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Flexible querying of Web data to simulate bacterial growth in food

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19 **Abstract**

20 A preliminary step in microbial risk assessment in foods is the gathering of experimental data.
21 In the framework of the [Sym'Previus project](#), we have designed a complete data integration
22 system opened on the Web which allows a local database to be complemented by data
23 extracted from the Web and annotated using a domain ontology. We focus on the Web data
24 tables as they contain, in general, a synthesis of data published in the documents. We propose
25 in this paper a flexible querying system using the domain ontology to scan simultaneously
26 local and Web data, this in order to feed the predictive modeling tools available on the
27 Sym'Previus platform. Special attention is paid on the way fuzzy annotations associated with
28 Web data are taken into account in the querying process, which is an important and original
29 contribution of the proposed system.

30 **Keywords :** Web data, flexible querying, ontology, predictive microbiology

31

32

33 Introduction

34 A preliminary step in microbial risk assessment in foods is the gathering of experimental data
35 (Tamplin *et al.* 2003, Baranyi and Tamplin 2004, McMeekin *et al.* 2006).

36 In the framework of the Sym'Previus project (Couvert *et al.* 2007 and
37 <http://www.symprevius.org>), we have designed a complete data integration system opened on
38 the Web which allows a local database (Buche *et al.* 2005) to be complemented by data
39 extracted from the Web (Hignette *et al.* 2008). The local data were classified by means of a
40 predefined vocabulary organized in taxonomy, called ontology. This ontology is used to
41 extract pertinent data from the Web. We focus on the Web data tables as they contain, in
42 general, a synthesis of data published in the documents. Our aim is to integrate the data tables
43 found on the Web with the local data by means of a flexible querying system which allows the
44 end-user to retrieve the nearest local and Web data corresponding to his/her selection criteria.
45 With our solution, the end-user may simultaneously and uniformly query local and Web data
46 in order to feed the predictive modeling tools available on the Sym'Previus platform.

47 These developments have been introduced in the predictive modeling program Sym'Previus
48 (www.symprevius.org). Actually, to take into account the food matrix effect, predictive
49 models need raw data obtained from food product. Considering the large diversity of foods, a
50 local database seems to be too limited (i) to gather information for all food products, and (ii)
51 to have enough and adequate data to take into account the food variability. The simultaneous
52 querying in local and web data increases the accuracy and the pertinence of the simulation
53 results.

54 We first remind the semi-automatic annotation method (implemented in the @WEB tool, see
55 [@Web demo](#)) which allows data to be retrieved from data tables found in scientific
56 documents on the Web and to be annotated thanks to the ontology. As the local data and the

57 Web data tables were all together indexed by the ontology, it is therefore possible to use the
58 terminology defined in the ontology in order to query simultaneously those two sources of
59 information. Second, we present the original contribution of the paper, which consists in the
60 design of the flexible querying system, called MIEL++. This system allows the end-user to
61 query simultaneously and in a transparent way the local data and the semantic annotated Web
62 data, thanks to the ontology. It is flexible because (i) it allows the end-user to express
63 preferences in his/her selection criteria and (ii) it takes into account, in the answers content,
64 the different kinds of fuzziness of the semantic annotated Web data. This second point is
65 essential to deal with the uncertainty of the Web data and with the imperfection of their
66 annotations. Third and finally, experimental results are presented and discussed.

67

68 **Materials and methods**

69 Our annotation method which allows the Web data tables to be indexed thanks to the
70 vocabulary defined in the ontology has already been presented in details by Hignette *et al.*
71 (2008). It is briefly recalled in the first paragraph of this section. The content of the Web data
72 tables must be indexed according to the ontology in order to be queried. This indexation
73 associates a set of annotation graphs with each row of a Web data table. This method is
74 presented in the second paragraph. Then, we present in the third paragraph, the automatic
75 querying method which uses the index associated with the Web data tables in order to perform
76 the MIEL++ query. Finally, we present in the fourth paragraph, the way the experimental data,
77 extracted thanks to the MIEL++ querying system, are used to estimate the parameters of the
78 simulation model.

79

80 **Automatic annotation method of a Web data table**

81 Web data tables are semi-automatically annotated by means of a predefined vocabulary, called
82 ontology (see definition in Table 1). This ontology is composed of data types meaningful in
83 the domain of risk in food and semantic relations linking those data types. The structure of the
84 ontology is presented in Figure 1. Data types are described in two different ways depending on
85 whether their associated values are symbolic (*Food product*, *Microorganism* ...) or numeric
86 (*Temperature*, *pH* ...). Symbolic types are described by taxonomies of possible values (for
87 example, a taxonomy of microorganisms). The taxonomy of possible values associated with a
88 symbolic type defines its domain of values. Numeric types are described by their possible set
89 of units (for example, °C or °F for *Temperature*, but no unit for *pH* or *a_w*), and their possible
90 numeric range (for example, [0, 14] for *pH*). The numeric range associated with a numeric
91 type defines its domain of values. Semantic relations (see definition in Table 1) are defined by
92 their signature which is composed of a result data type and a set of access data types. For
93 example, the relation *GrowthParameterAw*, representing the growth limits of a
94 microorganism for any food product, has for access type the symbolic type *Microorganism*
95 and for result type the numeric type *a_w*. Our annotation method first annotates the symbolic
96 columns and the numeric columns and then uses these annotations to recognise the semantic
97 relations present in the Web data tables (see Hignette *et al.* 2008 for more details).

98 Example: We consider a table having for legend “Reported prevalence of Campylobacter” and
99 which is composed of two columns having respectively for title: “Product” and “Positive for
100 Campylobacter (%)”. The first row of this table is composed of the term “Chicken products”
101 in the cell corresponding to the “Product” column and 0.07 in the cell corresponding to the
102 “Positive for Campylobacter (%)” column. When annotating [this table](#), the method finds that
103 the first column is symbolic and the second one is numeric. Concerning the first column, the
104 method annotates it by the symbolic type *Food product*. The second column is annotated by
105 the numeric type *Samples Positive*. Finally the whole table is automatically annotated by the

106 *Prevalence* semantic relation.

107 In the following, we explain how the semantic relations used to annotate a Web data table are
108 instanciated for each row of the Web data table in order to index it, this indexation being a
109 preliminary step to the flexible querying process.

