Editorial

As editors, we will generally stand aside and let our authors, through their papers, speak for themselves. For this inaugural issue, however, we think a few words are in order about the reasons for creating a new journal. Information Retrieval is a growing field, and served, in part, by a number of excellent journals. Yet there is no journal that has, as its central interest, the development of theories, experiments, systems and evaluations for the complex tasks of storing and retrieving and, more generally, organizing and finding, information, in texts, images and dynamic media.

In more than 40 years since Hans Peter Luhn described computer-aided retrieval and summarization, advances in computing and telecommunications have made some kinds of Information Retrieval an everyday occurrence. This has been accomplished by a collection of ingenious computational rules, occasionally with a theoretical basis but more often purely empirical, developed for purposes of textual Information Retrieval. But it is increasingly clear that theoretical underpinning is required, and that there are strong conceptual ties between the problems (if not the methods) of Information Retrieval and the theories and models developed in other fields.

These diverse fields include statistics, pattern recognition and machine learning, linguistics, the cognitive sciences, and perhaps many others.

The journal Information Retrieval aims to provide a rigorous international forum and archival record for research important to Information Retrieval in all these fields. Papers will be reviewed to the high standards set in the most demanding science and engineering disciplines, and edited to serve the broadest scientifically literate audience.

We believe that there are many important papers that are not being written, today, because of the absence of a forum such as this. We aim to seek out and publish those papers. At the same time, Kluwer Academic Publishers has established an important new policy to ensure author's rights to pre-publication and ongoing distribution in electronic formats, while maintaining the archival and portability virtues of traditional paper publication.

Interested authors are encouraged to contact either Editor-in-Chief, any member of the Editorial Board, or the Kluwer offices directly.

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