

DERI, NUI Galway Team second prize winner in the Elsevier Grand Challenge on Knowledge Enhancement in the Life Sciences

Elsevier, a leading global healthcare and scientific publisher, has announced the two winners chosen in the Elsevier Grand Challenge, a competition inviting researchers to prototype tools dealing with the ever-increasing amount of online life sciences information.

The first and second prize winners were announced on 22 April at the Experimental Biology conference in New Orleans and chosen from four finalist teams. Each of the four Grand Challenge finalists providing demonstrations to a distinguished panel of judges and fellow contestants. The applications used technologies ranging from automatic annotations, semantic search engines, image query and summarisation of cited documents.

The two first and second prize winners chosen by the panel of judges represent the tools thought to be most innovative and implementable:

- First prize winner: Sean I. O'Donoghue, Lars J. Jensen, Heiko Horn, Evangelos Pafilis, Michael Kuhn, Nigel P. Brown and Reinhard Schneider, EMBL Germany, for their project Reflect: Automated Annotation of Scientific Terms
- Second prize winner: Vit Novacek, Tudor Groza and Siegfried Handschuh, DERI, Ireland, for their project CORAAL—Dive into Publications, Bathe in the Knowledge

In the submitted work DERI presents a plan to integrate Knowledge Representation and Reasoning technologies in life science publications to better integrate, search and retrieve life sciences knowledge.

Dr. Siegfried Handschuh, SFI Stokes Lecturer at NUI Galway and research leader of the Semantic Collaboration team at DERI said "This is a very significant achievement for our team. The competition for this prize thus far has been very strong and we are very pleased to belong to the best two teams. We can leverage the knowledge in DERI to create innovative technologies that will change how life scientists work. Changing the way scientists exchange knowledge is on our agenda. This contest gave us another opportunity to present our work to an international audience and we plan to build on top of that success."

Prof Stefan Decker, Director of DERI said: "Life Sciences is an important application area for the technologies that DERI is creating. This is further proof that Irish research is visible and internationally competitive."

"The tool has taken more than half a year to build," said Vit Novacek Ph.D. Student at DERI "It didn't exist when we heard of the competition, and we just thought of what we could do with our research skills. We started to build from scratch, and then we reworked the back end of the tool entirely after we got comments from the judges in the semi-final round. It's really exciting to work in such a dynamic manner."

"I was impressed not only with the quality of the tools the finalists developed, but with the atmosphere of collaboration," added Herman van Campenhout, CEO, Elsevier. "Though the teams were in competition with one another, they were very open with their ideas, and a real sense of community has developed around the Elsevier Grand Challenge. We feel, more than ever, that by listening to what researchers want, and by partnering with members of the community to co-develop tools to improve scientific communication, we can create some very innovative solutions together. It's quite a fresh approach."

"The most amazing outcome of the challenge, I believe, is that it has actually helped produce some very good science," commented Anita de Waard of Elsevier Labs, Researcher Disruptive Technologies and co-organizer of the Challenge. "It seems clear that there is no single solution to solving the information infarct in biology. Apart from helping develop some wonderfully innovative thinking about improved ways to publish and access science, the Challenge has already led to several collaborations between the participants. We hope the Challenge and our planned conference on the

Future of Research Communication can stimulate the formation of a budding community to work on new ways of publishing science.”

About DERI

DERI is the largest applied research organisation developing the next generation of Internet technology - the Semantic Web. "Founded in 2003 with CSET (Centre for Science and Engineering Technology) funding from Science Foundation Ireland with Hewlett Packard Galway as its main industrial partner, it has since grown to over 120 people and has acquired significant additional research funding from sources such as the European Union Framework Programmes, Enterprise Ireland, and industrial partnerships. For more information about DERI see <http://www.deri.ie>
For more information about the Elsevier Grand Challenge see:
<http://www.elseviergrandchallenge.com/>

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