ACM TECHNEWS

Competition: Computer Science Teams Determine the Perfect Baby Name

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The Nameling name search engine allows users to type in baby names that they like, to generate a list of suggested names that they also might find appealing.

Credit: Baby Connect

University of Kassel computer scientists Juergen Muller and Folke Mitzlaff have applied knowledge engineering methods to the task of helping parents-to-be choose the right baby name.

In early 2012, Mitzlaff created the name search engine Nameling, which enables users to type in names that they like to generate a list of suggested names that they also might find appealing. The team has since refined Nameling so that users receive recommendations according to their own or previous user search profiles.

A new feature also lets users view suggested names based on a list of several names, enabling them to search specifically for first names that complement parent and sibling names.

Mitzlaff and his colleagues won the call for proposals to hold the 15th Discovery Challenge, an annual international competition within the scope of the European Conference on Machine Learning and Principles and Practices of Knowledge Discovery, which will take place in Prague this September. Participating researchers will program competing modules capable of answering queries, and the team whose recommendation system delivers the suggestions that best satisfy Nameling users will win.

The researchers also plan to incorporate opinion mining to draw conclusions about how names are perceived based on public data from social media.

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