Efficient Knowledge Base Construction Mechanism Based on Knowledge Map and Database Metaphor

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Abstract

Developing an efficient knowledge base construction mechanism as an input method for expert systems (ES) development is of extreme importance due to the fact that an input process takes a lot of time and cost in constructing an ES. Most ES require experts to explicit their tacit knowledge into a form of explicit knowledge base with a full sentence. In addition, the explicit knowledge bases were composed of strict grammar and keywords. To overcome these limitations, this paper proposes a knowledge conceptualization and construction mechanism for automated knowledge acquisition, allowing an efficient decision. To this purpose, we extended traditional knowledge map (KM) construction process to dynamic knowledge map (DKM) and combined this algorithm with relational database (RDB). In the experiment section, we used medical data to show the efficiency of our proposed mechanism. Each rule in the DKM was characterized by the name of disease, clinical attributes and their treatments. Experimental results with various disease show that the proposed system is superior in terms of understanding and convenience of use.

Keywords: Expert systems, Tacit knowledge, Explicit knowledge, Knowledge base, Dynamic knowledge map, Relational database.

1. Introduction

There are two kinds of knowledge: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. According to Planyi's (1966) definition, tacit knowledge is highly personal, context-specific, and therefore hard to conceptualize and communicate. Tacit knowledge is knowledge embedded in the human brain, such as expertise, understanding, or professional insight formed as a result of experience. Recently, people started seriously discussing the knowledge asset of an organization. As a result of, there was a growing effort to develop ontology or conceptualization mechanism that will help to clarify the area of applied knowledge (Gordon, 2000). Traditionally, conceptualization involves two fundamental activities (Gómez et al., 2000): analysis and synthesis. Analysis is a descriptive activity, by means of which components of the problem under study can be identified, whereas synthesis restructures and reorganizes the above model to represent the problem-solving process under examination. Unfortunately, however, traditional knowledge conceptualization and knowledge base system construction mechanisms have several problems. First, traditional knowledge base systems were non-applicable because of the conversion form tacit knowledge to explicit documented knowledge was very difficult. Second, it is often difficult to extend and enhance a knowledge base system with additional expert knowledge once the system is fielded. Third, within the context of rapidly changing technologies and processes, an existing knowledge-based system might no longer seem capable of meeting the increasingly complex knowledge demands in the industry (Woo et al., 2004).

In this paper, we tried to overcome most of the above mentioned pitfalls. To this purpose, we use the dynamic knowledge map (DKM) and database metaphor (that is, relational database: RDB). Dynamic knowledge map could help an expert, who wants to transform his tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Then, database metaphor could help a knowledge manager to link distributed knowledge with relationships. Therefore, the developed mechanism enables an interactive navigation by using dynamic knowledge map and RDB.

2. Methodology

Knowledge base system (KBS), Computer-based expert systems (ES) and artificial intelligence (AI) have also made an important contribution to our understanding of knowledge. For this activity to succeed, researchers had to be very clear about what they meant by knowledge and had to develop rigorous representations for knowledge so that the knowledge could be brought to life in a computer program (Shortliffe, 1976).

There are several accepted methods of knowledge representation that have been devised for AI-type applications. Some of these are also suitable for use and interpretation by humans and can form a bride between human knowledge and machine knowledge (Gordon, 2000). As one of useful methods of knowledge representation, in this study, we use knowledge map (KM). KM is the name given (McCagg & Dansereau, 1991) to a type of mental diagram by means of which complex ideas can be easily and quickly set out in a logical order. KMs typically point to people as well as to documents and databases to enable a person to find an appropriate knowledge source (Devenport & Prusak, 1998). Conventional KMs locate the holders of knowledge when their expertise is needed rather than spending time with imperfect solutions or searching for explicitly documented knowledge. KMs are a graphic representation of the connections made by the brain in the process of understanding facts about something. They are built starting with the attribute that defines the problem to then develop a graphical diagram that sets out on paper the manner in which the mind comes up with ideas in the process of understanding (Gómez et al., 2000). However the static nature of most KMs is an obstacle to disseminating tacit knowledge. More recently, the role of knowledge mapping has been changed to expert locater, which allows users to search through a set of biographies for an expert on a particular knowledge domain (Devenport & Prusak, 1998). To overcome these limitations, Devenport and Prusak (1998) proposed the basis for dynamic knowledge map. However they didn't suggested technical and graphical representation of DKM.

In contrast with Davenport and Prusak's DKM (1998), this paper proposes a technical and graphically manageable DKM construction mechanism. To this purpose, we referred the details of Gómez et al.'s (2000) KM construction mechanism. A general-purpose 6-phased procedure for outputting a KM during the knowledge conceptualization process is given below (Gómez et al., 2000).

Phase 1: Identify the main goal of the system. Generally, the purpose of the knowledge based systems (KBS) or ES is to make a decision on a concept and, more particularly, on a property or attribute of that concept, which we have termed the (main) goal property. Therefore, the above main goal should have already been decided, as it is essential for drawing up the KM. The attribute or goal property in a medical diagnostics system, for example, would be the disease suffered by the patient and a prescription presented by doctor.

