An overview of Semantic Web Languages and Technologies

Semantic Web Technologies

- W3C "recommendations"
 - RDF, RDFS, RDFa, OWL, SPARQL, RIF, R2R, etc...
- Common tools and systems -- commercial, free and open sourced
 - Ontology editors, triple stores, reasoners, etc.
- Common ontologies and data sets
 - Foaf, DBpedia, SKOS, PROV, etc.
- Infrastructure systems
 - Search, ontology metadata, linking services
- Non W3C: schema.org, Freebase, ...

Common KR languages

- Knowledge representation and reasoning (KR&R) is an important part of AI & other disciplines
- Many approaches have been developed, implemented, and evolved since the 1960s
- Most were one-offs, used only by their developers
- Starting in the 1990s, there was an interest in developing a common KR language to support knowledge reuse and distributed KB systems
- The Semantic Web languages (e.g., OWL) are a current generation of this idea

Questions

Database (DB) vs. knowledge base (KB)?

- TL;DR: DBs have facts, KBs have general knowledge as well as facts
- DBs typically have very simple schemas (knowledge) and lots of data (facts)
- KBs have complex schemas (aka ontologies) and may or may not have a lot of instances (data)
- Knowledge graphs are the new KBs

KBs support inference, e.g.,

Questions

What's the impact of using different structures to represent data or knowledge?

- Natural language
- Program code
- Relations vs. graphs vs. objects
- Logic vs. rules vs. procedures
- Neural networks
- Tensors

Questions

What's our "semantic" model for facts and knowledge?

- Classical logic is a common choice
 - man(socrates), $\forall x \text{ man}(x) => \text{mortal}(x)$
 - Classical logic has limitations: facts and relations and "rules" are either (always) True or False for all time
- May need to represent and reason with probabilistic or fuzzy facts and knowledge
- May need to handle dynamic facts or knowledge

Semantic Web Technologies

- Basic approach uses classical logic for underlying semantics
 - + Simple, well understood, good reasoning algorithms
 - No probabilities, adding extensions (e.g., for time) adds complexity
- Knowledge represented as a graph
 - + Simple, good tool support
 - Sometimes may be too simple

Two Semantic Web Notions

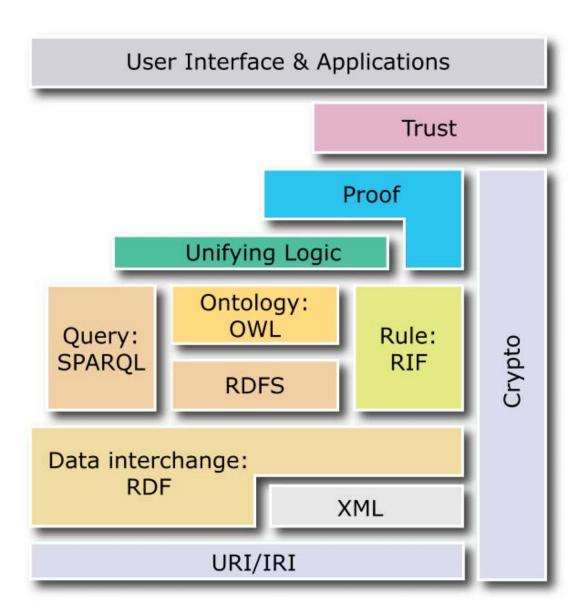
The semantic web

- Idea of a web of machine understandable information
- Agnostic about the technology used to support it
- May involve more AI (e.g., NLP, machine learning)
- Human end users in the center

