

Hilog, Defeasibility, and the Foundations of Practical Meta-Knowledge: A Brief Introduction

Benjamin Grosf^{*}

October 31, 2013

Ontolog Forum[‡]

Globally accessible webconference session

* Benjamin Grosf & Associates, <http://www.mit.edu/~bgrosf/>
and
Coherent Knowledge Systems <http://www.coherentknowledge.com>

‡ http://ontolog.cim3.net/cgi-bin/wiki.pl?ConferenceCall_2013_10_31

Meta in Rulelog – Extension of LP

Rulelog has several expressive features for **meta** knowledge

- Overall: mix meta knowledge with “base” knowledge, in fine grain
 - Just as the web/markup mixes meta in *data* with “base” data, in fine grain
- **Hilog**: any atom can be treated as a term. Used also in **Common Logic**.
 - Provides higher-order syntax (bit restricted)
 - Semantics reduces (transforms) to first-order, and uses logical functions.
- **Reification**: any formula can be treated as a term. A.k.a. *quoting*.
 - Provides modal syntax
- **Rule id’s**: enables meta-statements about assertions (i.e., about rules)
 - Every assertion has a rule id, that is a constant in the logical language
 - Useful for provenance, defeasibility, restraint, and other purposes
- **Defeasibility**: any rule can have exceptions (non-monotonically)
 - Strong negation (neg). Prioritized conflict handling. Cancellation of rules.
 - Argumentation-theory approach: specify via rules the principles of defeat
- **Restraint**: bounded rationality, using the “undefined” (u) truth value
 - u represents “not bothering”
 - Specify via rules the principles of such “not bothering”
 - Radial restraint: treat as u every atom/literal whose size exceeds a fixed radius

Examples of Reification

- Reification (a.k.a. quoting) makes a **term out of a formula**:

believes(john, $\{ \text{likes}(\text{mary}, \text{bob}) \}$)

Term made out of the formula likes(mary,bob)

- Variables can be **back-quoted**:

jealousOf(john, ?X) :- believes(john, $\{ \text{likes}(\text{mary}, ?X) \}$).

Back-quoting of ?X makes its scope be outside the quoted formula that ?X appears within

- See, e.g., [Yang & Kifer, ODBASE 2002]
- Rules, not just formulas, can be reified as well

Examples of Hilog

**Hilog permits predicates and functions to be any term:
a variable or a complex term, not just a constant**

$p(?X, ?Y) : - ?X(a, ?Z) \text{ and } ?Y(f(?Z)(b)).$

*Variable as predicate:
ranges over predicate
names of arity 2*

*Complex-term as
function: ranges over
function names of arity 1*

**Hilog also permits variables over atomic formulas. This is
a kind of reification:**

$p(q(a)).$
 $r(?X) : - p(?X) \text{ and } ?X.$

*Meta-variable: ranges over
unary method names*

Introduced in [Chen, Kifer, Warren, “HiLog: A
Foundation for Higher-Order Logic Programming”,
J. of Logic Programming, 1993]

Rule ID's

- Simple, but important, feature
- Each (assertion) statement gets a unique rule id
- The id can be explicitly specified
 - `@!{myRule17} H :- B.`
- Or if implicit, is a skolem essentially
 - `H :- B. →` gets treated as: `@!{gensym0897} H :- B.`
- Enables various useful kinds of meta-knowledge, by asserting properties of the rule id
 - Provenance, e.g., `createdBy(myRule17, Benjamin)`
 - Defeasibility
 - Rule-based transformations, e.g., for language extensibility, UI, NLP

Uses of Hilog and Reification and Rule ID's

Overall: for **knowledge exchange** and **introspection**

- Ontology mappings
- KB translation/import
- KR macros
- Modals (incl. deontic, alethic)
- Multi-agent belief
- Provenance and other aspects of context
- Reasoning control, incl. restraint bounded rationality
- KB modularization
- Navigation in KA (knowledge acquisition)
- ...
- Argumentation-theory approach to **defeasibility**
 - Principles of defeat (i.e., of debate) are meta rules that use Hilog and rule id's