Phase 2: Design the goal decision block. To extract a graphical representation of KM, in this phase, draw a rectangle around the property, specifying to which concept it belongs, using the property/concept form, and the possible values of that property. In the example of the medical diagnostics systems, the possible values would be the names of the diseases that are to be diagnosed by the system. Figure 1 shows an example of how to represent the properties in the KM.

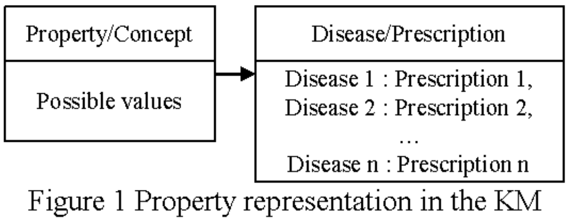

Figure 1 Property representation in the KM

Phase 3: Add the properties for inferring or calculating the goal decision. After the design of goal decision block, place the properties inside boxes around the goal decision. The relation with the goal property is expressed by means of an arrow that will start from the property used to infer or calculate the goal decision. The number of values of the source property of the arrow is specified on this arrow. If the number of values is 1, no specification is required. Each attribute around the goal decision must be involved in inferring the value of this decision. However, there is no need to infer the all attributes at the same time. Because of most human expert could deal with only a small number of attributes simultaneously. If a lot of attributes are used to infer the value of the goal decision, domain expert will probably calculate the value of some intermediate

attributes in order to infer the goal decision. Then, the number of attributes around the goal decision could be reduced by introducing intermediate attributes.
Phase 4: Extend the KM. If there were more additional information to infer the decision goal, the properties used to infer the values of each property have to be added.
Phase 5: Repeat phase 4 until none of the *peripheral* properties are inferred, that is, they are taken from external sources such as user input, sensors, files, database, and other external or internal changes.
Phase 6: Check the knowledge reflected in the KM. These checks come under two categories. First, checks related to the validation of the knowledge reflected in the KM with domain expert. Second, checks related to the verification of the KM against the static and dynamic models generated during the synthesis stage.

To combine the KM with RDB, in this study, we extended the Gómez et al.'s (2000) KM construction process to 9-phased process. Then, we called this process as dynamic knowledge map (DKM) construction process. Additional processes for DKM are given below.

Phase 7: Frame-based RDB table construction. After the check for KM, transformed the KM into frame-based RDB table forms.
Phase 8: Add the inference rules into frame-based RDB table. This phase is critical difference with Gómez et al.'s (2000) KM construction. To infer the properties or calculate the goal decision, we added the each inference rule into frame-based RDB table.
Phase 9: Relate the RDB tables. To confirm the relationships among each node in KM, connect the RDB tables with RDB relationship facilities. Figure 2 shows an example of how to represent the properties in our proposed DKM.

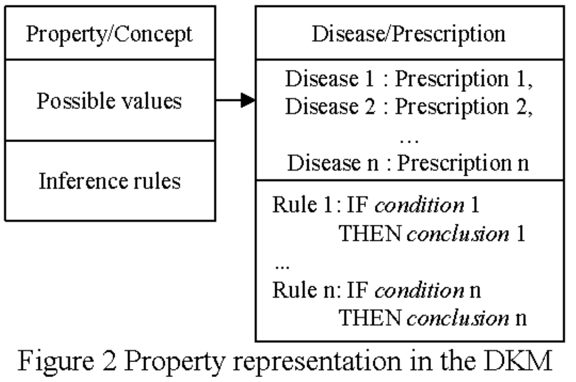

Figure 2 Property representation in the DKM

3. Example of DKM construction

To validate the performance of our proposed mechanism, in this section, we proposed a practical application. The application will give a better understanding of how DKMs are built and used. The example is part of a real medical expert's knowledge and illustrates how the DKM is drawn up from the static and dynamic models. Figure 3 shows the example of our proposed DKM. In contrast to Gómez et al.'s (2000) KM construction, our proposed mechanism DKM has several advantages.

First, each RDB table has its inference rules. Therefore, there is no need to construct a huge rule base.
Second, it is very easy to add and revise the DKM and its knowledge through the graphical user interface supposed by RDB management systems (RDBMS).
Third, on the basis of our proposed mechanism, ES has no need to have special inference engine. Because of every inference is performed by each RDB table respectively.
Fourth, there are no conflicts among inference rules. Because of every DKM nodes possess his own inference rules, and its' decision depends on his own properties.
Fifth, DKM node has several inference rules within his block. Contrary to Gómez et al.'s (2000) KM, therefore, our DKM could produce multiple choices.

