Preface from the NTCIR-12 General Chairs

Welcome to the Twelfth NTCIR Conference (NTCIR-12 Conference) and the 7th International Workshop on Evaluating Information Access (EVIA 2016).

NTCIR is a series of parallel and collective evaluation efforts designed to enhance research on diverse information access technologies, including, but not limited to, cross-language and multimedia information access, question-answering, text mining and summarisation, with an emphasis on East Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, as well as English. Launched in the late 1990s, NTCIR has attracted hundreds of research groups from well over 20 different countries and regions. Each NTCIR conference concludes the researchers' efforts over the course of 18 months or so, in the form of official results and future work items.

NTCIR-12 plays host to nine tasks as listed below. These are coordinated in parallel by some forty task organizers, who operate under the central coordination of the program co-chairs, Makoto Kato and Kazuaki Kishida. A hundred and fifty-seven different research groups from 20 countries/regions participated in one or more of the NTCIR-12 tasks, to compete and collaborate on a common ground and thereby advance the state of the art.

[Core Tasks]

- Search Intent and Task Mining "IMine-2"
- Medical Natural Language Processing for Clinical Document "MedNLPDoc"
- Mobile Information Access "MobileClick-2"
- Spoken Query and Spoken Document Retrieval "SpokenQuery&Doc-2"
- Temporal Information Access "Temporalia-2"
- Mathematical Information Retrieval "MathIR-3"

[Pilot Tasks]
- Lifelog Task "Lifelog"
- QA Lab for Entrance Exam "QALab-2"
- Short Text Conversation "STC"

While the NTCIR conference is a venue for task participants and organisers to discuss the official task results, open problems and future task designs, EVIA is a one-day workshop for information access researchers to present their work on evaluation methods, measures, test collections, experimental designs, etc. EVIA papers are peer-reviewed. This year, EVIA 2016, was run by PC chairs Charles Clarke and Emine Yilmaz.

The NTCIR-12 Conference and EVIA 2016 are operated by the NTCIR-12 Organizing Committee and the National Institute of Informatics (NII). We are very grateful to the sponsors listed in the conference program and our website. Their generous support has enabled us to help promising young researchers and students to travel to the conference.

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