

Improving Supply-Chain-Management based on Semantically Enriched Risk Descriptions

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Keywords: Supply-Chain-Management, Risk-Management, Enterprise Ontology, Semantic Technology.

Abstract: To discover risk as early as possible is a major demand of today's supply-chain- risk-management. This includes analysis of internal resources (e.g. ERP and CRM data) but also of external sources (e.g. entries in the Commercial Register and newspaper reports). It is not so much the problem of getting the information as to analyze and evaluate it near-term, cross-linked and forward-looking. In the APPRIS project an Early-Warning-System (EWS) is developed applying semantic technologies, namely an enterprise ontology and an inference engine, for the assessment of procurement risks. The approach allows for integrating data from various information sources, of various information types (structured and unstructured), and information quality (assured facts, news); automatic identification, validation and quantification of risks and aggregation of assessment results on several granularity levels. For representation the graphical user interface of a project partner's commercial supply-management-system is used. Motivating scenario is derived from three business project partners' real requirements for an EWS with special reference to the downstream side of supply chain models, to suppliers' company structures and single sourcing.

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization of the economy, on-going change of the market situation and ever-increasing cost pressure cause new business models to take up the challenges. In the manufacturing industry networked, virtual or extended enterprises have emerged (Park and Favrel, 1999) allowing for global sourcing without the necessity of owning all the players of the supply chain (Chung et al., 2004). However, transnational, inter-organizational collaborations of enterprises are not limited to the manufacturing sector but also of growing importance of the tertiary and quaternary economic sector, providing (shared) services to businesses and consumers. Whereas that strategy brings down the costs it increases the effort on managing business relations, particularly with respects to the supply chain.

In parallel dynamism of the economic environment increases and therefore, the risk factors that affect the performance of the supply chain, too. Studies of Volatier et al. (2009) show, that the risk portfolio can change significantly within a period of

three months (factor 8 more critical suppliers), and thus greatly increase the vulnerability of the own enterprise. The Global Risks Barometer presents an overview of 37 risks analysed in 18 workshops by more than 500 leading experts and decision-makers (Emmerson, 2011). The survey not alone identified risks and assessed the likelihood to occur in the next 10 years but also show how risks are interconnected. To look not only at direct suppliers but on the whole supply chain is a trend identified in the latest annual survey by PRTM Management Consultants about Global Supply Chain Trends 2010–2012 with 350 participating manufacturing and service companies (Geissbauer and D'heur, 2011).

Risk management in such a complex and dynamic environment requires a continuous tracking of events, trends and risks, their analysis and integration into the decision-making processes. Data about exchange, enterprises, economy, environment and politics, as well as country and sector analysis are available on the Internet. However, the exponential growth of information does not necessarily lead to better knowledge. Without a systematic methodology and efforts to remain

informed one drowns in the flood of information which is also the problem of lack of selectivity (Priddat, 2002). Albeit, today risk management in procurement is barely supported with tools and appropriate methods are missing. According to a study of Wyman (2010) more than 70% of the surveyed companies command “unstructured” (18%) or “re-active” (55%) risk management in procurement. A survey published in The McKinsey Quarterly in 2006 revealed that nearly one-quarter of the interviewees said that their company does no formal risk assessment, and almost half lack company-wide standards to help mitigate risk (Pergler and Lamarre, 2009).

The APPRIS project seeks to remedy this. It aims at integrating risk, procurement and knowledge management into one early warning system. To do so an enterprise ontology is used for knowledge representation stored in a triple store, risk assessment is implemented in Java and the graphical user interface is realized within a project partner’s commercial Supply-Management-System.

The paper is structured as follows: In chapter two the APPRIS-approach is introduced. The approach illustrates the project principles based on risks and indicators, introduces an enterprise ontology for the risk domain and provides an insight into implementation details and technologies used. In chapter three we highlight related research and we close in chapter four with a conclusion and an outlook.

