Preface to Lowering Adoption Barriers to Enterprise Modeling (LABEM)

The workshop on “Lowering the adoption barrier of enterprise modeling” (LABEM) takes place in Geneva, Switzerland on July 16th, hosted by the 16th IEEE Conference on Business Informatics (CBI 2014). It is held under the umbrella of the TEE workshop series, regrouping several topics on enterprise engineering. The LABEM workshop aims to raise the awareness on human dimensions immanent to enterprise modelling, and to underline the need for their better support by modelling technologies. This includes, for instance, cognitive and collaboration aspects, language-related aspects and tooling, modelling process, human-computer interaction, etc.

The success of an enterprise modelling effort heavily depends on the involvement and participation of a broader stakeholder group (e.g. process owners, domain experts, key decision-makers). In this context, models could be considered to act as boundary objects between different participants’ communities – typically, but not limited to – stakeholders, on one side, and modelling experts on the other. To allow for better involvement of participants of an enterprise modelling effort, the means used for modelling (i.e. primarily methods, modelling languages and tools) should be as intuitive and non-intrusive as possible. It is, however, a common observation in practice that standard modelling notations and dedicated tools offer unsatisfactory support with this regard, as they are rather focused on more technical aspects of modelling. This not only creates burden to stakeholder involvement, but also slows down the maturation of enterprise modelling practices.

Effectively supporting human dimensions of modelling is a tremendous challenge. Nonetheless, there is a growing research interest in this topic across different research communities, particularly in human-computer interaction, information systems and software engineering communities. LABEM workshop is conceived as a platform to interactively explore, discuss and elaborate on challenges related to including human dimensions of modelling into enterprise modelling research agenda. We hope to attract people from the surrounding disciplines, such as computer science, information systems, management science, cognitive science, linguistics, etc. Our ultimate long term objective is to develop a cross-disciplinary community around this topic.

The papers presented at LABEM 2014 pinpoint at several challenges pertaining to LABEM topics, zooming more on the quality of models and modelling languages. To start off, the paper by Vanderlinden investigates the interpersonal differences in understanding of modelling concepts typically found in modelling languages, provided by the people of different background and experience. The typical human understanding of modelling concepts is confronted to their stipulated semantics (by the modelling language specification). It is important, in this context, that the symbols used are easily processed by human cognitive system. In this light, the paper by Popescu and Wegmann uses the Physics of Notations theory, developed by Moody, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Systemic Enterprise Architecture Methodology (SEAM) notation for human model-based communication. Finally, the paper by Hildebrand et al., investigates the challenges of complementing graphical representations (of manufacturing process monitoring data) with audio of different nature, to facilitate the perception, understanding and reacting to different relevant monitoring events. The authors discuss in detail the potential advantages, as well as important challenges in effectively and meaningfully operationalising the concept of multi-modal process monitoring. This opens the discussion beyond the classical modelling environments towards new means for interacting, collaborating with models and towards new ways of conceiving modelling activities. Such thinking out of the box could fit better with human expectations and natural ability at modelling and thus lowering the adoption barrier enterprise modelling.

CBI 2014 involved two workshops that are topically related to the LABEM workshop: WEETM (Workshop on Enterprise Engineering Theories and Methods) and the 8th workshop on Transformation & Engineering of Enterprises. We are happy to announce that in 2015, LABEM, TEE and WEETM will merge under the TEE banner, with the joint support of the Enterprise Engineering Team (http://www.ee-team.eu/) and the CIAO! research network (http://www.ciaonetwork.org/). The future TEE workshops will aim to attract papers in domains including:
Enterprise Transformation & Innovation; Enterprise Engineering and Architecting and Enterprise Modelling. Case reports on transformation & engineering of enterprises will be another essential domain for papers submitted to TEE. Stay tuned on the TEE website (www.tee-series.org) for news and updates on domains and topics relevant for TEE.

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