Press release

14 European partners participate in Integrated Project NeOn

An open infrastructure for a new generation of semantic applications

The growing availability of information on Internet has shifted the focus from closed, relatively data-poor applications, to mechanisms and applications for searching, integrating and making use of the vast amounts of information that are now available. However, this scenario has brought new problems, such as how to effectively locate the right information or support the seamless integration of information derived from different sources.

Consider the case of a pharmacist that needs to find the appropriate medicine suitable for a particular patient. The pharmacist may need to search various Web databases to find a medicine with certain ingredients, special characteristics, costing less than O, and one that can be delivered at time N. The information on the web about the medicines, its use, availability, costs etc, is continuously updated by a wide range of actors (pharmaceutical companies, different kind of governments, pharmaceutics and associations). For instance an organization such as the Council of Pharmacists has to annually deal with large amounts of *heterogeneous*, diverse and unformatted pieces of information where each of these actors describe medicine and related properties in their own syntax and semantic style. The effort required to provide a useful source of valid information to the pharmacists in its broker-wise role between the pharmaceutical labs and the pharmacist is enormous.

By locating and combining the relevant semantic tags describing a particular medicine, a solution based on NeOn technology will make it possible to automate the process of collecting and integrating the information provided by different suppliers.

NeOn, "Lifecycle Support for Networked Ontologies", is an Integrated Project (IP), financed by the 6th Framework Programme of the EU. The project's budget is €14.7M, with the European Commission providing a €10.2 million grant. The UK's Open University is the coordinating partner, while the rest of the consortium includes European universities, businesses and user organizations collaborating in the project.

The research institutions include world-leading groups in the field of ontologies, collaborative technologies, context management and human-computer interaction, such as The Open University and University of Sheffield from UK, Universities of Karlsruhe and Koblenz-Landau from Germany, University Polytechnic Madrid (UPM) from Spain, INRIA (National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control) from France, Josef Stefan Institute from Slovenia and National Research Council from Italy. The companies that participate in this project are Software AG, iSOCO, Ontoprise and Atos Origin sae. A not-for-profit organization (AECE) is providing the pharmaceutical know-how for the planned case studies, while an international organization (United Nations FAO) is contributing another case study in the agricultural-fisheries area.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

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