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## D3.2.8v2 Report on PhD network activities, version 2

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**Abstract.**

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Abstract

This deliverable summarizes the activities regarding support of PhD students in the area Semantic Web for the years 2006 and 2007. In particular we have moved from the regional PhD students network in the Berlin-Brandenburg area to an internationally open PhD symposium, held in June 2006 and June 2007 co-located with the European Semantic Web Conference.

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## Executive Summary

As part of the education area activity of the EU Network of Excellence KnowledgeWeb, PhD students with a primary research focus in the Semantic Web were identified as one of the key communities needing early support. In response to this, the Free University of Berlin decided to found a “PhD student network” to gather together members of this community from the region of Berlin and Brandenburg in Germany (cf. deliverable D3.2.8). While this student network has been continued successfully in 2006 and 2007, we have decided in early 2006 to start a new initiative towards PhD students, using the experiences from the regional setting but being targeted at PhD students based in Europe or even beyond. This initiative is the KnowledgeWeb PhD Symposium (KWEPSY), which was co-located with the European Semantic Web Conference (ESWC) in 2006 (Budva, Montenegro) and 2007 (Innsbruck, Austria).

This deliverable reports about the motivation, the organization and the programme of this series of events, including some statistics, and outlines future work discussing also the sustainability of the approach.

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# 1. Motivation

The Knowledge Web PhD Symposium is aimed at bringing together doctoral students within the Semantic Web community to open their work up to discussion in a European forum, and to obtain valuable feedback from leading scientists in the field. However, in contrast with other similar initiatives, participants in the symposium receive not only constructive comments with respect to topic-specific research issues, but are assisted in formulating a coherent research narrative for their doctoral work. In particular, students were asked to submit an extended abstract, structured in accordance to a pre-defined template, which has been designed to highlight the key methodological components required for a sound research narrative.

In order to optimize the added value of such an event for its attendees, priority was given to 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD students, as they are still in the process of defining their research narrative. However all PhD students were welcome and encouraged to apply.

## 2. Organizational Issues

To be able to organize KWEPSY, several issues had to be considered as described in the following sections.

### 2.1 The Organizing Committee

As for all scientific events such as conferences, workshops, or symposia the organizing committee is responsible for running the whole event with regard to scientific and organizational issues. Table 1 summarizes the main organizers of KWEPSY 2006 and 2007:

Year	Main Organizer	Second Main Organizer	Senior Organizer
2006	Dr. Jörg Diederich	Elena Simperl	Prof. Enrico Motta
2007	Dr. Elena Simperl	Dr. Jörg Diederich	Prof. Guus Schreiber

Table 1: Organizers of the KnowledgeWeb PhD Symposium

The basic idea was to have one main contact person for all PhD students and a second main person who both together conducted the daily business of organization. For the choice of these organizers it was important that they are not too ‘senior’ so they still know about the needs of PhD students from their own experiences. The senior organizer was overseeing the work of the main organizers and helped to resolve conflicts, find scientific advisors, etc.

### 2.2 The Scientific Advisors + Mentors

One of the essential components of a high-quality PhD symposium is that the students get feedback from experienced advisors. Such advisors should include both, ‘very senior’ people (i.e. Professors / senior researchers) who know their field very well, and ‘less senior’ people (Post-Docs) who still know about the difficulties and problems of writing a PhD thesis from their own experience. Therefore, the scientific advisors of KWEPSY,



who are responsible for reviewing, were selected among the ‘very senior’ and ‘less senior’ people working in the KnowledgeWeb context and more general, from the Semantic Web community, in total 35 for KWEPSY 2006 and 39 for KWEPSY2007.

Those scientific advisors, who committed themselves to be physically present at the symposium then actually became mentors for specific PhD students such that each PhD student presenting at the symposium had exactly one contact person to talk to.

For the final assignments of mentors to PhD students, two possibilities existed:

- based on areas of expertise, or
- based on already provided reviews.

In the former case, mentors are assigned to those students that work in the main research area of the mentors. In the latter case, already existing relations between scientific advisors and students (in the form of reviews, the advisors have already provided for these students) were taken into account to reduce the efforts of the mentors to prepare for the mentoring. In fact, not being an expert in an area makes it even easier for the mentors to focus on aspects related to the research narrative instead of focusing on the content of the PhD thesis. Hence, we assigned mentors based on already provided reviews and only if none of the reviewers for an accepted paper had committed to come to the symposium, we assigned students on a different basis, for example, based on expertise of the mentors. This, however, was only necessary for less than 10% of the accepted submissions in both years.

We also informed the mentors by email about all reviews received for their PhD student(s) and the general objectives of the symposium (focusing on the narrative rather than on the scientific topic) to further reduce their workload and ensure that the supervision complies to the general objective of the event.

