Hypertext 2014 in Santiago de Chile

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ABSTRACT

This year was the 25th edition of the ACM Conferences on Hypertext and Hypermedia[1]. Hypertext 2014 took place in Santiago de Chile, a location that is quite far away from the US and particularly from Europe. Nevertheless, the conference was well-attended with about 85 participants. There were two interesting keynote talks, given by César A. Hidalgo from MIT Media Lab and Ricardo Baeza-Yates from Yahoo! Research Labs. The Best Paper Awards went to a study on reader preferences and behavior on Wikipedia and an experimental study on scalable, generic and adaptive focused crawling. The conference was organized at PUC Chile in central Santiago. The evening slots were dedicated to eating, drinking and exploring the city together, which was a great opportunity to get to know the Hypertext community on a more personal level.

1. INTRODUCTION

A conference is much more than just a venue where researchers present their papers. Apart from having their articles published in the Hypertext 2014 proceedings[2], the participating authors could enjoy good company, interesting keynotes and discussions, a charming city and great food.

In this article, we provide a short summary of the formal and social highlights of the conference. We hope that some parts of this report will bring a smile on the faces of those who attended Hypertext 2014, and that all others will now plan to attend next year's Hypertext conference.

2. BEHIND THE SCENES

Hypertext is a relatively small conference that usually accepts about thirty to thirty-five papers and typically attracts between seventy and ninety participants - several factors smaller than other SigWEB conferences like CIKM. Nevertheless, we have been busy for almost a year to make the event happen.

After having cleared the budget with ACM, to whom we are forever indebted for their professionalism and their expeditiousness, we decided to hold ACM Hypertext at the Casa Central of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile. The PUC, as it is known in Chile, is ranked at the top of Latin American Universities by the QS University Rankings, and has a great events center close to its engineering campus. Although the

General Chair of Hypertext 2014, Leo Ferres, comes from another university 500 kilometers south of Santiago, Universidad de Concepción, itself ranked #12 in the QS University Rankings, having European and North American authors and attendants travel another 500 kilometers was deemed a poor idea.

The Local Chair, Denis Parra, and Leo opted for the Casa Central premises, which already had quite some machinery in place to cater for conferences such as Hypertext. Perhaps the only thing that was a bit uncomfortable was the Chilean winter weather, which even was noticeable during the coffee breaks.

Figure 1: Word Cloud of Accepted Papers at Hypertext 2014

The focus of a conference is largely determined by its overall theme, but explicit tracks and people who promote these tracks are essential for balancing the different strands of research on hypertext and hypermedia, and for strengthening the community. Therefore, we were very happy with the active support from our track chairs. Johan Bollen and Daniele Quercia were the faces of the track "Links and Connections between People". Mathieu d'Aquin and Philippe Coudré-Mauroux were our ambassadors for the semantic web community. The adaptive hypermedia community and the HCI community in general were approached by Rosta Farzan and Vincent Wade.

Out of 86 submissions, we have been able to accept 19 regular papers, 15 short papers and 15 posters and demos – see Figure 1 for a tag cloud of the paper titles. Each submission was reviewed by at least three program committee members, followed by a metareview by the track chairs, who recommended acceptance or rejection of the papers. Apart from the reviews, there have been many discussions in the conference system EasyChair - between PC members and with the track chairs. As a result, the reviews were of very good quality - we received this feedback from the track chairs as well as from several authors, even those of papers that were not accepted. This made our lives a lot easier. Many thanks to all of you who reviewed papers for Hypertext.

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[1] http://ht.acm.org/ht2014/

[2] http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2631775&picked=prox and http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1210/

Following the example of several other conferences, we decided to publish the Extended Proceedings open access at CEUR-WS. Our poster and demo chairs, Carlos Castillo and Jill Freyne, collaborated with the workshop and tutorial chairs, Federica Cena and Christoph Trattner, and our Proceedings Chair Altigran Soares da Silva to make sure that all late-breaking results, doctoral consortium papers and workshop submissions are accessible from one place.

3. ARRIVING AT THE CONFERENCE

For many of us, Hypertext 2014 started with a long intercontinental flight. Eelco Herder, Program Chair, arrived on Saturday early morning in Santiago de Chile. In an email to all conference participants, Leo warned for 'South-American scenes' with taxi drivers trying to betray you - he suggested to take a shared shuttle instead. This turned out to be very unproblematic, so after a short stop in the hotel it was time to explore the city.

For Europeans, Santiago de Chile does not look very exotic at first sight - it is just your average Spanish city, and one doesn't really notice that the city has over seven million inhabitants. Particularly impressive is the view on the Andes Mountains, which are visible from about everywhere in the city. A free walking tour (Tour 4 Tips) turned out to be the perfect way to visit all landmarks and to learn about the city's rich history and peculiarities. During the city tour, we encountered one of the many friendly street dogs, who decided that it was fun to walk along while ensuring that the group stayed together.

The conference venue was the Casa Central of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile in downtown Santiago, a lively place where many other conferences and meetings were being held. The local organization team did a great job in ensuring that everything was working as expected: room allocation, projectors and sound, coffee breaks and internet - all without any problem.

4. THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The first day of the conference featured three workshops, a doctoral consortium and two tutorials. The workshops on Social Personalization (SP 2014) and on Data Visualization (DataWiz) lasted the whole day and were very well attended. The LinkQS workshop on the 'linking quantified self' and the doctoral consortium attracted a smaller audience, but both events were very lively and interactive.

The first keynote was given by César Hidalgo from MIT, who discussed some cool interfaces for visualizing the development of economies and cities, as well as for your personal email contacts and communications. Ricardo Baeza-Yates from Yahoo! gave the second keynote talk on the wisdom of ad-hoc crowds - also with quite some attention for visualization.

The main conference was completely single track, which allowed us all to attend all talks. Following the three conference tracks, all papers were grouped in thematic sessions, varying from entities and structures to collaboration and evaluation. As the papers are available in the (digital) proceedings, we only mention the two best paper awards:

- the Ted Nelson Best Newcomer Award went to "Readers Preference and Behavior on Wikipedia" by Janette Lehmann, Claudia Müller-Birn, David Laniado, Mounia Lalmas and Andreas Kaltenbrunner

- the Engelbart Best Paper Award went to "Scalable, Generic, and Adaptive Systems for Focused Crawling" by Georges Gouriten, Silviu Maniu and Pierre Senellart

The poster reception on Tuesday started with a 'poster madness', in which all presenters had one minute to pitch their posters and demos. Most people managed to stay within the one-minute limit, but one lady managed to continue presenting, despite orchestrated applause and the next presenter already standing in front of her.

During the social dinner, Denis held a charming speech, in which he told about one particular conference participant who was so jetlagged that he slept through a performance of the Cirque du Soleil; apart from the turbulence during his flight, this participant was also lucky enough to experience an earthquake of strength 6.6.

5. THE SOCIAL PART OF HYPERTEXT

Apart from the official conference program, the conference participants stuck together in the evening hours as well. The Bellavista area, near the conference venue, has many nice restaurants. During the first conference evening, two groups happened to end up in the same restaurant with traditional Peruvian dishes. We had a whopping 25% of registrants who indicated that they were vegetarian - or at least wanted to eat vegetarian. Santiago turned out to be quite vegetarian-friendly - with a 87-year old vegetarian restaurant 'El Naturista' and the traditional corn dish 'humita'.

It was not an exception that people had to go back to their hotels after midnight. Fortunately, our part of Santiago was very safe to walk. One evening, Eelco and a colleague of his even got 'protection' from two street dogs, who spontaneously decided to accompany them to their hotel and to check every street corner ahead of them.

At the first day of the conference, some of us visited a very pittoresque "La Piojera". This is a place where many traditions of Chile come to life. Among them, famous fatty meals, cheap beer and, most of all, the famous "Terremoto" (or earthquake). Terremotos are alcoholic drinks made of really cheap white wine (which is, by the way, somewhat better white wine than most of what is sold in Europe and North America) and, surprisingly, ice-cream - vanilla ice-cream in particular. The taste of Terremoto is, as we understood, like Marmite: you either love it or hate it.

The conference banquet was held at the Hotel Plaza San Francisco, a few minutes' walk from the conference venue. We ordered many vegetarian dishes as well, and the reception and dinner were very good. As a colorful note, the room that we had rented looked like a wedding reception, including flowers on the tables, tables with mantelpieces matching the upholstery of the chairs and other wealthy decorations.

Johan Bollen from Indiana University - and chair of the track "Links and Connections between People" was given the inofficial 'Best Friend of Hypertext Award' for his late-night achievements. Rumors go that 'best friend' is a euphemism.

6. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the above: Hypertext 2014 was a very successful conference, with a good scientific program and a very sociable group of participants. What remains are the excellent proceedings, sweet memories, new contacts and many pictures.

At the end of the conference, Simon Harper, chair of ACM SigWeb, announced that next year's Hypertext will take place in Northern Cyprus between 2 and 4 September 2015.

Eelco Herder is a Senior Researcher at the L3S Research Center, Germany. His research areas include Web personalization, user modeling, usability and HCI in general. Other research topics include Web usage analysis and the development of tools for Personal Information Management. He is program chair for Hypertext 2014 and was member of the organization committees for UMAP 2013, 2012 and 2011, CHI 2012 and Adaptive Hypermedia 2008.

Leo Ferres is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at the Universidad de Concepcion in Chile. Dr. Ferres has published widely in accessibility, has guest edited three journal issues on accessibility, and has been active in the two most famous scientific conferences on accessibility, ASSETS and the W4A, as program committee member, as Chair and as General Chair. Dr. Ferres is the General Chair of Hypertext 2014.

Denis Parra is Assistant Professor at the Computer Science Department, School of Engineering, in the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in Information Science from University of Pittsburgh in 2013. His research focuses on Recommender Systems and Adaptive Web Systems, but he also investigates in topics related to Social Media Analysis and Information Visualization applied to Recommender Systems.