D3.2.2 Report on Educational Events

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Abstract.
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A report on educational events is required after the first twelve months of the Network's existence. While most of this report is concerned with the Second European Summer School on Ontological Engineering and the Semantic Web (SSSW-2004), we also report on several other events which have been organized by participants in the educational outreach strand of the KnowledgeWeb Network of Excellence.

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Changes

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Executive Summary

A report on educational events is required after the first twelve months of the Network's existence. While most of this report is concerned with the Second European Summer School on Ontological Engineering and the Semantic Web (SSSW-2004), we also report on several other events which have been organized by participants in the educational outreach strand of the KnowledgeWeb Network of Excellence.

Contents

1. Introduction

According to the KnowledgeWeb Technical Annex a report on educational events is required after the first twelve months of the Network's existence. While most of this report is concerned with the Second European Summer School on Ontological Engineering and the Semantic Web (SSSW-2004), we also report on several other events which have been organized by participants in the educational outreach strand of the KnowledgeWeb Network of Excellence. These range from lectures given at another summer school, through an information day for professionals to a network for PhD students. While none of these events currently makes use of VISWER (the VISWE educational resources repository) it is likely that future events will find it indispensable. At the same time, the resources used in these events will be added to the repository.

Readers should note that since this report mainly collates events which have been organized by participants in the educational outreach activities of KnowledgeWeb. Other parts of the NoE, for example, the industrial outreach work package, will also have been involved in such activities.

2. SSSW-2004

Introduction

The school was held in an excellent conference facility belonging to the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, in the Sierra de Guadarrama Mountains about 50 km from Madrid. While the school was underwritten by the KnowledgeWeb, we had 8 other sponsors ranging from universities to private companies.

There were three topic areas:

- Ontologies: Theory, Methods and Tools;
- Human Language Technologies and Machine Learning for the Semantic Web;
- Semantic Web Services

This is the second SSSW summer school following the success of the first school held under the auspices of OntoWeb in 2003.

The school was designed to be an intense, focused, week-long learning experience for students (and tutors) with formal, theoretical sessions followed by hands-on practical sessions. These sessions were conducted by researchers active in the semantic web and gave students an opportunity to become acquainted with state of the art ideas and tools. In addition, as a means of integrating the work on the four topic areas, students had to work in groups of 4 or 5 on a mini-project related to one of the topic areas. The students presented their project work on the last day of the school and a prize was given for best presentation.

A typical day lasted from 9 until 6 but most students worked long after the formal sessions were over with some still at work in the early hours of the morning.

The talks by invited speakers gave additional perspectives to the tutorial material and were unanimously welcomed by all the participants at the school.

A much needed break from this schedule was provided in the middle of the week by a visit to Segovia, a medieval city on the other side of the Sierra de Guadarrama.

While in general staff and students expressed satisfaction both with SSSW-2004's organization and content, a more detailed analysis of the questionnaire sent to students after the school indicates some areas in which improvements could be made.

Of the 56 students at the summer school, 29 returned completed questionnaires, a 52% return rate. This was probably due to the late issue of the questionnaire. While we attempt some analysis of student responses in the rest of this report, this should be approached with some caution.

Organization Model followed

A simple organizational model was followed with Enrico Motta as director making the overall decisions about location, student numbers, tutor selection and so on. The director consulted with the co-director (Asunción Gómez Pérez) on overall strategy and before making detailed decisions. The co-director also acted as local organizer, making decisions on the detailed logistics based on the overall strategy. The director was supported in making decisions and collating information by Arthur Stutt who also acted as project coordinator. Once the decisions were made about the summer school components (number of tutorial strands, hands-on sessions, mini-project) and the tutor team selected, they, along with some of the invited speakers, formed an ad hoc management board in which any remaining decisions about, for example, the format of and detailed interaction among the various components of the school, were made, usually by email or telephone conferences.

