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 VLDLs 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, VLDLs 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, VLDLs should be described as DLs featuring very large features in one or more of such aspects.

Since its first edition (ref. VLDL2008 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 VLDLs as a research field on its own, with well-defined areas, problems, solutions and open questions.

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