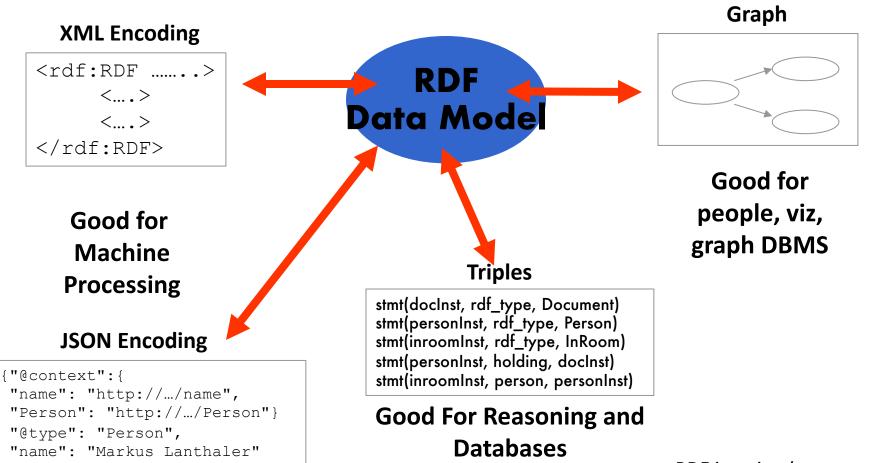
The Semantic Web

- Current vision of a semantic web as defined by the W3C community: a Web of Data
- Uses W3C supported standards, i.e., RDF, OWL, SPARQL, SHACL, XML, RIF, etc.
- Developing common reference KGs, i.e., DBpedia, Wikidata
- By machines for machines with human-oriented applications on top

W3C Semantic Web Stack



RDF is the first SW language



RDF is a simple language for building graph based representations

The RDF Data Model

- An RDF document is an unordered collection of statements, each with a subject, predicate and object (aka triples)
- A triple can be thought of as a labelled arc in a graph
- Statements describe properties of web resources
- Resource are objects that can be pointed to by a URI:
 - a document, a picture, a paragraph on the Web, ...
 - E.g., http://umbc.edu/~finin/cv.html
 - a book in the library, a real person (?)
 - isbn://5031-4444-3333
- Properties themselves are also resources (URIs)

URIs are a foundation

- URI URN
- URI = Uniform Resource Identifier
 - "The generic set of all names/addresses that are short strings that refer to resources"
 - URLs (<u>Uniform Resource Locators</u>) subset of URIs,
 used for resources that are *accessable* on web
- URIs look like URLs, often with fragment identifiers pointing to a document part:
 - http://foo.com/bar/mumble.html#pitch
- IRIs (Internationalized Resource Identifier) are URIs that allow Unicode characters

IRIs are a foundation

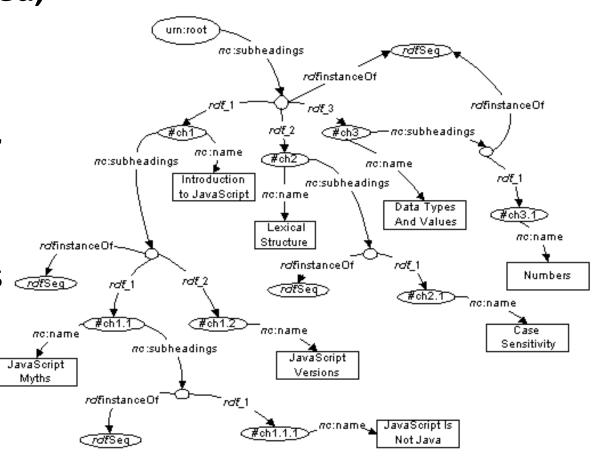
- IRIs and URIs are unambiguous, unlike natural language terms -- the web provides a global namespace
- We can use a URI to denote something, e.g., a concept, entity, event or relation
- We usually assume references to the same URI are to the same thing

What does a IRI mean?

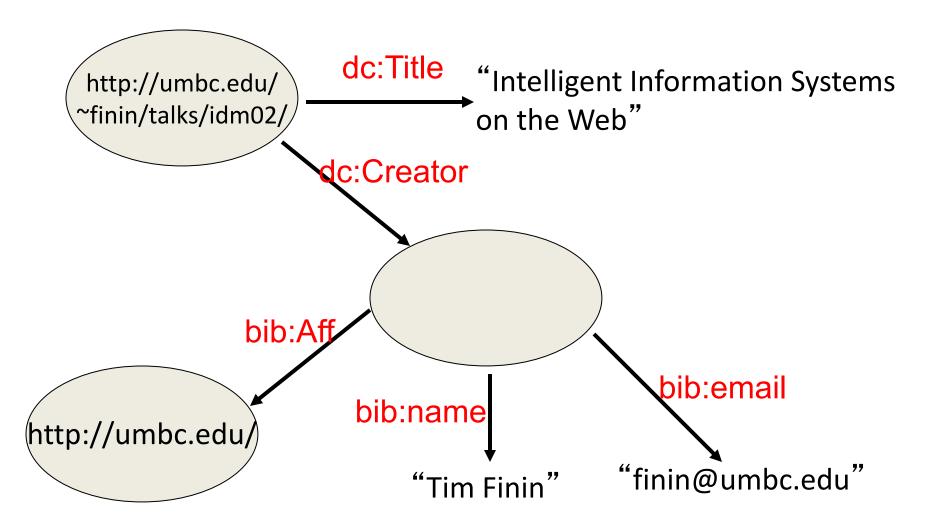
- An IRI can denote a web resource
 - -http://umbc.edu/~finin/finin.jpg denotes a file
 - –RDF can make assertions about it, e.g., it's an image and depicts a person with name Tim Finin, ...
- It can denote an instance or concepts
 - -E.g., http://umbc.edu/ denotes a particular university
- Resolving the ambiguity is done by context or social convention
- TBL: "Cool URIs don't change"
 - -http://www.w3.org/Provider/Style/URI