HiLog Transformation

- HiLog semantics is defined via a transformation
- A simplified version of that, which gives intuition:
 - Rewrite each atom $p(a,b) \rightarrow \text{holds_2}(p,a,b)$
 - Generic predicate constants $\text{holds_1}, \text{holds_2}, \dots$
 - Treat each term in similar manner
 - $f(a,b) \rightarrow \text{apply_2}(f,a,b)$
 - Generic function constants $\text{apply_1}, \text{apply_2}, \dots$
- General case of transformation heavily uses logical functions
 - $\Rightarrow \Rightarrow$ creates a challenge in implementation

Knowledge often has **Exceptions**

- A.k.a. knowledge is **defeasible** (i.e., can be “defeated”)
- **“A (eukaryotic) cell has a nucleus.” ... Except when it doesn’t 😊**
 - A cell has no nucleus during anaphase. Red blood cells have no nuclei.
 - A cell has two nuclei between mitosis and cytokinesis. Some fungi are multinucleate.
- **Exceptions / special cases are inevitably realized over time**
 - E.g., knowledge is incomplete, multiple authors contribute, ...
- **Requiring entered knowledge to be strictly / universally true (exception-free) is impractical**
 - Precludes stating generalities (the typical) and thus the population of authors
 - “The perfect is the enemy of the good”
- **Exceptions manifest as contradictions, i.e., conflict**
- **Leveraging multiple sources of knowledge (e.g., KB merging) requires conflict resolution**
 - Errors. Confusions. Omitted context.

Defeasibility is Indicated When...

- **Useful generalities – and potential exceptions – coexist**
 - Specify knowledge in detail/precision appropriate for various circumstances
- **Governing doctrine, definitions, or other knowledge, cannot be assured to be conflict-free, e.g.:**
 - Multiple sources of governing doctrine exist
 - Typically, no central authority resolves all conflict promptly
 - Truth depends on context
 - Yet context is rarely made fully explicit
- **Many broad realms are full of exceptions**
 - Policies, regulations, laws — and the workflows they drive
 - Multiple jurisdictions, organizations, contracts, origins
 - Learning and science. Updating. Debate.
 - May falsify previous hypotheses after observation or communication
 - Causal processes: changes to state, from interacting/multiple causes
 - Natural language (text interpretation): “there’s a gazillion special cases”

EECOMS Example of Conflicting Rules: Ordering Lead Time

- Vendor's rules that prescribe how buyer must place or modify an order:
 - A) 14 days ahead if the buyer is a qualified customer.
 - B) 30 days ahead if the ordered item is a minor part.
 - C) 2 days ahead if the ordered item's item-type is backlogged at the vendor, the order is a modification to reduce the quantity of the item, and the buyer is a qualified customer.
 - D) 45 days ahead if the buyer is a walk-in customer.
- Suppose more than one of the above applies to the current order? **Conflict!**
- Helpful Approach: **precedence** between the rules.
 - E.g., D is a catch-case: $A > D$, $B > D$, $C > D$
- Often only *partial* order of precedence is justified.
 - E.g., $C > A$, but no precedence wrt B vs. A, nor wrt C vs. B.

Ordering Lead Time Example in LP with Courteous Defaults

```
@prefCust orderModifNotice(?Order,14days) :-  
    preferredCustomerOf(?Buyer,SupplierCo), purchaseOrder(?Order,?Buyer,SellerCo) .  
  
@smallStuff orderModifNotice(?Order,30days) :-  
    minorPart(?Buyer,?Seller,?Order), purchaseOrder(?Order,?Buyer,SupplierCo) .  
  
@reduceTight orderModifNotice(?Order,2days) :-  
    preferredCustomerOf(?Buyer,SupplierCo) and  
    orderModifType(?Order,reduce) and  
    orderItemIsInBacklog(?Order) and  
    purchaseOrder(?Order,?Buyer,SupplierCo) .  
  
\overrides(reduceTight, prefCust) . // reduceTight has higher priority than prefCust  
// The below exclusion constraint specifies that orderModifNotice is unique, for a given order.  
  
\opposes(orderModifNotice(?Order,?X), orderModifNotice(?Order,?Y)) :- ?X != ?Y .
```

