

ProM and the Challenges of Process Mining

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Within organizations there has been a shift from *data* orientation to *process* orientation. By process we mean the way an organization arranges their work and recurses, for instance the order in which tasks are performed and which group of people are allowed to perform specific tasks. Sometimes, organizations have very explicit process descriptions of the way the work is organized and this description is supported by a process aware information system like, for instance, a workflow management system (WFM). But even if there are explicit descriptions of the way the work should be done, the practical way of working can differ considerably from the prescribed way of working. Other times, there is no, or only a very immature process description available. However, in many situations it is possible to gather information about the processes as they take place. For instance, in many hospitals, information about the different treatments of a patient are registered (date, time, treatment, medical staff) for reasons like financial administration. This kind of information in combination with appropriate mining techniques can also be used to get more insight in the health care process. We use the term *process mining* for the method of distilling process knowledge from a set of real executions.

Event logs are used as the starting point for mining. We distinguish three different mining perspectives: (1) the process perspective, (2) the organizational perspective and (3) the case perspective. The *process perspective* focuses on the control-flow, i.e., the ordering of activities. The goal of mining this perspective is to find a good characterization of all possible paths, expressed in terms of, for instance, a Petri net. The *organizational perspective* focuses on the originator field, i.e., which performers are involved in performing the activities and how they are related. The goal is to either structure the organization by classifying people in terms of roles and organizational units or to show relations between individual performers. The *case perspective* focuses on properties of cases. Cases can be characterized by their path in the process or by the originators working on a case. However, cases can also be characterized by the values of the corresponding data elements.

To address the three perspectives and the logical and performance issues a set of plug-ins has been developed for the ProM framework [1]. ProM is open source and uses a plug-able architecture, e.g., people can add new process mining techniques by adding plug-ins without spending any efforts on the loading and filtering of event logs and the visualization of the resulting models. Notwithstanding that ProM 4.2 provides six different types of plug-ins, and in total more than 200 plug-ins. This makes ProM a practical and versatile tool for process analysis and discovering. In the presentation we will illustrate the basic concepts behind ProM and focus on the many scientific process mining challenges that are still remaining.

References

- [1] B. van Dongen, A.K. Alves de Medeiros, H.M.W. Verbeek, A.J.M.M. Weijters, and W.M.P. van der Aalst. The ProM framework: A New Era in Process Mining Tool Support. In G. Ciardo and P. Darondeau, editors, *Application and Theory of Petri Nets 2005*, volume 3536 of *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, pages 444–454. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 2005.