2 THE APPRIS APPROACH

2.1 Principles

The APPRIS approach is based on a study by Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner (2011) who identified ten top procurement risks. Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner (2011) developed a matrix for each of the ten risks characterizing the sources of a risk (organizational risk sources, environmental risk sources and network-related risk sources) and four crises (stakeholder crisis, strategy crisis, operational crisis and financial crisis). Figure 1 depicts the matrix for the Supply Disruption Risk. For each of the top ten risks warning signals have been identified and classified into the matrix. We took these matrixes as starting point and determined risk indicators for warning signals, which have been considered most important by the project’s business partners. For 10 out of a total of approximately 180 warning signals, risk indicators have been derived.

Risk indicators can be very different since one can be a number (e.g. of force majeure events per year), another one can be mode (e.g. the transportation mode of a deliverer) and third one can be a specific business event (e.g. the production manager leaves the supplier). All indicators need different scales of measure.

In order to have the best possible basis different kind of information sources and types are

Supply Disruption Risks				
	Stakeholder Crisis	Strategic Crisis	Operational Crisis	Financial Crisis
Organizational signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ownership changes in the supplier firm and the successor has no interest in running the business per se; - High employee turnover in the supplier firm - Supplier’s order books; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of information regarding supplier’s inventory; - Higher prices are voluntarily paid to keep the supplier alive; - Supply is unsecure; - No disaster planning at key suppliers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent obsolescence of parts; - Plant fire/plant shut down or any similar unprecedented situation; - Loss of volume/product/mix flexibility; - Capacity issues; - No production stock available for ramp-up phase; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of information regarding supplier’s insurance (<i>ex ante</i> contract signing); - Supplier requests for reduced payment terms, factoring etc; - Profit slump (<i>although it is not always transparent</i>); - Invitation to talks with banks (<i>it is already too late by then</i>);
Environmental signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in political landscape; - Changes in regulations; - Changing import/export custom rules; - Natural hazards; - Labor/transportation strikes; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disruptions via technology levers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External disturbances like political movements (for example Egypt) causing disruption in the supply chain; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Factors like economic crisis that impact each and every member of the supply chain causing perturbations in the flow of materials, information or/and money;
Network-related signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supplier is (over)dominated by competitors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single/sole sourcing market conditions; - Supplier is highly dependent on a handful of suppliers and/or customers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of flexibility in the suppliers’ supply-network; - Frequent stock-outs within the network; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A major player within the supply chain is facing financial distress;

Figure 1: Supply Disruption Risks' Matrix (Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner, 2011).

considered: data extracted from a company’s ERP system, data delivered by a service provider like Dun and Bradstreet (who is a project partner), information allocated by a news provider like LexisNexis (who is also a project partner), information extracted from web-sites (e.g. company sites or commercial registers) and user-generated input, as some information isn’t available publicly.

Results of risk identification and assessment must be displayed in an easy-to-understand way. Therefore monitor suspension system is developed enhancing the graphical user interface of a project partner’s commercial Supply-Management-System.

2.2 Knowledge Representation

Using an ontology for enterprise modeling is a well-known and accepted approach and several models

have been developed, for example the Toronto Virtual Enterprise (TOVE) by Fox et al. (1996), the Enterprise Ontology (EO) by Uschold et al. (1997), the Core Enterprise Ontology (CEO) by Bertolazzi et al. (2001), the Enterprise Ontology by Dietz (2006) and more recently the ContextOntology by Thönsen and Wolff (2010). Despite the consent about using an ontology for describing enterprise entities no standard or even an agreement has been achieved yet on the appropriate representation language for an enterprise ontology.

