Introduction: Special Issue on Expanded Papers from the First Workshop on Multimedia Semantics, November 28/29, 2002 in Milovy, Czech Republic, in Conjunction with SOFSEM 2002

What follows are expanded versions of four papers which were presented at the first Workshop on Multimedia Semantics, held November 28/29, 2002, in Milovy, Czech Republic, in conjunction with SOFSEM 2002.

Feature-based techniques for content-based retrieval have been studied for quite some time. What is now needed is for researchers to develop approaches to extract semantics from multimedia documents so that retrievals using concept-based queries can be tailored to individual users. The semantic gap, or, as others put it, the semantic chasm, must be crossed. This workshop concentrated on techniques to help us do this.

The first paper, 'A Multimedia Information Repository for Cross Cultural Dance Studies,' by Forouzan Golshani, Pegge Vissicaro, and Youngchoon Park, which was the keynote of the workshop, develops techniques for extracting semantics from the worlds' cultural heritage of dance. As the first such study in this area, it reflects the growing interest in using information technology to enhance the way people interact with various art forms. The next paper, 'Structuring and Querying Documents in an Audio Database Management System,' by R. Lutfi, M. Gelgon, and J. Martinez, brings audio into a database environment suitable for content-based retrieval. This is an initial foray into this very important area and their approach will certainly be used by future investigators.

The third paper, 'A Logic for SVG Documents Query and Retrieval,' by Eugenio Di Sciascio, Francesco Donini, and Marina Mongiello, brings another underrepresented domain, scalable vector graphics, into a database environment suitable for content-based retrieval. For a modality of multimedia information that has not been explored over the last few years, this paper shows its importance, and will, hopefully, initiate further research. The last paper, 'Discovering Document Semantics QBYS: A System for Querying the WWW by Semantics,' Michael Johnson, Farshad Fotouhi, Sorin Draghici, Ming Dong, and Duo Xu, develops techniques for determining the genre of web pages. They show that good results can be obtained by using enhanced textual/structural information (tags as well as keywords), and leave one pondering the question of whether non-textual information is really needed for genre detection.

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