

I had a great opportunity to publish a paper I made out of my Master's thesis during the 8th Semantic Web Service Challenge Workshop last November 9, 2009 held at the Technical University of Eindhoven. This was held in conjunction with the 7th European Conference on Web Services (ECOWS '09)

Ever since I was doing my Master's thesis, I made it a goal to make it publishable. I thought it would be a nice reward to my self with all the hard work I put into making it. But more than self-fulfillment, I wanted to know how it felt like to be presenting my work in a real conference setting, to see how other researchers would respond to my work and how I might get suggestions or critiques from them.

To tell you frankly, I was more tensed preparing the presentation and demo for the workshop than I ever did for my Master's thesis defense. I had reasons to be tensed: Firstly, my prospective audience is a throng of academics (not like a Masters defense where the background of the audience is quite mixed) – so they know how to ask questions! Secondly, my supervisors know my work as we have been corresponding for many months. Come defense time, it's just simply a recollection of the results I've already discussed with them. Presenting in a workshop is quite different as they may not be familiar with my work, and this may require some effort to get the message pass through. On the other hand, however, I thought, this may also be good as this can give new insights to my work from an “outsider's” perspective. These were just some of my expectations of what's coming my way.

D-day came. What I thought would be a tensed day turned out to be quite casual after all. The audience was quite interested with the presentation as they had a lot of challenging “how-did-you-do-it?” to “what-if?” questions. I thought they would be unforgiving with their questions, but actually their questions allowed me to look at things which I have not thought of before while doing the research. They also offered suggestions and improvements with some of the limitations of my research. The demo also went very well.

There were also parts during the workshops where presentations from guest speakers and other projects were also given. And, the ensuing discussions were highly academic. I could see first hand how people who drink the same cup of tea are so passionate about their research interests. And, I think it was a good sight to behold. Despite of the heated discussions, coffee and lunch breaks were always jovial and cordial.

Overall, I believe I made a good choice to put my paper into publication. That was just one day but already I have learned much. I have gained confidence in presenting academic topics to other people. I got much more interested in similar research areas – learning how other people solve the same problem I'm solving. Finally, I made new friends and connections which I hope to come in handy someday.