110

111 **Instanciation of a semantic relation in a Web data table into a RDF graph**

112 Once a Web data table has been annotated by one or several semantic relations, it is indexed
113 by instances of these relations which are associated with each row of the Web data table. The
114 instanciation (see definition in Table 1) of a semantic relation in a Web data table is
115 represented, for each row of the table, as a Resource Description Framework (RDF) graph.
116 RDF is the language recommended by the W3C (World Wide Web consortium) to represent
117 semantic annotations associated with Web resources. An instance of a semantic relation
118 associated with a row of a Web data table is composed of the instances of the result data type
119 and the access data types of its signature which are associated with the data present in the cells
120 of the row. The generated instanciations are fuzzy: they allow one to take into account the
121 imprecision of the initial data in the table (for example an interval for a numeric type), the
122 similarity comparison between the vocabulary used in the table with the vocabulary of the
123 ontology, and the uncertainty of the annotation of the table by semantic relations. We first
124 present briefly the theory of fuzzy sets that we use in our instanciation method, then we
125 present how we instanciate numeric types, symbolic types and relations.

126

127 *Fuzzy sets:*

128 We use the definition of fuzzy sets given by Zadeh, 1965 and Zadeh, 1978. The notion of
129 fuzzy set is an extension of classical subsets. In the classical case, elements of a reference set
130 X which have some properties belong to a subset A, and elements which do not have these

131 properties belong to the complementary subset of A in X . In a fuzzy set, elements can belong
 132 partially to the fuzzy set, with a membership degree included between 0 (element which is not
 133 part of the fuzzy set) and 1 (element which is completely part of the fuzzy set). The
 134 membership degree of an element x of the reference set X for the fuzzy set A is denoted $\mu_A(x)$.
 135 When X is defined on a continuous domain, we talk about a continuous fuzzy set; when X is
 136 defined on a discrete domain, we talk about a discrete fuzzy set. The support of a fuzzy set A
 137 defined on a reference set X is the set (in the classical definition) of elements x of X such that
 138 $\mu_A(x) > 0$. The kernel of a fuzzy set A defined on a reference set X is the set (in the classical
 139 definition) of elements x of X such that $\mu_A(x) = 1$.

140 A trapezoid fuzzy set TFS is a special continuous fuzzy set which is described only by its
 141 support $\text{sup} = [\min_{\text{sup}}, \max_{\text{sup}}]$ and its kernel $\text{ker} = [\min_{\text{ker}}, \max_{\text{ker}}]$. The membership degree of
 142 a numeric value x in the reference set is then defined as follows:

143 – if $x \leq \min_{\text{sup}}$ or $x \geq \max_{\text{sup}}$ then $\mu_{\text{TFS}}(x) = 0$;

144 – if $\min_{\text{ker}} \leq x \leq \max_{\text{ker}}$ then $\mu_{\text{TFS}}(x) = 1$;

145 – if $\min_{\text{sup}} \leq x \leq \min_{\text{ker}}$ then $\mu_{\text{TFS}}(x) = \frac{x - \min_{\text{sup}}}{\min_{\text{ker}} - \min_{\text{sup}}}$;

146 – if $\max_{\text{ker}} \leq x \leq \max_{\text{sup}}$ then $\mu_{\text{TFS}}(x) = \frac{x - \max_{\text{ker}}}{\max_{\text{sup}} - \max_{\text{ker}}}$;

147 There are several semantics for fuzzy sets, defined in Dubois and Prade, 1997:

- 148 • Preferences: the elements with the higher membership degrees are the preferred
 149 elements. This is used in the MIEL++ querying system by the user to define query
 150 preferences;
- 151 • Uncertainty or imprecision: there exists a “true” value, but we do not know it. The
 152 higher is the membership degree of a value x , the more possible is x to be the “true”
 153 value. This is used in our instantiation method to represent the imprecision of the
 154 original data in the tables (in the instantiation of numeric types);

- 155 • Similarity: a new value is represented by its similarity with known values. The higher
156 is the membership degree of a known value x , the more it is similar to the new value.
157 This is used in our instantiation method to represent the similarities between a term
158 from the web and terms from the ontology (in the instantiation of symbolic types).

159

160 *Instantiation of numeric types*

161 Let us consider that a Web data table has been annotated by a semantic relation. There are
162 three possibilities in order to instantiate (see definition in Table 1) a numeric type t of the
163 signature of the relation in a given row of the Web data table:

164 1. There is one column in the table (thus one cell in the row to annotate) that was annotated
165 by the numeric type t . In this case, the values in the cell are used to instantiate the type: it can
166 be an isolated value, an enumeration of isolated values, an interval or a mean with a standard
167 error. Intervals and mean with standard error are recognised using specific patterns; if those
168 patterns are not recognised, then all numeric values in the cell are considered as isolated.

169 2. There are several columns in the table that were annotated by the numeric type t . In this
170 case, we have to find the relations between the columns: it is done by looking for keywords in
171 the columns titles. A column can represent a minimum value, a maximum value or an
172 optimum value (included between the minimum and maximum); it can also represent a mean
173 value or a standard error.

174 3. There is no column in the table that was annotated by the numeric type t . If the numeric
175 type t has a defined unit, we search for occurrences of a numeric value followed by this unit, in
176 the table title or in the columns titles: those occurrences are then considered as isolated values.

177 An instance of a numeric type is represented by a continuous fuzzy set of which the reference
178 set is the numeric range of the numeric type defined in the ontology. This fuzzy set is built
179 from trapezoid fuzzy sets, each being created as follows:

- 180 • when recognising an isolated value x in the table, we construct a trapezoid fuzzy set
181 with $\text{sup} = \text{ker} = [x, x]$;
- 182 • when recognising an interval $[a, b]$ in the table, either in one cell or when a is the value
183 in a cell recognised as minimum and b is the value in a cell recognised as maximum
184 with no cell recognised as optimum, we construct a trapezoid fuzzy set with $\text{sup} = \text{ker}$
185 $= [a, b]$;
- 186 • when recognising a cell as minimum, its minimum numeric value being min , a cell as
187 maximum, its maximum numeric value being max and a cell as optimum, its values
188 being included in the minimum interval $[a, b]$, we construct a trapezoid fuzzy set with
189 $\text{sup} = [\text{min}, \text{max}]$ and $\text{ker} = [a, b]$;
- 190 • when recognising a mean m and a standard error e , we construct a trapezoid fuzzy set
191 with $\text{sup} = [m - e, m + e]$ and $\text{ker} = [m, m]$.

192 Once all trapezoid fuzzy sets have been created, the instantiation of the numeric type is the
193 union of all those sets (for example, there can be a union of several isolated values).

194

195 Example: Table 2 is annotated with the semantic relation of the ontology

196 *GrowthParameterAw*, with the access type *Microorganism* and the result type a_w . This result
197 type is instantiated, for the first row of the data table, as a unique trapezoid fuzzy set with sup
198 $= [0.943, 0.97]$ and $\text{ker} = [0.95, 0.96]$. This fuzzy set is represented in Figure 2.