Sponsors

There were 9 sponsors:

- KnowledgeWeb
- The Open University
- Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
- KMi
- Departamento de Inteligencia Artificial
- Ontology Engineering Group
- IBM
- XAnalys
- iSOCO

Statistics

The summer school had 56 students, mostly in the 2nd year of their PhDs, from 16 countries. There were 7 tutors and 5 invited speakers from 6 countries. There were 89 submissions. 44% of those accepted were from KnowledgeWeb participants.

Austria	2	Korea	1
Belgium	1	Latvia	1
Finland	1	Malta	1
France	3	Netherlands, The	2
Germany	8	Portugal	1
Greece	1	Spain	9
Ireland	1	Sweden	1
Italy	10	United Kingdom	13

Table 1: number of students per country

Males: 41	Female: 15

Table 2: Female/male percentage: i.e., 26% of the students were women

Organization

Two central questions relating to the structure of the summer school were asked: firstly, about student's rating of the importance of including a component; secondly on their enjoyment of a component. Student scores ranged from 1 = lowest rating to 4 = highest. As Table 3 indicates, the greatest number of students gave 4s to all components, thus indicating that they felt that all components should have been included. However, their responses to the second question show that students enjoyed the project slightly more and the hands-on sessions slightly less than in 2003.

Inclusion				Enjoyment				
tutorials	hands-on	talks	project	tutorials	hands-on	talks	project	
4	3	4	4	3	4	4	2	2003
4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	2004

Table 3 showing the statistical mode for the student responses

Topics

KR	Lang	SWS
3	3	3

Table 4 Modes for topic fulfillment of expectations

KR	Lang	SWS
3	3	3

Table 5 Modes for topic enjoyment

As Table 4 indicates, when asked about to rate how well a topic fulfilled their expectations most students gave 3s for all three strands. As Table 5 indicates, the results were similar when students were asked to rate their enjoyment of the topics.

KR	Lang	SWS
87	80	83

Table 6 Sums for topic fulfillment of expectations

KR	Lang	SWS
90	86	87

Table 7 Sums for topic enjoyment

This is borne out by Tables 6 and 7, although the Ontologies strand was slightly better at meeting expectations and enjoyed more

Practical sessions

We haven't done an analysis here since most students were happy or very happy with the hands-on sessions.

Mini-Project

Again, we haven't done an analysis here since most students were happy or very happy with the organization, time allocated, integration with formal/hands-on sessions, tutor availability and structure.

User-centred	Technology-centred	Both
25%	32%	43%

Table 8 Students doing particular types of tasks (where answered)

Table 8 perhaps indicates that student's don't really think in terms of doing solely user-centred tasks but are happier thinking in terms of the use of technology or technology in fulfilling a task

Selected Student Suggestions and Comments

Have you any suggestions as to how the summer school organization might be improved?	Hands On session were really interesting, however sometime they were not so effective as they could be. In some session more detailed guidelines would be appreciate! I know that part of the porpoises were to play with tools, but sometime the time spent to play was more than the time to chew over "the concepts". The hands-on sessions needed to be more intense. Many of the exercises were trivial; the real difficulty was getting started with the particular tools, which often lacked intuitive interfaces. Unless the goal is to market particular tools, the emphasis should be solving non-trivial problems (of which the mini-project should be the hardest) using 'semantic web' techniques. Somehow you need to reduce the learning curve of the tools so that students can get on to the real interesting stuff. Admittedly this is hard to achieve within the constraints of 1 week. It was really well organized! Congratulations ! Even the integration among the tutors, speakers, organizers was fantastic ! All the professors are very nice. First of all, I would like to say that I liked the summer school a lot. However, I would like to provide some comments that IMHO could help to improve future editions. I think the summer school was too project oriented. From my point of view, students do not know everything about some topics. Students might be really good in Ontologies but know nothing about Semantic Web Services. Therefore, it does not make sense to talk to them about current developments in some projects without giving first a first overview and introduction to the important keypoints of SWS. My suggestion would be to oblige speakers to give an introduction to the field and give the talks about the field itself and only at the end of

