Preface

Special Issue: Supporting E-Learning with Technologies for Electronic Documents

This special issue explores how to complement traditional e-learning techniques with technologies for electronic documents in order to assist e-learning. We use the phrase “technologies for electronic documents” to mean processes and algorithms that operate on unprocessed electronic content and, in general, the research undertaken in these areas assumes that the domain of application is open, changing and unstructured.

Techniques being developed in the information retrieval and knowledge management communities, for example, include mechanisms to describe the semantics of document fragments and relationships between documents, tools for automatically deriving and visualising the concepts within a document and between documents, authoring tools for adding metadata to documents, the use of task and user models to improve the relevance of documents retrieved by search engines.

In asking this question, we received papers ranging from those that address core document modelling issues to papers that discuss how to use analysis of users’ interaction with electronic content in a collaborative environment. The papers encompass the following themes: document reuse, concept and task modelling, collaboration between learners and dealing with dynamic open environments.

There are clear synergies between research occurring in the fields of electronic document technologies and AIED. We hope this special issue will encourage further work at the boundary between the two areas.

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