199

200 *Instantiation of symbolic types*

201 Let us consider that a Web data table has been annotated by a semantic relation. In order to
202 instantiate (see definition in Table 1) a symbolic type t of the signature of the relation in a
203 given row of the Web data table, we construct a discrete fuzzy set. The reference set of this
204 fuzzy set is the taxonomy of possible values of the symbolic type t . The membership degree of

205 a term x of the ontology in the fuzzy set is the term similarity between x and the term in the
206 cell that was annotated by the symbolic type t . In the corpus of tables we used for
207 experimentations, it did not happen that several columns in a table were annotated by the
208 same symbolic type t , however, would that happen, we would construct a union of fuzzy sets
209 (one fuzzy set for each column).

210 The term similarity between a term x of the ontology and the term in the cell has already been
211 presented in Hignette *et al.* (2008) and is briefly recalled in the following. Both terms are
212 transformed into weighted vectors: the coordinate system of the vectors is the set of all
213 possible words (i.e. all words in the ontology plus the words of the terms to compare with the
214 ontology), the coordinate values associated with a given vector represent the weight of those
215 words in the term (1 if the word is present in the term, 0 otherwise). The similarity between
216 both terms is computed as the cosine similarity measure between the two weighted vectors,
217 which is one of the most popular similarity measures described by Lin, 1998.

218 Example: Table 2 is annotated with the semantic relation of the ontology
219 *GrowthParameterAw*, with the access type *Microorganism* and the result type *aw*. The access
220 type is instanciated, for the first row of the data table, as a unique fuzzy set, defined as
221 follows: $\{0.5/Clostridium\ perfringens, 0.5/Clostridium\ botulinum\}$ which means that the
222 term, *Clostridium*, in the cell is similar to the terms *Clostridium perfringens* and *Clostridium*
223 *botulinum* of the ontology with a similarity measure of 0.5. If other *Clostridium* are defined in
224 the ontology, they will also appear in the fuzzy set.

225

226 *Instanciation of semantic relations*

227 Once all the types of the signature of a semantic relation have been instanciated for a given
228 row of a Web data table, we can instanciate the semantic relation for this row: we create an
229 instance of the relation which is composed of the instances of the numeric and symbolic types

230 of its signature which were created for the row.

231 Example: Let us consider that Table 2 has been annotated by the semantic relation

232 *GrowthParameterAw*. Figure 3 shows the RDF graph which represents the instantiation of

233 this relation in the first data row of Table 2. In Figure 3, the RDF graph expresses that the row

234 (having the identifier *uriRow1* in the RDF graph) is annotated by a discrete fuzzy set, called

235 *DFSRI*. This fuzzy set has a semantic of similarity and indicates the list of the closest

236 semantic relations of the ontology used to annotate the first row. Only the semantic relation

237 *GrowthParameterAw* belongs to this fuzzy set with the pertinence score of 1.0, which

238 expresses the degree of certainty associated with the semantic relation recognition by our

239 annotation method. The access type of the relation, which is an instance of the symbolic type

240 *Microorganism*, is instantiated by a discrete fuzzy set, called *DFSI*. This fuzzy set has a

241 semantic of similarity and indicates the list of the closest terms of the ontology compared with

242 the term *Clostridium*. Two terms (*Clostridium Perfringens* and *Clostridium Botulinum*)

243 belong to this fuzzy set with a membership degree of 0.5. The result type of the relation,

244 which is an instance of the numeric type *aw*, is instantiated by a continuous fuzzy set, called

245 *CFSI*. This fuzzy set has a semantic of imprecision and indicates the possible growth limits

246 ([0.943, 0.97]) and the possible optimal growth limits ([0.95, 0.96]).

247 In the following, we call annotations of a Web data table the instantiations of the semantic

248 relations which have been recognised in the table.

249

250 **Simultaneous flexible querying of the RDF graph database and the local database**

251 The MIEL++ querying system relies on the domain ontology used to index the local data and

252 the Web data tables. MIEL++ allows the end-user to retrieve the nearest local and Web data

253 corresponding to his/her selection criteria expressed as fuzzy sets and representing his/her

254 preferences. The ontology -more precisely the taxonomies of values associated with symbolic

255 types- is used in order to assess which data can be considered as “near” to the user’s selection
256 criteria. A query is asked to the MIEL++ system through a single graphical user interface,
257 which relies on the domain ontology. The query is translated into the query language of each
258 data source: an SQL query in the relational local database (see Buche *et al.*. 2005 for more
259 details) and a SPARQL query in the RDF graph base. SPARQL is the querying language
260 recommended by the W3C to query annotations expressed in RDF graphs. The global answer
261 to the query is then the union of the local answers in each data source, which are ordered
262 according to their relevance to the query selection criteria. In this paper, we focus on three
263 original aspects of the SPARQL querying: (1) the use of the taxonomies of values associated
264 with the symbolic types to enlarge the querying, (2) the way comparisons between the user’s
265 selection criteria and fuzzy annotations of Web data tables are done, (3) the total order on the
266 answers defined to retrieve the most pertinent data to the user.

267 Example: Let us consider a MIEL++ query Q expressed in the relation *GrowthParameterAw*
268 and having for selection criteria ($aw=awPreference$) and
269 (*Microorganism=MicroPreferences*). The continuous fuzzy set *awPreferences*, which is equal
270 to [0.9, 0.94, 0.97, 0.99], means that the end-user is first interested in a_w values in the interval
271 [0.94, 0.97], but he/she accepts to enlarge the querying till the interval [0.9, 0.99]. The
272 discrete fuzzy set *MicroPreferences*, which is equal to {1.0/*Gram+*, 0.5/*Gram-*}, means that
273 the end-user is interested in microorganisms which are first *Gram+* and then *Gram-*. This
274 fuzzy set defines implicitly user’s preferences for microorganisms which are kinds of *Gram+*
275 and *Gram-*. Besides, the taxonomy of values associated with the symbolic type
276 *Microorganism* contains the terms *Clostridium Botulinum*, *Clostridium Perfringens* and
277 *Staphylococcus Spp.* which are kind of *Gram+* and *Salmonella spp.* which is a kind of *Gram-*.
278 In order to take those implicit preferences into account in the querying, we propose to perform
279 a closure of the fuzzy set *MicroPreferences* (see Thomopoulos *et al.* 2003 and Thomopoulos

280 *et al.* 2006 for more details). Intuitively, the closure propagates degrees of preferences to more
281 specific values of the taxonomy. By example, the closure of the fuzzy set *MicroPreferences*
282 is: {1.0/*Gram+*, 0.5/*Gram-*, 1.0/*Clostridium Botulinum*, 1.0/*Clostridium Perfringens*, 1.0/
283 *Staphylococcus Spp.*, 0.5/*Salmonella*}.