### ***2.3 The Organizational Work Environment: Web pages + Semantic Wiki***

For the dissemination of information about the symposium, we initially created a standard web page for KWEPSY2006, available at <http://www.l3s.de/kweb/kwepsy2006>. However, for an easier cooperation between the organizers we later decided to move this web page into a wiki, in our case the Semantic Wiki ‘Ontoworld’ (cf. <http://ontoworld.org/wiki/KWEPSY2006>), where we, however could not upload additional multi-media material such as the accepted papers or photos from the event itself. This approach was continued in 2007, the KWEPSY2007 web pages are available at <http://ontoworld.org/wiki/KWEPSY2007>.

### ***2.4 Timeline***

In 2006, the time for the organization of the event was very short due to the fact that the organization of the symposium was decided at the KnowledgeWeb general meeting in January 2006 in Trento. In 2007, the organization started timely in 2006, also because KWEPSY was an integral part of the ESWC2007 while it was only co-located with

ESWC2006 in the previous year. Table 2 below summarizes the timeline for both KWEPSY2006 and 2007:

	<b>KWEPSY2006</b>	<b>KWEPSY2007</b>
<b>Call for Papers published</b>	February 2006	October 2006
<b>Submission deadline</b>	07/04/2006	02/03/2007
<b>Reviews requested</b>	10/04/2006	07/03/2007
<b>Acceptance decisions</b>	21/04/2006	13/04/2007
<b>Final version due</b>	28/04/2006	20/04/2007
<b>Request for mentors</b>	Beginning of May 2006	Middle of May 2007
<b>Assignment of mentors</b>	End of May 2006	End of May 2007

**Table 2: Timeline for KWEPSY2006 and 2007**

## **2.5 Call for Abstracts**

The call for papers for 2006 has been as follows:

*Though organized under the umbrella of KnowledgeWeb, the symposium is open to all PhD students carrying out research on topics related to the Semantic Web. The applicants are required to send an extended abstract (maximally 5 pages, minimal font size: 12-point) of their doctoral work, which should adhere to the following structure:*

- *Briefly describe the research problem the PhD is addressing and its relevance to the Semantic Web area.*
- *Explain why this is a significant problem.*
- *Outline current approaches to the problem, and describe their strengths and weaknesses.*
- *Describe your proposed approach, clearly differentiating between the results achieved so far and the remaining work.*
- *Compare and contrast your approach with other existing approaches, in particular highlighting the shortcomings of other approaches, which your approach is planning to tackle.*
- *Present the expected contributions of your work and highlight the novelty and benefits of the suggested solutions.*
- *Sketch the research methodology that you have adopted (or you are planning to adopt), in particular your approach to evaluating/validating the results.*

*Applicants should also specify how long they have worked on their doctoral work.*

*The submissions will be reviewed against the following criteria:*

- *Novelty and originality of the research work,*
- *Relevance of the work with respect to the Semantic Web field,*
- *Conformance of the submitted abstract to the given template,*

- *Rigorousness and scientific soundness of the overall approach and of the results so far,*
- *Clarity of the presentation.*

*The selected participants will be given the opportunity to open their work up to discussion in front of other students and an expert audience (either in a regular presentation session or in a poster session). Each accepted contribution will be assigned to a scientific advisor who will provide extended feedback to the presented research achievements and to the accuracy of the applied methodology.*

*An award will be given to the best PhD Symposium contributions. Special travel grants to support the participation of female PhD students are also available. Please take a look at the [Hoppers@Kweb](mailto:Hoppers@Kweb) web site for more details*

For 2007, the call for papers was modified such that:

- Submission have to be no longer than 5 pages Springer LNCS format
- The structure of the abstracts had to follow an additionally extended specification (see Section 2.6).
- A template for structuring the paper presentations was provided after the final program of the symposium has been set up.
- In addition to full papers, a limited number of papers was accepted as posters, for which the authors were required to submit a 2 page version of the original submission due to the camera-ready deadline. (We also had posters in KWEPSY2006, but we decided during the review process to have them).

## **2.6 Submission Template**

To guide the students in writing their abstract we provided a template with the expected structure of the abstract. In 2006, we included this template in the call for paper as follows:

- Briefly describe the research problem the PhD is addressing and its relevance to the Semantic Web area.
- Explain why this is a significant problem.
- Outline current approaches to the problem, and describe their strengths and weaknesses.
- Describe your proposed approach, clearly differentiating between the results achieved so far and the remaining work.
- Compare and contrast your approach with other existing approaches, in particular highlighting the shortcomings of other approaches, which your approach is planning to tackle.
- Present the expected contributions of your work and highlight the novelty and benefits of the suggested solutions.

- Sketch the research methodology that you have adopted (or you are planning to adopt), in particular your approach to evaluating/validating the results.