- Rule D, and prioritization about it, were omitted above for sake of brevity.
- Above rules are represented in Logic Programs KR, using the Courteous defaults feature
- Notation:
 - “:-” means “if”. “@...” declares a rule tag. “?” prefixes a logical variable.
 - “\overrides” predicate specifies prioritization ordering.
 - An exclusion constraint specifies what constitutes a conflict.
 - “!=” means \neq .

Example: Ontology Translation, leveraging hilog and exceptions

/ Company BB reports operating earnings using R&D operating cost which includes price of a small company acquired for its intellectual property. Organization GG wants to view operating cost more conventionally which excludes that acquisition amount. We use rules to specify the contextual ontological mapping. */*

@{normallyBringOver} ?categ(GG)(?item) :- ?categ(BB)(?item).

@{acquisitionsAreNotOperating} neg ?categ(GG)(?item) :-

acquisition(GG)(?item) and (?categ(GG) :: operating(GG)).

\overrides(acquisitionsAreNotOperating, normallyBringOver). /* exceptional */

acquisition(GG)(?item) :- price_of_acquired_R_and_D_companies(BB)(?item).

R_and_D_salaries(BB)(p1001). p1001[amount -> \$25,000,000].

R_and_D_overhead(BB)(p1002). p1002[amount -> \$15,000,000].

price_of_acquired_R_and_D_companies(BB)(p1003). p1003[amount -> \$30,000,000].

R_and_D_operating_cost(BB)(p1003). /* BB counts the acquisition price item in this category */

R_and_D_operating_cost(GG) :: operating(GG).

Total(R_and_D_operating_cost)(BB)[amount -> \$70,000,000]. /* rolled up by BB cf. BB's definitions */

Total(R_and_D_operating_cost)(GG)[amount -> ?x] :- /* roll up the items for GG cf. GG's definitions */

As desired: |= R_and_D_salaries(GG)(p1001)

|= neg R_and_D_operating_cost(GG)(p1003) /* GG doesn't count it */

|= Total(R_and_D_operating_cost)(GG)[amount -> \$40,000,000]

Notation: @{...} declares a rule tag. ? prefixes a variable. :- means if. X :: Y means X is a subclass of Y.
\overrides(X,Y) means X is higher priority than Y.

Ex.'s: Causal Chains & Change in Biology

- The **change** of state effected by process causality requires **defeasibility** in KR
 - A cause's effect is an exception to the persistence of previous state
 - When two causes interfere, one's effect is an exception to the other's effect
- **Causal process reasoning is a large portion of AP Biology, often requiring multi-step causal chains and/or multiple grain sizes of description to answer a question**
- **E.g., Rulelog was piloted on such causal process reasoning in biology using SILK**
- **Hypothetical question about causal interference in an experiment:**
 1. "A researcher treats cells with a chemical that prevents DNA synthesis from starting.
 2. This treatment traps the cells in which part of the cell cycle?"

Answer: G1 [which is a sub-phase of interphase]
- **Counterfactual hypothetical question:**
 1. " Suppose the typical number of chromosomes in a human liver cell was 12. [It's actually 46.]
 2. How many chromosomes would there be in a human sperm cell?"

Answer: 6. [I.e., half the number in the liver and most organs.]