4. Conclusion

In this research, we extended traditional KM construction process and combined these two different knowledge representation tools as a dynamic knowledge map (DKM). The method could support the organizations in several ways:

- It makes expert knowledge visible to all managers and users
- It helps managers identify areas of expert knowledge requiring attention.
- It can improve the efficiency of knowledge inference and its application
- It is applicable to real world decision, because of the conversion form tacit knowledge to explicit documented knowledge is very easy.
- It is easy to extend and enhance a knowledge-based system with additional expert knowledge once the system is fielded.

The method also has advantages for the individual and for organizations specializing in education:

- It can help individuals plan their own learning when working alone in some area which requires specific domain knowledge.

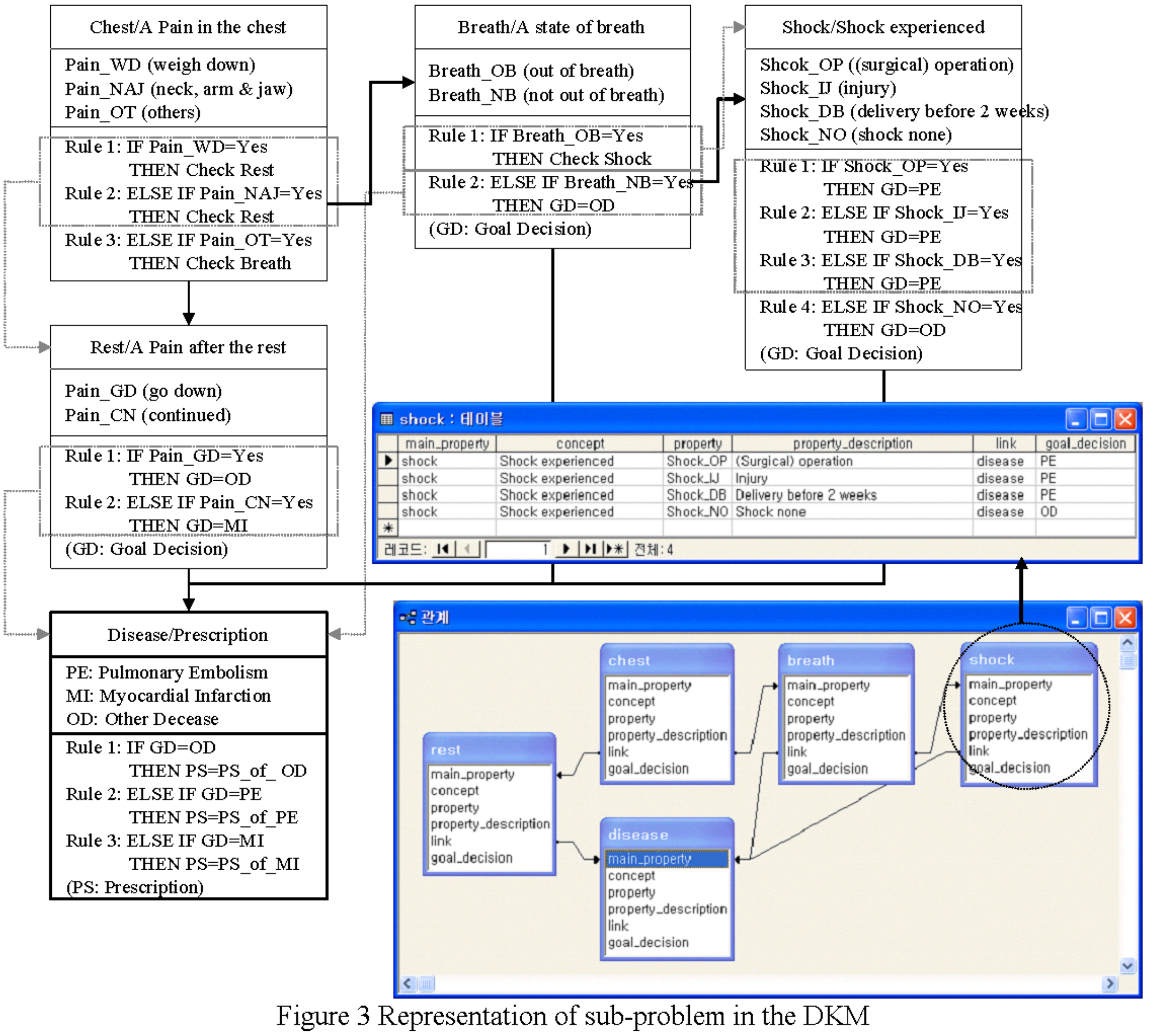

Figure 3 Representation of sub-problem in the DKM

- It allows an individual to see and understand a conceptualization process of knowledge and its applications.
- It can be easily applied to the educational field such as ES development or decision support systems (DSS) construction.
- It helps to concentrate effort on understanding rather than on technical implementation.
- It will determine whether DKM improves students' learning in an ES design class.
- It will identify appropriate directions for the use of knowledge management systems.

Further research should be conducted in order to test the suitability of DKM in real-world application. First, a Web application of DKM should be constructed to support the knowledge collection and management. Second, a set of real-world experiments will prove the efficiency and robustness of DKM. Third, educational applications should be developed to help the ES educators.

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