Preface from the Workshop Chairs

These proceedings contain the papers presented in the First International Workshop on Teaching and Learning of Information Retrieval, held in London on the 10\textsuperscript{th} of January, 2007 at the British Computer Society Headquarters building.

Information Retrieval (IR) is a research area that has generated a great deal of interest recently, largely due to the growth in Internet use. Many different problems that have arisen during this time have been solved by means of the devotion and efforts of thousand of researchers around the world. These new advances are spread following the usual scientific channels: journals, conferences, forums, workshops and books. Therefore, researchers are kept abreast of new developments in the field.

Today, all this knowledge has had a significant impact in both personal and business use where it is common the presence, explicit or implicit, of IR tools. Therefore, it is very important that both undergraduate and postgraduate students understand the basis of this discipline, not just to conduct research, but also as a way of learning how search engines work. IR is a useful subject with which to reinforce the knowledge acquired in other subjects, such as programming, algorithms and data structures, user interface design etc. Also, postgraduate students who carry out research in this area require knowledge of the fundamental aspects of the subject, as they may be building new solutions on top of them.

Therefore as important as research is to IR, one way to improve the profile of the subject is to create a common space where IR lecturers and researchers can share their experiences and opinions in the field of IR teaching at any of the educational levels (from primary to postgraduate). The aim of the workshop is to provide this common space.

The organisers of the conference are very happy with the response to our call for papers, noticing the interest of the IR community in this field, particularly as there was no forum for this field. The workshop is composed of 10 papers selected for presentation, covering a wide range of topics and showing interesting experiences. A brief summary of all the contributions, classified in three main areas, is presented below.

\textbf{Session 1: E-learning and Learning Environments for teaching IR.}

- Design experiment on two information retrieval learning environments by Kai Halttunen. The author presents a user study comparing two experimental IR learning environments based on anchored instruction and intentional scaffolding, respectively.

- IR-BASE: An Integrated Framework for the Research and Teaching of Information Retrieval Technologies, by Pável Calado, Ana Cardoso-Cachopo, Arlindo L. Olvera. IR-BASE, a basic object oriented framework for the integration of components, documentation and services, focused on the rapid development of prototypes for research and teaching, is presented in this paper.

- Information Retrieval as eLearning Course in German. Lessons Learned after 5 Years of Experience, by Andreas Henrich and Karlheinz Morgenroth. The paper describes the long experience in the field of eLearning within the area of Information Retrieval at the University of Bamberg. The authors describe the structure of the course, the resources, as well as usage statistics and evaluation results.

- A Software Tool to Teach the Performance of Fuzzy IR Systems based on Weighted Queries by Enrique Herrera-Viedma, Sergio Alonso, Francisco J. Cabrerizo, Antonio G. Lopez-Herrera, and Carlos Porcel. This paper shows an IRS to teach students the principles and concepts of Fuzzy IR. With this teaching tool students learn the management of the fuzzy weighted query languages which could be used in any conventional Web search engine to improve the representation of user information needs.

- A flexible object-oriented system for teaching and learning structured IR by Luis M. de Campos, Juan M. Fernández-Luna, Juan F. Huete and Alfonso E. Romero. The researchers at the University of Granada show how they use Garnata, an IRS based on Probabilistic Graphical Models, to teach structured retrieval in a postgraduate programme.

\textbf{Session 2: Strategies and Mathematics for Teaching IR.}

- Pedagogic challenges in Information Retrieval: teaching mathematics to Postgraduate Information Science students by Andrew MacFarlane. The author describes his experience of teaching mathematics for IR to LIS students, and how various techniques and strategies can be used to improve the delivery of materials and positively affect the student experience in learning the subject.
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- Using Research Questions to Encourage Creativity and Assess Understanding in Teaching of Information Retrieval by, by Gareth F. J. Jones. The author presents his experiences of developing, delivering and assessing courses in IR.

- Teaching of Web IR: Web first or IR first? by Stefano Mizzaro. The paper presents two alternatives when teaching Web IR discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches, obtained from the literature, the author's experience and students' feedback.

Session 3: Curricula and evaluation.

- Information retrieval curricula; contexts and perspectives, by David Bawden, Polona Vilar, Jessica Bates, Jela Steinerov, Pertti Vakkari. This paper reports the main findings on curriculum development for information retrieval, in the wider context of information seeking human information behaviour.

- Integrating standard test collections in interactive IR instruction, by Eija Airio, Eero Sormunen, Kai Halttunen, Heikki Keskustalo. The paper shows the Query Performance Analyser, an interactive tool for the performance analysis of individual queries and the experiences of using the software.

This workshop is organised under the auspices of the Information Retrieval Specialist Group from the British Computer Society. We would like to thank this organization its support and encouragement, especially to the committee members, headed by Leif Azzopardi. Thanks go to the British Computer Society for allowing us access to its facilities to hold the workshop, assisting us in the registration and administrative tasks, and editing the proceedings.

We are very grateful to the members of the programme committee for their interesting and useful revisions of the submitted papers. This is composed of the following colleagues:

- Leif Azzopardi, Strathclyde University.
- Alex Bailey, Google.
- David Bawden, City University London.
- Ayse Goker, Robert Gordon University.
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- Monica Landoni, Strathclyde University.
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- Pauline Rafferty, City University London.
- Crawford Revie, Strathclyde University.
- Ian Ruthven, Strathclyde University.

And also we wish to thank the local organisers, who were in charge of all logistics of the conference: Andrew MacFarlane, City University London and Alex Bailey Google, Zurich. Although it has been a small workshop, there were lots of hours spent in its organization.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to those researchers and lecturers who submitted their papers into consideration, making possible this first edition of the workshop.

We hope this first workshop has created a discussion forum in an important IR area which had not been addressed by our community, and where IR lecturers and researchers may exchange interesting experiences in the field of teaching and learning IR, giving way to a long number of exiting editions.

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