

## Preface

The Semantic Web has come a long way. What started as a vision of a machine readable web over ten years ago now consists of a vibrant community of researchers, practitioners, enthusiasts, companies, and, finally, users. Topics that were once cutting edge research have now arrived in the mainstream and have even become part of political agendas. The sharing of public information in the form of linked data has become a major argument for the transparency of administrations and institutions around the globe are putting their data online. Companies from various sectors such as the BBC, Google, IBM, or The New York Times release products that are based on Semantic Web technologies. Against all prophecies of failure the Semantic Web is flourishing.

The International Semantic Web Conference is the premier forum for Semantic Web research, where cutting edge scientific results and technological innovations are presented, where problems and solutions are discussed, and where the future of this vision is being developed. It brings together specialists in fields such as artificial intelligence, databases, social networks, distributed computing, Web engineering, information systems, human-computer interaction, natural language processing, and the social sciences for tutorials, workshops, presentations, keynotes, and sufficient time to have detailed discussions.

This volume contains the main proceedings of the 11th International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC 2012), which was held in Boston, USA, in November 2012. Even though the economic times are anything but easy we received tremendous response to our calls for papers from a truly international community of both researchers and practitioners. Every paper was thoroughly evaluated following practices appropriate for its track and its evaluation measure. The breadth and scope of the papers finally selected for inclusion in this volume, speak to the quality of the conference and to the contributions made by researchers whose work is presented in these proceedings. As such, we were all honored and proud that we were invited to serve the community in the stewardship of this edition of ISWC.

The Research Track of the conference attracted 186 submissions, 41 of which were accepted, resulting in a 22% acceptance rate. Each paper received at least three, and sometimes as many as five, reviews from members of the Program Committee. After the first round of reviews, authors had the opportunity to submit a rebuttal, leading to further discussions among the reviewers, a meta-review and a recommendation from a member of the Senior Program Committee (SPC). The SPC held a 10 hour virtual meeting in order to select the final set of accepted papers, paying special attention to papers that were borderline or had at least one recommendation for acceptance. In many cases, additional last minute reviews were sought out to better inform the SPC's decision.

As the Semantic Web develops, we find a changing variety of subjects that emerge. This year the keywords of accepted papers were distributed as follows

(frequency in parentheses): knowledge representation and reasoning (13), querying the Semantic Web and database technologies (10), ontology engineering (7), machine learning and information extraction (7), data mining and analysis (6), ontology mapping (6), linked data (5), languages, tools and methodologies (4), interacting with Semantic Web data (4), instance mapping (4), evaluation (4), social and emergent semantics (4), cleaning, assurance, and provenance (4), search and information retrieval (3), federated/distributed systems (3), scalable systems (3), Semantic Web services (3), exploiting the social web (3), knowledge acquisition (2), natural language processing (2), query languages (2), uncertainty (2), modeling users and contexts (2), semantic streams and sensors (2), ontology learning (1), user interfaces (1), mashing up data and processes (1), trust, privacy and security (1), and personalized access (1).

This edition of the International Semantic Web Conference marks the introduction of the Evaluations and Experiments Track. The goal of this track is to consolidate research material and to gain new scientific insights and results by providing a place for in-depth experimental studies of significant scale. It aims at promoting experimental evaluations in Semantic Web/Linked Data domains where availability of experimental datasets and reproducibility of experiments are highly important.

The Evaluations and Experiments track received 35 submissions from all areas of the Semantic Web: including reasoning, querying, searching, matching, and annotating. Papers were of two main categories, namely evaluation (comparing several approaches to a problem) and corpus analysis. To our surprise, testing a hypothesis through an experiment was not explicitly considered. We also received very few papers aiming at reproducing existing experiments. Eight papers were accepted, corresponding to a 23% acceptance rate. Each paper was reviewed by at least three members of the Program Committee paying special attention to the reproducibility criteria. In spite of the limited number of accepted papers, they address a large range of areas, such as linked stream data, federated query processing, tag recommendation, entity summarization, and OWL reasoning.