The RDF Graph

- An RDF document is an unordered collection of triples
- The subject of one triple can be the object of another
- The result is a directed,
 labelled graph
- A triple's object can also be a literal, e.g., a string or number
- Graphs are simpler that relational tables or objects
- This is both a plus and a minus



Simple RDF Example



Serialization

- A graph is an abstract model, we'll need to serialize it as text for many reasons, e.g., display, editing, exchange, ...
- Multiple standard RDF serializations
- Most important: XML, Turtle, ntriples, JSON-LD
- Most Semantic Web tools can read or write in any of these serializations

XML encoding for RDF

```
<rdf:RDF xmIns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/"
  xmlns:bib=http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/>
<rdf:Description rdf:about="http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/">
 <dc:title>Intelligent Information Systems on the Web</dc:title>
 <dc:creator>
  <rdf:Description>
   <br/><bib:Name>Tim Finin</bib:Name>
   <br/>
<br/>
dib:Email>finin@umbc.edu</bib:Email>
   <bib:Aff rdf:resource="http://umbc.edu/" />
  </rdf:Description>
 </dc:creator>
</rdf:Description>
</rdf:RDF>
```

Note the prefix declarations

```
<rdf:RDF xmIns:rdf="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#"
  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/"
  xmlns:bib=http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/>
<rdf:Description rdf:about="http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/">
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 <dc:creator>
  <rdf:Description>
   <br/><bib:Name>Tim Finin</bib:Name>
   <br/><bib:Email>finin@umbc.edu</bib:Email>
   <br/><bib:Aff rdf:resource="http://umbc.edu/" />
  </rdf:Description>
 </dc:creator>
</rdf:Description>
</rdf:RDF>
```

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```
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  xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/"
  xmlns:bib=http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/>
<rdf:Description rdf:about="http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/">
 <ac:title>Intelligent Information Systems on the Web</ac:title>
 <dc:creator>
                                   Makes it easy to include terms from three
  <rdf:Description>
                                   different "vocabularies":
    <br/><bib:Name>Tim Finin</bib:N

    rdf for terms that are part of its

    <br/>
<br/>
bib:Email>finin@umbc.edu
                                      representation language (e.g., rdf:type)
                                     dc for terms from the Dublin Core
    <bib:Aff rdf:resource="http://</pre>
                                     vocabulary developed by librarians
  </rdf:Description>
                                     bib for terms from a bibliography
 </dc:creator>
                                     vocabulary developed at UMBC
```

</rdf:Description>

</rdf:RDF>

Easy to convert between serializations

Most RDF software tools can read and write different serializations

- rdf2rdf is a simple handy utility for converting from one RDF serialization to another
- Any23 is another open-source library, web service and command line tool
- <u>riot</u> is yet another converter that's part of the open-source <u>Apache Jena</u> package

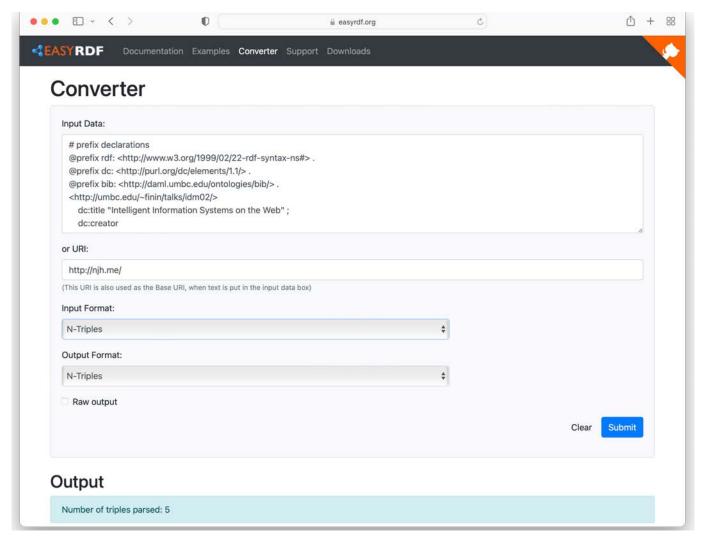
Using riot to convert ttl to nt

- Guesses input and output formats
- The NT format has 5 lines, one for each triple

>>> riot ex1.ttl ex1.nt