Priorities are available and useful

- Priority information is naturally available and useful. E.g.,
 - recency: higher priority for more recent updates
 - specificity: higher priority for more specific cases (e.g., exceptional cases, sub-cases, inheritance)
 - causality: higher priority for causal effects (direct or indirect) of actions than for inertial persistence of state (“frame problem”)
 - authority: higher priority for more authoritative sources (e.g., legal regulations, organizational imperatives)
 - reliability: higher priority for more reliable sources (e.g., security certificates, via-delegation, assumptions, observational data).
 - closed world: lowest priority for catch-cases
- Many practical rule systems employ priorities of some kind, often implicit. E.g.,
 - rule sequencing in Prolog and production rules
 - Courteous LP subsumes this as a special case (totally-ordered priorities)
 - Also Courteous LP enables: merging, more flexible & principled treatment

Semantic KR Approaches to Prioritized LP

The currently most important for Semantic Web are:

1. Courteous LP

- KR extension to normal LP
- In RuleML, since 2001; in LegalRuleML, since 2012
- Commercially implemented and applied
 - IBM CommonRules, since 1999

2. Defeasible Logic

- Closely related to Courteous LP
 - Less general wrt typical patterns of prioritized conflict handling needed in e-business applications
 - In progress: theoretical unification with Courteous LP [Wan, Kifer, Grosz RR-2010]

Argumentation Theories approach to Defaults in LP

- **Combines Courteous + Hilog, and generalizes**
- **New approach to defaults: “argumentation theories”**
 - Meta-rules, in the LP itself, that specify when rules ought to be defeated
 - [Wan, Grosz, Kifer, *et al.* ICLP-2009; RR-2010]
- **Extends straightforwardly to combine with other key features**
 - E.g., Frame syntax, external Actions, Omniformity, ...
- **Significant other improvements on previous Courteous**
 - Eliminates a complex transformation
 - Much simpler to implement
 - 20-30 background rules instead of 1000’s of lines of code
 - Much faster when updating the premises
 - More flexible control of edge-case behaviors
 - Much simpler to analyze theoretically

Argumentation Theories approach, Continued*

- **More Advantages**
 - 1st way to generalize defeasible LP, notably Courteous, to HiLog higher-order and F-Logic frames
 - Well-developed model theory, reducible to normal LP
 - Reducibility results
 - Well-behavior results, e.g., guarantees of consistency
 - Unifies almost all previous defeasible LP approaches
 - Each reformulated as an argumentation theory
 - E.g., Defeasible Logic (see Wan, Kifer, and Grosz RR-2010 paper)
 - Cleaner, more flexible and extensible semantics
 - Enables smooth and powerful integration of features
 - Applies both to well founded LP (WFS) and to Answer Set Programs (ASP)
 - Leverages most previous LP algorithms & optimizations
- **Implemented** in Flora-2; used in SILK and Coherent Knowledge Systems

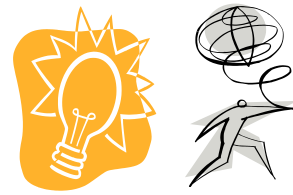
For More Info

- See the ff. longer AAAI-13 Rules tutorial, available at <http://coherentknowledge.com/publications> :
 - Benjamin Grosf, Michael Kifer, and Mike Dean. [Semantic Web Rules: Fundamentals, Applications, and Standards](#) ([abstract](#)). Conference Tutorial ([Slides](#) for 4-hour tutorial), 27th AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence ([AAAI-13](#)), Bellevue, Washington, July 15, 2013.
 - This is the latest iteration of a tutorial that since 2004 has been presented at numerous scientific conferences on web, semantic web, and AI.
 - A book is in early stages of preparation based on this tutorial.

- For Survey of KR's: also see 10/24/2013 session of Ontolog Forum
- For Rulelog overview: also see 6/20/2013 session of Ontolog Forum
- For Restraint: see [Grosf & Swift, AAAI-13] and [Andersen et al, RuleML-2013 and similar WLPE-2013] (all available at <http://coherentknowledge.com/publications>)

Acknowledgements

- Thanks to Michael Kifer and Mike Dean, co-authors of longer tutorial presentations upon which this presentation was based.