284 In order to build the answer to a query, selection criteria representing user's preferences
285 expressed as fuzzy sets must be compared with fuzzy annotations, which are associated with
286 the Web data tables to query. But, as we saw previously, the fuzzy sets used in the annotations
287 have two different semantics: similarity for fuzzy sets associated with the instantiations of
288 symbolic types and imprecision for those associated with the instantiations of numeric types.
289 Consequently, we propose to realise those comparisons separately using two different
290 measures: (i) a possibility degree of matching (noted Π) and a necessity degree of matching
291 (noted N) which are classically used (see Dubois & Prade 1988) to compare a fuzzy set having
292 a semantic of preference with a fuzzy set having a semantic of imprecision and (ii) an
293 adequacy degree as proposed by (Baziz *et al.* 2006) to compare a fuzzy set having a semantic
294 of preference with a fuzzy set having a semantic of similarity.

295 Let $(a=v)$ be a selection criterion of the MIEL++ query Q , v' a fuzzy annotation of the attribute
296 a (which is either a numeric type or a symbolic type of the ontology) stored in a RDF graph,
297 $\text{sem}_{v'}$ the semantic of v' , μ_v and $\mu_{v'}$ their respective membership degrees defined on the
298 domain of values Dom (see definition in Table 1) associated with the attribute a and cl the
299 function which corresponds to the fuzzy set closure. The comparison result depends on the
300 semantic of the fuzzy set v' :

- 301 • if $\text{sem}_{v'}=\text{imprecision}$, the comparison result is given by the **possibility degree of**
302 **matching** between v and v' noted $\Pi(v,v')=\sup_{x \in Dom}(\min(\mu_v(x), \mu_{v'}(x)))$ and the
303 **necessity degree of matching** between v and v' noted $N(v,v')=\inf_{x \in Dom}(\max(\mu_v(x), 1 -$
304 $\mu_{v'}(x)))$ (see Figure 5 for a graphical representation);

305 • if sem_v =similarity, the comparison result is given by the **adequacy degree** between
306 $cl(v)$ and $cl(v')$ noted $ad(cl(v), cl(v')) = \sup_{x \in Dom} (\min(\mu_{cl(v)}(x), \mu_{cl(v')}(x)))$ (see Figure 6
307 for a graphical representation).

308 The comparison results of fuzzy sets having the same semantic (similarity or imprecision) and
309 associated with different selection criteria are aggregated using the min operator. Therefore,
310 an answer to a query is a set of tuples composed of (i) the pertinence score ps associated with
311 the queried semantic relation, (ii) three comparison scores associated with the selection
312 criteria of the query: a global adequation score ad_g and two global matching scores Π_g and N_g ,
313 and, (iii) the values associated with the answer attributes of the query. Based on those scores,
314 we propose to define a total order on the answers which gives greater importance to the most
315 pertinent answers compared with the ontology: answers are respectively sorted, in descendant
316 order, according to ps , ad_g , N_g and Π_g .

317 Example: The answer to the MIEL++ query Q considered in the previous example and
318 compared with the fuzzy annotations associated with the three rows of Table 2 is given below:

319 $\{ps=1, ad_g=0.5, N_g=1, \Pi_g =1, Microorg=(0.5/Clostridium Perfringens+0.5/Clostridium$
320 $Botulinum), aw=[0.943, 0.95, 0.96, 0.97]\}$,

321 $\{ps=1, ad_g=0.5, N_g =0.5, \Pi_g=0.68, Microorg=(0.5/Staphylococcus spp.+0.5/Staphylococcus$
322 $aureus), aw=[0.88, 0.98, 0.98, 0.99]\}$,

323 $\{ps=1, ad_g=0.5, N_g =0, \Pi_g=0.965, Microorg=(1.0/Salmonella), aw=[0.94, 0.99, 0.99, 0.991]\}$

324

325 **Application in bacterial growth simulations**

326 Microbial growth kinetics are usually described using primary models with four main
327 parameters: x_0 is the initial bacterial concentration, x_{max} is the maximum bacterial
328 concentration, lag is the lag time (h), and μ_{max} is the maximum specific growth rate (h^{-1}). The

329 two last parameters vary according to the physico-chemical food characteristics and the
 330 specific effect of the food matrix, whereas x_0 and x_{\max} are considered as constant. The effects
 331 (pH, a_w , storage temperature and food matrix) on μ_{\max} is described by a multiplicative
 332 function with interactions (Augustin *et al.*, 2005; Le Marc *et al.*, 2002) derived from the
 333 cardinal models of Rosso *et al.* (1995):

334

$$335 \mu_{\max}(T, pH, a_w) = \mu_{opt} \cdot CM_2(T) CM_1(pH) CM_1(a_w) \xi(T, pH, a_w)$$

336 where

337

$$338 CM_n(X) = \begin{cases} 0 & , X \leq X_{\min} \\ \frac{(X - X_{\max})(X - X_{\min})^n}{(X_{opt} - X_{\min})^{n-1} [(X_{opt} - X_{\min})(X - X_{opt}) - (X_{opt} - X_{\max})(X_{opt} + X_{\min} - nX)]} & , X_{\min} < X < X_{\max} \\ 0 & , X \geq X_{\max} \end{cases}$$

$$339 \text{ and } \xi(T, pH, a_w) = \begin{cases} 1 & , \phi \leq 0.5 \\ 2 \cdot (1 - \phi) & , 0.5 < \phi < 1 \\ 0 & , \phi \geq 1 \end{cases} \quad \text{with} \quad \phi = \sum_i \frac{\omega(X_i)}{2 \cdot \prod_{j \neq i} (1 - \omega(X_j))} \quad \text{and}$$

$$340 \omega(X) = \left(\frac{X_{opt} - X}{X_{opt} - X_{\min}} \right)^3,$$

341

342 where μ_{\max} is the specific growth rate in the considered food and in the considered
 343 temperature, pH and a_w conditions, μ_{opt} is the optimal growth rate value when temperature,
 344 pH and a_w are set to their optimal values, and X_{\min} , X_{opt} and X_{\max} are minimal, optimal and
 345 maximal temperatures, pH, and water activities for growth. n is the shape parameter of the
 346 CM model.

