



1st International Web Observatory Workshop

WOW2013Chairs' Welcome

The Web operates at a very large scale and is dominated by emergent phenomena with radical innovations coming from and driven by its users, and in time scales that are faster than those exhibited by earlier computer-based systems. We are motivated to study the Web as an artefact and also use it as a lens onto human behaviour, gaining insights into the Web and into the society that creates and interacts with it. However we are only just beginning to understand how to conduct scientific research on the huge and constantly changing socio-technical system formed by the Web and all the people and agents that use it.

Consequently numerous research labs around the world are building Web Observatories and conducting studies within them, many highly advanced, but typically developed in isolation. The 1st International Web Observatory Workshop provides a forum for reporting, presenting, and evaluating this work and disseminating new approaches to advance the discipline. The papers include case studies of several observatories, addressing how they are constructed and how they are used. They also ask questions about why, what and how observations are made, and provide insights into the ecosystem of observatories.

These studies provide the groundwork as we “observe the observatories” and move from the case studies towards principles of general applicability, establishing the research agenda in this growing field. In particular they provide an opportunity to explore how Web Observatories might in the future interoperate – be that through the exchange of data, metadata, remote access, analytic algorithms, results or policies.

We hope that this inaugural workshop will help establish the Web Observatory research community, and that other workshops will follow to advance this important new field.

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