Thank You

**Disclaimer: The preceding slides represent the views of the author(s) only.
All brands, logos and products are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies and organizations.**

OPTIONAL SLIDES FOLLOW

Declarative Logic Programs (LP) is the Core KR today

- **LP is the core KR of structured knowledge management today**

- **Databases**

- Relational, semi-structured, RDF, XML, object-oriented
- SQL, SPARQL, XQuery
- Each fact, query, and view is essentially a rule

- **Business Rules – the commercially dominant kinds** (production/ECA rules, Prolog)

- **Semantic Rules**

- RuleML standards design, incl. SWRL. The main basis for RIF.
- W3C Rule Interchange Format (RIF): -BLD, -Core. E.g., Jena tool.



- **Extension: Rulelog.** E.g., Coherent's tool.

- **Semantic Ontologies**

- W3C RDF(S)
- W3C OWL-RL (= the Rules subset). E.g., Oracle's tool for OWL.



- **Overall: LP is “the 99%”, classical logic is “the 1%”**

- **Relational DB's were the first successful semantic technology**

- LP is the KR/logic that was invented to formalize them

- **The Semantic Web today is mainly based on LP KR** ... and thus essentially equivalent to semantic rules

- **You might not have realized that!**

Declarative Logic Programs (LP) – Family of KR's

- Normal LP
 - Rule syntax: $H \leftarrow B_1 \wedge \dots \wedge B_k \wedge \text{naf } B_{k+1} \wedge \dots \wedge \text{naf } B_m$. ($m \geq 0$)
 - H and Bi's are atoms.
 - \leftarrow is a kind of implication that lacks contraposition. Its lhs and rhs are called the rule's “head” and “body”, respectively.
 - **naf** (“negation-as-failure”) is a kind of negation that is logically non-monotonic. Intuitively, **naf** Bi means “not believe Bi”.
 - Semantics (well-founded) is defined constructively via an iterated fixed point.
 - It has 3 truth values: *true*; *false* in the naf sense; and an intermediate “*undefined*”, which can represent paradoxicality.

HiLog

- A higher-order extension of predicate logic, which has a tractable first-order syntax
 - Allows certain forms of logically clean, yet tractable, meta-programming
 - Syntactically appears to be higher-order, but semantically is first-order and tractable
- Used in ISO Common Logic to syntactically extend FOL
 - Also appears promising for OWL Full and its use of RDF [Kifer; Hayes]
- Implemented in Flora-2 and SILK
 - Also partially exists in XSB, others
- [Chen, Kifer, Warren, “HiLog: A Foundation for Higher-Order Logic Programming”, J. of Logic Programming, 1993]

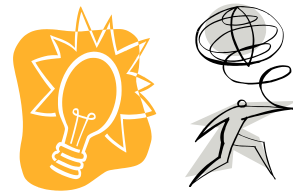
Courteous LP: Advantages

- Facilitate updating and merging, modularity and locality in specification.
- Expressive: strong negation, partially-ordered prioritization, reasoning to infer prioritization.
- Guarantee consistent, unique set of conclusions.
 - E.g., never conclude both p and $\neg p$, nor that discount is both 5% and that it is 10%.
- Scalable & Efficient: low computational overhead beyond ordinary LPs.
 - Tractable given reasonable restrictions (VB + function-free):
 - extra cost is equivalent to increasing v to $(v+2)$ in normal LP, worst-case.
 - By contrast, more expressive prioritized rule representations (e.g., Prioritized Default Logic) add NP-hard overhead.
- Modular software engineering:
 - Transform into normal LP, via argumentation theory approach

Ubiquity of Priorities

in Commercially Important Rules -- and Ontologies

- Updating in relational databases
 - more recent fact *overrides* less recent fact
- Static rule ordering in Prolog
 - rule earlier in file *overrides* rule later in file
- Dynamic rule ordering in production rule systems (OPS5)
 - “meta-”rules can specify agenda of rule-firing sequence
- Event-Condition-Action rule systems rule ordering
 - often static or dynamic, in manner above
- Exceptions in default inheritance in object-oriented/frame systems
 - subclass’s property value *overrides* superclass’s property value, e.g., method redefinitions
- **All lack Declarative KR Semantics**



Thank You

**Disclaimer: The preceding slides represent the views of the author(s) only.
All brands, logos and products are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies and organizations.**