347 The lag time (lag) is calculated according to the following equation:

$$348 lag = \frac{\mu_{opt} \cdot lag_{\min}}{\mu_{\max}}$$

349 where lag_{min} is the lag time value when temperature, pH and a_w are set to their optimal values.
350 The optimal growth rate μ_{opt} and the minimal lag time lag_{min} depend on both strain and food
351 matrix (Pinon *et al.*, 2004).
352 Cardinal values are characteristic parameters of the microorganisms and are independent from
353 the food matrix. Consequently, $CM_n(X)$ functions are calculated using only bacterial species
354 parameters and physico-chemical factors, whereas μ_{opt} and lag_{min} can be estimated from an
355 experimental μ_{max} and lag related to microbial growth in the food to be assessed:

$$356 \mu_{opt} = \frac{\mu_{max}(T, pH, a_w)}{CM_2(T).CM_1(pH).CM_1(a_w)}$$

$$357 lag_{min} = \frac{\mu_{max}.lag}{\mu_{opt}}$$

358 μ_{opt} and lag_{min} calculations need at least one μ_{max} and one lag value at certain temperature, pH
359 and a_w conditions. In the Sym'Previous calculation tools, these data can be entered following
360 two main ways. On the one hand, the user can enter manually values if he/she has this
361 information (results of a challenge-test, bibliographic data, etc.). On the other hand, the user
362 can select the food product in the ontology (figure 4), and submit a query simultaneously in
363 local and web data. The results are returned in a synthetic table (figure 7) where experimental
364 μ_{max} and lag values are proposed to be included in the μ_{opt} and lag_{min} calculation.

365 In the worst case (no food data available), simulations are carried out with known μ_{opt} and
366 lag_{min} obtained in culture media in laboratory conditions.

367

368 **Results and discussion**

369 We use in this paper the same corpus as the one used in Hignette *et al.* (2008) which
370 composed of 60 tables extracted from publications on food microbiology, in order to test our

371 instantiation of semantic relations in Web data tables and the flexible querying of the Web
372 data tables such annotated.

373 We have automatically instantiated the 119 relations which were correctly recognised to
374 annotate the 60 tables in the experiment presented in Hignette *et al.* (2008).

375

376 *Instantiation of numeric types*

377 The instantiation of numeric types was analysed for the first data row of each table: we
378 assume that the structure is enough homogenous inside a table, such that the instantiation of
379 the first row can be considered as representative of what happens in the whole table. On the
380 119 relations, there were two errors on the extraction of numeric values (one was an error of
381 type recognition; one was an error of numeric value recognition). For 5 tables (corresponding
382 to 13 relations), the numeric type *Temperature* was not instantiated because its value was not
383 present in the table but in the textual environment of the table in the original publication.
384 There also were three errors in interval reconstruction (values were considered as isolated
385 while it was an interval) and one error in the construction of a minimum/optimum/maximum
386 trapezoid fuzzy set (values were considered as isolated). For all 100 remaining relations, all
387 numeric values were correctly instantiated.

388

389 *Instantiation of symbolic types*

390 The quality of the instantiation of symbolic types was evaluated on 185 instances of food
391 products extracted from the corpus of 60 tables. For those food products, the “best match” in
392 the ontology (i.e. the term in the ontology that was the nearest to the meaning of the term in
393 the table) was manually defined. The evaluation is done by looking at the position of the “best
394 match” in the automatic instantiation, by order of descendant membership degree. The
395 position is evaluated at worse, i.e. if there are several terms in the ontology having the same

396 membership degree in the fuzzy set used for the instantiation, the “best match” is always
397 considered as being in last position. This evaluation at worse comes from the need to
398 manually validate the instantiations: if we ask a user to choose among the 5 terms having the
399 best membership degree, we want to be sure that the “best match” is among those 5. On the
400 185 terms from the web, 78% had a “best match” for which the term similarity with the term
401 from the web was not null, 46% had their “best match” in first position in the computed
402 instantiation, while 66% had their “best match” among the five best positions. These results
403 validate the approach of keeping a fuzzy set for instantiating the symbolic types, instead of
404 keeping only the term in the taxonomy having the best similarity with the term in the table.

405

406 *Flexible querying of the RDF database including Web data tables*

407 In preliminary tests performed on the RDF graph database composed of more than 22.000
408 RDF triples (312 graphs), we have evaluated 5 queries (see Table 3) covering at least 50% of
409 the database entries. Querying quality is assessed using two measures: precision and recall.
410 Precision is the ratio of correct answers over the total number of computed answers. Recall is
411 the ratio of correct computed answers over the number of expected answers. We obtain better
412 results in the queries where the selection criterion concerns microorganisms than in the ones
413 concerning food products. This is due to the fact that microorganism names are more
414 standardized in Web data tables than food product names. Nevertheless, we obtain a precision
415 of 100% for the two last queries concerning food product if we put a threshold of 0.7 on the
416 terms similarity degrees.

417

418 *Microbial growth simulation in food*

419 Growth simulation in food requires data related to the bacterial species (cardinal values),
420 physico-chemical properties of food (pH, water activity, storage temperature) and food matrix

421 effect. The implementation of the food matrix in models is achieved thanks to the μ_{opt} and
422 lag_{min} parameters. These two parameters can be estimated only from experimental data
423 collected in food. In the absence of food experimental data, simulations are usually processed
424 using μ_{opt} and lag_{min} obtained in culture media at laboratory conditions, giving approximate
425 results.

426 The following example presents *Listeria monocytogenes* growth simulation in cold smoked
427 salmon (pH 6 +/- 0.2 and water activity 0.970 +/- 0.003) and stored at 6°C (+/- 1°C),
428 performed with the Sym'Previus probabilistic software (Couvert *et al.*, submitted article). The
429 initial contamination for simulation is expected to -2 log CFU/g (+/- 0.2). On the one hand,
430 without any experimental data related to *L. monocytogenes* growth in cold smoked salmon,
431 the simulation includes physico-chemical properties and optimum growth parameters obtained
432 in culture media (figure 8-A). On the other hand, a query in local and web data allows one to
433 retrieve experimental data (figure 7) which are used to estimate μ_{opt} and lag_{min} and,
434 consequently, taking into account the food matrix in simulations. The figure 8-B reproduces
435 the previous simulation in cold smoked salmon, taking into account the food product
436 parameters. Median population size after 21 days of storage reaches 4.4 log CFU/g in
437 laboratory media simulations, and -0.09 log CFU/g taking into account bibliographic data in
438 cold smoked salmon. These results demonstrate the importance of the food matrix effect on
439 bacterial growth, and the necessity to link bibliographic data stored in databases with
440 simulation softwares.

441

442 *Discussion*

443 Recent propositions in the Semantic Web community propose to extract, filter, annotate and
444 query Web data tables (Ying *et al.* 2007, Cafarella *et al.*, 2008), but they have not been
445 designed with the same objectives. TableSeer (Ying *et al.* 2007) for instance permits to extract

446 a set of predefined metadata (caption, cell content, geographical position of the table in the
447 HTML page, ...) from Web tables, but it does not compare the schema of the Web tables to
448 preexisting schemas defined in an ontology. We can also cite WebTables (Cafarella *et al.*,
449 2008) which proposes a system to identify data tables in the huge amount of tables included in
450 HTML documents and index them, in order to query and rank them. Nevertheless, the
451 WebTables querying language is only composed of a set of key-words which are compared
452 with the titles of the columns present in the Web tables. The row content of the Web tables is
453 not used in the querying process which is only based on global co-occurrences frequencies
454 statistics of the terms appearing in the titles of the columns. Therefore, it is not possible to
455 compare the results we obtain with our annotation and instantiation methods with other Web
456 table mining methods because they don't have the same aim.

