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Innovation

Storm delivers semantic web business opportunity for Nortel

14.11.2008

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A collaboration between technology firm Storm and the National University of Ireland Galway Digital Enterprise Research Institute has resulted in a semantic web system revolutionising catalogue and document management for communications giant Nortel.

The 40-plus team at Storm primarily focus on providing high-quality software consultancy and web integration services to a wide range of public and private sector clients.

Storm and its client Nortel had identified the challenge of connecting Nortel's structured product catalogue with relevant documents from its multiple unstructured information sources. Nortel wanted users of its product catalogue to be easily able to retrieve context relevant documents from their corporate document repositories.

With over 125 staff, DERI is an internationally recognised institute in semantic web research, education and technology transfer. For Storm, commercialising some of DERI's research was an obvious stepping stone to meeting a customer need.

Through collaboration with the team at DERI, Storm was able to scale up its R&D capability, while DERI had access to a real-world industrial scenario for its work. The project, which was called INDRA, focused on tackling a key challenge within the enterprise, the management of unstructured information (document repositories, websites, intranets etc).

The semantic web is an evolving extension of the world wide web where data and services are defined and have meaning. This enriching of web content is opening semantically-powered solutions, and is applicable to day-to-day business issues such as Nortel's document management process.

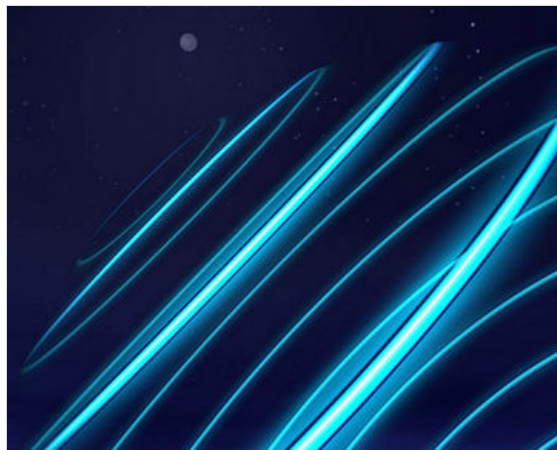
Part of DERI's remit is the bringing together of academic and industrial partners to boost innovation in science and technology, with its research focused on the semantic web. DERI has worked extensively with multinational industrial partners, including Hewlett Packard, and the INDRA project provided an opportunity to work closely with an Irish SME.

"Research commercialisation is an important avenue for smaller companies, as well as larger enterprises," Dr Edward Curry, INDRA project manager DERI explained. "Working with indigenous companies such as Storm, DERI and the university can provide a huge amount of research expertise and know-how".

Working closely with Nortel, the teams from DERI and Storm were able to deliver a successful solution after 11 months of collaboration.

The solution provides simple, user-friendly product search across all of Nortel's repositories, with relevant context information from the product catalogue included within the search results. The project utilised DERI's techniques for information identification using ontology-based entity detection and disambiguation.

"The INDRA project gave DERI the opportunity to build a serious, real-world semantic application while researching new ideas in how semantics can make a difference in the emerging science of knowledge discovery," Bill McDaniel, a senior researcher at DERI explained.



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The day-to-day interaction between DERI and Storm personnel leads to knowledge transfer opportunities between both parties.

The INDRA project was supported by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), and both DERI and Storm own the part of the project they worked on, with some limited joint ownership. Based on its successful participation within the INDRA project, Storm has committed to further collaboration with DERI.

The potential benefits of this transfer were emphasised by Karl Flannery, managing director of Storm Technology.

"Equally important to the development of a product is the actual knowledge transfer and the opportunity to innovate across both organisations."

By John Kennedy

John Kennedy  


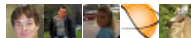
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