The Semantic Web In-Use Track received 77 submissions. At least three members of the In-Use Program Committee provided reviews for each paper. Seventeen papers were accepted – a 22% acceptance rate. The large number of submissions this year demonstrated the increasingly diverse breadth of applications of Semantic Web technologies in practice. The papers demonstrated how semantic technologies are applied in a variety of domains, including eGovernment, smart cities, biomedicine or question answering. Several papers dealt with applying reasoning for a variety of use cases, while others dealt with streaming data and processing complex events. A number of infrastructure papers contributed to the state of art for Linked Open Data and for querying large data sets. Very exciting application papers demonstrated how semantic technologies are applied in diverse ways, starting from using linked data in mobile environments to employing full-fledged artificial intelligence methods in real-time use cases.

The Doctoral Consortium is a key event at the ISWC conference. PhD students in the Semantic Web field get an opportunity to present their thesis proposals and to interact with leading academic and industrial scientists in the field, who act as their mentors. Out of 21 submissions to the Doctoral Consortium, six were accepted as for presentation at the conference. For discussion at the special Consortium-only session on 12 November nine additional proposals were selected. The Doctoral Consortium day is organized as a highly interactive event, in which students present their proposals and receive extensive feedback and comments from the mentors as well as from their peers.

A unique aspect of the ISWC conference is the Semantic Web Challenge, now in its 10th year, with the goal of demonstrating practical progress towards achieving the vision of the Semantic Web. Organised this year by Diana Maynard and Andreas Harth, the competition enables practitioners and scientists to showcase leading-edge real world applications of Semantic Web technology.

The keynote talks given by leading scientists or practitioners in their field further enriched the ISWC program. Thomas W. Malone, the director of the Center for Collective Intelligence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, discussed the phenomenon of Collective Intelligence and how it interrelates with the Semantic Web. Jeanne Holm, an evangelist for data.gov, discussed the changing global landscape of data sharing and the role the semantic web is playing in it. Mark Musen, a professor of medicine of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Informatics Research, discussed how the fundamental challenges of AI are still with us and await embracing to fulfill the vision of the Semantic Web. And last but not least, Nigel Shadbolt, Deputy Head of the School of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, gave a lively dinner talk.

As in previous ISWC editions, the conference included an extensive Tutorial and Workshop program. Claudia d'Amato and Thomas Scharrenbach, the Chairs of this track, selected a stellar and diverse collection of 9 tutorials and 18 workshops, where the only problem that the participants faced was which of the many exciting workshops to attend. Workshops and Tutorials were chosen on the ground of two different but complementary criteria: maintaining the history of the most promising, challenging, and highly attended workshops such as the Ontology Matching Workshop, the Consuming Linked Data Workshop, the Ontology Patterns workshop, or the Uncertainty Reasoning for the Semantic Web Workshop and highlighting the attention on new, challenging and visionary research trends as testified by the Programming the Semantic Web Workshop, the Semantic Sensor Network workshop, the Web of Linked Entities Workshop, the Semantic Technologies Applied to Biomedical Informatics and Individualized Medicine Workshop, the Web of Data for E-Commerce Tutorial, the Machine Learning for Linked Data Tutorial, the Linked Data for Development Tutorial, or the Financial Information Management using the Semantic Web Tutorial. Also particular attention was dedicated to the heterogeneity and scalability issues and related aspects, which explains the choice of the Workshop on Large and Heterogeneous Data and Quantitative Formalization in the Semantic Web, the

Tutorial on RDF Query Processing in the Cloud, and the Tutorial on Scalable Semantic Processing of Hodge, Distributed Real Time Streams.

We would like to thank Birte Glimm and David Huynh for organizing a lively Poster and Demo Session. As in 2011, the Posters and Demos were introduced in a Minute Madness Session, where every presenter got 60 seconds to provide a teaser for their poster or demo.

Ivan Herman, Tom Heath and Tim Berners-Lee coordinated a top-flight Industry Track where end-users of Semantic Web and Linked Data technologies shared their ‘warts and all’ experiences with the research community. The track attracted presentations from enterprises of all scales, from startups through to software, hardware and retail giants such as Oracle, Cray, Cisco, EMC and Best-Buy.

