

CLEF 2012 and Beyond: Perspectives for the Conference and Labs of the Evaluation Forum

by Nicola Ferro

Since 2000, CLEF has played a successful role in stimulating research and promoting evaluation in a wide range of key areas in the information access and retrieval domain. In 2010, a radical innovation and renewal process led to the establishment of the CLEF Initiative, whose mission is to promote research, innovation, and development of information access systems with emphasis on multilinguality and multimodality. The CLEF Initiative is structured in two main parts:

1. a series of Evaluation Labs, i.e., laboratories to conduct evaluation of information access systems and workshops to discuss and pilot innovative evaluation activities;
2. a peer-reviewed Conference on a broad range of issues, including
 - the activities of the Evaluation Labs;
 - experiments using multilingual and multimodal data; in particular, but not only, data resulting from CLEF activities;
 - research in evaluation methodologies and challenges.

Due to these changes and the broader scope of the CLEF Initiative, the acronym CLEF, traditionally expanded to Cross-Language Evaluation Forum, now translates to Conference and Labs of the Evaluation Forum. This renewal process and the organization of the annual CLEF events are partially supported by the EU FP7 PROMISE project (contract n. 258191): Participative Research labOratory for Multimedia and Multilingual Information Systems Evaluation and by the ELIAS RNP network.

CLEF 2012: Information Access Evaluation meets Multilinguality, Multimodality, and Visual Analytics

The annual meeting of the CLEF Initiative was hosted this year by the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, 17-20 September as a 4 day event in which



CLEF 2012 participants.

conference presentations, laboratory meetings, workshops, and community sessions were smoothly interleaved to provide a continuous stream of discussions on the different facets of experimental evaluation.

14 papers and 3 posters were accepted for the Conference and published by Springer in their Lectures Notes for Computer Science (LNCS) series. Two keynote speakers highlighted important developments in the field of evaluation. Peter Clark, Vulcan Inc., USA, focused on how to move from information retrieval to knowledgeable machines. Tobias Schreck, University of Konstanz, Germany, presented research challenges for visual search and analysis in textual and non-textual documents and their evaluation.

The community sessions at CLEF 2012 were organized around the presentation of the activities of other evaluation initiatives and an "Evaluation Clinic" where participants had the possibility of meeting evaluation experts and discussing with them their evaluation problems.

Seven benchmarking activities ran as evaluation labs in CLEF 2012. The results were presented and discussed in Rome in dedicated sessions:

- CHiC (Cultural Heritage in CLEF, new): investigating systematic and large-scale evaluation of cultural heritage digital libraries and information access systems;

- CLEF-IP: studying IR techniques in the patent domain;
- ImageCLEF: proposing experimental evaluation of image classification and retrieval, with a focus on the combination of textual and visual evidence;
- INEX (new in CLEF): evaluating XML retrieval;
- PAN: uncovering plagiarism, authorship and social software misuse;
- QA4MRE: evaluating machine reading systems through question answering and reading comprehension tests;
- RepLab (new): evaluating reputation management technologies.

There was also an exploratory workshop: CLEFeHealth 2012 (new) on cross-language evaluation of methods, applications, and resources for eHealth document analysis.

CLEF 2013 and Beyond

During CLEF 2012 considerable steps were taken to further reshape and improve the overall organization of CLEF. In order to allow for more time for planning and organizing the activities the bidding process for both CLEF 2013 and CLEF 2014 was completed and the host venues of the annual meeting for the next two years were decided.

CLEF 2013 will be hosted by the Technical University of Valencia, Spain, 23-26 September 2013 while CLEF 2014 will be hosted by the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, 15-19 September 2014.

The Call for Participation in the CLEF2013 Evaluation Labs and the Call for Papers for the CLEF 2013 Conference will both be released in November 2012. Lab registration will open in December 2012 and the expected deadline for the submission of papers to the conference is late April 2013. All details can be found on the CLEF website.

Finally, bids for hosting CLEF 2015 are now open and will close on 5th April 2013. Proposals can be sent to the CLEF Steering Committee Chair at chair@clef-initiative.eu.

