



Gary H. Merrill debates Smith and Ceusters' notion on ontological realism in new issue of Applied Ontology

Article Ontological realism: Methodology or misdirection? by Gary H. Merrill
freely available

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AMSTERDAM, July 15th 2010 – We are happy to inform you that issue 5:2 (2010) of the journal Applied Ontology is now online at www.applied-ontology.org. The issue features three high-quality papers:

- Ontological realism: Methodology or misdirection? / Gary H. Merrill (DOI 10.3233/AO-2010-0076)
- An ontological analysis of states: Organizations vs. legal persons / E.H. Robinson (DOI 10.3233/AO-2010-0077)
- A note on ontology localization / P. Cimiano, E. Montiel-Ponsoda, P. Buitelaar, M. Espinoza and A. Gomez-Perez (DOI 10.3233/AO-2010-0075)

Given its relevance for the field of ontology engineering, the first paper Ontological realism: Methodology or misdirection? (DOI 10.3233/AO-2010-0076, Gary H. Merrill), an analysis of the implications of Ontological Realism from the applied ontology, has been made freely available online <http://iospress.metapress.com/content/j3324564p5l33863/>.

For several years, Barry Smith and Werner Ceusters have made the strong plea that ontologies should be developed from a realist perspective, such that the entities in an ontology refer directly to entities in reality. Smith and Ceusters have advocated the notion of realism quite forcefully in the biological community, where the OBO Foundry represents a collection of reference ontologies that adhere to a number of principles, among them the realist perspective. Smith and Ceusters have been extremely successful in persuading a large cadre of ontology developers to adhere to this point of view.

Merrill's article makes a head-on attack on Smith and Ceusters' approach, with strong arguments and strong wit. This paper is essential reading for anyone who is interested in the philosophical underpinnings of ontology engineering in general and in the OBO Foundry in particular.

Meanwhile, Barry Smith and Werner Ceusters are busy preparing a response to the paper by Merrill, which promises to make a head-on counterattack, with equally strong arguments and strong wit. Smith and Cuester's response to the Merrill paper will be published in the next issue of Applied Ontology.

Merrill has promised to respond to the rebuttal from Smith and Ceusters. Smith and Ceusters have already asked to refute Merrill's rebuttal.

This debate on the essence of ontology for e-science is fundamental and important to everyone concerned with the subject matter of the journal.

About Applied Ontology

Applied Ontology - An Interdisciplinary Journal of Ontological Analysis and Conceptual Modeling is a journal whose focus is on information content in its broadest sense. As the subtitle makes clear, two broad kinds of content-based research activities are envisioned: ontological analysis and conceptual modeling. The former includes any attempt to investigate the nature and structure of a domain of interest using rigorous philosophical or logical tools; the latter concerns the cognitive and linguistic structures we use to model the world, as well as the various analysis tools and methodologies we adopt for producing useful computational models, such as information systems schemes or knowledge structures.

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The current issue 5:2 (2010) is available as of now through
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