	the presentation, talk about theirs projects as examples of what was explained before. I found the talk from Fabio Ciravegna perfect. He taught us a lot about the field and only at the end explained his projects as examples. The same happened with the Hands-On sessions. They were focused on using some tools where, from my point of view, I didn't get much knowledge. OTOH, I liked a lot the exercise proposed by Enrico and Aldo about how to model triple relationships in RDF where only binary relationships are allowed. This was really interesting. The tutorials could be a bit more "basic" instead of "fancy". Although I see the idea of showing semantic web technology that just works right now, it might be beneficial to teach students the basics a bit more. Sometimes I felt like being on a conference when the tutors showed their work. If the practical session can be more organised, with more instructions about what we want to achieve in this section.
Would you add any additional components, and if so, what?	I would add a talking point on our experiences with semantics. It could be something like a debate supervised by the organisers. I think the components are the perfect ones. They only should reoriented to address participants needs. I think most of the participants know a lot about one field (e.g. ontologies) and not much about others. Therefore, the talks and hands-on sessions should be a bit more generic in order to teach them about concepts (and not specific projects they will probably not use anymore). It could be useful to add some kind of short student's presentation, where each summer school assistant would expose their current work, interests, problems,… related to the course content. The main objective of this would be to improve the interchange of information among the students. More theory-based tutorials (in particular, a tutorial – embracing more than one session – on description logics would have been appreciated) I think a lot of people expected a "basic RDFS and OWL" component, discussing pro's and con's etc. Possibly more hands-on-session, but more in the conceptual area. Clicking around in IRS-XXVII hasn't taught me a lot, but the modelling tasks with pen & paper in groups gave me a lot of insight, that was remarkably good. Let's do more pen & paper hands-on-sessions.
Any other comments on the organization of the summer school?	Overall the organisation of the summer school was excellent. The three main themes seemed to be well chosen, and they linked well with the mini-project. One suggestion however is to perhaps revert to the mini-project structure of the first summer school, where it was done all through the week. An idea would be to get the groups together by the afternoon of day 2 and then each lab time could be used to help each group build a piece of functionality to their mini-project. This functionality could be uniform until later in the week when the groups become more familiar with the material and can then branch off with individual novel ideas. The topics addressed during the summer school were very interesting, but the level was sometimes too low, since one may assume that the participants do have previous knowledge about Semantic Web technologies. Some of the talks started by defining the technologies instead of presenting new results. Might it also be possible to have parallel sessions, so you can choose to focus more on one subject than on another?
If you would prefer to have more topic areas, what would you add?	The topic areas where ok, but I would have expected more in depth detail in some of the areas. (Information) visualization and semantic searching issues; Semantic web & geoscience. I would add something on Ontologies and P2P systems. And maybe also a hands-on session on agents handling ontologies. More about the "web" in semantic web. "Web technologies and the Semantic Web: RDF, OWL, HTTP/REST" or something like that… How these technologies can be used together?
Add any critical comments or positive suggestions as to how the hands-on sessions might be improved.	Some Hand-on sessions should have more explicit goals. Perhaps, they should not be so centred on how to handle one or two applications, but on how to solve real problems from a theoretical point of view. I have ticked happy in question 6 above because I felt that the tutors were always eager to give assistance. However, sometimes it appeared as if they were ill prepared for some of the problems with the tools that arose, so the suggestion for next time is that more preparation goes into the hands on sessions. Better computers – typically the network would fail or be inadequate for the tasks required Some sessions were just software (or file) demonstrations. It would be more useful to deal with "problems (not) to be solved" using softwares or modelling approach (as in the KR and Ontologies

