HQA'18 Workshop Chairs' Welcome

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the First International Workshop on Hybrid Question Answering with Structured and Unstructured Knowledge (HQA) at WWW 2018. As more and more knowledge is available electronically in a structured or unstructured form over the World Wide Web, such knowledge provides a rich resource based on which both questions regarding our daily life and scientific questions posed by domain experts can be answered. To make this possibility a reality, tools that can (semi-)automatically answer questions based on a large amount of available data need to be developed.

This challenge has been targeted separately over the last years by different research communities, including query answering in the Semantic Web based on structured semantic data and question answering in Natural Language Processing based on unstructured textual data. While the former is powerful in representing complex questions and using background knowledge (e.g., large biomedical ontologies), it is often difficult to set up, and such advanced query answering systems are difficult to use without a specialized user interface. In contrast, the latter can handle natural language questions directly, and it can formulate constraints that cannot be represented by formal query answering approaches due to the limited expressiveness of the employed formalisms. However, with this approach it is not clear how to take into account background and common sense knowledge, which is often needed to obtain precise answers over structured data.

The objective of this workshop is to bring together researchers and developers working on question/query answering systems over structured or unstructured knowledge, thus creating a platform for potential collaborations for solving this multidisciplinary task.

We have received submissions from seven different countries and three different continents, and have decided to accept eight papers. These papers cover a broad range of topics: QA systems based on the construction of formal queries in English or in Vietnamese over structured or semi-structured data; the construction or the analysis of QA corpora for dealing with complex phenomena, such as temporal questions and hybrid QA; formal ontology based query answering techniques using temporalized ontology languages; neural networks based techniques for query expansion for FAQ and intent classification for goal oriented dialogue systems. The application domains of these techniques include: open domain, biomedical domain and other specific domains.

With Andreas Both and Eric Gaussier, we also succeeded in attracting two prominent invited speakers on component-based, domain-specific, efficient question answering systems and the large-scale classification for semantic annotation in the biomedical domain.

We believe that the program of HQA 2018 provides a good balance between several topical areas such as deep learning, graph mining, ontologies, etc. Hence we hope that you will find the workshop program interesting, providing you with a valuable opportunity to learn and share ideas with other researchers and practitioners from institutions all over the world.

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