Preface

The *Fourth NTCIR Workshop* (NTCIR-4) is the fourth in a series of evaluation workshops designed to enhance research in information access technologies, including text retrieval, cross-language information retrieval, automatic text summarization, information extraction, question-answering, text mining, etc., using Japanese and East Asian-languages text. It is co-sponsored by the Research Center for Information Resources at the National Institute of Informatics (RCIR/NII) and the Japanese MEXT Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Informatics (#13224087). And the Question Answering Challenge's third subtask was supported by NII Collaborative Research Grant Type-B.

These *Working Notes* contain reports of the experiments and investigations performed within NTCIR-4. These will be presented and discussed in the NTCIR-4 Meeting, 2-4 June 2004, NII, Tokyo, Japan. The final papers will be published in the *NTCIR-4 Proceedings* both in paper and online after revised and extended by the discussion at the Meeting.

The NTCIR-4 consists of five tasks: (1) Cross-Lingual Information Retrieval Task (CLIR), (2) Patent Retrieval Task (PATENT), (3) Question-Answering Challenge (QAC2), (4) Text Summarization Challenge (TSC3), and (5) WEB Task (WEB). Each task was coordinated and organized by the *task organizers*. CLIR is organized in cooperation with National Taiwan University and the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI). PATENT is organized in cooperation with the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) as a joint research project with the NII. We deeply thank National Taiwan University, KISTI, and JIPA for their cooperation and collaboration.

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Seventy-four research groups from ten different countries and areas conducted the tasks set by the organizers and submitted results. We appreciate the efforts and energy of each group in their research for this workshop.

NTCIR-4 has two new ventures: A special issue of the ACM-Transaction on Asian Language Processing (ACM-TALIP) for NTCIR-4 and an Open Submission Session, I would like to thank the recommendation committee members and reviewers for their detailed reviews. I am grateful to the advisors and members of the WEB Task Advisory Committee. Special thanks go to Drs Ellen Voorhees and Donna Harman, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), USA, for their continuous support and substantial advice based on their experience from the beginning of the project, and for permitting the use of TREC's evaluation program. We thank CLEF, the Cross-Language Evaluation Forum, for support and collaboration on various occasions.

I do hope each of the participants will enjoy presenting their research results and discussing with each others at the Meeting, and such occasion will lead fruitful collaboration and research enhancement.

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