```
<http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/>
<http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/title> "Intelligent
Information Systems on the Web" .
:B55c4d1cd7d6ea94ecdf3cad94f462ee3
<http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Name> "Tim Finin" .
:B55c4d1cd7d6ea94ecdf3cad94f462ee3
<http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Email> "finin@umbc.edu"
:B55c4d1cd7d6ea94ecdf3cad94f462ee3
<http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Aff> <http://umbc.edu/>
<http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/>
<http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/creator>
_:B55c4d1cd7d6ea94ecdf3cad94f462ee3 .
>>>
```

Online conversion services also exist



https://www.easyrdf.org/converter

N-triple representation

- N-triples is a line-oriented serialization for RDF
- Also known as NT format
- URIs are wrapped in angle brackets, ended with a period
 <subject> <object> .

```
<http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/> <http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/title>
   "Intelligent Information Systems on the Web" .
   <http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/> <http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/creator>
    _:node17i6ht38ux1 .
   _:node17i6ht38ux1 <http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Name> "Tim Finin" .
   _:node17i6ht38ux1 <http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Email> "finin@umbc.edu" .
   :node17i6ht38ux1 <http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/Aff> <http://umbc.edu/> .
```

 NT is less readable for people, but loads into a triple store quickly because it's easier to parse

Turtle Serialization

Turtle: a compact and readable serialization

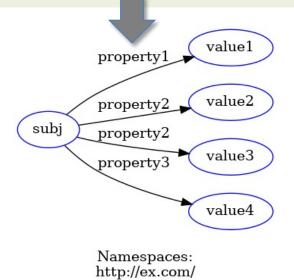
```
# prefix declarations
@prefix rdf: <a href="http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#">http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-rdf-syntax-ns#</a> .
@prefix dc: <a href="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/">http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/>.</a>
@prefix bib: <a href="http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/">http://daml.umbc.edu/ontologies/bib/</a> .
<a href="http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/">http://umbc.edu/~finin/talks/idm02/</a>
   dc:title "Intelligent Information Systems on the Web";
   dc:creator
      [ bib:Name "Tim Finin" ;
         bib:Email "finin@umbc.edu";
         bib:Aff <http://umbc.edu/>].
```

Basic Turtle Syntax

- Based on TBL's original notation3 syntax
- Prefixes make URI references compact
- Note use of empty prefix for http://ex.com/
- Subject is followed by one or more property-values sets separated by semicolons
- Multiple values for the same property are separated by commas
- Blank nodes are enclosed in square brackets

```
@prefix : <http://ex.com/> .
:subj
:property1 :value1;
:property2 :value2, value3;
:property3 value4.
```

```
:subj :property1 :value1 .
:subj :property2 :value2 .
:subj :property2 :value3 .
:subj :property3 :value4 .
```



More RDF Vocabulary

- RDF is a "pure" graph representation language
 - -Graphs are unordered set of triples: node, edge, node
 - Nodes and edges are simple objects denoted by URIs
 - Object nodes can be URIs or RDF literals
- Literals can be strings ("dog"), language-tagged strings ("chien"@fr), or strings tagged with a XML Schema datatype ("3.14"^^xsd:decimal)
- For Turtle, <u>numbers</u> are automatically recognized as such by regexes, so both "3.14"^^xsd:decimal and 3.14 are recognized as a floating-point numbers, but "3.14" is seen as a string

Making statements about statements

- Suppose we want to give an edge a probability (:flipper rdf:type :mammal) :probability 0.9
- Or assert that someone believes it to be true

 (:flipper rdf:type :fish) :believedBy :Bob
 ((:flipper rdf:type :fish) :believedBy :Bob) :believedBy :Carol
- Or give a date for a population count (:arbutus :population 21655) :date 2020
- Property graphs let us attach properties with literal values to either nodes or edges, directly supporting these examples

Property graphs?

- RDF is a "pure" graph model with only labeled nodes and edges
- Many popular graph databases implement property graphs (e.g., Neo4j)
- Nodes & edges can have properties, whose values are literals or maybe lists of literals
- Results in a more compact graph
- But, as we'll see, introduces some limitations

RDF Reification (1)

In an RDF graph each triple must be unique