We are indebted to Eva Blomqvist, our Proceedings Chair, who provided invaluable support in compiling the volume that you now hold in your hands (or see on your screen) and exhibited superhuman patience in allowing the other Chairs to stretch deadlines to the absolute limits. Many thanks to Jen Golbeck, the Fellowship Chair, for securing and managing the distribution of student travel grants and thus helping students who might not have otherwise attended the conference to come to Boston. Peter Mika and David Wood were tireless in their work as Sponsorship Chairs, knocking on every conceivable virtual ‘door’ and ensuring an unprecedented level of sponsorship this year. We are especially grateful to all the sponsors for their generosity.

As has been the case in the past, ISWC 2012 also contributed to the linked data cloud by providing semantically annotated data about many aspects of the conference. This contribution would not have been possible without the efforts of Li Ding our Metadata Chair. Oshani Seneviratne, our Publicity Chair, was tirelessly twittering and sending old-fashioned (and highly appreciated) announcements on the mailing lists, creating far more lively ‘buzz’ than ISWC ever had.

Our very special thanks go to the Local Organization Team, led by Lalana Kagal. She did an outstanding job of handling local arrangements, thinking of every potential complication way before it arose, often doing things when members of the Organizing Committee were only beginning to think about asking for them. We managed to juggle so many balls, that some of us were dizzy just looking at it. Special thanks go to the staff of MIT conference services – Cathi Di Iulio Levine, Nicole Silva, Lynne Alyson Lenker, and Eva Cabone – for their enormous resourcefulness, foresight, and anticipation of the conference needs and requirements. Also many thanks for the designers at the University of Zurich Multimedia and e-Learning Services, who provided all the design work often going beyond the call of any duty.

Finally, we would like to thank all members of the ISWC Organizing Committee not only for handling their tracks superbly, but also for their wider contribution to the collaborative decision-making process in organizing the conference.

September 2012

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# Table of Contents - Part I

## Research Track

MORe: Modular Combination of OWL Reasoners for Ontology Classification .....	1
<i>Ana Armas, Bernardo Cuenca Grau and Ian Horrocks</i>	
A formal semantics for weighted ontology mappings .....	17
<i>Manuel Atencia, Alexander Borgida, Jérôme Euzenat, Chiara Ghidini and Luciano Serafini</i>	
Personalised Graph-based Selection of Web APIs .....	33
<i>Milan Dojchinovski, Jaroslav Kuchar, Tomas Vitvar and Maciej Zaremba</i>	
Instance-Based Matching of Large Ontologies Using Locality-Sensitive Hashing .....	48
<i>Songyun Duan, Achille Fokoue, Oktie Hassanzadeh, Anastasios Kementsietsidis, Kavitha Srinivas and Michael Ward</i>	
Automatic typing of DBpedia entities .....	65
<i>Aldo Gangemi, Andrea Giovanni Nuzzolese, Valentina Presutti, Francesco Draicchio, Alberto Musetti and Paolo Ciancarini</i>	
Performance Heterogeneity and Approximate Reasoning in Description Logic Ontologies .....	81
<i>Rafael S. Gonçalves, Bijan Parsia and Ulrike Sattler</i>	
Concept-Based Semantic Difference in Expressive Description Logics ....	97
<i>Rafael S. Gonçalves, Bijan Parsia and Ulrike Sattler</i>	
SPLODGE: Systematic Generation of SPARQL Benchmark Queries for Linked Open Data .....	113
<i>Olaf Görlitz, Matthias Thimm and Steffen Staab</i>	
RDFS Reasoning on Massively Parallel Hardware .....	129
<i>Norman Heino and Jeff Z. Pan</i>	
An Efficient Bit Vector Approach to Semantics-based Machine Perception in Resource-Constrained Devices .....	145
<i>Cory Henson, Krishnaprasad Thirunarayan and Amit Sheth</i>	
Semantic Enrichment by Non-Experts: Usability of Manual Annotation Tools .....	161
<i>Annika Hinze, Ralf Heese, Markus Luczak-Rösch and Adrian Paschke</i>	