	sesison). I think that at the end of each session, the student should be able to understand how good is the approach adopted and which are its limits. The computer rooms are too small. Sessions could be longer (or more) with more public discussions on possible results/solutions. It would be nice, if some sessions would be more connected to theoretical talks. I think a bit more time should be allocated to these sessions, along with a clearer structure of what is expected and what we should be getting out of each practical. There should also be a bit more time at the end to go over any 'solutions' and properly finish off the session. OWL-S hands-on sessions should be improved. It is necessary to define a clear goal and provide tools to play with OWL-S specifications. As I said, they were too much project oriented. I think that given the fact that only 1 or 2 hours are available for hands-on sessions, the learning curve needed to use one tool makes it not worthy. The important thing in Computer Science in general is to know the concepts (even without using any tool in particular) and then, we all know how to learn to use a specific tool ourselves. I missed the fact of practising the theory in the hands-on session. I learnt to use a plug-in for Protègè but I don't know how to do it. I learnt to use a tool to annotate documents but I don't know how to do it. I found the exercise from Enrico and Aldo where we had to model triple relationships with RDF really good. Hands-on sessions should (in my humble opinion) take a lower priority with respect to other sessions, mostly considering that one week is not a lot of time to learn important concepts from different topics. In many cases hands-on sessions make people lose time on hardware-software problems which are obviously not related to the interested topic. Anyway, do not take this one as a suggestion, only as a feedback from one single person :-) I thought the focus was too much on which tools existed (with each group basically presenting its own tools) and too little on the theories/methodologies or even technology behind it. See (organisation 3): more pen & paper, more basic, more concepts, less clicking around in sophisticated tools hiding the real complexity
Add any critical comments or positive suggestions as to how the mini-project sessions might be improved.	More time should be dedicated for the mini project so that the ideas are not just exposed in a superficial way and students will have the time to produce more working demos. Expected results of the mini-project were a little bit unclear. I think the mini-project was useful in getting people thinking a lot more about the different subjects they had been taught. In fact, the multi-project of this summer school is many problems. For examples, there are not sufficient PC, Programs and Assistant. The most difficult part (but real life is sometimes like that) was to manage some elements of the group. We could not do what we would like to do and even we got a little bit stressed because one of the elements was always arguing and discussing about no important topics. We had few time to do the best we could and it was really complicated. However, it can not be improved because we do not know each other and it is good to see that even for a small task it may be really hard if some participant is not used to work in group. It would be nice to have more time for the mini-project. The mini-project should cover the whole week and be more integrated with topics covered by talks. The biggest criticism was that the set-up of the project mentioned a tool (eSpotter) not made available. That there was only one choice for the implementation of web services (IRS) was also disappointing. I think the mini-project was the most interesting part of the summer-school since it gives the students the opportunity to see how the technologies can be applied in practice. The allocated time was too short, mainly because getting to know the presented tools was relatively time consuming. From a learning point of view, I think it is better to have a more structured assignment (i.e., the teachers know beforehand the details of the assignment and possible solutions). Although the freedom we had makes it fun, I think we will learn more if teachers have some specific points they want to teach/make clear, using a really specific assignment. Now it took us a long time already to think about and agree on what we wanted to do. Therefore, the results were really conceptual, not very detailed. Objectives a bit more clear

	The tutorial and hands-on session about web services starts after the project is allocated. This is out of our expectation.
Any other comments or suggestions	I really enjoin during the school, Thanks!!!!! Overall it was a well executed programme. The social programme also deserves praise because it helped participants to get to know each other, which in turn enhanced the learning environment because we felt comfortable enough to ask each other questions. The questionnaire could be filled the last day of the summer school, I think that this could provide some advantages: More people filling it; - Everybody remembers the school sessions and can make better suggestions. Thank you very much for this opportunity to give our opinions Finally, I would like to thank you for choosing me as one of the participants of the SSSW'04. It was great time at great school, great talks by great scientists and great contacts with great students! :) I think this summer school is really valuable chance for related researchers, students, professor and developer. So please give a chance to non-European people. We'd like to discuss with other researcher in whole world. The great idea is to keep people together. It is great for people knowing each other, changing ideas and making friends. Prof. Asución and Prof. Enrico were always speaking about the importance of the social part and I totally agree. It was really important to participate and I just have to say Thank You for the opportunity. The hands-on sessions should rely on more reliable tools and be more integrated with mini-project work. Again, I would like to thank you all for the effort and for the time spent with us there. It was really valuable. It was a great summer school! It would be nice to have some debate sessions on specific topics, where tutors and students could talk about present and future issues of the Semantic Web from a global perspective. One suggestion on the questionnaire itself: maybe more values (at least 5) to choose from gives a better indication of our opinions; the gap between "happy" and "very happy" is much smaller than the gap between "unhappy" and "happy"