457

458 **Conclusion and perspectives**

459 Probabilistic simulations of Sym'Previus software needs a lot of data in food products to take
460 the food matrix into account and to assess food variability in bacterial growth simulations. A
461 prototype of the @WEB and the MIEL++ tools will be soon integrated with the predictive
462 modeling tools of the Sym'Previus project. These automatic links between web data and
463 simulation tools are a major contribution to enhance risk assessment. In the near future, we
464 will study ontology evolution in order to take into account the evolutions of the predictive
465 modeling tool. For example, (i) the impact of the packaging and gaz transfer on the behaviour
466 of the microorganism in the food matrix should be studied or (ii) the possible use of the
467 growing number of ontologies which are available on the Web in close domains ([OBOE](#),
468 [OUM](#), ...) and which may enhance the quality of our annotation and instantiation methods if
469 they are merged with our own ontology. Therefore, in order to take into account this new
470 information, the domain ontology of our system should evolve, and, new methodologies and

471 tools should also be developed according to this ontology evolution. Another perspective is to
472 extend this work in order to also be able to extract pertinent information represented as
473 graphics or directly from the text.

474

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479

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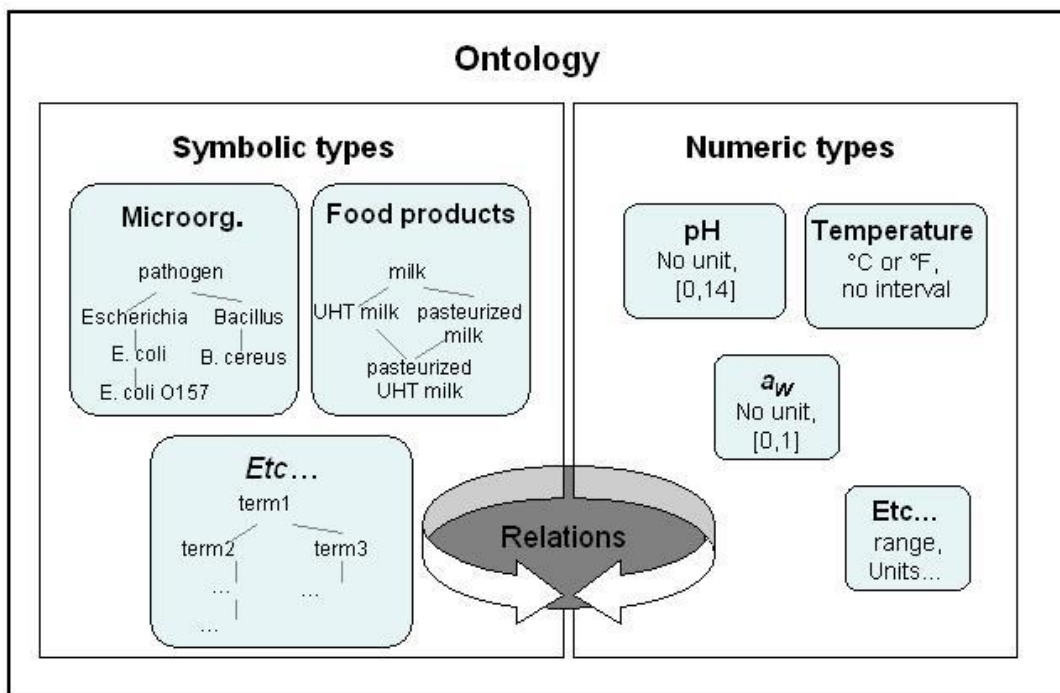


Figure 1

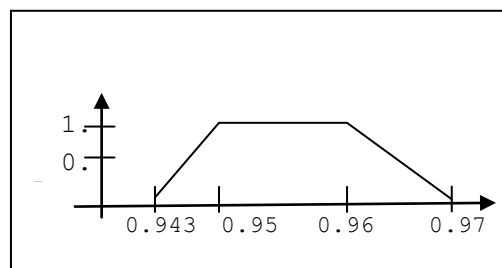
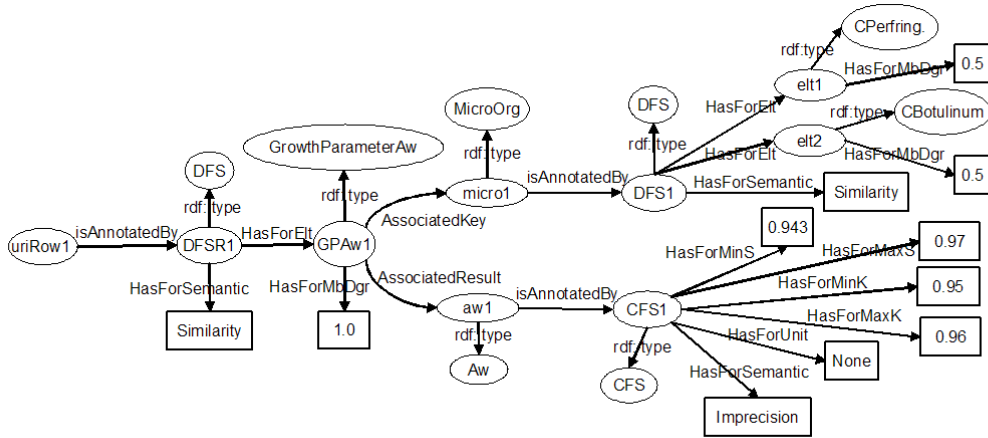