For the APPRIS approach we derived the following requirements:

The enterprise ontology must

- be formally represented in a language which is understood by humans and machines alike,

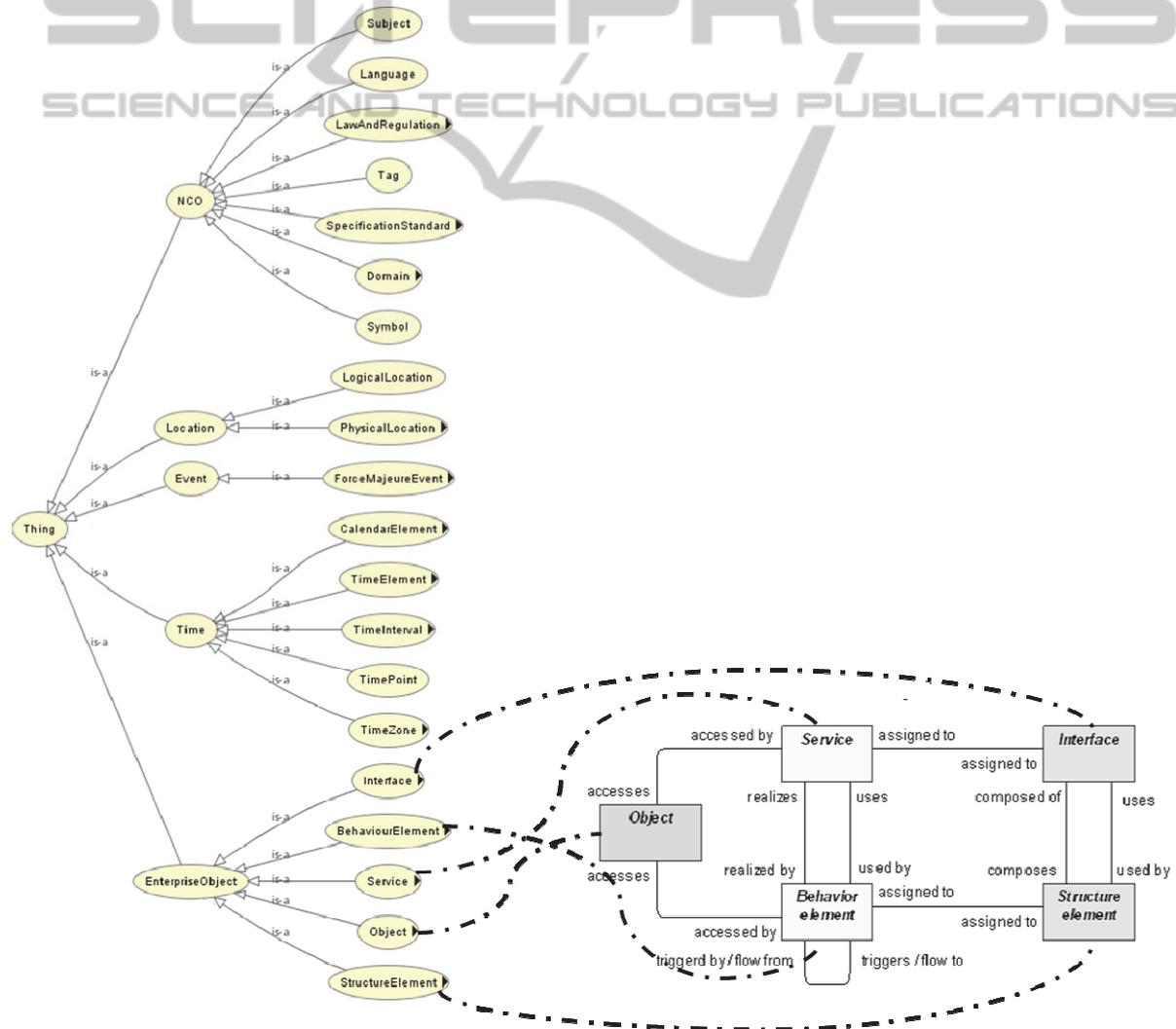


Figure 2: ArchiMEO concepts derived from the ArchiMate Standard (The Open Group, 2009).

- allow for operational use and thus must be decidable,
- be linked to external data sources to integrate information of already existing applications (e.g. ERP Systems, Supply-Chain-Management Systems),
- be based on standards to ensure exchangeability and re-use,
- be easy to use to allow enhancements and adaptations by business users.

