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Multilingual Information Access for Text, Speech and Images

5th Workshop of the
Cross-Language Evaluation Forum, CLEF 2004
Bath, UK, September 15-17, 2004
Revised Selected Papers



Springer

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2005928950

CR Subject Classification (1998): H.3, I.2, H.4

ISSN 0302-9743

ISBN-10 3-540-27420-0 Springer Berlin Heidelberg New York

ISBN-13 978-3-540-27420-9 Springer Berlin Heidelberg New York

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springeronline.com

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Printed in Germany

Typesetting: Camera-ready by author, data conversion by Scientific Publishing Services, Chennai, India
Printed on acid-free paper SPIN: 11519645 06/3142 5 4 3 2 1 0

Preface

The fifth campaign of the Cross-Language Evaluation Forum (CLEF) for European languages was held from January to September 2004. Participation in the CLEF campaigns has increased each year and CLEF 2004 was no exception: 55 groups submitted results for one or more of the different tracks compared with 42 groups in the previous year. CLEF 2004 also marked a breaking point with respect to previous campaigns. The focus was no longer mainly concentrated on multilingual document retrieval as in previous years but was diversified to include different kinds of text retrieval across languages (e.g., exact answers in the question-answering track) and retrieval on different kinds of media (i.e., not just plain text but collections containing image and speech as well). In addition, increasing attention was given to issues that regard system usability and user satisfaction with tasks to measure the effectiveness of interactive systems or system components being included in both the cross-language question answering and image retrieval tasks with the collaboration of the coordinators of the interactive track.

The campaign culminated in a two-and-a-half-day workshop held in Bath, UK, 15–17 September, immediately following the 8th European Conference on Digital Libraries. The workshop was attended by nearly 100 researchers and system developers. In addition to presentations by participants in the campaign, talks included reports on the activities of the NTCIR evaluation initiative for Asian languages, and on industrial experience in building cross-language applications. The final session consisted of a panel in which the members attempted to analyze the current organization of the CLEF campaigns in depth, discussing whether CLEF is working on the right problems, choosing its investments wisely, and giving sufficient attention to the user perspective. Suggestions for the CLEF 2005 campaign included multilingual Web retrieval and a cross-language Geographic Information Retrieval track.

CLEF 2004 was conducted as an activity of the DELOS Network of Excellence on Digital Libraries, within the framework of the Information Society Technologies programme of the European Commission. These post-campaign proceedings were prepared with the assistance of the Center for the Evaluation of Language and Communication Technologies (CELCT), Trento, Italy. The support of DELOS and CELCT is gratefully acknowledged. We should also like to thank the other members of the CLEF Steering Committee for their assistance in the coordination of this event.

April 2005

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CLEF 2004 Coordination

CLEF is coordinated by the Istituto di Scienza e Tecnologie dell'Informazione, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, ISTI-CNR, Pisa.

The following institutions contributed to the organization of the different tracks of the CLEF 2004 campaign:

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- College of Information Studies and Institute for Advanced Computer Studies, University of Maryland, USA
- Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, University of Limerick, Ireland
- Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, UK
- Department of Information Studies, University of Tampere, Finland
- Eurospider Information Technology AG, Zürich, Switzerland
- Evaluations and Language Resources Distribution Agency, ELDA, Paris, France
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