

Dear NTCIR community,

As was announced during the NTCIR-8 Meeting, there will be some changes in the central coordination of the next NTCIR-9 based on careful reflection of the past NTCIR activities. First of all, NII (National Institute of Informatics) and NICT (National Institute of Information and Communications Technology) will co-host NTCIR-9. The NTCIR-9 General Co-chairs will be Noriko Kando (NII, Japan), Tsuneaki Kato (University of Tokyo, Japan), and Eiichiro Sumita (NICT).

Second, NTCIR-9 will be more community-led than previous NTCIRs. Submitted proposals will be assessed by the NTCIR-9 Task Selection Committee. The task selection process will be chaired by the NTCIR-9 Evaluation Co-chairs, Tetsuya Sakai (Microsoft Research Asia, China) and Hideo Joho (University of Tsukuba, Japan). To emphasize the new community-led structure, we are considering to change the name of NTCIR to "NII/NICT Testbeds and Community for Information access Research" (without changing the acronym).

These changes, however, mean nothing unless the research and development in Information Access are facilitated by the community. Therefore, we are looking for proposals of evaluation tasks that can help advance our understanding of Information Access processes, technologies, and systems. In NTCIR-9, we are looking for three types of evaluation tasks: Core challenge task, Grand challenge task, and Pilot task.

- Core Challenge Task: this is similar to previous NTCIR tasks. It is for benchmarking and assessment of solutions to a particular Information Access problem within one or two NTCIR cycles. It also aims to establish the best practices to address each of the problems. NTCIR-8 had six tasks including IR for QA, Complex Cross-Language QA, Patent Machine Translation, Patent Mining, GeoTime Search, and Opinion analysis.
- Grand Challenge Task: this task aims at more long-term goals than core challenge tasks. Proposals should clearly demonstrate their potential impact on society. Also, the technologies required to accomplish this task can be more complex than those

for the core challenge tasks. In particular, this task should encourage cross-community collaboration and integration of multiple core technologies (e.g., IR, QA, NLP, Visualization, ML, etc.).

- Pilot Task: this type can be used when the evaluation task is potentially appealing to a large community, but there are some uncertainties in the methodology, and thus, premature as a core or grand challenge task. In such a situation, you can apply for a pilot task to test the feasibility and obtain feedback from the community. NTCIR-8 had a community QA pilot task.

The proposal will be carefully assessed by the NTCIR-9 Task Selection Committee based on selection criteria given below. Please make sure to include sufficient information for the Task Selection Committee to assess the proposals using the criteria. A seed funding will be available for the accepted evaluation tasks to cover some of the expenses (data collection purchase, relevance assessments, etc.). Task organizers are encouraged to apply for external funding whenever appropriate, to make the resultant data publicly available, and to involve the participants or community in the data creation process.

Coordinating an evaluation task is a great way to create a new research area and establish an international community. We are looking for innovative and exciting ideas for the evaluation tasks in Information Access! Please send your proposal in PDF format to [ntc-admin@nii.ac.jp](mailto:ntc-admin@nii.ac.jp) by Midnight of 16 July 2010 (JST) with the subject: NTCIR-9 Task Proposal.

Best regards,

Tetsuya Sakai and Hideo Joho  
NTCIR-9 Evaluation Co-Chairs

Noriko Kando, Tsuneaki Kato, and Eiichiro Sumita  
NTCIR-9 General Co-Chairs

- Important Dates
  - 16 July 2010: Deadline for proposal
  - 8 August 2010: Notification of the results
  - 1 September 2010: Kick-off Event (Call for task participation)
  
- Proposal Format
  - Main Part (A single A4 page)
    - ✧ Task Name
    - ✧ Task Type (Core or Grand challenge or Pilot)
    - ✧ Outline
    - ✧ Purpose
    - ✧ Methodology
    - ✧ Expected results
  - Appendix (Free format)
    - ✧ Name and contact information of the organizer(s)
    - ✧ Expected participants
    - ✧ Resources (document sets and others) to be used or constructed
    - ✧ Budget planning
    - ✧ Schedule
    - ✧ Other notes
  
- Selection Criteria
  - Essential
    - ✧ Responsibility: how do the organizers plan to advocate the significance of the proposed task and commit to it?
    - ✧ Sustainability: how do the organizers plan to sustain the task activity financially after the seed funding runs out?
    - ✧ Repeatability: Will the participants' work be reproducible? Scientific merits: what is the significance of potential research being conducted in the task? What are the potential benefits to other work and related technologies?
  - Desirable
    - ✧ Social impact: what social problems/issues can the expected results of

the task address?

- ✧ Synergy: How will the task fit in with other prospective tasks? Can the grand challenge task leverage core challenge tasks, or can the core challenge task contribute to a grand challenge task?
- ✧ Generalisability: how would the results of the task generalize to other situations and data?
- ✧ Accountability: how does the task plan to ensure that participants perform and report a component-level evaluation as well as end-to-end evaluation? Are there any potential components?

- NTCIR-9 Task Selection Committee

- Charles Clarke (University of Waterloo, Canada)
- Fred Gey (UC Berkeley, USA)
- Gareth Jones (Dublin City University, Ireland)
- Noriko Kando (NII, Japan)
- Sung-Hyon Myaeng (KAIST, South Korea)
- Stephen Robertson (Microsoft Research Cambridge, UK)
- Eiichiro Sumita (NICT, Japan)