Given the positive feedback received from the attendees of the previous event, a similar template was suggested in 2007 on the web site of the symposium:

- Describe the research problem of the PhD thesis and argument its relevance for the Semantic Web area.
- Describe the state of the art, emphasizing the need for improvement and the feasibility of your approach.
- Summarize the expected contributions and outline the real-world use cases (applications, target audience) which will mainly benefit from your work.
- Sketch the research methodology that you have adopted (or you are planning to adopt), in particular your approach to evaluating/validating the results.
- Describe your proposed approach, clearly differentiating between the results achieved so far, the remaining work and the (planned) evaluation.
- Compare and contrast your approach with other existing approaches, in particular highlighting the shortcomings of other approaches, which your approach is planning to tackle.
- Conclude your summary with an outline of the planned future work.

## **2.7 Presentation Template**

Each full paper was presented in a talk of 25 minutes in the symposium. For accepted papers, we recommended presenters to allocate about 10 minutes of their time slot to discussions and to prepare between 8 and 12 slides, according to the following structure:

- Problem statement (1-2 slides),
- Research questions and expected contributions (1 slide),
- Proposed solution (4-6 slides),
- Evaluation or evaluation plans (1-2 slides),
- Future work (1 slide).

## **2.8 Student support**

In order to especially encourage female students to participate, we have organized financial support for female students from the [Hoppers@Kweb](mailto:Hoppers@Kweb) programme (cf. <http://hoppers-kweb.cs.manchester.ac.uk/funding.html>). In 2006, we could provide four students with a full grant (750 EUR), coming from Turkey, Poland, Romania, and Spain and 3 students with a partial grant (250 EUR). In 2007, we could provide four students with a full grant (750 EUR) from Germany, UK, Italy, and Sweden and one with a partial grant (500 EUR).

## **2.9 Awards**

In both KWEPSY instances, we offered a price of 500 EUR for the best paper submission (in 2006 this was sponsored by KnowledgeWeb, in 2007 it was sponsored by the BIT

school). To decide about the price, we asked already the reviewers in the scientific committee about their impression regarding the papers. In 2006, the decision was clear while in 2007 we had three best paper candidates. Hence, we asked all mentors to rank the best papers and the final result was also a clear vote. We intentionally did not include the presentation into the award decision since the presentation was meant to focus on giving feedback / improvements and should not have the ‘burden’ of an award decision in the minds of the presenters and the mentors.

The best papers were:

**2006: Sergey Lukichev: Visual Modeling and Verbalization of Rules**

**2007: Anne Schlicht: Improving the Usability of Large Ontologies by Modularization**

## **2.10 Dinner**

We also organized a joint dinner, in 2006 before the actual PhD symposium (for time reasons), in 2007 directly on the evening after the symposium. This dinner was intended to give the mentors and the PhD students another chance to talk together and to build up a ‘social relationship’ between both, potentially to survive beyond the end of the symposium.

## **3. The Programme**

The programme of KWEPSY 2006 was as follows:

9.00-9.10 Introduction

### **1. Session: Domain modeling**

9.10-9.50 C. Maria Keet: Enhancing biological information systems with granularity

9.50-10:20 Paul Doran: Ontology Reuse via Ontology Modularization

### **2. Session: Data**

10:20-10:50 Andriy Nikolov: Fusing Automatically Extracted Semantic Information

10:50-11:30 Coffee break

### **3. Session: Rules**

11:30-12:10 Loredana Laera: Resolving Semantic Heterogeneity in Rule-Enabled Ontologies

12:10-12:50 Sergey Lukichev: Visual Modeling and Verbalization of Rules

13:00-14:00 Lunch

### **3. Session: Applications**

14:00-14:40 Miriam Fernández: The Quest for Information Retrieval on the Semantic Web

14:40-15:00 Meeting of the award committee; preparations for the poster session

#### **4. Session: Award Ceremony**

15:00-15:20 The award ceremony. The winner is: Sergey Lukichev.

#### **5. Session: Poster session**

15:20-17:00

Malgorzata Mochol: MOMA Framework - How to find a suitable matching approach

Dilek Tapucu: Trusted Ontology Mapping for the Semantic Web

Agnieszka Lawrynowicz: Pattern discovery from the ontological layer of the Semantic Web

Raúl García Castro: Benchmarking Semantic Web Technology

Nabonita Guha: Semantic Digital Library Services

Tobias Bürger: The Role of Intelligent Content Objects in Service Oriented Architectures

Ana-Maria Muresan: Auditing using Semantic Web Services

Denny Vrandečić: Ontology Evaluation for the Web

For 2007, the programme was:

09:00 - 09:05 Opening

#### **1. Session**

09:05 - 09:30 Caching for Semantic Web Services, Michael Stollberg

09:30 - 09:55 Towards Novel Techniques for Reasoning in Expressive Description Logics based on Binary Decision Diagrams, Uwe Keller