Figure 2



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Figure 3

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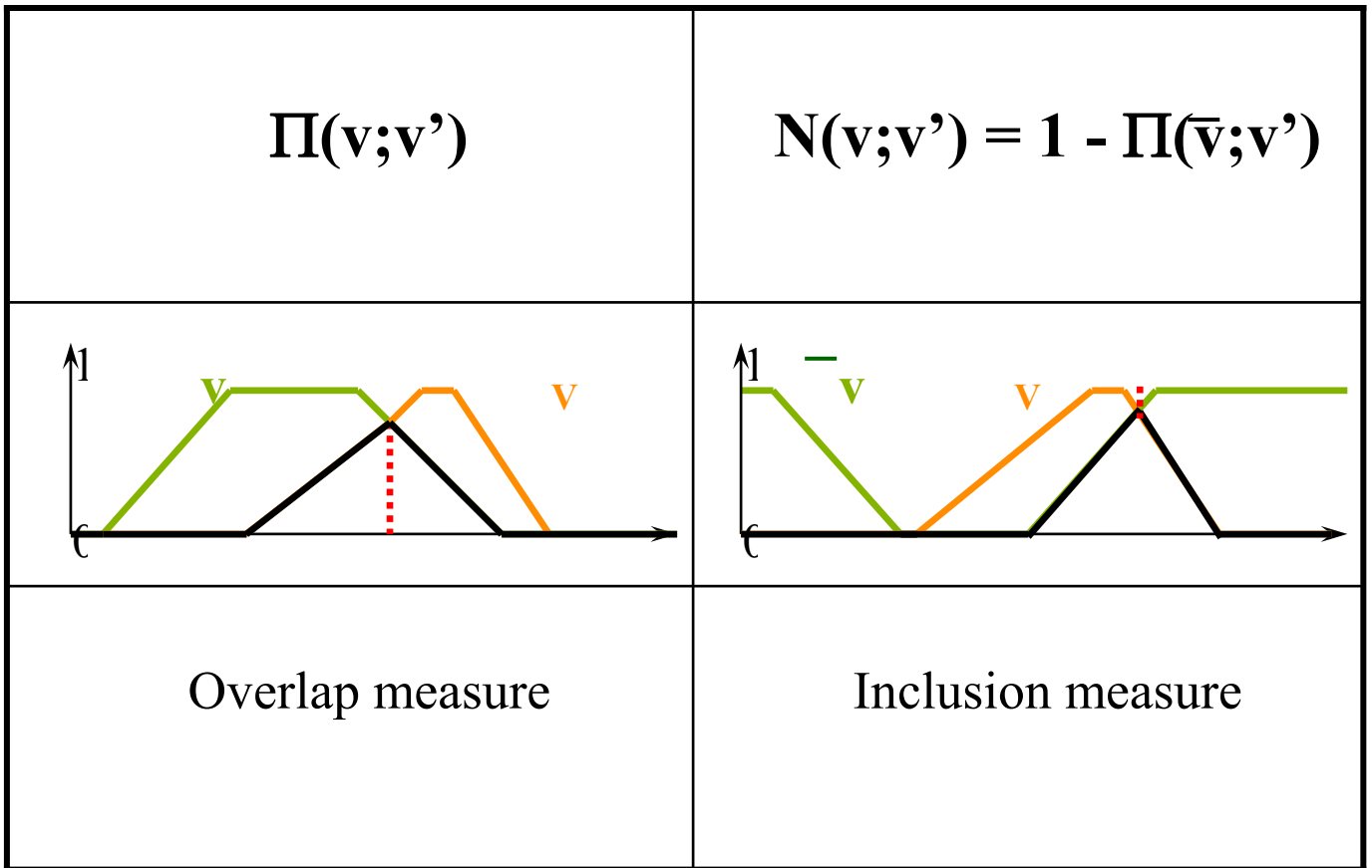


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Figure 4

Figure 5



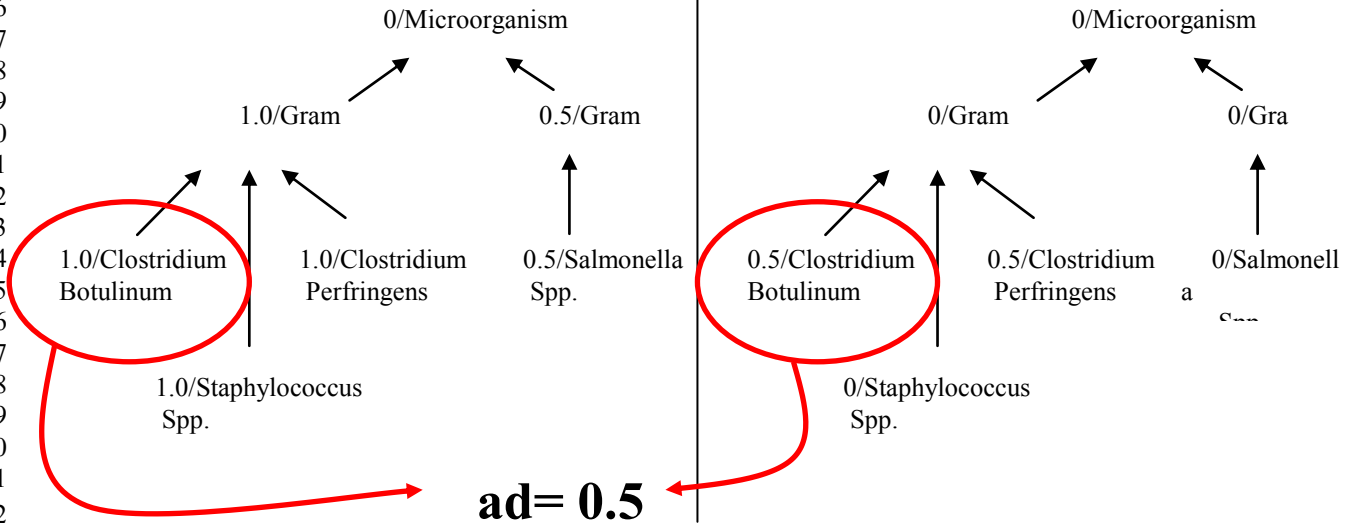
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Figure 6

clos(MicroPreferences)

clos(DFSR1)



