

# Preface

Since 2000, the Conference and Labs of the Evaluation Forum (CLEF) has played a leading role in stimulating research and innovation in the domain of multimodal and multilingual information access. Initially founded as the Cross-Language Evaluation Forum and running in conjunction with the European Conference on Digital Libraries (ECDL/TPDL), CLEF became a standalone event in 2010 combining a peer-reviewed conference with a multi-track evaluation forum. CLEF 2015<sup>1</sup> was hosted by the *Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse* UMR 5505 CNRS, *Université de Toulouse*, France, SIG team.

The CLEF conference addresses all aspects of information access in any modality and language. The conference has a clear focus on experimental IR as done at evaluation forums (CLEF Labs, TREC, NTCIR, FIRE, MediaEval, RomIP, SemEval, TAC, ...), paying special attention to the challenges of multimodality, multilinguality, and interactive search. We invited submissions on significant new insights demonstrated on the resulting IR test collections, on analysis of IR test collections and evaluation measures, as well as on concrete proposals to push the boundaries of the Cranfield/TREC/CLEF paradigm. The conference format consisted of keynotes, contributed papers, lab sessions, and poster sessions, including reports from other benchmarking initiatives from around the world. It was an honor and a privilege to have Gregory Grefenstette (INRIA Saclay, France), Mounia Lalmas (Yahoo Labs, London, UK), and Douglas W. Oard (University of Maryland, USA) as keynote speakers. Greg talked about personal information systems and personal semantics, Mounia addressed the topic of user engagement evaluation, and Doug examined issues in privacy and ethics when searching among secrets.

CLEF 2015 received a total of 68 submissions, a dramatic increase over previous years. Each submission was reviewed by at least three PC members, and the two program chairs oversaw the reviewing and often extensive follow-up discussion. Where the discussion was not sufficient to make a decision, the paper, went through an extra review by the PC. A novel feature of the CLEF 2015 conference was to invite CLEF 2014 lab organizers to nominate a “best of the labs” paper, which was reviewed as a full paper submission to the CLEF 2015 conference according to the same review criteria and PC. This resulted in 8 full papers accepted corresponding to each of the CLEF 2014 labs. We received 24 regular full paper submissions, of which 8 (33 %) full papers were accepted for regular oral presentation, 7 further full paper submissions (29 %, making a total of 63 %) accepted with short oral presentation and a poster. We received 36 short paper submissions, and accepted 20 (55 %).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://clef2015.clef-initiative.eu/>

In addition to these talks, the eight benchmarking labs reported results of their year long activities in overview talks and lab sessions<sup>2</sup>. The eight labs running as part of CLEF 2015 were as follows:

**CLEFeHealth** provided scenarios aiming to ease patients' and nurses' understanding and accessing of eHealth information. The goals of the lab were to develop processing methods and resources in a multilingual setting, to enrich difficult-to-understand eHealth texts, and provide valuable documentation. The tasks were: information extraction from clinical data, and user-centered health information retrieval.

**ImageCLEF** provided four main tasks with a global objective of benchmarking automatic annotation and indexing of images. The tasks tackled different aspects of the annotation problem and aimed at supporting and promoting cutting-edge research addressing the key challenges in the field: image annotation, medical classification, medical clustering, and liver CT annotation.

**LifeCLEF** provided image-based plant, bird, and fish identification tasks addressing multimodal data by (i) considering birds and fish in addition to plants, (ii) considering audio and video content in addition to images, (iii) scaling-up the evaluation data to hundreds of thousands of life media records and thousands of living species. The tasks were: an audio record-based bird identification task (BirdCLEF), an image-based plant identification task (PlantCLEF), and a fish video surveillance task (FishCLEF).

**Living Labs for IR (LL4IR)** provided a benchmarking platform for researchers to evaluate their ranking systems in a live setting with real users in their natural task environments. The lab acted as a proxy between commercial organizations (live environments) and lab participants (experimental systems), facilitated data exchange, and made comparisons between the participating systems. The task was: product search and web search.

**News Recommendation Evaluation Lab (NEWSREEL)** provided two tasks designed to address the challenge of real-time news recommendation. Participants could: a) develop news recommendation algorithms and b) have them tested by millions of users over the period of a few weeks in a living lab. The tasks were: benchmark news recommendations in a living lab, benchmarking news recommendations in a simulated environment.

**Uncovering Plagiarism, Authorship, and Social Software Misuse (PAN)** provided evaluation of uncovering plagiarism, authorship, and social software misuse. PAN offered three tasks at CLEF 2015 with new evaluation resources consisting of large-scale corpora, performance measures, and web services that allowed for meaningful evaluations. The main goal was to provide for sustainable and reproducible evaluations, to get a clear view of the capabilities of state-of-the-art algorithms. The tasks were: plagiarism detection, author identification, and author profiling.

**Question Answering (QA)** provided QA from the starting point of a natural language question. However, answering some questions may need to query linked data

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<sup>2</sup> The full details for each lab are contained in a separate publication, the Working Notes, which are available online at <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1391/>.

(especially if aggregations or logical inferences are required); whereas some questions may need textual inferences and querying free-text. Answering some queries may need both. The tasks were: QALD: Question Answering over Linked Data, entrance exams: questions from reading tests, BioASQ: large-scale biomedical semantic indexing, and BioASQ: biomedical question answering.

**Social Book Search (SBS)** provided evaluation of real-world information needs which are generally complex, yet almost all research focuses instead on either relatively simple search based on queries or recommendation based on profiles. The goal of the Social Book Search Lab was to investigate techniques to support users in complex book search tasks that involve more than just a query and results list. The tasks were: suggestion track, and interactive track.

A rich social program was organized in conjunction with the conference, starting with a welcome reception with local food and wine specialties, continuing with a city hall reception, which included the local band “*La mal Coiffée*”. The social dinner was enjoyed in a famous organic restaurant named “*Saveur Bio*”, and master classes in (1) traditional polyphonic singing with Bastien Zaoui from the famous Vox Bigerri band and (2) wine and food pairing with Yves Cinotti, were also offered.

The success of CLEF 2015 would not have been possible without the huge effort of several people and organizations, including the CLEF Association<sup>3</sup>, the Program Committee, the Lab Organizing Committee, the Local Organization Committee in Toulouse, the reviewers, and the many students and volunteers who contributed along the way. We would like to acknowledge the *Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse* UMR 5505 CNRS and its director, Prof. Michel Daydé, for the support we got, first for bidding to host the conference, then for organizing it. We also received the support from the following universities and schools: Ecole supérieure du professorat et de l’éducation, Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès, Université Paul Sabatier, and Université du Capitole. We also gratefully acknowledge the support we received from our sponsors. The ESF Research Networking Program ELIAS, the ACM SIG-IR, the *Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès*, and the *Région Midi-Pyrénées* for their strong financial support; but also: Springer, the *Université Paul Sabatier*, *Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse* UMR 5505 CNRS, INFORSID, *Université Toulouse Capitole*, EGC, ARIA, and ACL. The level of sponsorship allowed us to offer 20 grants for students in addition to a free registration for the 25 volunteers including 11 further students.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.clef-initiative.eu/association>

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