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Preface

Automatic summarization and question answering aim at producing a concise, condensed representation of the key information content in an information source for a particular user and task. Interest in automatic summarization and question answering continues to grow, motivated by the explosion of on-line information sources and advances in natural language processing and information retrieval. In fact, various forms of automatic summarization and question answering will undoubtedly be indispensable given the massive information universes that lie ahead in the 21st century.

Summarization and question answering involves the extraction or generation of text snippets to fulfill some user needs. Rule-based or statistical-based summarization and QA systems have shown promising results in the TREC QA-tracks, NTCIR QAC, and NIST DUC; it is, however, very difficult to find good evaluation functions or rules that work well across domains or in all questions because there are many system parameters that must be carefully tuned in order to achieve good system performance. In consequence, various machine learning (ML) techniques have recently been applied to summarization and QA systems.

We hope that the workshop will foster an open discussion of current issues and present some novel techniques used for question answering and summarization. The chairs thank members of the program committee that provided reviews for the papers and for all the other useful comments while we were organizing this workshop. We also want to say a word of thanks to all of the authors that submitted papers, and hope to see them all presented in the future.