09:55 - 10:20 Process Mediation in Semantic Web Services, Emilia Cimpian

10:20 - 10:45 Scalable Web Service Composition with Partial Matches, Adina Sirbu, Jörg Hoffmann

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee break

#### **2. Session**

11:00 - 11:25 Improving Email Conversation Efficiency by Enhancing Email with Semantics, Simon Scerri

11:25 - 11:50 Towards Distributed Ontologies with Description Logics, Martin Homola

11:50 - 12:15 A Framework for Distributed Reasoning on the Semantic Web Based on Open Answer Set Programming, Cristina Feier

12:15 - 12:50 Logic as a power tool to model negotiation mechanisms in the Semantic Web Era, Azzura Ragone

12:50 - 14:00 Lunch break

#### **3. Session**

14:00 - 14:25 Improving the Usability of Large Ontologies by Modularization, Anne Schlicht

14:25 - 14:50 Inferential Ontology Learning, Vit Novacek

14:50 - 15:15 Imprecise SPARQL: Towards a Unified Framework for Similarity-Based Semantic Web Tasks, Christoph Kiefer

15:15 - 15:50 Semiautomatic Creation of Semantic Networks, Lars Bröcker

15:50 - 16:15 Coffee break

#### **4. Poster Session**

16:15 - 17:30 Poster session

17:30 - 18:00 Wrap-up and closing

In 2006, we allowed for 30 minutes time slots (15 minutes presentation and 15 minutes discussion) for 1<sup>st</sup> year students and 40 minutes time slots (25 minutes presentation and 15 minutes discussion) for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year students to have enough room for discussions and suggestions from the mentors. For this purpose, we accepted only 6 presentations in 2006 (from 16 submissions).

In 2007, however, we had many high-quality submissions among the 55 received in total, that we decided to accept 12 this time, but had to reduce the presentation time to 25 minutes (15 minutes presentation + 10 minutes discussion).

#### **4. Statistics**

As mentioned above, we had 16 submissions in 2006, of which we accepted 6 as full presentations (37%) and another 8 as posters. In 2007, we had 55 submission, of which we accepted 12 as presentations (22%) and 17 as posters. During the PhD symposium, we had 28 attendants in 2006, almost 50% being scientific advisors. In 2007, the number of attendants increased to about 45, but most of them were PhD students actually and we had only 9 mentors this time. This was mainly because the symposium was at the end of a long conference week (starting with the European Semantic Technologies Conference ESTC and continuing with European Semantic Web Conference ESWC), so that we had difficulties in finding senior persons who were still at the conference and not at the same time involved in one of the parallel ESWC workshops.

#### **5. Feedback**

At the end of the symposium we specifically asked the participants for feedback about the symposium in an open panel. For 2006, most people criticized that the symposium was two days after the ESWC conference (in the middle of a KnowledgeWeb general assembly). While this led to idle time for the PhD students, it actually led to many mentors from KnowledgeWeb attending the symposium. However, we decided to integrate the symposium with the ESWC conference (also for sustainability reasons) to remove that gap for the PhD students. Furthermore, focusing on the narrative was mentioned as a very good objective for the symposium, but quite some of the comments still were targeted at the content level (so the mentors might have to improve on that).

Otherwise, most of the participants were happy with the setup and the special objectives of the symposium and especially mentioned the dinner to be a good idea.

In 2007, we received similar feedback (especially mentioning this time the focus on 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year students), even though the time for presentation and discussion was consid-

ered to be too short and also the poster session should have been longer. For reasons of time, we did not make an introductory round from the mentors this year, which we however, will reintroduce next time as it helps the students to better classify the comments of the mentors according to their main expertise area. Furthermore, some participants complained that the feedback they received from the reviewing process was very high level. This was because of the overwhelming number of submissions, which we had not expected and which increased the workload for the reviewers considerably. A nice idea (though difficult to implement) was to actually make the mentors present the work of the student to deepen the discussion on the topic (though this will exclude the ability of the students to train presentations about their theses).

## 6. Conclusions and Future

In summary, the two instances of the KnowledgeWeb PhD symposium (KWEPSY), which we have organized to broaden the scope of the Berlin-Brandenburg PhD network to a European level, have been conceived very successful by both the mentors and the attending PhD students.

Starting from 2007, the symposium has become an integral part of the European Semantic Web Conference (ESWC) which ensures that the symposium will continue to exist even beyond the end of the KnowledgeWeb project. This is also underlined by the fact that the European Association for Semantic Web Education (EASE) has decided in their 2007 general assembly to officially endorse the PhD symposium. In general, the setup of the symposium was very successful and we plan only minor modification, such as the re-introduction of the mentors introductory presentations or a higher number of scientific advisors to be able to accommodate a larger number of submissions expected for 2008.

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