Preface from the NTCIR-17 General Chairs

Welcome to the Seventeenth NTCIR Conference (NTCIR-17 Conference). Finally we are able to get together "in-person" conference after four and half years, and at the same time this is the first challenge for NTCIR to have a hybrid conference. We do hope each of you will enjoy the opportunity. EVIA has not been held during the pandemic, but it has also restarted keeping its style placing emphasis on discussion. For enhancing the accessibility to the NTCIR-17 and EVIA 2023 papers, the organizers assigned DOI to each of the publications for the first time in the history of the NTCIR series. We hope that DOI helps researchers find and cite the NTCIR and EVIA papers.

NTCIR is a series of 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 1997 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.

The first NTCIR Conference was held in the summer of 1999, consecutively with the IREX Workshop, another shared task evaluation on Information Retrieval and Extraction. Since then, a wide variety of tasks have been conducted through NTCIR, more than 300 researchers involved in the organizations, more than 1,100 teams participated in NTCIR task(s) and 5,340 research groups currently use NTCIR Test Collection(s) for their research (as of March 2023).

NTCIR-17 plays host to ten 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, Takehiro Yamamoto and Zhicheng Dou.

- FairWeb-1 ("FairWeb-1")
- Fine-grained Argument Understanding in Financial Analysis ("FinArg-1")
- Medial Natural Language Processing for Social media and Clinical texts ("MedNLP-SC")
- Personal Lifelog Organisation & Retrieval ("Lifelog-5")
- QA Lab for Political Information-4 ("QA Lab-PoliInfo-4")
- Resource Transfer Based Dense Retrieval ("Transfer")
- Session Search ("SS-2")
- Unbiased Learning to Rank Evaluation Task 2 ("ULTRE-2")
- Understanding of non-Financial Objects in Financial Reports ("UFO")

We are now in the middle of the drastic changes: how to utilize LLM and Generative AI in Information Retrieval (IR) and Information access (IA) technologies such as QA and Summarization; how to evaluate LLM and Generative IR; and the fairness, trust, bias of these technologies, etc. In addition to the report out of the above-mentioned NTCIR-17's task results, Keynotes and panels are targeting to these issues. Please join the discussion at the conference and think about the future direction of the information access technologies.

NTCIR conference is a venue for task participants and organizers to discuss the official task results, open problems and future task designs. The NTCIR-17 Conference is operated by the NTCIR-17 Organizing Committee and the National Institute of Informatics (NII). We are very grateful to "Strategic Programs" grant from ROIS (Research Organization of Information and Systems) for their generous support.

We are grateful to the Program Committee of NTCIR-17, and to the NTCIR-17 task organizers and their affiliated institutions. In addition, several of the NTCIR-17 task organizers served as the editors of this volume and/or provided feedback on the papers submitted by the participants. Many of the task participants volunteered to help with the dataset creation, and we appreciate their great contribution to this community-based activity. We would like to express our gratitude to Tetsuya Sakai, who prepared a tutorial on evaluation of information access technologies, and keynote speakers of the NTCIR-17 conference: Paul Thomas and Fernando Diaz. Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank the people who worked behind the scenes—especially Tomoko Ohsuga, Yuya Tsuda, Yuka Kawada, Wakana Kuwada, Yoko Matsufuji, Kiyoko Shinohara, and Nagara Matsufuji for their continued effort throughout the course of the NTCIR-17.

NTCIR-17 continues the structure introduced at NTCIR-10 with multiple general co-chairs and program co-chairs, and with tasks coordinated by task organizers with an optional seed funding from NTCIR.

The Center for Dataset Sharing and Collaborative Research (DSC) was launched in NII in April 2015, to encourage the close collaboration with various data providers and enhance the research based on the dataset including NTCIR. This center provides a solid foundation for NTCIR activities.

We are especially grateful that participants and organizers could work through under this difficult environment. We sincerely hope that all participants will enjoy presenting and discussing their research results at the NTCIR-17 conference, socializing, and that it serves as an opportunity for new research collaborations.

We would like to thank all the participants, organizers and contributors, and would like to think and envision a fruitful enhanced next 10 years and future together with all of you in the NTCIR/EVIA community.

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