

Preface

The workshop on Applications of Natural Language to Information Systems (NLDB) has since 1995 provided a forum for academic and industrial researchers and practitioners to discuss the application of natural language to both the development and use of software applications.

The use of natural language in relation to software has contributed to improving the development of software from the viewpoints of both the developers and the users. Developers benefit from improvements in conceptual modeling, software validation, natural language program specifications, and many other areas. Users benefit from increased usability of applications through natural language query interfaces, semantic webs, text summarizations, etc.

The integration of natural language and information systems has been a research objective for a long time now. Today, the goal of good integration seems not so far-fetched. This is due mainly to the rapid progress of research in natural language and to the development of new and powerful technologies. The integration of natural language and information systems has become a convergent point towards which many researchers from several research areas are focussing.

NLDB 2002 was hosted by the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden during 27–28 June and 42 papers were submitted to the workshop. The papers were distributed to the members of the program committee for reviewing. Each paper was reviewed by a minimum of three referees. The reviews were collected and evaluated resulting in a number of papers that were clearly to be accepted, clearly to be rejected, and some needing additional reviewing. The additional reviewing was done by members of the program committee not previously acquainted with the paper. To support the program committee chair in his final decision some papers were reviewed and discussed by up to five reviewers. Most of this process was done through e-mail.

Due to the large number of high-quality submissions it was decided to accept 17 full papers and 7 short papers for presentation at the conference. Each paper was classified as belonging to one of the following presentation themes:

- Linguistic aspects of modeling,
- Information retrieval,
- Natural language text understanding,
- Knowledge bases,
- Recognition of information in natural language descriptions,
- Natural language conversational systems,
- Short papers.

We wish to thank all members of the program committee for their refereeing work and sharing of valuable insights.

We also would like to thank the conference keynote speaker, Prof. Dieter Fensel, for his speech on the emerging Semantic Web. This is certainly one area where the research results of applications of natural language to information systems are and will continue to be applicable.

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