```
@prefix : http://ex.com/
:flipper rdf:type :mammal .
:flipper rdf:type :mammal .
```

- In an RDF graph there can be only one triple with a given subject, predicate and object
- Duplicate triples are ignored and not added to the knowledge graph
- This example specifies a graph with just one triple

RDF Reification (2)

- RDF also can describe triples through <u>reification</u>
- Enabling statements about statements

```
@prefix : http://ex.com/
:flipper rdf:type :mammal .
_:s1 rdf:type rdf:Statement ;
    rdf:subject :flipper;
    rdf:predicate :type;
    rdf:object :mammal;
    :probability 0.9 .
```

- Reification is a term from philosophy for making concrete something that's abstract
- In CS, it has a similar meaning
- The underscore prefix is introduces a *blank node*
- More about this later, but for now, think of it as introducing "a new, nameless thing"

RDF Reification (3)

- RDF also can describe triples through <u>reification</u>
- Enabling statements about statements

```
@prefix : http://ex.com/
:flipper rdf:type :mammal .
_:s1 rdf:type rdf:Statement ;
    rdf:subject :flipper;
    rdf:predicate :type;
    rdf:object :mammal;
    :probability 0.9 .
```

- Reification is a term from philosophy for making concrete something that's abstract
- In CS, it has a similar meaning
- The underscore prefix is introduces a *blank node*
- More about this later, but for now, think of it as introducing "a new, nameless thing"

More RDF Vocabulary

 RDF ABILITY TO describe triples through reification enables statements about statements

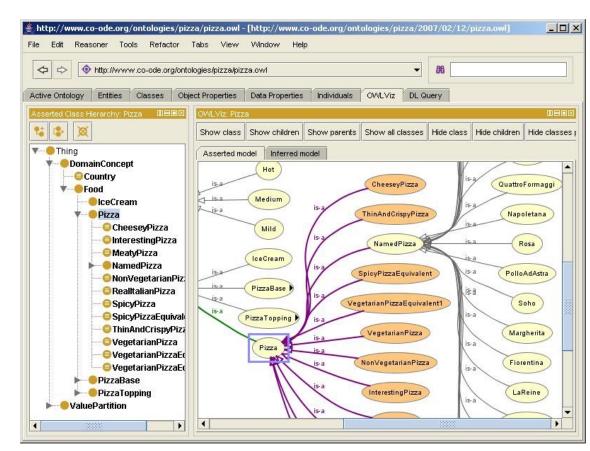
```
:john bdi:believes _:s.
_:s rdf:type rdf:Statement.
_:s rdf:subject <http://ex.com/catalog/widgetX>.
_:s rdf:predicate cat:salePrice .
_:s rdf:object "19.95" .
```

RDF* / RDF-star

- RDF* (aka RDF-star)provides an easier syntax to make assertions about assertions
- This avoids having to use explicit reification
- It's been implemented by most popular RDF database systems (e.g., Jena, Stardog, RDFox)
- It's currently being considered for formal approval as a W3C standard

RDF Schema (RDFS)

- RDF Schema adds taxonomies for classes & properties
 - subClass and subProperty
- and some metadata
 - domain and range constraints on properties
- Many widely used KG tools can import and export in RDFS



Stanford **Protégé** KB editor

- Java, open sourced, free
- extensible, many plug-ins
- provides reasoning & server capabilities
- Local and web-based version

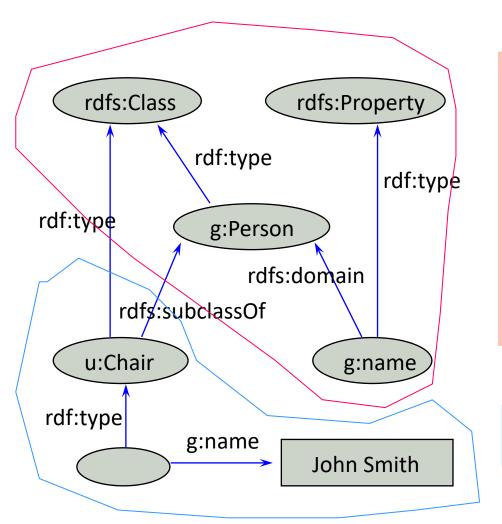
RDFS Vocabulary

RDFS introduces the following terms and gives each a meaning w.r.t. the rdf data model

- Terms for classes
 - rdfs:Class
 - rdfs:subClassOf
- Terms for properties
 - rdfs:domain
 - rdfs:range
 - rdfs:subPropertyOf
- Special classes
 - rdfs:Resource
 - rdfs:Literal
 - rdfs:Datatype

- Terms for collections
 - rdfs:member
 - rdfs:Container
 - rdfs:ContainerMembershipProperty
- Special properties
 - rdfs:comment
 - rdfs:seeAlso
 - rdfs:isDefinedBy
 - rdfs:label

RDF and RDF Schema



Schema-level information

