
WORKSHOP REPORT

The Fourth Asian Information Retrieval Symposium (AIRS 08)

Hang Li, Wei-Ying Ma
Microsoft Research Asia
hangli@microsoft.com,
wyma@microsoft.com

Jian-Yun Nie
University of Montreal
nie@iro.umontreal.ca

Kam-Fai Wong
The Chinese University of
Hong Kong
kfwong@se.cuhk.edu.hk

1 The conference

Asia Information Retrieval Symposium (AIRS) 2008 was held in Harbin Institute of Technology, China, in January 15-18, 2008. This was the fourth AIRS conference in the series established in 2004. The previous conferences have been held in Beijing (2004), Jeju (2005) and Singapore (2006). The AIRS conferences trace their roots to the successful Information Retrieval with Asian Languages (IRAL) workshops, which started in 1996.

The AIRS conference aims to bring together international researchers and developers to exchange new ideas and the latest results in information retrieval. The scope of the conference encompasses the theory and practice of all aspects of information retrieval in text and multimedia data.

AIRS 2008 has received 144 submissions from all continents: Asia, Europe, North America, South America and Africa. 39 of them have been accepted as regular papers (27% acceptance rate) and 45 as short papers (31%). All submissions have been double-blind reviewed. The proceedings are published by Springer as an issue of the Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS).

The conference has been jointly organized by the Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT) and the Chinese Information Processing Society of China (CIPS), in corporation with ACM SIGIR. It has been sponsored by Microsoft Research Asia and Tencent.

More information can be found on the conference website: <http://ir.hit.edu.cn/airs2008/>

2 Presentations

2.1 Invited talks

Two distinguished researchers were invited to give keynote speeches: Yves Chiaramella from University Joseph Fourier of Grenoble and Kenneth Church from Microsoft Research.

Yves Chiaramella delivered a talk on “Indexing and retrieving structured and semi-structured information”. He has investigated this topic for many years. He first reviewed the problem of retrieving structured and semi-structured information and the possible impact of it. He then reviewed two families of approaches to deal with the problem: model-oriented and tool-oriented. Finally, he observed that there is an acute need to integrate both approaches.

Ken Church’s talk was about “Entropy of search engine logs: How hard is search?”. In this talk, he reviewed previous utilizations of entropy and language modeling on different problems. He then

described how these techniques can be used for search, in particular, for its personalization, and to predict how personalization and query suggestion can be useful.

2.2 Tutorials

Dr. Tie-Yan Liu has delivered a tutorial on “Learning to Rank for Information Retrieval”, and Prof. Gary Geunbae Lee on “Speech, Dialog and Ubiquitous Information Access”.

2.3 Paper presentations

The accepted papers have been presented in the following sessions:

- IR models
- Image Retrieval
- Text Classification
- Chinese Language Processing
- Text Processing
- Applications of IR
- Machine Learning
- Taxonomy
- IR Methods
- Information Extraction
- Summarization
- Multimedia
- Web IR
- Text Clustering,

Short papers have been presented at a poster session.

The full list of papers and posters can be found on the conference’s website:

<http://ir.hit.edu.cn/airs2008/technicalprogram.asp>

3 Final remarks

The AIRS 08 conference featured research papers covering a large array of topics in IR, from IR models to application, from text retrieval to multimedia retrieval. The large number of submissions to this conference strongly reflects the fact that information retrieval is an increasingly active research area in Asia. Research in this area is engaged in both academia and industry. AIRS has successfully served as a forum to exchange research ideas between these two communities. It also attracted researchers from other continents. We expect the area of IR will become even more active in the coming years in Asia, and AIRS will continue to serve as the major IR conference in Asia.
