



An Annotated Bibliography on Temporal and Evolution Aspects in the World Wide Web

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The TIMECENTER icon on the cover combines two “arrows.” These “arrows” are letters in the so-called *Rune* alphabet used one millennium ago by the Vikings, as well as by their predecessors and successors. The Rune alphabet (second phase) has 16 letters, all of which have angular shapes and lack horizontal lines because the primary storage medium was wood. Runes may also be found on jewelry, tools, and weapons and were perceived by many as having magic, hidden powers.

The two Rune arrows in the icon denote “T” and “C,” respectively.

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1 Introduction

Time is a pervasive dimension of reality as everything evolves as time elapses. Information systems and applications at least mirror, and often have to capture, the time-varying and evolutionary nature of the phenomena they model and the activities they support. This aspect has been acknowledged and long studied in the field of temporal databases but it truly applies also to the World Wide Web, although it has not seemingly considered as a primary issue yet. However, several papers addressing, in an explicit or implicit way, the representation and management of time and change in the World Wide Web appeared recently and, on some aspects, showed a clear upward trend in last months, witnessing a sustained and/or growing interest.

The present bibliography reflects such interest by collecting the references concerning the handling of time and evolution issues in World Wide Web research. This follows several fortunate bibliographies on time-varying information, including seven ones on temporal databases (Bolour, Anderson, Dekeyser & Wong, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **12**:3, 1983; McKenzie, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **15**:4, 1986; Stam & Snodgrass, *IEEE Database Engineering* **17**:4, 1988; Soo, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **20**:1, 1991; Kline, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **22**:4, 1993; Tsotras & Kumar, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **25**:1, 1996; Wu, Jajodia & Sean Wang, in *Temporal Databases: Research and Practice*, Springer LNCS 1399, 1998), two ones on spatio-temporal databases (Al-Taha, Snodgrass & Soo, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **22**:1, 1993; Al-Taha, Snodgrass & Soo, *Intl' Journal of Geographical Inf. Sys.* **8**:1, 1994), two ones on spatio-temporal data mining (Roddick & Spiliopoulou, *ACM SIGKDD Explorations* **1**:1, 1999; Roddick, Hornsby & Spiliopoulou, *Proc. TSDM 2000 Intl' Workshop*, Springer LNCS 2007, 2000), one on schema evolution (Roddick, *ACM SIGMOD Record* **21**:4, 1992), and one on (temporal) indeterminacy (Dyreson, in *Uncertainty Management in Information Systems*, Kluwer, 1996).

We apologize in advance (with the readers and especially with the authors) for any **errors**, **misclassifications** and **omissions** may result from the collected entries. Additions, corrections and comments are welcome.

2 PAPERS

The references are organized into ten main sections, where they are further grouped by some similarity criterion introduced by brief notes. Entries are listed in ascending chronological order within (sub)groups.

2.1 Transaction Time

Transaction time is the time some fact is current in a database, from when it is stored in the system to when it is deleted. With respect to the Web, it represents the on-line availability and versioning of resources in a Web site, even if they are not created by “transactions” in a strict sense. Although in several cited papers it was called “valid time”, if it concerns the time Web documents are modified it is properly transaction time.

The first group of papers explicitly deals with transaction-time versioning of Web resources, which can be selectively accessed, on user’s request, through a transaction-time aware temporal Web server.

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- [4] Tony Allan, Gayle Allan, “Temporal and Version Extensions to XML and the W3C Document Object Model” (Poster), *Proc. of 8th Intl’ WWW Conf. (WWW8) – Posters*, Toronto (May 1999), Ontario, 1999, <http://www8.org/>.
- [5] Curtis E. Dyreson, “Transaction-Time World-Wide Web (WWW) Server”, in The Dagstuhl Seminar Researchers, “Summary of Current Work”, in *Temporal Databases: Research and Practice*, LNCS Vol. 1399, Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, p. 416, 1999.
- [6] Stefan Zapf, Thomas Myrach, “A Prototype for the Support of Temporal Aspects of Web Administration on the Basis of a Repository” (*in German*), *Proc. of Workshop on Application of Concepts of Temporal Data Management in Database Systems and World Wide Web (ZobIS)* (in conj. with MobIS-Fachtagung 2000), Siegen (October 2000), Germany, Gesellschaft für Informatik, Bonn, pp. 291–297, 2000.
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- [12] Peter Buneman, Sanjeev Khanna, Keishi Tajima, Wang-Chiew Tan, “Archiving Scientific Data”, *Proc. of ACM Intl’ Conf. on Management of Data (SIGMOD 2002)*, Madison (June 2002), WI, ACM Press, New York, pp. 1–12, 2002.
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2.2 Valid Time

Valid time is the time some fact is true in the real world. In the Web, it concerns the temporal validity of the information carried by the contents of a Web resource. In the following group of papers, modeling and management of historical Web documents is properly concerned.