Conclusions with regard to the summer school

1. One point noted already is that the gender distribution of the students was uneven. This led to perhaps too many male only groups for the mini-project
2. Working tools are still an issue.
3. More basic theory is needed. "I think a lot of people expected a "basic RDFS and OWL" component, discussing pro's and con's etc " "The tutorials could be a bit more "basic" instead of "fancy". Although I see the idea of showing semantic web technology that just works right now, it might be beneficial to teach students the basics a bit more."
4. Clearer, written instructions for hands-on sessions, tools and the project are needed.
5. Positioning of the mini-project is still not right.
6. Some students still felt that there was not enough time for the project.

3. Other Events

Semantic Web Information Day at the FU Berlin

The first Semantic Web Information Day was organized by Prof. Robert Tolksdorf (FU Berlin, Networked Information Systems) and Dr. Rainer Eckstein (HU Berlin, Databases and Information systems) as an event of the XML Clearinghouse Berlin (http://www.xml-clearinghouse.de), a non-profit organization funded by the German Ministry of Research (BMBF) whose aim is to support the transfer of XML technologies as a public service. It took place at the Free University of Berlin. The aim of the event was to introduce attendees from local industry to central topics of the Semantic Web: standard representation languages like RDF(S) and OWL, ontologies and use scenarios for Semantic Web technologies. The 50 participants attending the event had the chance to learn about the Semantic Web during a half-day workshop and exchange opinions about its potential in an industrial setting in a concluding open discussion.

Due to the FU Berlin's experience in providing this kind of events on a regional basis we plan to organize a second Semantic Web Information Day for Professionals in 2005. This event would take place as part of the KnowledgeWeb NoE activity in educational outreach to industry, and would benefit from integrating the local knowledge of XML Clearinghouse with the wider contacts being built up in the KnowledgeWeb Industry Board, the experience and resources of KnowledgeWeb partners as well as the ongoing development and provision of learning units for professionals. The event would be an opportunity to evaluate the workshop format and the use of targeted learning materials for educating interested business professionals about the potential of the Semantic Web for their business practices. We intend to extend the original scope of the event to a special session on real-world Semantic Web applications.

Semantic Web PhD Network Berlin/Brandenburg

The Free University of Berlin has founded a Semantic Web PhD Student Network for Berlin and Brandenburg. This network exists to give PhD students in Berlin and the surrounding area of Brandenburg who have a major research interest in Semantic Web technologies an opportunity for contact to one another. The main goal of the network is to support doctoral students by giving them a space to present their ideas and discuss them with their peers. The network primarily is built around informal bi-monthly F2F meetings in which students can take turns to present their work, and is supported by a Web site, mailing list and a shared workspace. Every working meeting is organized around 3 to 4 40 minute presentations, with a focus on discussion and feedback from the attendees.

The network was launched on 22 October with 16 members from 4 educational institutions in Berlin. Through the next meetings, the building of community and the feedback from the participants the FU Berlin will contribute this valuable experience to VISWE in the scenario of Communities of Practice. More information about the network can be found at its website:

http://nbi.inf.fu-berlin.de/research/KnowledgeWeb/phd/phd.html

Lectures at Aussois Summer School

The following lectures were given by KnowledgeWeb participants at the International Doctoral School in Theoretical Computer Science and the Semantic Web at Aussois in France, held 21-25 June, 2004.

1. Guus Schreiber – Ontologies and the Semantic Web: a Web of Meaning. Available from http://www.univ-savoie.fr/Portail/Groupes/DoctoralSchoolChyTurin/SlidesSW.htm

2. Alain Leger - Semantic Web Applications.

3. Amedeo Napoli - Elements on knowledge representation, description logics, ontologies, and knowledge discovery for the Semantic Web.