Ontology-Based Access to Probabilistic Data with OWL QL . . . . .	177
<i>Jean Christoph Jung and Carsten Lutz</i>	
Predicting Reasoning Performance Using Ontology Metrics . . . . .	193
<i>Yong-Bin Kang, Yuan-Fang Li and Shonali Krishnaswamy</i>	
Formal Verification of Data Provenance Records . . . . .	209
<i>Szymon Klarman, Stefan Schlobach and Luciano Serafini</i>	
Cost Based Query Ordering over OWL Ontologies . . . . .	225
<i>Ilianna Kolli and Birte Glimm</i>	
Robust Runtime Optimization and Skew-Resistant Execution of Analytical SPARQL Queries on Pig . . . . .	241
<i>Spyros Kotoulas, Jacopo Urbani, Peter Boncz and Peter Mika</i>	
Large-Scale Learning of Relation-Extraction Rules with Distant Supervision from the Web . . . . .	257
<i>Sebastian Krause, Hong Li, Hans Uszkoreit and Feiyu Xu</i>	
The Not-So-Easy Task of Computing Class Subsumptions in OWL RL . . .	273
<i>Markus Krötzsch</i>	
Strabon: A Semantic Geospatial DBMS . . . . .	289
<i>Kostis Kyzirakos, Manos Karpithiotakis and Manolis Koubarakis</i>	
DeFacto - Deep Fact Validation . . . . .	305
<i>Jens Lehmann, Daniel Gerber, Mohamed Morsey and Axel-Cyrille Ngonga Ngomo</i>	
Feature LDA: a Supervised Topic Model for Automatic Detection of Web API Documentations from the Web . . . . .	321
<i>Chenghua Lin, Yulan He, Carlos Pedrinaci and John Domingue</i>	
Efficient Execution of Top-k SPARQL Queries . . . . .	337
<i>Sara Magliacane, Alessandro Bozzon and Emanuele Della Valle</i>	
Collaborative Filtering by Analyzing Dynamic User Interests Modeled by Taxonomy . . . . .	353
<i>Makoto Nakatsuji, Yasuhiro Fujiwara, Toshio Uchiyama and Hiroyuki Toda</i>	
Link Discovery with Guaranteed Reduction Ratio in Affine Spaces with Minkowsky Measures . . . . .	369
<i>Axel-Cyrille Ngonga Ngomo</i>	
Hitting the Sweetspot: Economic Rewriting of Knowledge Bases . . . . .	385
<i>Nadeschda Nikitina and Birte Glimm</i>	

Mining Semantic Relations between Research Areas .....	401
<i>Francesco Osborne and Enrico Motta</i>	
Discovering Concept Coverings in Ontologies of Linked Data Sources ....	417
<i>Rahul Parundekar, Craig Knoblock and José Luis Ambite</i>	
Ontology Constraints in Incomplete and Complete Data .....	433
<i>Peter Patel-Schneider and Enrico Franconi</i>	
A Machine Learning Approach for Instance Matching Based on Similarity Metrics .....	449
<i>Shu Rong, Xing Niu, Evan Wei Xiang, Haofen Wang, Qiang Yang and Yong Yu</i>	
Who will follow whom? Exploiting Semantics for Link Prediction in Attention-Information Networks .....	465
<i>Matthew Rowe, Milan Stankovic and Harith Alani</i>	
On the Diversity and Availability of Temporal Information in Linked Open Data .....	481
<i>Anisa Rula, Palmonari Matteo, Andreas Harth, Steffen Stadtmüller and Andrea Maurino</i>	
Semantic Sentiment Analysis of Twitter .....	497
<i>Hassan Saif, Yulan He and Harith Alani</i>	
CrowdMAP: Crowdsourcing Ontology Alignment with Microtasks .....	513
<i>Cristina Sarasua, Elena Simperl and Natasha F. Noy</i>	
Domain-aware Ontology Matching .....	529
<i>Kristian Slabbekoorn, Laura Hollink and Geert-Jan Houben</i>	
Rapidly Integrating Services into the Linked Data Cloud .....	545
<i>Mohsen Taheriyani, Craig Knoblock, Pedro Szekely and José Luis Am- bite</i>	
An Evidence-based Verification Approach to Extract Entities and Relations for Knowledge Base Population .....	561
<i>Naimdjon Takhirov, Fabien Duchateau and Trond Aalberg</i>	
Blank Node Matching and RDF/S Comparison Functions .....	577
<i>Yannis Tzitzikas, Christina Lantzaki and Dimitris Zeginis</i>	
Hybrid SPARQL queries: fresh vs. fast results .....	593
<i>Jürgen Umbrich, Marcel Karnstedt, Aidan Hogan and Josiane Xavier Parreira</i>	
Provenance for SPARQL queries .....	609
<i>Carlos Viegas Damásio, Anastasia Analyti and Grigoris Antoniou</i>	