```
@prefix rdf: <http://www.w3.org/1999/02/22-
rdf-syntax-ns#> .
@prefix rdfs:
        <http://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema#> .
@prefix g: <http://schema.org/gen> .
@prefix u: <http://schema.org/univ> .

g:name rdf:type rdfs:Property;
    rdfs:domain g:Person .

u:Chair rdfs:subclassOf g:Person .
```

Instance-level information

```
_:john rdf:type u:Chair;
g:name "John Smith" .
```

RDFS supports simple inferences



- An RDF ontology plus some RDF statements may imply additional RDF statements
- Not true of XML data
- Note that this is part of the data model and not of the accessing or processing code

rdfs:domain:Woman.

:eve :mother :cain.

- The subject of a :person relation must be a :Person
- The object of a :person relation must be a :Person
- A :mother relation is a special kind of :parent relation
- The subject of a :mother relation must be a :Woman

RDFS supports simple inferences



- An RDF ontology plus some RDF statements may imply additional RDF statements
- Not true of XML data
- Note that this is part of the data model and not of the accessing or processing code

RDFS Terms

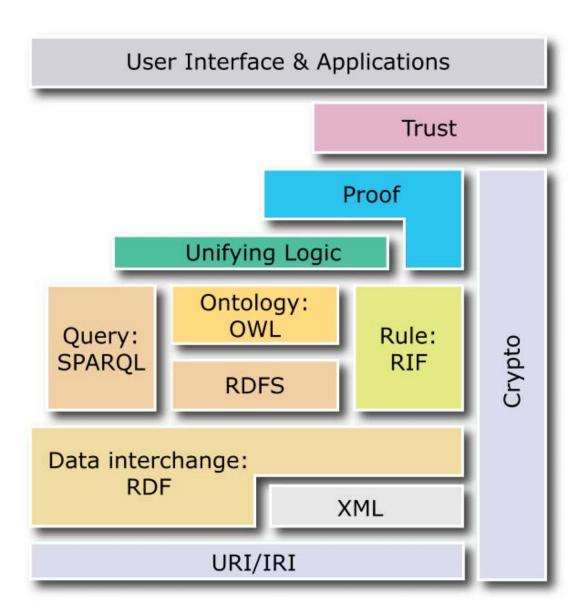
- Information on the RDFS vocabulary is given by the file its prefix resolves to
- https://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema
- It provides some insight, e.g., rdfs: domain goes from a rdfs:Property to a rdfs:Resource
- Not a formal definition though; that's given in logic

Is RDF(S) better than XML?

Q: For a specific application, should I use XML or RDF? A: It depends...

- XML's model is
 - a tree, i.e., a strong hierarchy
 - applications may rely on hierarchy position
 - relatively simple syntax and structure
 - not easy to combine trees
- RDF's model is
 - a loose collections of relations
 - applications may do database-like search
 - not easy to recover hierarchy
 - easy to combine relations in one big collection
 - great for the integration of heterogeneous information

W3C Semantic Web Stack



Problems with RDFS

