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1. Introduction

The purpose of the document is to describe SIMBAD's strategies and working methods, composing a brief Quality Plan in order to ensure a successful management of the project.

SIMBAD is a three-year EU-FP7 FET (Future and Emerging Technologies) project, started on 1st April 2008, which involves the following partners:

- UNIVE Ca' Foscari University (Venice, Italy), *coordinator*
- UNİYORK University of York (England)
- TUD Delft University of Technology (The Netherlands)
- IST Instituto Superior Técnico (Lisbon, Portugal)
- UNIVR University of Verona (Italy)
- ETHZ ETH Zurich (Switzerland)

The project aims at bringing to full maturation a paradigm shift that is currently just emerging within the pattern recognition and machine learning domains, where researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of similarity information per se, as opposed to the classical feature-based approach. We aim at undertaking a thorough study of several aspects of similarity-based pattern analysis and recognition methods, from the theoretical, computational, and applicative perspective, with a view to substantially advance the state of the art in the field, and contribute towards the long-term goal of organizing this emerging field into a more coherent whole.

2. Organization

SIMBAD will employ a simple but effective management practice to assure the scientific quality of the project and progress along the proposed work plan and the agreed obligations towards the Commission and the scientific community.

Coordination of the project will be achieved through the following roles:

- Project Coordinator (PC);
- Project Administrator (PA);
- Project Coordination Board (PCB);
- Work Package Leaders (WPL).

The PCB is the main decision-making body of the project, responsible for the scientific and strategic directions as well as for the financial management. Its members are the scientific coordinators of the principal contractors, the PC, who chairs the Board, and it is assisted by the PA, who acts as secretary and has experience in financial and contract management.

The PCB meets at least once a year and its responsibilities include:

- monitoring the progress of the project towards its objectives in observance of its obligations;
- resolution of issues raised by the PC and WPLs;
- resolutions related to the project consortium and contract (budget transfers, activity redefinition, reallocation of effort, ...);
- quality management of project's productions (review of technical reports and papers, releases for publications, ...);
- compilation of the necessary financial and administrative information for annual cost statements to be sent to the Commission;
- logistics related to the organization of project meetings and workshops;

- equal opportunities policies
- dissemination and intellectual property rights (IPR) issues.

The will also handle conflicts arising between partners. Decision of PCB shall be unanimous. Where unanimity cannot be reached, the following steps will be followed in this order: 1) majority rule, if all members agree to follow this rule (with prevailing vote of the PCB chairman in case of tie); 2) arbitration with a moderator acceptable to all partners; 3) “red flag” to the project and re-submission to the Commission.

The PC is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, in line with decisions taken by the SC, and for overseeing and coordinating all technical work according to the project workplan and timetable. He is responsible for the logistic organization, and he is assisted in this by the PA. The PC is the main point of liaison between the project consortium and the Commission, and ensures timely delivery of all deliverables, periodic progress reports and audit information according to contractual obligations.

A WPL is responsible for coordinating the technical work of a workpackage, and ensures that the workpackage's objectives are achieved with timely production of deliverables. He is responsible for management of efforts among the tasks composing the workpackage and for ensuring workflow to and from dependent workpackages. WPLs report to the PC.

The PA will be assisted by senior finance management staff from the main research administration offices of UNIVE. The PA will be in charge of the day-to-day logistic management of the project, as well as handling administrative communication between partners by means, e.g., of mailing lists.

3. Communication

Communication and information flow between project partners will take place via:

- electronic mailing lists;
- a project web site for information and document deposit and retrieval;
- audio and/or video teleconferences, twice-yearly full project meetings.

Electronic mail will be the primary communication medium for both technical exchanges as well as for administrative matters (e.g., voting on issues concerning the SC). A number of electronic mailing lists will be defined, typically by workpackage and committee. In order to address specific technical issues, ad-hoc working groups may also be set up with their own mailing list. The mailing list system will be hosted by the coordinating contractor, UNIVE.

A project web site will be set up and administered by the coordinating contractor, UNIVE. The site will consist of a publicly accessible part and a password-protected consortium-only part. The site will host a document archive for technical documents and administrative information.

Teleconferences will be used as the need arises and will be encouraged to avoid unnecessary travel. Full project meetings twice a year will provide the opportunity for face-to-face meetings between partners.