SRBench: A Streaming RDF/SPARQL Benchmark . . . . .	625
<i>Ying Zhang, Minh-Duc Pham, Oscar Corcho and Jean Paul Calbimonte</i>	
Scalable Geo-thematic Query Answering . . . . .	641
<i>Özgür Lütfü Özcepe and Ralf Möller</i>	

## Table of Contents - Part II

### In-Use Track

Managing the life-cycle of Linked Data with the LOD2 Stack . . . . .	1
<i>Sören Auer, Lorenz Bühmann, Christian Dirschl, Orri Erling, Michael Hausenblas, Robert Isele, Jens Lehmann, Michael Martin, Pablo Mendes, Bert van Nuffelen, Claus Stadler, Sebastian Tramp and Hugh Williams</i>	
Achieving Interoperability through Semantics-based Technologies: The Instant Messaging Case . . . . .	17
<i>Amel Bennaceur, Valerie Issarny, Romina Spalazzese and Shashank Tyagi</i>	
Linking Smart Cities Datasets with Human Computation the case of UrbanMatch . . . . .	33
<i>Irene Celino, Simone Contessa, Marta Corubolo, Daniele Dellaglio, Emanuele Della Valle, Stefano Fumeo and Thorsten Krueger</i>	
ourSpaces - Design and Deployment of a Semantic Virtual Research Environment . . . . .	49
<i>Peter Edwards, Edoardo Pignotti, Alan Eckhardt, Kapila Ponnamperruma, Chris Mellish and Thomas Bouttaz</i>	
Embedded EL+ Reasoning on Programmable Logic Controllers . . . . .	65
<i>Stephan Grimm, Michael Watzke, Thomas Hubauer and Falco Cescholini</i>	
Experiences with modeling composite phenotypes in the SKELETOME project . . . . .	81
<i>Tudor Groza, Andreas Zankl and Jane Hunter</i>	
Toward an ecosystem of LOD in the field: LOD content generation and its consuming service . . . . .	97
<i>Takahiro Kawamura</i>	
Applying Semantic Web Technologies for Diagnosing Road Traffic Congestions . . . . .	113
<i>Freddy Lecue, Anika Schumann and Marco Sbodio</i>	
DEQA: Deep Web Extraction for Question Answering . . . . .	129
<i>Jens Lehmann, Tim Furche, Giovanni Grasso, Axel-Cyrille Ngonga Ngomo, Christian Schallhart, Andrew Sellers, Christina Unger, Lorenz Bühmann, Daniel Gerber, Konrad Höffner, David Liu and Sören Auer</i>	

QuerioCity: A Linked Data Platform for Urban Information Management	145
<i>Vanessa Lopez, Spyros Kotoulas, Marco Luca Sbodio, Martin Stephenson, Aris Gkoulalas-Divanis and Pol Mac Aonghusa</i>	
Semantic similarity-driven decision support in the skeletal dysplasia domain	161
<i>Razan Paul, Tudor Groza, Andreas Zankl and Jane Hunter</i>	
Using SPARQL to Query BioPortal Ontologies and Metadata	177
<i>Manuel Salvadores, Matthew Horridge, Paul Alexander, Ray W. Ferguson, Mark Musen and Natasha F. Noy</i>	
Trentino government linked open geo-data: a case study	193
<i>Pavel Shvaiko, Feroz Farazi, Vincenzo Maltese, Alexander Ivanyukovich, Veronica Rizzi, Daniela Ferrari and Giuliana Ucelli</i>	
Semantic Reasoning in Context-Aware Assistive Environments to Support Ageing with Dementia	209
<i>Thibaut Tiberghien, Hamdi Aloulou, Mounir Mokhtari and Jit Biswas</i>	
Query Driven Hypothesis Generation for Answering Queries over NLP Graphs	225
<i>Chris Welty, Ken Barker, Lora Aroyo and Shilpa Arora</i>	
Comparing Hard Filters to Soft Evidence Scoring for Answer Typing in Watson	240
<i>Chris Welty, J William Murdock, Aditya Kalyanpur and James Fan</i>	
Incorporating Semantic Knowledge into Dynamic Data Processing for Smart Power Grids	254
<i>Qunzhi Zhou, Yogesh Simmhan and Viktor Prasanna</i>	
<b>Evaluations and Experiments Track</b>	
Evaluating Semantic Search Query Approaches with Expert and Casual Users	270
<i>Khadija Elbedweihy, Stuart Wrigley and Fabio Ciravegna</i>	
Extracting Justifications from BioPortal Ontologies	282
<i>Matthew Horridge, Bijan Parsia and Ulrike Sattler</i>	
Linked Stream Data Processing: Facts and Figures	294
<i>Danh Le Phuoc, Minh Dao-Tran, Minh-Duc Pham, Peter Boncz, Thomas Eiter and Michael Fink</i>	
Benchmarking Federated SPARQL Query Engines: Are Existing Testbeds Enough?	306
<i>Gabriela Montoya, Maria-Esther Vidal, Oscar Corcho, Edna Ruckhaus and Carlos Buil-Aranda</i>	