INRIA Seminar "Publier sur Internet", Aix-les-bains (FR), 28/9-2/10 2004

Every two years INRIA organizes a one week summer school targeting librarians and people of similar background. This seminar is called "Publier sur l'internet" (publishing on Internet) and count as a continuous education seminar.

Jérôme Euzenat (INRIA Rhône-Alpes) and Raphaël Troncy delivered a 6 hours introductory course on "Semantic web and library practice" covering an introduction to semantic web technology exemplified through library applications and a special emphasis on the indexing of multimedia documents. The summary of the presentation is as follows:

"The semantic web has the ambition to offer machines web-access similar to that already existing for people. This would provide humans with the power of computers for managing the information available on the web. Hence, semantic web technologies will strongly contribute to future library practices. We present the technologies for describing web resources and their ontologies under a librarian perspective. We introduce a number of available resources which can be used for this goal as well as an application to multimedia and audiovisual document indexing."

The presentation has been featured in a book chapter:
http://exmo.inrialpes.fr/papers/BibrefServlet?file=bibexmo.xml&abstrip=false&format=html&ref=euzenat2004e

Tutorial at ECAI'04

Asunción Gómez Pérez and colleagues gave a tutorial on Ontological Engineering and the Semantic Web at ECAI'04 (http://www.dsic.upv.es/ecai2004/). The tutorial can be found at http://webode.dia.fi.upm.es/ontologicalengineering/TutorialECAI04.pdf

4. Future work

Briefly, we will provide a summer school every year in future. Other events will take place as needed.

Since it was felt that the 3.2 work package has too many only weakly interconnected activities (and a certain redundancy in deliverables for educational events and for the summer school) it was decided that in future it should focus on two issues and distinguish among the types of educational event:

1) Providing educational events (summer school etc.);
2) Organizing the shared master.

While the shared master activities will become the main activity in WP3.2, the following tasks (all with deliverables at the end of Month 24) will be concerned with educational events:

T 3.2.1 Educational Events: Joint Industry-Education Co-operation

A key goal of KnowledgeWeb is the outreach of Semantic Web technologies to industry. This can not be achieved without communicating effectively to interested businesses the key benefits of applying Semantic Web technologies in their domain as well as facilitating the uptake of those technologies within the business through informing project leaders or training programmers. This task shall form a communication channel to the industry WPs through which industry-targeted learning materials can be produced from business use case analysis, and events organized which are tailored to the particular needs of business professionals.

T 3.2.2 Educational Events: Summer Schools

Due to the overwhelming popularity and great success of SSSW 2003 (held under the auspices of Ontoweb) and SSSW 2004 (under Knowledge Web) we propose to hold these schools annually in future. We are currently planning for SSSW 2005. This will take place in July 2005. It is likely that we will continue to use the UPM facility in Cercedilla, Spain. The ethos of the school will continue to be based on a constructivist learning approach, since it has been found to be enjoyable and useful by the students. Of course, we are not planning to stand still and we will continue to experiment with some aspects of the format, in order to ensure not only that the quality improves every year, but that the school itself remains at the leading edge of pedagogical approaches

T 3.2.3 Educational Events: PhD Student Community of Practice

In order to support and evaluate the VISWE scenario "Communities of Practice" a small network of PhD students (who study within a single city) whose research is focused on aspects of the Semantic Web has been set up (see above). This community has the aim to

bring together students in an informal setting to exchange ideas and present research, with the opportunity for critical discussion, sharing of knowledge and experience and building up confidence for writing the dissertation and making a strong of the thesis. Through the formation and continuation of the community for a period of at least a year the approach employed can be evaluated through participant feedback and valuable experience gained as a precursor to building larger networks.

5. Work in next period

This task is now complete. As indicated, similar tasks will be carried out in the new Joint Programme of Activities.