As none of the existing ontologies mentioned above meets these requirements an ontology has been developed based on the ArchiMate standard and represented in RDFS. ArchiMate is a modeling notation which intentionally resembles the UML notation. It is intuitive and much lighter than currently proposed by UML 2.0 (The Open Group, 2009). According to (Matthes, 2011), a Dutch co-operation from government, industry and education developed ArchiMate. Since 2008 ArchiMate has been supported by the Open Group and V (1.0) became a technical standard in 2009. Since ArchiMate is not formalized enough to be machine understandable its concepts and relations have been transformed into an ontological representation. We call the ontology ArchiMEO to indicate these roots.

Figure 2 depicts ArchiMEO’s top-level concepts and its sub-concepts. As shown, the ArchiMate concepts are all considered sub-concepts of the top-level concept *EnterpriseObject*. As ArchiMate focuses on the inter-domain relationships but risks evolve from external events, addition top-level concepts have been introduced, namely *time*, *event*, *location* and *NCO*. *NCO* is top-level concept introduced for ‘non-categorized objects’, i.e. concepts of general interest. Moreover, concepts and relations of the ArchiMate business layer have been detailed as the granularity level of the standard was not sufficient enough for risk modeling. Table 1 shows the enhancements which have been made to ArchiMate for that reason.

Table 1: ArchiMate concepts and its ArchiMEO sub-concepts.

ArchiMate	ArchiMEO
<i>BusinessObject</i>	<i>Top10ProcurementRisk</i>
	<i>CrisisPhase</i>
	<i>WarningSignal</i>
	<i>RiskIndicator</i>
<i>BusinessEvent</i>	<i>RiskEvent</i>
<i>BusinessActor</i>	<i>Person</i>
	<i>LegalEntitiy</i>
<i>BusinessCollaboration</i>	<i>BusinessRelationship</i>
<i>BusinessRole</i>	<i>Supplier</i>
	<i>Customer</i>

Since demands on the expressive power are rather low but decidability and performance is important, the ontology RDFS is chosen as representation language for ArchiMEO. ArchiMEO is stored in a triple store. Since data extracted from ERP systems is already stored in a relational database, a direct mapping is chosen instead of replication. Thus, a part of the A-Box is stored in the RDBMS (Figure 3), namely instances of events. For APPRIS we have chosen D2RQ (Cyganiak, 2012) mainly because of its simplicity and support in an active community.

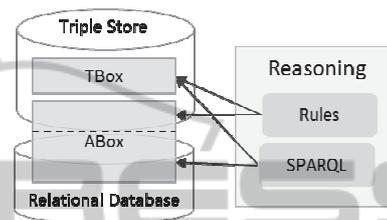


Figure 3: Hybrid storage.

D2RQ provides a declarative mapping language to describe the relation between the ontology and the relational data model. The mapping file can be generated out of the database schema. The instances in the relational database are queried with SPARQL (Prud’hommeaux and Seaborne, 2008) and will be further processed for the risk assessment with Java. For inferred knowledge resp. risks, rules are applied.

2.3 Implementation

The APPRIS approach is implemented as a prototype of an Early Warning System (EWS). The prototype might be evolutionary and further integrated or transformed in a solution by one of the technical partners of the project.

The EWS prototype is built as loosely coupled extension to an existing Supply-Chain-Management-System of a project partner. Hence the EWS can draw upon complex visualisation components and focus on functionality. Enterprise internal data, like extracts of ERP (Enterprise-Resource-Planning) systems, are stored in a relational database.

The prototype provides three functional modules (Figure 4) with semantically enriched risk management capabilities:

- Source processing engine,
- Risk assessment, and
- Risk Monitor.

