

INVITED SPEAKER:

John Prange, ARDA

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CONFERENCE WEBSITE:

<http://www.languagecomputer.com/hltnacl04qa/>

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to the Workshop of the Pragmatics of Question Answering (Q/A), held in conjunction with the HLT-NAACL 2004 Conference in Boston MA, May 2-7, 2004. This workshop continues the discussion on results of research in Textual Q/A that took place in Workshops at ACL (2001 and 2003), COLING(2002), LREC(2002), EACL(2003) and the AAI Spring Symposium series (2002 and 2003). It is mainly motivated by the new pragmatic aspects of processing complex questions. Recent examples of complex question emerged in the context of complex scenarios, characterizing the search for complex information in text documents. Several forms of pragmatic processing have started to impact on the design of Q/A architectures. To process complex questions, context and user background have to be modeled. Additionally, the questions need to be decomposed into simpler questions that can be processed by the current technology. The decomposition allows for multiple interactions with the Q/A system, generating a dialog between the user and the Q/A system. This volume contains the papers accepted for presentation at the 2001 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP 2001), a SIGDAT meeting held at Carnegie Mellon University on June 3 and 4, 2001, just preceding the Second Meeting of the North American Chapter of the ACL. Moreover, more complex semantic representations govern the interpretation of questions and the extraction of answers. Each of these aspects of advanced Q/A requires different pragmatic processes. Ten different papers have been accepted for publication in this workshop, each presenting an interesting perspective and proposing solutions to the pragmatics of Q/A.

We are honored to have Dr. John Prange as the keynote speaker of the Workshop. Dr. Prange is the Director of AQUAINT program that fosters research in Advanced Question Answering. The workshop will also contain a panel of discussion, in which leaders from the research field of Q/A have been invited.

This workshop will be a forum for researchers to discuss and present their results in the new area of QA that moves beyond fact-seeking into resolving complex questions. The topics that will be discussed are:

- semantics of scenario-based QA
- dialogs for answering complex questions
- ontological commitments imposed by QA scenarios
- answering questions in context
- multi-modal QA
- processing negation, temporality and scoping in QA
- abductive reasoning in QA
- deep semantic representations and probabilistic reasoning
- user background and its interactions with complex scenarios and QA

A two-day workshop cannot take place without the efforts of many people. We thank the members of the program committee for their reviews; the authors for their submissions and the rapid formatting in camera-ready versions. Our special thanks to HLT-NAACL 2004 General Chair, Julia Hirschberg, Publications Chairs Gina-Anne Levow and Miles Osborne and Workshop Chair Richard Sproat for their support and assistance.

Sanda Harabagiu and Finley Lacatusu
Workshop Co-Chairs
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