

Homo Narrans: From Information to Narratives

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Abstract

Humans are curious creatures, equipped with a sense of (and desire for) finding meaning in their environment. They are predisposed to identify patterns, real and spurious, in the world they live in, and above anything else, they understand the world in terms of narratives. In this talk, we will explore a set of questions about narratives: what is a narrative made up of? What signals from textual prose tell us what the narrative is? What about signals from structured data that imply a particular narrative? What is the essence of a story? How can narrative information be extracted and presented? Open source intelligence analysts and investigative reporters alike are hunting for the story, the narrative, behind the petabyte intercepts or terabyte leaks. The more data we gather or have available, the stronger will be our thirst to distill meaningful stories from it.

Short Bio


Professor Jochen L. Leidner MA MPhil PhD FRGS is the Research Professor for Explainable and Responsible Artificial Intelligence in Insurance at Coburg University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany, where he leads the Information Access Research Group, a Visiting Professor of Data Analytics in the Department of Computer Science, University of Sheffield and founder and CEO of the consultancy KnowledgeSpaces. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Dr. Leidner's experience includes positions as Director of Research at Thomson Reuters and Refinitiv in London, where he headed its R&D team (2013-2022). He has built up research and innovation teams. He was also the Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professor of Data Analytics at the Department of Computer Science. His background includes a Master's in computational linguistics, English and computer science (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg), a Master's in Computer Speech, Text and Internet Technology (University of Cambridge) and a PhD in Informatics (University of Edinburgh), which won the first ACM SIGIR Doctoral Consortium Award. He is a scientific expert for the European Commission (FP7, H2020, Horizon Europe) and other funding bodies in Germany, Austria, the UK and the USA. He also is a past

In: R. Campos, A. Jorge, A. Jatowt, S. Bhatia, M. Litvak (eds.): Proceedings of the Text2Story'24 Workshop, Glasgow (United Kingdom), 24-March-2024.

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chair of the Microsoft-BCS/BCS IRSG Karen Sparck Jones award. Professor Leidner is an author or co-author of several dozen peer-reviewed publications (including one best paper award), has authored or co-edited two books and holds several patents in the areas of information retrieval, natural language processing, and mobile computing. He has been twice winner of the Thomson Reuters inventor of the year award for the best patent application, and is the past received of a Royal Society of Edinburgh Enterprise Fellowship in Electronic Markets.