

The Time Yards Model: a Way to Decipher the Evolution of Characters over Time in Texts

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My talk is subsumed to the domain of natural language processing, an active branch of artificial intelligence. I present a proposal for representing development of stories in free writings, like novels. The model focusses on animated entities and time. It tries to mimic the human performance of reordering events involving characters, usually presented shuffled in books, for stylistic or effect reasons. The human reader deciphers with easiness in a text: temporal discontinuities, transitions from one storyline to another, flash-backs and flash-forwards, changes of perspective, and is capable to formulate summaries in which developments involving different characters regain their linear flow. How could a machine reproduce this high cognitive ability? Our research is at an incipient level towards this goal.