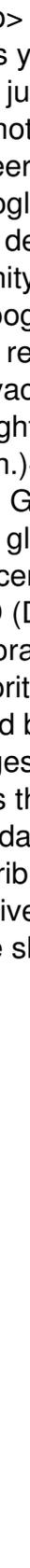


Impressions from Google Scholars' Retreat 2011, which took place last month in Zurich, Switzerland, where the Retreat for the EMEA region was organized, are great. ♦ It has really been a valuable experience to meet many Googlers, other scholars and their research work.

Below is this year logo.



Let me mention just a few workshops and talks I have attended during the Retreat:

- Keynote speech
- Working in Industry
- Product Design Workshop
- Career Panel
- Poster Show
- Android Technical Talk
- Open source and Google Support of its Advancement in the Community ♦ (Details: Open source community at Google, development model and how Google uses it and supports advancement of this community.)
- Google Web API (Details: Generic principles of Google Web APIs and the tools Google provide for learning and experimenting with them. Focus on interaction with these tools for research, be it to harvest data or to help present data in an efficient way.)
- *Privacy, the Ultimate Interdisciplinary Challenge (Details: The questions of deletion and digital rights management, online reputation and self-representation, the right to be forgotten.)
- *Google.org - Using Google's Strengths to Address Global Challenges (Details: Google.org is tasked with using Google's strengths in technology and the Internet to address global challenges. The session covered development of Google Flu Trends as well as more recent work including Google Earth Engine and Google Crisis Response.)
- *Street View 3D (Details: Many problems arise when developing such a product, such as augmenting the panoramas with 3D features for better navigation and a more immersive experience.)
- *Priority Inbox (Details: Because importance is highly personal, email importance is predicted by learning a per-user statistical model, updated as frequently as possible. The challenges include inferring the importance of mail without explicit user labeling; finding learning methods that deal with non-stationary and noisy training data; constructing models that reduce training data requirements; storing and processing terabytes of per-user feature data; predicting in a distributed and fault-tolerant way.)

Beside that there were some very informative talks on business visions of Google, ways of involvement with Google, office tours (I liked the slides between the floors :) and lots of small talk with Googlers.