

Preface

Since its inception in the last decade, the Semantic Web has experienced a steady and continuous development toward its original vision, both in terms of research and of technology development and applications. Many of the research results presented in the initial conferences have now matured and been taken up in commercial settings, giving rise to new research problems that are now being explored. Large-scale initiatives, such as some of the most popular datasets in the linked open data cloud, are now considered as commodities and are part of many services that are being used on a daily basis, not only inside our research community but also in other research areas.

The International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC) has continued to be the premier venue for presenting innovative systems, applications, and research results related to the Semantic Web. In this edition, we aimed at making it even more clear that the Semantic Web is not only about using the well-known W3C recommendations RDF, RDF Schema, and/or OWL, and dealing with their associated challenges, but generally about the combination of semantics, data, and the Web.

This volume contains the proceedings of ISWC 2015, with papers accepted into the various tracks for which specific calls for papers had been issued. Besides the usual research track, this year we split the Replication, Benchmark, Data and Software track and the Semantic Web In-Use track from previous editions into three more specialized tracks, covering: Empirical Studies and Experiments, In-Use and Software, and Data Sets and Ontologies.

We received a very good response to all our calls from a truly international community of researchers and practitioners. The statistics on the submissions and accepted papers were:

- Research track: 172 papers submitted, with 38 of them accepted
- Empirical Studies and Experiments track: 23 papers submitted, with seven of them accepted
- In-Use and Software track: 33 papers submitted, with 14 of them accepted
- Data Sets and Ontologies track: 35 papers submitted, with eight of them accepted

All submitted papers were reviewed by at least three Program Committee (PC) members. In the case of the research track, the review process for each paper was also overviewed by a senior PC member, whose job was to drive discussions among reviewers when their points of view diverged, to make sure that clear questions were sent to the authors so as to give them the opportunity to reply to reviewers during the rebuttal period, and to provide a final meta-review with a summary of the strongest and weakest aspects of each of the papers. Finally, the acceptance and rejection of papers were decided via phone conferences between PC chairs and senior PC members that lasted two consecutive days.

This year's edition also had two additional innovations. On the one hand, we encouraged authors to include pointers to any additional material that supports the

scientific claims made in their papers (e.g., extended technical reports, source code, datasets, links to applications). This proposal was received well among authors, who made an extra effort to make such additional material available for reviewers first, and if their paper was accepted, to make it available together with their camera-ready version of the paper. Such additional material has been uploaded into a variety of systems, including figshare, zenodo and institutional repositories of universities and research centers.

The second request introduced by PC chairs was the suggestion to reviewers to sign their reviews if they wished, following recent trends on open reviewing, so as to pave the way for having a more transparent review process for our conference. The number of signed reviews was still very low, which suggests that there is a need to continue discussions on whether this open review model is applicable for a conference like ISWC or should be left to journals, which have a longer review process.

ISWC 2015 also included a Doctoral Consortium track for PhD students from the Semantic Web community, giving them the opportunity not only to present their work but also to discuss in detail their research topics and plans and to receive extensive feedback from leading scientists in the field. The Doctoral Consortium was very efficiently run by Fabio Ciravegna and María-Esther Vidal.

Another unique aspect of the International Semantic Web Conferences is the Semantic Web Challenge. In this competition, practitioners and scientists are encouraged to showcase useful and leading-edge applications of Semantic Web technology. This year the Semantic Web Challenge was organized by Sean Bechhofer and Kostis Kyzirakos. It consisted of two main tracks, the Open track, focused on end-user applications, and the Big Data track, which follows on the success of the Billion Triple Data track from previous editions.

The ISWC program was further enriched by keynote talks given by leading figures from both the academic and business world. Specifically, Michael Atkin, Andrew McCallum, and Ian Horrocks.

As in previous ISWC editions, the conference program also included an extensive Tutorial and Workshop Program, with eight tutorials and 24 workshops, which were co-ordinated by Miriam Fernández and Krzysztof Janowicz.

We would like to thank Jeff Z. Pan and Serena Villata for chairing an excellent Poster and Demo Session, and Vinay Chaudhri and Tony Shaw for co-ordinating the Industry Track, a forum for the latest discussions and demonstrations of semantic applications in the commercial world. The Industry Track serves as a complement to the In-Use and Software Track and shows just how far semantics are expanding through the enterprise.

The conference also included a Lightning Talk session, where ISWC attendees could at very short notice get five minutes of attention from the audience, to report on anything they have done, plan to do, like or dislike about the Semantic Web.

We are also much indebted to Krishnaprasad Thirunarayan, our proceedings chair, who provided invaluable support in compiling the printed proceedings and exhibited super-human patience in allowing the other chairs to stretch deadlines to the absolute limit. Many thanks also to Matthew Horridge and Nadeschda Nikitina, our student coordinators, and to Juan Sequeda, our publicity chair.

As has been the case for the past few years, ISWC 2015 also contributed to the linked data cloud, by providing semantically characterized data on aspects of the conference. This would not have been possible without the efforts of our metadata chair, Heiko Paulheim.

We would like to give a special thank you to the local organization chair, Jeff Heflin and his team, who did a brilliant job in taking care of the local arrangements and ensuring that anything the Organizing Committee needed was promptly made available. We would also like to thank the generous contribution from our sponsors and the fine work of the sponsorship chairs, Michelle Cheatham and Carlos Pedrinaci. Finally, we are indebted to Andrei Voronkov and his team for providing the sophisticated and convenient service of EasyChair and to Alfred Hofmann, Anna Kramer, and their team at Springer for being most helpful with publishing the proceedings.

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