

Preface

Digital Libraries are complex and advanced forms of information systems which extend and augment their physical counterparts by amplifying existing resources and services and enabling development of new kinds of human problem solving and expression. Their complexity arises from the data-rich domain of discourse as well as from extended demands for multi-disciplinary input, involving distributed systems architectures, structured digital documents, collaboration support, human-computer interaction, information filtering, etc. In addition to the broad range of technical issues, ethics and intellectual property rights add to the complication that is normally associated with the development, maintenance, and use of Digital Libraries.

The Second European Conference on Digital Libraries (ECDL'98) builds upon the success of the first of this series of European Conferences on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries, held last year in Pisa, Italy, September 1-3, 1997.

This series of conferences is partially funded by the TMR Programme of the European Commission and is actively supported and promoted by the European Research Consortium on Informatics and Mathematics (ERCIM). The aim is to bring together the different communities involved in the development of Digital Libraries, to review progress and to discuss strategies, research and technological development (RTD) issues, as well as specific topics related to the European context. These communities include professionals from universities, research centres, industry, government agencies, public libraries, etc. One of the main objectives is to promote and sustain an international and multi-disciplinary Digital Libraries community, facilitating scientific and technological progress, enabling growth of the available infrastructure and services, increasing the dissemination bandwidth and attracting further interest, particularly from young scientists.

ECDL'98 is held in Heraklion, Crete, Greece, September 21-23, 1998, and is organised by the Institute of Computer Science (ICS) of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH) in co-operation with the Department of Computer Science of the University of Crete. It is a truly international event of a distinctively interdisciplinary nature. The international programme committee of the conference comprised 32 representatives from 13 countries. In total, 107 papers were received, a significant increase from last year, which were assigned to 56 reviewers. The significant increase in the number of paper submissions marks the growing interest that the field of Digital Libraries has attracted over the past year. Following a rigorous peer review selection process, where each paper was reviewed by at least three reviewers, 35 full papers were selected. The high quality of the submitted papers also indicates the rapid progress that is taking place in this emerging technological field. Additionally, the conference features 1 keynote speaker, 10 invited talks, 7 tutorials, 32 posters, 6 panel sessions, 2 special sessions, 13 demonstrations, and 9 DELOS Workshop papers.

We are indebted to all those who have contributed to make this conference possible. The TMR Programme of the European Commission, ERCIM, ICS-FORTH, University of Crete, and the sponsors of this conference; the international programme committee, the reviewers and the local organising committee; the invited speakers, the paper and poster presenters, the organisers and participants of tutorials, panel sessions, case studies and demonstrations, and all the conference participants.

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Christos Nikolaou and Constantine Stephanidis

Organisation

The Second European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries was organised in Heraklion, Crete, Greece by the Institute of Computer Science (ICS) of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH), in co-operation with the Department of Computer Science of the University of Crete, and with the assistance of the European Commission (TMR Programme) and the European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics (ERCIM).

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