Building Consensus via a Semantic Web Collaborative Space

George Anadiotis$^1$, Konstantinos Kafentzis$^1$, John Pavlopoulos$^1$, Adam Westerski$^2$

1: IMC Technologies S.A.

2: Universidad Politecnica de Madrid

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Presentation Structure

1. Background and related work
2. A deliberative, discursive mode of decision making: the eDialogos Consensus process and platform
3. Semantic Web Technology to Facilitate Collaborative Decision Making: the eDialogos Consensus Ontology
4. Argumentation Graphs and User Feedback to Estimate Agreement: the Consensus Rate Model
5. Conclusions and Outlook
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IBIS: A tool for all reasons

- Question (Problem/Issue)
- Idea (Position)
- Argument For/Against

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IBIS spinoffs: ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling tools

• Argument Mapping: tools based on a GUI to enable users to capture Questions, Ideas, Arguments

• Assumptions:
  – Laying down the arguments will result in an enlightened understanding of the problem
  – Decision will be reached via offline procedures
  – A facilitator will catalyze the process

• Problem: User-friendly tools, but limited functionality - glorified mind maps
IBIS spinoffs: ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling tools

- Argumentation grounding: tools based on formal argumentation to enable users to document options, argumentation structure and strength

- **Assumptions**
  - Documenting all the arguments, their logical premises and structure is possible
  - Applying reasoning rules will enable tools to provide the ’algorithmically optimal’ solution

- **Problem**: Complex and unappealing user experience - made by and for argumentation experts.
Citizen Engagement for Governance and Policy Modelling

- Use of Social Media to connect citizens and all other stakeholders to decision-making and governance
- Contributions at a vast scale can lead to remarkably powerful emergent phenomena:
  - Idea synergy, the long tail, many eyes, wisdom of the crowds
- Existing Social Media are not designed for CE:
  - Disorganized content, low signal-to-noise ratio, quantity rather than depth, Polarization, dysfunctional argumentation
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A methodology and platform in the middle ground between completely unstructured, general purpose approaches and highly structured, formal argumentation approaches.

• Making the entry barrier for users as low as possible:
  • Social Media platform

• Enabling compatibility with existing approaches:
  • Building on IBIS and semantic grounding/interoperability

• Enabling, encouraging and making use of user generated content and feedback in every phase of the process:
  • Designing and implementing a model that estimates argument strength and agreement level based on user feedback
4th European eGovernment Awards 2009

Finalist
Category 2a: eGovernment Empowering Citizens

eDialogos
e-Trikala S.A. (Greece)

Viviane Reding
European Commissioner
Information Society and Media
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eDialogos evolution

2012

Problem Formulation  Idea Management  Voting
Building Consensus via a Semantic Web Collaborative Space

Architecture

- Working Groups -> Issues -> Positions -> Arguments / Notes
- Debating Period / Voting Period

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Interaction

- Moderators: raise Issues, set periods
- All: add positions, notes/arguments, rate, vote

**My Consensus**

Δοκιμαστικό Τοπικό

Several issues still obscure the classification of rhinitis, with optimal patient management in mind. The term rhinitis is used to describe inflammatory conditions of the nasal mucosa.

Allergy is an immune-mediated hypersensitivity reaction. A major proportion of allergic diseases are mediated through IgE-dependent mechanisms, which are also the best understood. The term "allergy" therefore often tends to be used interchangeably with "IgE-mediated allergy". IgE antibodies are not necessarily associated with symptoms after exposure to the specific allergen due to local IgE production (entopy) [references] or a cell mediated mechanism, so IgE sensitization is not identical to allergic rhinitis.

- Add Position

**Popular Positions**

- Dr Nikos Papadopoulos on September 01st, 2011 at 22:51:
  - As a major component, clinical characteristics, breach, chest tightness, should be specifically.

- Classification of pediatric rhinitis
  - Corresponding Group
  - Corresponding Topic

- 2 votes required to reach consensus

- Vote on Position
- Explore Debate (1 Comments)
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Consensus Rate Definitions

- Position a
- Arguments b (pro) and c (con)
- Rating arguments (like/dislike)
- Each edge is either For or Against
- Node’s color & size reflects social opinion
Consensus Rate Algorithm

- Start from the leaves and measure opinion $(f & g)$
- Normalize over all ratings in all Positions: ...out of all the people who could have rated
- Aggregate on the parent $(e)$
  - Rate of $e +$ Sum of rates of children
  - Account deviation: How much each child deviates from siblings
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Conclusions and Outlook

• **Contributions**
  - A middle-ground approach for ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling
  - Semantic interoperability and grounding: the eDialogos Consensus ontology
  - Metric definition: the eDialogos Consensus rate

• **Outlook**: Deployment at European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (7000 users)

• **Future work**
  - Argument mapping GUI
  - Formal argumentation support
  - Open source / tool convergence
  - …

Anadiotis et al: Semantics-powered Virtual Communities and Open Innovation for a Structured Deliberation Process. Workshop on Semantics for Governance and Policy Modelling, ESWC 2011