

Preface

We are living in a fascinating period, when the applications of natural language processing (NLP) are going mainstream. The maturity of the field has reached a stage in which its solidity can be witnessed in the adoption and uptake of its technologies outside the core NLP academic community. The success and visibility of software systems such as IBM Watson, Siri, and Google Knowledge graph are incentivizing the increase of interest in the field and the adoption of NLP in diverse areas.

The past two decades in which NLDB has been active were fundamental for the establishment of the foundations and the further maturation of this field and NLDB can claim the share of its contributions. During this time, NLDB has been one of the main conferences for applications in NLP, in which researchers could find a sweet spot between rigorous scientific contributions and openness to new ideas and perspectives. Another notable characteristic that has been consistently present at NLDB is multidisciplinary: NLDB has welcomed contributions from applications of NLP into different areas, and has helped in bridging NLP to different communities and application fields.

This year's NLDB featured a special track on natural language and its connection to semantic and cognitive computing. Semantic computing aims at connecting the user's information need with the meaning of content in a multidisciplinary fashion. Cognitive computing systems naturally interact with people and learn over time.

The NLDB 2015 program spanned a wide range of topics that all revolve around the use of natural language to access information. Three invited speakers covered topics as diverse as distributional semantics, computational humanities, and linked open data. Sessions comprised the following topics: unsupervised and semi-supervised machine learning, information extraction, event extraction and named entity recognition, multilingual alignment and translation, sentiment detection and user-generated content processing, indexing and the lexicon, query processing, question answering, speech processing, and dialog systems. Last, but not least, the special session on semantic and cognitive computing attracted position papers and featured a sponsored talk by IBM.

NLDB 2015 had a higher number of submissions compared with previous years. Out of 100 submissions, 18 papers were accepted as full papers (18 % acceptance rate), 15 as short papers (33 % acceptance rate) and 14 as posters and demos (47 % acceptance rate). A lot of work was involved in the careful selection of the papers and we would like to thank the Program Committee and reviewers for their hard work and dedication. We would also like to thank the invited speakers for their inspiring contributions to the program.

NLDB 2015 was held in the picturesque town of Passau. Dating back to Roman times, Passau is located at the German-Austrian border and it is notable for being at the convergence of three rivers (the Danube, the Inn, and the Ilz). Its location at the heart of Europe and its proximity to different borders made Passau a natural confluence for different cultures and influences, a fact that is embodied in its architecture that harmoniously blends German, Austrian, and Italian styles. Despite its openness, Passau is

deeply connected to its German and Bavarian traditions and symbols and offers a great entry point for the German culture.

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In its 20th anniversary we would like to celebrate the effort behind the construction of the NLDB community, expressing our gratitude to authors, Program Committee members, and organizers for the past editions of NLDB.

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