

Guest Speaker Series on "Some(what) Grand Challenges for Information Retrieval" on 25 Jul 08.

Abstract

Although we see the positive results of Information Retrieval (IR) research embodied throughout the Internet, on our computer desktops, and in many other aspects of daily life, at the same time we notice that people still have a wide variety of difficulties in finding information that is useful in resolving their problematic situations.

This suggests that there still remain substantial challenges for research in IR. Already in 1988, on the occasion of receiving the ACM SIGIR Gerard Salton Award, Karen Spärck Jones suggested that substantial progress in information retrieval was likely only to come through addressing issues associated with users (actual or potential) of IR systems, rather than continuing IR research's almost exclusive focus on document representation and matching and ranking techniques.

In recent years it appears that her message has begun to be heard, yet we still have relatively few substantive results that respond to it. In this talk, we identify a few challenges for IR research which fall within the scope of association with users, and which we believe, if properly addressed, are likely to lead to substantial increases in the usefulness, usability and pleasurability of information retrieval.

Speaker's Profile

Nicholas J. Belkin received his Ph.D. degree from the University of London in 1977, studying with B.C. Brookes at the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College, London. He was on the faculty of the Department of Information Science, City University, London from 1975 to 1985, with visiting appointments at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada in 1979-1980, and the Free University, Berlin in 1981-1982.

In 1985, he was appointed Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University, where he is currently located. In 1994 -95, he was a Visiting Scientist at the Institute for Systems Science, National University of Singapore, and in 1996, he was a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Tampere, Finland.

He has been Chair of the ACM Special Interest Group in Information Retrieval (SIGIR) and President of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST), and had received the ASIST Information Science Teacher Award, the ASIST Research Award, and the ASIST Award of Merit.

Peter Ingwersen is research professor at the Department of Information Studies, Royal School of Library and Information Science in Copenhagen. His research expertise includes: information seeking; interactive information retrieval (IR); performance evaluation methods for IR; informetrics-scientometrics & webometrics.

He has carried out experimental research on cognitive aspects of user-intermediary-system interaction and served in several Esprit projects as expert consultant on the design of knowledge-based IR interfaces and systems (SIMPR; FERMI). He participated in the three-year ESPRIT Long Term Research Workshop: MIRA on multimedia IR and evaluation.

He has published several books, among which *Information Retrieval Interaction*, 1992, is well known internationally, and more than 60 journal articles and conference papers, in addition to editing work, for which he has received more than 600 citations excl. self-citations. He is member of several editorial boards of internationally reputed journals of the field. Ingwersen has been visiting scholar in Italy, 1980-84, USA, 1987, Japan, 1996 and South Africa, 1997.

From January 1997 he is also appointed Visiting Professor (Docent) at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. From 1998-2000 he co-chaired a DANIDA sponsored PhD-network in South Africa. In 1999-2002 he served as NORFA Visiting Professor at the Dept. of Information Studies, Tampere University, Finland. He has been member of 12 professorial evaluation committees in 5 countries and external opponent in 12 doctoral examinations in 7 countries worldwide. He has supervised visiting Japanese and UK post-doctoral and doctoral researchers.

Since 1992 he gives frequently lectures at tutorials and in doctoral fora at conferences and recently at the European research school (ESSIR) on IR and Users in Context. From 1998 he has organized one and two-week local and NORFA doctoral courses, on IR and Informetrics. He was member of the Standing Committees of the NORFA-sponsored network for Information Studies: NordIS-Net 1998-2002. He is currently Chair of the Research Education Board of the Royal School of LIS and supervises personally 5 doctoral students.

Noriko Kando is professor in the Information and Society Research Division of the National Institute of Informatics (NII), Tokyo, Japan, and the Chair of the NTCIR Project, the large-scale evaluation of information access technologies, such as information retrieval, summarization, question answering, etc., focusing on Asian languages, which has attracted international participation. Her research interests are information access technologies, human-language technologies, educational application of digital archives, multilingual information access.

She received her PhD from Keio University in 1995 and has been conducting research at NII since that time. She has published scientific articles in journals and international conferences, and has been an invited speaker at

many international conferences. She is an Asia representative for ACM-SIGIR Executive Committee and a Program Co-Chair of SIGIR 2007.