Links

CLEF: <http://www.clef-campaign.org/>

CLEF 2015 Template for Bids:

http://www.clef-initiative.eu/documents/71612/87713/CLEF-Initiative-Template_for_bids.docx

PROMISE: <http://www.promise-noe.eu/>

ELIAS: <http://www.elias-network.eu/>

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Turing Year in Spain

by Juan José Moreno Navarro

A few years ago, Time magazine published a list of the 100 greatest minds of the 20th century, which included Alan Mathison Turing, alongside the Wright brothers, Albert Einstein, the DNA breakers Crick and Watson, and the discoverer of penicillin, Alexander Fleming.

As clearly shown by the special theme section, we have Turing to thank for many concepts that underpin technologies that are now part of our daily lives: the first computers, the program stored, artificial intelligence, software verification and modelling. Without Turing and his brilliant ideas we would not be able to shop online, watch a video on a tablet, remotely manage our finances, play our favorite music on an mp3 device, send emails, get an x-ray or travel on high-speed trains. Like many great ideas,

such as the wheel or the arch, which in hindsight seem obvious, with his one invention, the general-purpose computer, Turing changed the world.

What is remarkable about Turing is the breadth and scope of his contributions to society. While some of the individuals on Time's list have made their mark in history with a single great contribution, Turing made numerous contributions. He was responsible for: the foundations of artificial intelligence, proposing the Turing Test, the basis of the verification and validation of software, the first uses of algorithmic modelling of natural phenomena (in this case, biological or morphogenesis patterns), connectionist networks, and more. Few scientists have been such visionaries in their field as Turing was in computer science.

A wonderful way to honour Turing is to raise public awareness of his work. Whilst the achievements of scientists like Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Einstein are widely appreciated by the general public, fewer people are aware of the work of Turing, although his ideas arguably have had an even greater impact on our daily lives.

Unfortunately there is much work to do: even those with the best intentions, in trying to popularize Turing's work, have tended to focus on his work as an accomplished code breaker and hero of the Second World War or his contribution to Artificial Intelligence. But his contributions to the creation of the modern computer deserve a place of honour in the Olympus of the greatest scientists of all time.

The commemoration of Turing Year / Year of Informatics is coordinated by the Spanish Scientific Computer Science Society (SCIE – www.scie.es) in collaboration with the Conference of Directors and Deans of Computer Science of Spain (CODDII – coddii.org). It began in Madrid with a formal opening ceremony on 27 July, and will end in June 2013. After that, SCIE will organize the Spanish Conference of Informatics - CEDI, a biennial event that brings together more than 2,000 Spanish researchers in computer science. An Organizing Committee is coordinating the event, with the assistance of an Advisory Committee chaired by Prince Felipe de Borbón.

As well as being a tribute to Turing, the celebration in Spain has an additional goal in showing colleagues, science policy makers and the general public that computer science (CS) is a very active area of research with excellent indicators: Spain occupies the 7th place in the world ranking, produces around 7% of Spanish scientific publications and represents around 3.6% of the CS production of the world, being, in summary, the most dynamic research subject area in Spain.

In celebration of the Turing year we have planned several activities including academic, scientific, dissemination and industry collaboration. Check <http://turing.coddii.org/turing> for a detailed list of activities.

Two of the academic and scientific activities of note include: the 7th annual celebration of the National Awards in Informatics, and a summer course in the prestigious Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo entitled "1st Meeting in Commemoration of Alan Turing". This very successful and exciting meeting took place in August 2012.

In the dissemination area we have been actively engaging with media. We have had media coverage in high profile newspapers, broadcasting and TV and there will be more to come. In particular, a blog is running in El País (the most followed newspaper in Spain). This is a Spanish-language blog that can be viewed at <http://blogs.elpais.com/turing/>. We are also planning activities in museums and schools and an ambitious exhibition on computer art developed in Spain in the sixties. The exhibition, which is usually based in Madrid, will be visiting several other cities in Spain.

Our goal is to act as exemplary and enthusiastic ambassadors of computer science and to provide Spanish society with a deeper understanding of a singular figure and of the discipline of computer science.

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