Tag Recommendation for Large-Scale Ontology-Based Information Systems .....	318
<i>Roman Prokofyev, Alexey Boyarsky, Oleg Ruchayskiy, Karl Aberer, Gianluca Demartini and Philippe Cudre-Mauroux</i>	
Evaluation of techniques for inconsistency handling in OWL 2 QL ontologies .....	330
<i>Riccardo Rosati, Marco Ruzzi, Mirko Graziosi and Giulia Masotti</i>	
Evaluating Entity Summarization Using a Game-Based Ground Truth ...	342
<i>Andreas Thalhammer, Magnus Knuth and Harald Sack</i>	
Evaluation of a layered approach to question answering over linked data .	354
<i>Sebastian Walter, Christina Unger, Philipp Cimiano and Daniel Bär</i>	

### **Doctoral Consortium - Long Papers**

Cross Lingual Semantic Search by Improving Semantic Similarity and Relatedness Measures .....	366
<i>Nitish Aggarwal</i>	
Quality Reasoning in the Semantic Web .....	374
<i>Chris Baillie, Peter Edwards and Edoardo Pignotti</i>	
Burst the Filter Bubble: Using Semantic Web to Enable Serendipity .....	382
<i>Valentina Maccatrozzo</i>	
Reconstructing Provenance .....	390
<i>Sara Magliacane</i>	
Very Large Scale OWL Reasoning through Distributed Computation ....	398
<i>Raghava Mutharaju and Pascal Hitzler</i>	
Replication for Linked Data .....	406
<i>Laurens Rietveld</i>	
Scalable and Domain-Independent Entity Coreference: Establishing High Quality Data Linkages Across Heterogeneous Data Sources .....	414
<i>Dezhao Song</i>	

### **Doctoral Consortium - Short Papers**

Distributed Reasoning on Semantic Data Streams .....	422
<i>Rehab Albeladi</i>	
Reusing XML Schemas Information as a Foundation for Designing Domain Ontologies .....	426
<i>Thomas Bosch</i>	

A Multi-Domain Framework for Community Building Based on Data Tagging.....	430
<i>Bojan Božić</i>	
Towards a theoretical foundation for the harmonization of linked data ...	434
<i>Enrico Daga</i>	
Knowledge Pattern Extraction and their usage in Exploratory Search....	438
<i>Andrea Giovanni Nuzzolese</i>	
SPARQL Update for Complex Event Processing .....	442
<i>Mikko Rinne</i>	
Online Unsupervised Coreference Resolution for Semi-Structured Heterogeneous Data .....	446
<i>Jennifer Sleeman</i>	
Composition of Linked Data-based RESTful Services .....	450
<i>Steffen Stadtmüller</i>	
 <b>Keynotes</b>	
Driving Innovation with Open Data and Interoperability .....	454
<i>Jeanne Holm</i>	
The Semantic Web and Collective Intelligence .....	455
<i>Thomas Malone</i>	
Tackling Climate Change: Unfinished Business from the Last “Winter” ..	456
<i>Mark A. Musen</i>	