- RDFS too weak to describe resources in detail, e.g.
 - No localised range and domain constraints
 Can't say that the range of hasChild is person when applied to persons and dog when applied to dogs
 - No existence/cardinality constraints
 Can't say that all instances of person have a mother that is also a person, or that persons have exactly two parents
 - No transitive, inverse or symmetrical properties
 Can't say isPartOf is a transitive property, hasPart is the inverse of isPartOf or touches is symmetrical
- We need RDF terms providing these and other features.

W3C's Web Ontology Language (OWL)

- DARPA project, DAML+OIL, begat OWL
- OWL released as W3C recommendation 2/10/04
- See the <u>W3C OWL pages</u> for overview, guide, specification, test cases, etc.
- Three layers of OWL are defined of decreasing levels of complexity and expressiveness
 - OWL Full is the whole thing
 - OWL DL (Description Logic) introduces restrictions
 - OWL RL is a subset of OWL that can be efficiently implemented with rules (e.g., <u>horn clauses</u>)
- Owl 2 became a W3C recommendation in 2009, updated in 2012

$OWL \leftrightarrow RDF$

- An OWL document is a set of RDF statements
 - -OWL defines semantics for certain statements
 - Does NOT restrict what can be said; documents can include arbitrary RDF
 - —But no OWL semantics for non-OWL statements
- Adds capabilities common to <u>description logics</u>, e.g., cardinality constraints, defined classes, equivalence, disjoint classes, etc.
- Supports ontologies as objects (e.g., importing, versioning, ...
- A complete OWL reasoning is significantly more complex than a complete RDFS reasoner

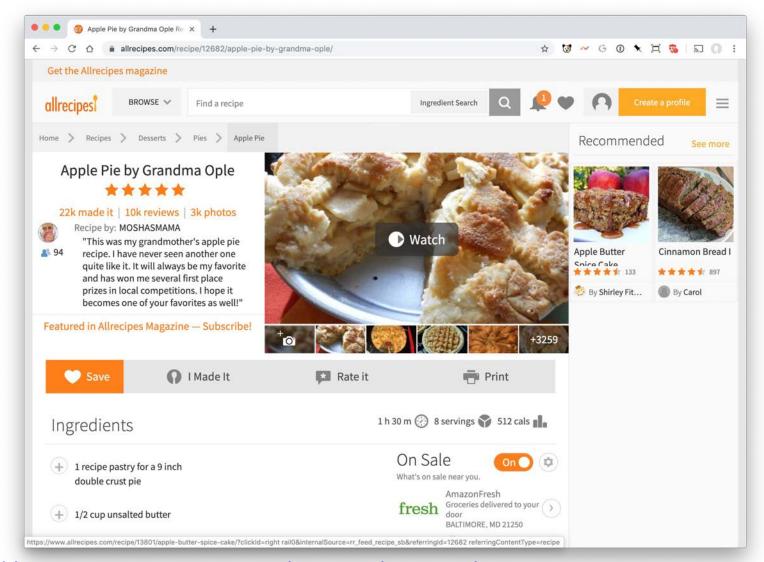
$OWL \leftrightarrow RDF$

- RDF allows us to define instance-level data
- RDFS adds the ability to add some schema-level data
- OWL extends this to allow much more schema-level information
- We typically use RDFS and OWL to define domain ontologies (i.e., schemas)
- And then use those ontologies to state information about instances

Embedding Semantic Data in HTML