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Consistent research efforts have been devoted to the management of (non-temporal) resource *versions* over the Web.

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In this list we should also add the special issue on "The Adaptive Web" of the *Communications of the ACM* (Vol. 45, No. 5, May 2002) and *most* of the papers presented at a series of conferences/workshops started in 2000, on "*Adaptive Hypermedia and Adaptive Web-Based Systems (AH)*", including: AH'2000 (Trento, Italy, August 2000), AH'2001 (Aarhus, Denmark, August 2001) and AH'2002 (Malaga, Spain, May 2002). AH'2003 will have sessions proposed at three conferences (WWW'03 – Budapest, Hungary, May 2003; UM'03 – Johnstown, PA, June 2003; HT'03 – Nottingham, UK, August 2003). As indirect reference, links to the home pages and table of contents of the AH conferences can be found from the DBLP bibliography at URL <http://www.informatik.uni-trier.de/~ley/db/conf/ah/>. Proceedings have been published so far by Springer-Verlag (LNCS 1892, LNCS 2266, LNCS 2347).

Other papers on adaptive techniques for Web personalization based on user profiling can also be found at the end of Sec. 2.7.

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2.6 Time in Web Warehousing

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2.7 Navigation Time

An autonomous research thread concerns time in Web usage. We can define *navigation time* the temporal dimension marking the navigation of the Web by a user. A user’s navigation history also corresponds to what has been called “clickstream”, and analysis of Web logs (e.g. for Web user profiling) is also known as Web usage mining.

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A strictly related issue is the “optimization” of the interaction leading, for example, to the development of caching and prefetching techniques or to site restructuring (e.g. personalization). Such issue is covered in a quite broad specific literature. We try to reference most of the papers where the proposed techniques are, in turn, based on temporal or evolutionary aspects (e.g. analysis of navigation histories).

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Relevant papers can also be found in the special issue on “Context in Information Retrieval” of the *Information Processing & Management* journal (Vol. 38, No. 5, September 2002, edited by Cool & Spink).

2.8 Time and Change in Semantic Web

Temporal and evolution aspects have also been considered in the definition of *ontologies* for the so-called *semantic Web*, and further developments are likely to appear in the next future. Good starting points for finding related resources are the “SemanticWeb.org” Portal (<http://www.semanticweb.org/>) or the W3C “Semantic Web” Homepage (<http://www.w3c.org/2001/sw/>). For instance, sample DAML ontologies involving time can be found from URL <http://www.daml.org/ontologies/> (e.g. searching the repository by “time”, “temporal” or “version” keywords).

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2.9 WWW Evolution

Several papers deal with the history and evolution of the Web itself. Technical issues but also “cultural” (e.g. sociological or media) aspects can be considered. This is also a broad literature, for which a separate bibliography could be compiled. For the sake of brevity, we only cite a few representatives.

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An online collection of articles concerning the history of the Web can be retrieved from the “Internet Society” Web site at URL: <http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/>.

A related research field, more focused on technical aspects and aiming at a development of Web technologies, concerns the *Web dynamics*. The Web dynamics field has been initiated by the *Intl’ Workshop on Web Dynamics* (London, England, January 2001, co-located with ICDT ’01), <http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/webDyn/>. The field has been surveyed by Mark Levene and Alexandra Poulouvasilis in “Web Dynamics”, *Software Focus* 2:2, pp. 60–67, 2002. A special issue of *Computer Networks* (Vol. 39, No. 3, June 2002, edited by Levene & Poulouvasilis) is also devoted to several aspects of

Web dynamics. Table of contents and abstracts are available at URL <http://www.elsevier.com/inca/publications/store/5/0/5/6/0/6/index.htm>. A second edition of the Intl' Workshop on Web Dynamics was held in May 2002 (Honolulu, Hawaii, in conj. with WWW 2002), <http://www.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/webDyn2/> (workshop report on *ACM SIGMOD Record* **31**:3, September 2002).

Other papers deal with the evolution of single Web sites (e.g. software engineering case studies) or of Web site and service types.

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2.10 Other Time Aspects

Several efforts involve standardization of temporal expressions to be used on the Web (e.g. as metadata). For instance, the issue has been addressed by the W3C Consortium, and is part of the XML-Schema datatype

definitions. Metadata carrying temporal information have also been considered in the TEI, Dublin Core, MUC and EAD initiatives. In the Open Archives Initiative, (transaction-time) *datestamps* are used for *selective harvesting* of metadata.

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Some multimedia Web resources have an intrinsic temporal dimension connected with the user’s fruition of the resource itself. These include streaming video and music, animated presentations and so on. For the sake of completeness, we only give a few representative references; although dealing with time, they quite represent a world apart.

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