies. She serves in editorial capacities for leading journals and has chaired numerous conferences and award committees. Her mentorship is widely recognized; her research group members are considered worldwide leaders in dynamic and web algorithms.

Biographical Background

Monika Henzinger is a Professor and Vice-President of Technology Transfer at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) and was a Visiting Scientist at the Simons Institute at UC Berkeley and at Stanford University. Monika has held prominent academic positions at institutions including Cornell University and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). In addition to her academic career, Henzinger has played a significant role in industry, notably as the first Director of Research at Google, where she contributed to the development of large-scale web search technologies, and as a member of Research Staff at Digital Equipment Corporation's Systems Research Center.

She holds a PhD from Princeton University and an Honorary Doctorate from the Technical University of Dortmund. An ACM and EATCS Fellow, she is also a member of the Academia Europaea, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Her honors include two ERC Advanced Grants, the Carus Medal of the Leopoldina, the Wittgenstein Award of the Austrian Science Fund, the European Young Investigator Award, and the NSF Career Award.

Henzinger will formally receive the Athena Lecturer Award at ACM's annual awards banquet on June 13, 2026, in San Francisco.

About the ACM Athena Lecturer Award

The [ACM Athena Lecturer Award](#) celebrates women researchers who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. It includes a \$25,000 honorarium provided by Two Sigma. The Athena Lecturer is invited to present a lecture at an ACM event. Each year, the Athena Lecturer honors a preeminent woman computer scientist. Athena is the Greek goddess of wisdom; with her knowledge and sense of purpose, she epitomizes the strength, determination, and intelligence of the "Athena Lecturers."

About ACM

ACM, [the Association for Computing Machinery](#), is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources,

and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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