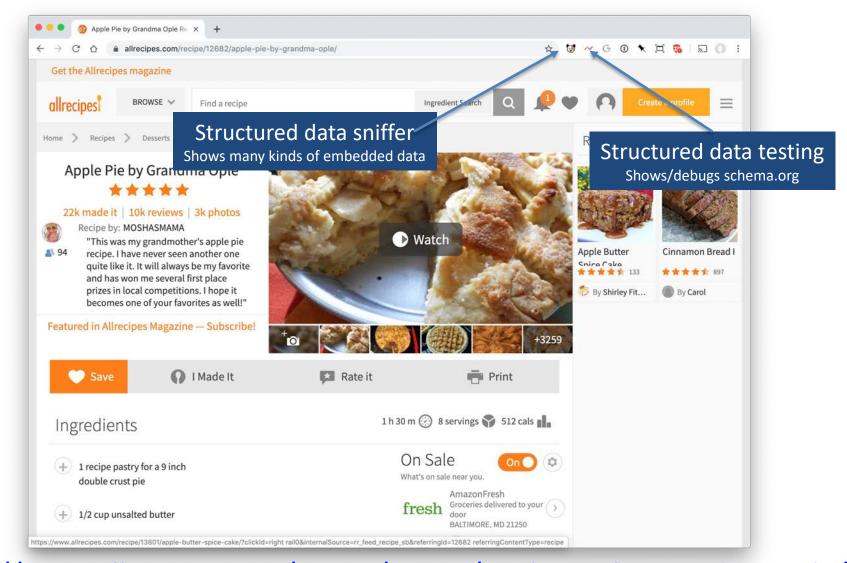
- Embedding semantic data in HTML allows documents to be understood by people and machines
 - RDFa is a 'standard' for embedding RDF in HTML as tag attributes
 - JSON-LD is a 'standard' for embedding RDF in a simple json-compatible serialization
- Facebook looks for embedded RDFa statements using its opengraph (og) vocabulary
- Bestbuy embeds produce info in RDFa

Detecting semantic data via a browser



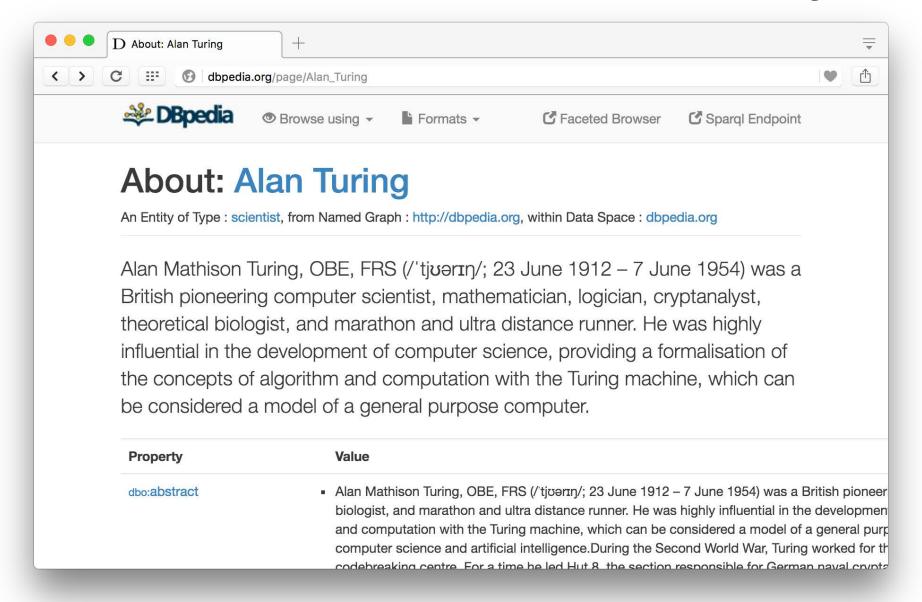
https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/12682/apple-pie-by-grandma-ople/

Detecting semantic data via a browser



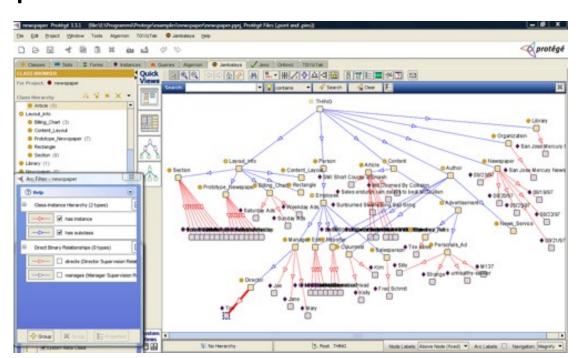
https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/12682/apple-pie-by-grandma-ople/

Semantic Data Browser/Query



Ontology Editor

- There are a number of editors available for creating and editing ontologies and data
- We recommend using <u>Protégé</u>, a java-based free system developed at Stanford
 - Good support for reasoning
 - Lots of plugins



RDF Triple Stores

- A triple store is a database for RDF triples
- It usually has a native API and often accepts SPARQL queries
- It might do reasoning, either in an eager manner (as triples are loaded) or on demand (to answer queries), etc.
- Some stores focus on scalability and others on flexibility and features
- We'll look at several, including <u>Apache Jena</u>,
 <u>Stardog</u>, <u>rdf4j</u>, <u>Amazon Neptune</u>, and <u>RDFox</u>.

Frameworks and Libraries

- There are frameworks, libraries and packages for most programming languages
- Rdflib is a excellent Python package for RDF
 - We'll try this via Jupyter notebooks and scripts
- Jena is a very comprehensive Java framework originally developed by HP and now Apache
 - Triple store, SPARQL engine, Reasoners, and more

Conclusion

- There's quite a bit of technology needed to support the Semantic Web
- This has been a brief tour
- We'll cycle back on these and explore them in more detail
- And give you a chance to use and experiment with them