4. Meetings

Consortium meetings will take place every six months, in different locations according to a round-robin policy. During the meetings, the partners inform the consortium about their activities and task progress. Work packages (WP's) and tasks are then discussed and decisions are taken together if necessary. The partners may inform the manager about possible difficulties and problems they may encounter. The PC should be able to manage that kind of issues. The meeting is also an opportunity for the PC to remind the deadlines to achieve tasks and to deliver reports and deliverables. During the meeting, the partners decide on when and where the next meeting will take place.

The agenda will include:

- Location
- Date
- Participants
- Items to be discussed and presented

The hosting Partner prepares the agenda which is disseminated within the consortium. The partners have a week to add their comments to the agenda. The final version of the agenda is then disseminated. If modified, the agenda needs to be approved once again during the meeting.

The PC prepares the meeting's minutes which summaries what have been said at the meetings and future actions. The minutes will include:

- Location
- Date
- Participants
- Agenda
- Report on what has been said
- Future actions

The minutes of the meetings are disseminated to the partners without delay, in any case not later than one month. The minutes will be considered as accepted if, within fifteen calendar days from receipt, no party has objected in a traceable form to the PC. If so, there are some comments to the minutes, a new version is released taking into account the comments.

5. Documents

All technical documents will be based on the style sheet of the document "EmptySIMBADDocument.doc" that is available on the SIMBAD web site (<http://simbad-fp7.eu>).

5.1 Progress reports

5.1.1 Schedule

During the life time of the Project, the PC has to deliver to the European Commission all needed contractual reports and to summarise and communicate the work of the overall project, as well as the communication with complementary projects. The partners are request to fill in the requested reports one week after the end of the related period and have two weeks to deliver it to the Project Manager. If they do not deliver on time, the Project Manager sends them a reminder. If he gets no feed back he contacts the partner to see what the problem is and try to find a solution with the partner.

5.1.2 Periodic Progress Reports

The Project Manager presents annual project reports and the final project to summarise and communicate to the European Commission the work of the overall project.

Annual reports are due at:

- 31st March 2009
- 31st March 2010

Final report is due at:

- 31st March 2011

Let's note that the annual and final reports are associated to cost statements. All annual and final reports are written by the Project Manager with the style sheet of the document "EmptyProgressReport.doc" available on the Simbad web site.

5.1.3 Cost statements

Each year, the PA provides the partners with the template of the cost statements. The PA supervises the costs to make sure the partners monitor their spending according to the contract. Cost statements are sent to the European Commission with the related reports and deliverables.

Cost statements are due at:

- 31st March 2009
- 31st March 2010
- 31st March 2011

5.2 Deliverables

The PC monitors the delivery of all contractual deliverables. One month before the deadline, he reminds the partners on the delivery deadline. The Project partners deliver the deliverables to the European Commission. The PC asks the parties to deliver the deliverables fifteen calendar days before the due date. The deliverable is then circulated within the partners who have a week to make possible comments to the deliverable author. Once it is adopted by all partners it is then sent to the European Commission by the PC.

6. Dissemination

The dissemination of the project results will take place mainly through publications in the top-level specialized technical journals, and presentations at the leading international conferences and workshops. Further, at the end of project we plan to publish a book containing the major results achieved by the consortium, to be published by a major international scientific publisher.

Moreover, other activities will be pursued especially in conjunction with the major application goals of the project, which have relevant social impact. These include, for example, issuing press releases to local, national or international press on suitable occasions, participation in web-based networks, technical forums and discussion groups, organization and participation of media events in press conferences, exhibitions or information days (e.g., on the occasion of a project meeting), organization of a dissemination event in the form of a workshop, seminar or conference, etc.

The Simbad web site is hosted by <http://simbad-fp7.eu> Here, the project's publications, reports, software, data, and results, both theoretical and technological, will be published and illustrated. An important part of the site will be the collection of similarity data set up in work package WP3 that will be publicly available, thereby creating a common reference for similarity-based computational models and algorithms.

To promote research activity in the field we shall consider establishing an open workshop series specifically devoted to the project's theme as well as organizing special issues in top-level technical journals. All participants in the consortium have long experience in this kind of editorial/organizational activity.

Attention will also be devoted to establishing interactions with related EU initiatives (e.g. PASCAL, ECVision, euCognition).