#	Food	Factors				Remarks and source	Parameters				kinetic	Accuracy	Include
		T°	pH	aw	Others		lag	μ_{max}	No	Nmax			
1	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	127.8	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	25.33	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	51.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	317.7	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	.	0.103	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	.	0.086	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	.	0.033	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Saumon fumé	.	6.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here	Click here	.	0.036	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Saumon fumé	10.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	25.5	0.0178	4.33	36.3	Ok	+	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Saumon fumé	15.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	27.1	0.0716	4.32	8.31	Ok	++	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Saumon fumé	25.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	8.42	0.231	4.45	8.59	Ok	++	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Saumon fumé	10.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	Fit	.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Saumon fumé	15.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	Fit	.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Saumon	25.0	6.9	0.989	.	Click here	Fit	.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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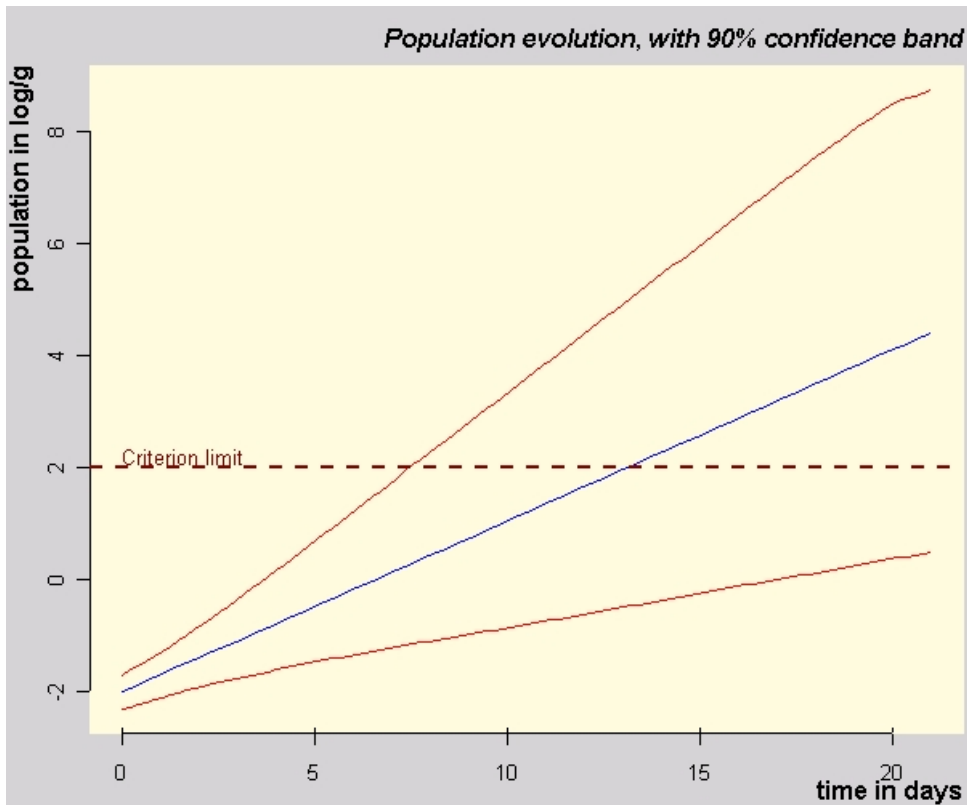
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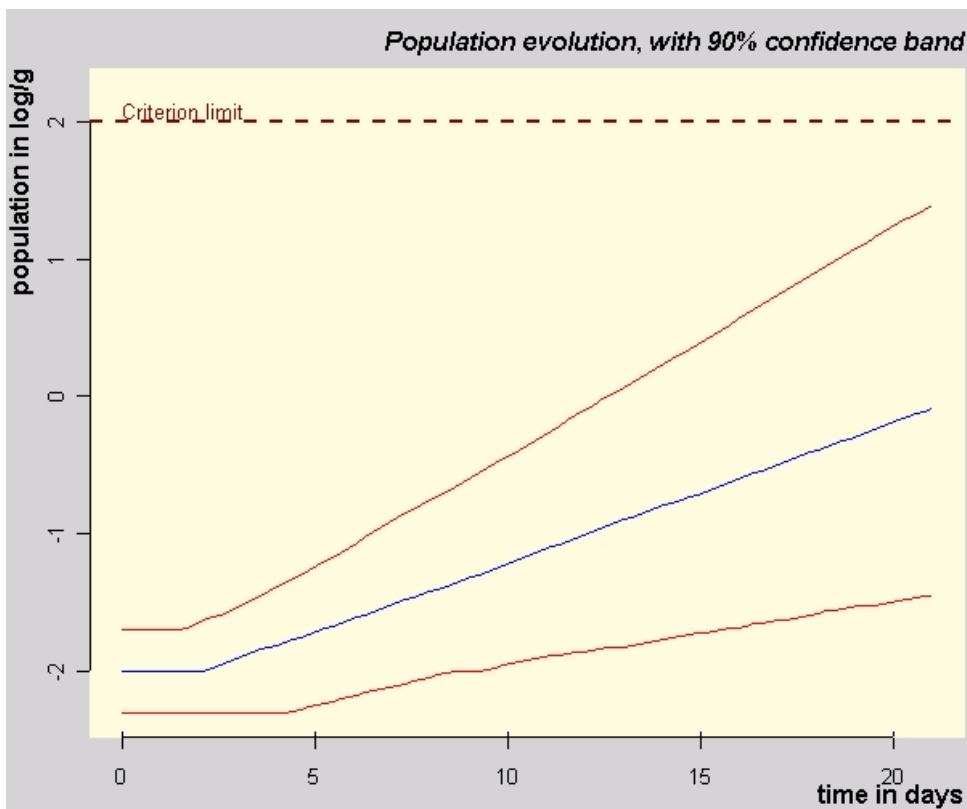
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Figure 7

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Figure 8

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615 Table 1: Glossary of technical terms

Term	Explanation
Ontology	It is, for a given scientific domain, a set of concepts and semantic relations which link those concepts. By example, <i>Microorganism</i> and <i>Clostridium Perfringens</i> , <i>pH</i> , <i>a_w</i> are concepts of the ontology. <i>Microorganism</i> is a concept classified as symbolic data type. <i>pH</i> is a concept classified as numeric data type. <i>Microorganism</i> and <i>Clostridium Perfringens</i> are linked by the <i>a kind of</i> semantic relation.
Semantic relation	It is a relation which links concepts of the ontology. Semantic relations are defined by their signature which is composed of a result data type and a set of access data types. For example, the relation <i>GrowthParameterAw</i> , representing the growth limits of a microorganism for any food product, has for access type the symbolic type <i>Microorganism</i> and for result type the numeric type <i>a_w</i> .
Instanciation	The instanciation of a concept or a semantic relation is an occurrence of a concept (a numeric or a symbolic type) or a semantic relation used to annotate a given row of a given Web data table.
Domain of values (Dom)	A domain of values is defined for a symbolic type and a numeric type of the ontology. The domain of values of a symbolic type is its taxonomy of possible values in the ontology. The domain of values of a numeric type is its numeric range in the ontology

616

617 Table 2: Cardinal values (growth boundaries).

Organism	<i>a_w</i> minimum	<i>a_w</i> optimum	<i>a_w</i> maximum
<i>Clostridium</i>	0.943	0.95-0.96	0.97
<i>Staphylococcus</i>	0.88	0.98	0.99
<i>Salmonella</i>	0.94	0.99	0.991

618

619

620 Table 3: Evaluation of query results

Queried relation	Selection criteria	Precision-recall	Nb of answer graphs
Lag Time	Microorganism= <i>L. monocytogenes</i>	100%-100%	47 graphs
Lag Time	Microorganism= <i>P. fluorescens</i>	100%-100%	29 graphs
Growth kinetics	Microorganism= <i>E. coli</i>	100%-100%	39 graphs
Lag Time	FoodProduct= Egg salad	50%-100%	24 graphs
Growth kinetics	FoodProduct= Salad	54%-100%	26 graphs

621

622