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Mind to Market

Tuesday, June 29, 2010

Semantic Technology Conference

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the [Semantic Technology Conference](#), SemTech, to get caught up on the latest technology. Semantic Web technologies seem to be moving from the domain of a few evangelists, including [Tim Berners-Lee](#), into the main stream with presentations given by [Facebook](#) and [Google](#).

Although I have been an ardent [supporter](#) of the Semantic Web, this type of technology centric conference is new to me as I am more familiar with subject domain specific conferences. In domain specific conferences I am and more familiar with the subject matter, can connect with more people and may in fact have worked with those people in the past. In a cross-domain conference the business problems that people are working with are quite different, people use different terminologies and it is frequently difficult to reach some understanding. The one thing the attendees have in common is the sharing of a similar technology for solving the problems, but in many cases they will use the technology in much different ways.

Semantic web technology is not a single technology, instead is composed of a host of technologies that are intended to bring more "intelligence" to information. And there are commonalities in applying these technologies over a range of domains from finance to publishing and healthcare. The real advantage to technology centric conferences is that they can lead to "cross-pollination"; ideas for solutions can be transferred from one domain to another. An added benefit: if there are insufficient adopters in one domain for a conference, these early adopters can attend a cross-domain conference to achieve the critical number of attendees and ideas to reach a critical mass.

With many different knowledge domains represented at SemTech, one thing became apparent to me; that the biomedical field has far outstripped other domains in the standardization of vocabularies. Perhaps this is because the domain has so many vocabularies and they are so important for the field, but other fields are still struggling with this before making more progress. This is a major obstacle to penetration of semantic web in a domain; if stakeholders cannot agree on a common terminology, the other, sometimes more valuable features, of the technology cannot be achieved.

About

If you are interested in clinical informatics, bioinformatics, software development and their commercial aspects you've come to the right place.


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About Me



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Location: Colorado, United States

With over 20 years in developing technology start-up companies, I have had the opportunity to lead many talented teams through the process of creating and commercializing new ideas and technologies.

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Another issue with technology-centric conferences is that the business problems that are presented tend to be superficial, they are usually quickly reviewed in order to get to the more interesting part; the elegant solutions that have been devised to solve the problems. A very worthwhile conference, I hope to make it back next year.

Labels: [health it](#), [semantic web](#), [semtech](#)

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
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