

Second International Symposium on Information Interaction in Context

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1 Introduction

The second International Symposium on Information Interaction in Context (IiX'08) was held at the London office of the British Computer Society (BCS), London, UK on 14-17 October 2008. IiX'08 succeeded the first symposium held in Copenhagen in 2006.

The primary objective of IiX is to investigate how the concept of context can be understood and exploited to make information systems truly interactive. Knowledge about context can be used effectively to constrain retrieval and seeking of information and to understand ensuing information behaviours including relevance and use, thereby reducing the complexity of the interaction processes. As in the case of the first IiX symposium, the aim of IiX'08 was to bring together researchers from the related areas of information seeking behaviour, laboratory IR, and interactive IR to provide a forum for discussion and collaboration on context issues with respect to information seeking and retrieval. This was successfully achieved in IiX 2008, as a variety of angles to the concept of context, as well as suggestions as to how to consider and treat context in information seeking and retrieval, were presented.

IiX'08 attracted over 90 participants from 5 continents and 15 countries. The conference organisation (both the social and scientific programs) was planned with the aim of creating an informal atmosphere that encouraged interaction and discussion in every opportunity. The mix of participants (younger and more senior researchers, doctoral students) also contributed to a relaxed, informal atmosphere conducive to highly enjoyable social and scientific interaction.

2 Conference Organisation and Content

The proceedings of the conference are published by the ACM Digital Library, as part of the ACM International Conference Proceedings Series. In the following section we summarise the main components of the conference.

2.1 Keynote presentations

IiX'08 included two keynote presentations from senior researchers. The conference was opened by a keynote presentation given by Stephen Robertson (Microsoft Research, UK) entitled: "The study of information retrieval - a long view". In his presentation, Prof. Robertson outlined the opposition between, on the one hand, experiments conducted in a laboratory setting, and on the other, studies in more naturalistic settings with people and real information needs, and proceeded to a discussion of the compromises that are made in pursuit of scientific validity and reliability in these settings.

The second keynote presentation was given by Ian Ruthven (University of Strathclyde, UK), with the title: “The context of the interface”. Dr. Ruthven’s keynote examined existing search interfaces to highlight how the nature of information retrieval interfaces has changed in response to research from contextual information seeking and retrieval, with a particular emphasis on the commercial nature of web search interfaces.

2.2 Research papers

IiX 2008 received 54 paper submissions from 19 countries (four continents) and accepted 18 full and 5 research in progress papers. Submissions were received in accordance with the overall theme of the conference, which (similar to IiX’06) was organised within three main research areas that contribute to our understanding of interactive information seeking and retrieval: Information Behaviour, Laboratory IR, and Interactive IR. Each of these areas had its own Thematic Programme Chair responsible for managing the review process: Information Behaviour (chaired by John Feather, University of Loughborough, UK), Laboratory IR (chaired by Arjen de Vries, CWI, Netherlands) and Interactive IR (chaired by Diane Kelly, University of North Carolina, USA). Jesper W. Schneider and Pia Borlund as Program Chairs had the overall management of the reviewer selection and assignment process.

The accepted contributions were thematically divided into sessions that covered the broad areas on interactive IR, context retrieval methods, personalisation, evaluation and relevance, museums and archives in context, and information seeking. Within these sessions, the individual contributions reported work in areas as diverse as image and music retrieval, bioinformatics, context-aware mobile applications, and children’s information seeking behaviour.

The best paper award for IiX’08 was given to Hideo Joho, Joemon Jose and David Hannah from the University of Glasgow for the paper “Comparing collaborative and independent search in a recall-oriented task”. The award was sponsored by Yahoo! Research. The decision for the award was taken by a committee consisting of Monica Landoni from the University of Lugano in Switzerland, Nils Pharo from Oslo University College in Norway and Ian Ruthven from the University of Strathclyde in the UK. The committee was chaired by Anastasios Tombros.

2.3 Panel Discussion

As in the first IiX conference in 2006, a lively panel discussion was part of the program. The title of the panel was Information Interaction: Problems & Challenges, and was organised by Peter Ingwersen from the Royal School of Library and Information Studies, Denmark. The five panellists (Nick Belkin from Rutgers University, Ayşe Göker from City University London, Diane Kelly from the University of North Carolina, Steve Robertson from Microsoft Research Cambridge, and Ian Ruthven from the University of Strathclyde) addressed a number of questions on current problems and near-future challenges concerned with theoretical and methodological, as well as application issues, of information interaction. The questions were distributed to the panellists in advance in order to prepare their responses. The session had a highly interactive nature with a number of very interesting questions and observations from the audience. Overall, the panel session contributed to a thought provoking, relaxing and informal atmosphere.

2.4 Doctoral forum

A doctoral forum was organised as part of IiX’08. The forum was a one-day event, taking place the day before the start of the main conference. The doctoral forum was an invitation to doctoral students to present their research projects, and in return receive constructive feedback. The primary objective of the forum was therefore to provide doctoral students with a forum to present and discuss their research

projects with senior researchers and fellow students and to develop their relationships with other scientists.

The forum was chaired by Erica Cosijn from the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and Ross Wilkinson from CSIRO, Australia. Participating students were selected by the forum chairs based on a short paper describing their doctoral research project and their motivation for participating in the forum as well as the stage of their projects. In total 14 applications were accepted, representing a broad range of research perspectives. Seven senior researchers experienced in one or more of the IiX symposium themes gave feedback to the students and discussed their projects with them, based on their papers and presentations at the forum. The senior researchers were: Katriina Bystrom (Swedish School of Library and Information Science, Sweden), Theresa Dirndorfer-Anderson (University of Technology, Sydney, Australia), Ayşe Göker (City University, UK), Joemon Jose (University of Glasgow, UK), Diane Kelly (University of North Carolina, US), Andrew MacFarlane (City University, UK), Daniella Petrelli (University of Sheffield, UK).

2.5 Tutorials

The day before the start of the main conference also included two half-day tutorials. The selection of the tutorials was organized by the two chairs, Eero Sormunen from the University of Tampere in Finland, and Peter Ingwersen from the Royal School of Library and Information Studies in Denmark. The first tutorial by Ayşe Göker and her colleagues from City University London and AmbieSense, focused on information interaction in mobile environments. The second tutorial by Peter Ingwersen proposed and demonstrated a research framework for semi-controlled field studies in interactive IR. Tutorials were included in the program of IiX for the first time this year.

2.6 Workshops

Three workshops were also held in conjunction with IiX'08 on the day after the main conference. The workshops were:

- *Teaching and Learning of IR*. Organisers: Andrew MacFarlane (City University London), Juan F. Huete and Juan M. Fernández-Luna (Universidad de Granada), Efthimis N. Efthimiadis (University of Washington). <http://www soi.city.ac.uk/~andym/TLIR08/>
- *Corpus Profiling for Information Retrieval and Natural Language Processing*. Organisers: Anne De Roeck (The Open University), Dawei Song (Robert Gordon University), Udo Kruschwitz (University of Essex). <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/events/corpus-profiling/index.php>
- *Adaptive Information Retrieval*. Organisers: Joemon M. Jose, C. J. van Rijsbergen, Hideo Joho (University of Glasgow). <http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/workshops/air2008/index.html>

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4 The IiX Symposium in 2010

The next in the series of the IiX conferences, will be organised by Professor Nick Belkin, Rutgers University, USA and will be held in New Jersey, USA in 2010 (probably in August 2010).