

MEDIA RELEASE

Funnelback contributes to three important scientific search events

21st November 2008 - Funnelback's leading research scientist Professor David Hawking recently returned to the Funnelback office after representing the company at three scientific search events.

Information Retrieval Facility Symposium 2008

<http://www.ir-facility.org/symposium>

David is a founding member of the Scientific Board of the Information Retrieval Facility (IRF) in Vienna, a verein (not-for-profit organisation) whose goals are to promote improvements in information retrieval technology. The IRF operates a supercomputing facility known as the "Large Data Collider" to host large scale experiments proposed by academic researchers around the world. The initial focus area is patent retrieval and the IRF Symposium in November 2008 brought together in Vienna 165 specialists from both the intellectual property (IP) and information retrieval (IR) fields.

Professor Hawking said that highlights of the event included a patent search tutorial for IR researchers, and reports from three scientific projects working with collections of patent data on the Large Data Collider. Professor Hawking said "...that although Funnelback is not currently active in the patent search area, the company was conscious that search technology used in that industry typically dates from several decades ago." It is watching IRF developments with considerable interest.

SPIRE 2008

<http://spire2008.csse.unimelb.edu.au/>

On Wed, 12 Nov Professor Hawking gave a keynote address at the international SPIRE 2008 conference held in Melbourne's new Digital Harbour development. His talk covered the theme of "unsolved problems in search" and he outlined the challenges of providing highly effective search over heterogeneous collections of data behind organisational firewalls.

Professor Hawking said that there were at least 40 different factors which could adversely affect the quality of search results in this environment. He emphasised the necessity of being able to accurately measure how well search is actually working for the people who have to use it. Only with accurate evaluation is it possible to develop improved search models and tune them.

Professor Hawking's talk included a demonstration of Funnelback's new prototype technology designed to index and search huge volumes of data. Funnelback indexed 2.5 terabytes of data (115 million web pages) on a single \$A2000 Dell laptop and provided responses to typical web queries over these indexes in a fraction of a second.

"I expect that Funnelback will soon be called upon to support projects with comparable volumes of data", said Professor Hawking. This new technology will play a vital role, as will tools under development by Funnelback's research and development team to allow scalable query processing over clusters or clouds of machines.

Next Generation Search workshop

<http://www.hcsnet.edu.au/priorityareas/nextgensearch>

On Thu 13 Nov, Professor Hawking gave a talk "Promoting Diversity in Search Results" at the Next Generation Search workshop, sponsored by HCSNet and held at the State Library of Victoria.

Professor Hawking said that all vendors of search technology and all operators of search facilities need to remember that the same query may be submitted by different people for different purposes, and that individual searchers often value a spread of search results covering different sources of information, different opinions and different instances of the same type of event or thing.

The Next Generation Search workshop aims to promote communication and interaction between Australian researchers from fields such as information retrieval, human computer interaction and natural language processing.

About Funnelback

Funnelback is a leading edge technology company offering Web and Enterprise Search Engine solutions. The Funnelback search engine has a world class result ranking algorithm at its core, which can be tuned to the specific information retrieval needs of its clients. It is used on a daily basis by millions of users and many organizations in Australia and around the world, including the Australian Government, Wetspac Banking Corporation, the ABC, the ASX, ninemsn, NRC Canada, Staffordshire University and PacificNetwork.tv.

For further information

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