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(Editors)

**Proceedings of the Second Workshop on
Very Large Digital Libraries
VLDL2009**

*A Workshop in conjunction with the European
Conference on Digital Libraries 2009*

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Preface

The implementation of nowadays Digital Libraries is more demanding than in the past. Information consumers are facing with the need to access ever growing, heterogeneous, possibly federated Information Spaces while information providers are interested in satisfying such needs by sharing rich and organised views over their information deluge. Because of their fundamental role of information production and dissemination vehicle, Digital Libraries are also expected to provide information society with services that must be available 24/7 and guarantee the expected quality of service. This scenario leads to the development of Very Large Digital Libraries in terms of number of Information Objects and Collections to be made available, users to be served and potentially distributed resources needed to implement such systems. Such systems have to confront with new challenges in a context having scalability, interoperability and sustainability as focal points.

Interestingly, however, there is no clear and well-accepted definition of Very Large Digital Library (VLDL). Some, in an attempt to give one, blur the separation between Very Large Databases (VLDBs) and VLDBs and regard the latter as VLDBs storing Digital Library content. Since in databases the adjective Very large strictly refers to size of content, the implication is that, similarly, VLDBs ought to be DLs storing digital content beyond a given storage threshold. Despite being intuitively correct, this explanation does not fully satisfy DL practitioners. Indeed, DL content design paradigms cannot be conceptually separated by the relative functionalities as it happens for DBs. DLs are of use to peculiar user communities whose functionality needs, best practices and behaviour are well-accepted DL systems requirements. As captured by the DELOS reference model for DLs, user management, content management, functionality management, and policies are equally important in the definition of a DL. Accordingly, as demonstrated by real DL system experiences, VLDBs should be described as DLs featuring very large features in one or more of such aspects.

Since its first edition (ref. VLDB2008 Workshop Report, published in SIGMOD Records 2009), the goal of this workshop was to provide researchers, practitioners and application developers with a forum fostering a constructive exchange among all key actors in the field of Very Large Digital Libraries. Its long-term and ambitious mission is to discuss and delineate the foundations of VLDBs as a research field on its own, with well-defined areas, problems, solutions and open questions.

We would like to thank all the people who have directly or indirectly contributed to the event. Among these our colleagues at ISTI-CNR, Donatella Castelli, Leonardo Candela, and Costantino Thanos for their research inspiration, and Vittore Casarosa and Francesca Borri for the logistic support. Finally, our sincere gratitude goes to the members of the program committee, who sacrificed part of their precious time for the success of this workshop, to the chairs of the sessions, who offered their expertise to coordinate and harmonize the sequence of presentations, and of course to all authors, whose passion and ideas were the real fuel of VLDB 2009.

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