Preface

Welcome to NLDB 2004, the 9th International Conference on the Application of Natural Language to Information Systems, held at the University of Salford, UK during June 23–25, 2004. NLDB 2004 followed on the success of previous conferences held since 1995. Early conferences, then known as Application of Natural Language to Databases, hence the acronym NLDB, were used as a forum to discuss and disseminate research on the integration of natural language and databases and were mainly concerned with natural-language-based queries, database modelling and user interfaces that facilitate access to information. The conference has since moved to encompass all aspects of information systems and software engineering. Indeed, the use of natural language in systems modelling has greatly improved the development process and benefited both developers and users at all stages of the software development process.

The latest developments in the field of natural language and the emergence of new technologies has seen a shift towards storage of large semantic electronic dictionaries, their exploitation and the advent of what is now known as the Semantic Web. Information extraction and retrieval, document and content management, ontology development and management, and natural language conversational systems have become regular tracks in recent NLDB conferences.

NLDB 2004 saw a 50% increase in the number of submissions, and NLDB has established itself as one of the leading conferences in the area of applying natural language to information systems in its broader sense. The quality of the submissions and their diversity made the work of the members of the program committee more difficult than usual. Sixty-five papers were submitted from 22 different countries. Twenty-nine were accepted as regular papers, while 13 were accepted as short papers. The papers were classified as belonging to one of these themes:

- Natural language conversational systems
- Intelligent querying
- Linguistic aspects of modeling
- Information retrieval
- Natural language text understanding
- Knowledge bases
- Recognition of information in natural language description
- Natural language text understanding
- Knowledge management
- Content management

This year we were honored by the presence of our invited speaker Fabio Ciravegna from the University of Sheffield, UK. His lecture on “Challenges in Harvesting Information for the Semantic Web” was highly appreciated, and initiated vivid discussions.

We are very thankful for the opportunity to serve as Program Chair and Conference Chair for this conference. However, the organization of such an event is a collective effort and the result of a team’s work. First of all we would like to thank the
members of the Program Committee for the time and effort they devoted to the reviewing of the submitted articles and to the selection process. My thanks go also to the additional reviewers for their help and support. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the local organizing committee, especially its chairman Sunil Vadera, for their superb work. We would like to thank Nigel Linge the head of the School of Computing Science and Engineering, Tim Ritchings the head of the Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunication discipline, and Gary Wright from the External Relations Division for their help and support.

Obviously we thank the authors for their high-quality submissions and their participation in this event and their patience during the long reviewing process.

June 2004

Farid Meziane
Elisabeth Métais
Organization

Conference Chair

Elisabeth Métais, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers de Paris, France

Program Committee Chair

Farid Meziane, University of Salford, UK

Program Committee

Diego Mollá Aliod, Macquarie University, Australia
Kenji Araki, Hokkaido University, Japan
Mokrane Bouzeghoub, PRiSM, Université de Versailles, France
Fabio Ciravegna, University of Sheffield, UK
Gary A. Coen, Boeing, USA
Isabelle Comyn-Wattiau, CEDRIC/CNAM, France
Antje Düsterhöft, University of Wismar, Germany
Günther Fliedl, Universität Klagenfurt, Austria
Alexander Gelbukh, Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico
Nicola Guarino, CNR, Italy
Rafael Muñoz Guillena, Universidad de Alicante, Spain
Jon Atle Gulla, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
Harmain Harmain, United Arab Emirates University, UAE
Helmut Horacek, Universität des Saarlandes, Germany
Paul Johannesson, Stockholm University, Sweden
Zoubida Kedad, PRiSM, Université de Versailles, France
Leila Kosseim, Concordia University, Canada
Nadira Lammari, CEDRIC/CNAM, France
Winfried Lenders, Universität Bonn, Germany
Jana Lewerenz, sd&m Düsseldorf, Germany
Robert Luk, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
Heinrich C. Mayr, Universität Klagenfurt, Austria
Paul McFetridge, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Elisabeth Métais, CEDRIC/CNAM, France
Farid Meziane, Salford University, UK
Luisa Mich, University of Trento, Italy
Ana Maria Moreno, Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, Spain
Jian-Yun Nie, Université de Montréal, Canada
Manual Palomar, Universidad de Alicante, Spain
Odile Piton, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, France
Reind van de Riet, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Organization

Hae-Chang Rim, Korea University, Korea
Tim Ritchings, University of Salford, UK
Hongchi Shi, University of Missouri-Columbia, USA
Niculae Stratica, Concordia University, Canada
Vijay Sugumaran, Oakland University, Rochester, USA
Veda Storey, Georgia State University, USA
Lua Km Teng, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Bernhard Thalheim, Kiel University, Germany
Babis Theodoulidis, UMIST, UK
Sunil Vadera, University of Salford, UK
Ronald Wagner, University of Linz, Austria
Hans Weigand, Tilburg University, The Netherlands
Werner Winiwarter, University of Vienna, Austria
Stanislaw Wrycza, University of Gdansk, Poland

Additional Reviewers

Farida Aoughlis, University of Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria
Andrew Basden, University of Salford, UK
Frances Bell, University of Salford, UK
Maria Bergholtz, Stockholm University, Sweden
Aleksander Binemann-Zdanowicz, Kiel University, Germany
Antonio Ferrández, Universidad de Alicante, Spain
Laura Compoy-Gomez, University of Salford, UK
Fiedler Gunar, Kiel University, Germany
Maria Kutar, University of Salford, UK
Didier Nakache, CNAM, France
Alessandro Oltramari, CNR, Italy
Peggy Schmidt, Kiel University, Germany

Organizing Committee

Sunil Vadera (Chair), University of Salford, UK
Farid Meziane, University of Salford, UK
Samia Nefti, University of Salford, UK
Mohamad Saraee, University of Salford, UK
Edwin Mit, University of Salford, UK