

ORM 2009 PC Co-chairs' Message

Following successful workshops held in Cyprus (2005), France (2006), Portugal (2007), and Mexico (2008), this was the fifth in a series of fact-oriented modeling workshops run in conjunction with the OTM conferences. Fact-oriented modeling is a conceptual approach to modeling and querying the semantics of business domains in terms of the underlying facts of interest, where all facts and rules may be verbalized in language readily understandable by users working in those business domains.

Unlike entity-relationship (ER) modeling and UML class diagrams, fact-oriented modeling treats all facts as relationships (unary, binary, ternary etc.). How facts are grouped into structures (e.g., attribute-based entity types, classes, relation schemes, XML schemas) is considered a design level, implementation issue irrelevant to capturing the essential business semantics. Avoiding attributes in the base model enhances semantic stability and populatability, and facilitates natural verbalization and thus more productive communication with all stakeholders. For information modeling, fact-oriented graphical notations are typically far more expressive than those provided by other notations. Fact-oriented modeling includes procedures for mapping to attribute-based structures, so it may also be used to front-end those approaches.

Though less well known than ER and object-oriented approaches, fact-oriented modeling has been used successfully in industry for over 30 years, and is taught in universities around the world. The fact-oriented modeling approach comprises a family of closely related "dialects," the most well known being object-role modeling (ORM), cognition-enhanced natural language information analysis method (CogNIAM) and fully-communication-oriented information modeling (FCO-IM). Though adopting a different graphical notation, the object-oriented systems model (OSM) is a close relative, with its attribute-free philosophy. The Semantics of Business Vocabulary and Business Rules (SBVR) proposal adopted by the Object Management Group in 2007 is a recent addition to the family of fact-oriented approaches.

Commercial tools supporting the fact-oriented approach include the ORM solution within Microsoft's Visio for Enterprise Architects, the CogNIAM tool Doctool, the FCO-IM tool CaseTalk, and the Colibra ontology tool suite. The NORMA (Natural ORM Architect) tool for ORM 2 is available as a free, open-source plug-in to Visual Studio; a commercial, professional version of NORMA is also under development. Free ORM tools include InfoModeler, Infagon, ActiveFacts, and ORM-Lite. DogmaStudio is an ORM-based tool for specifying ontologies. General information about fact-orientation may be found at www.ORMFoundation.org.

This year we had 22 original proposals for workshop papers. After an extensive review process by a distinguished international Program Committee, with each paper receiving three or more reviews, we accepted the 13 papers that appear in these proceedings. Congratulations to the successful authors! We gratefully acknowledge the generous contribution of time and effort by the Program Committee, and the OTM Organizing Committee, especially Robert Meersman and Tharam Dillon (OTM General Chairs), and Pilar Herrero (OTM Workshops General Chair).

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