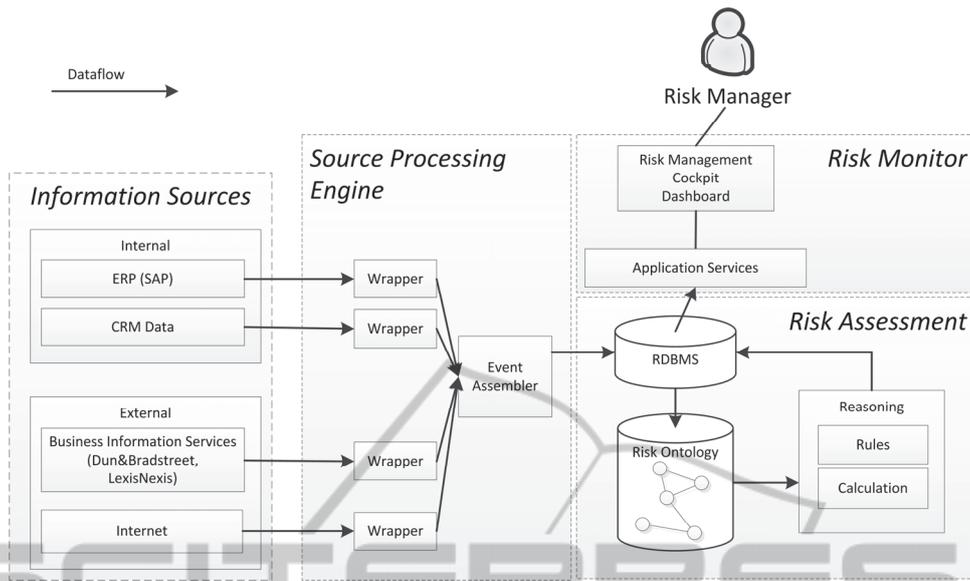


Figure 4: EWS system context diagram with functional modules.

2.3.1 Source Processing Engine

The source processing engine of the EWS monitors internal and external information providers and creates and assembles risk events, which are further processed during the risk assessment.

Sources are integrated through web-services (e.g. provided by LexisNexis, Dun&Bradstreet, Twitter), via a batch import from an ERP (i.e. SAP) to the relational database or via direct access of internet resources based on HTTP.

The sources are either actively monitored or if a notification service is available, the source processing engine is triggered. In both cases queries resp. filters are applied to retrieve only the information of interest. Terms used in the filters and queries are for example “Earthquake”, “Bankruptcy”, “Location changes”, etc.

If notable information has been identified relevant terms for the risk detection are extracted, e.g. the name of a supplier, or the location of an event. Based on this information a risk event for the internal processing is created and stored in the relational database. For example: A key supplier is located in Japan and we receive the news about an earthquake in Japan from Twitter. The source processing engine extracts relevant information about this disaster: Location, Magnitude, Time, etc. and creates a specific risk event (*NaturalDisasterEvent*), which will be further processed in the risk assessment module.

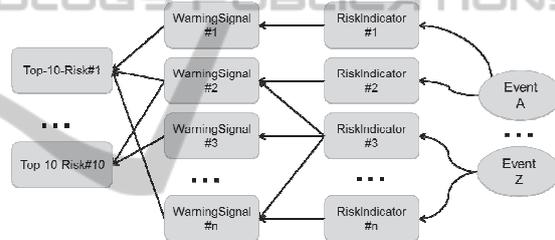


Figure 5: Core risk concepts.

2.3.2 Risk Assessment

The risk assessment module can be seen as the core part of the early warning system. This module is based on the semantic model, the risk indication and the risk evaluation components.

2.3.2.1 Semantic Risk Model

The semantic risk model is an extension of ArchiMeo as described in chapter 2.2.

The integrated development environment used for modelling the risk ontology is Protégé. The core risk model is based on the concepts *RiskEvent*, *RiskIndicator*, *CrisisPhase*, *WarningSignal* and *Top10ProcurementRisk*. For simplification the system is explained based on these concepts and relationships shown in Figure 5.

Starting point is the risk event, depicted at the very right hand side of Figure 5.

RiskEvent

A risk event in our context is either a business – or a

force majeure event with a potential impact on the company’s supply-chain risks. An example for a business event is the information that a supplier has financial problems and is close to go bankrupt. A force majeure event might be a flood disaster. In our context this can have an impact on suppliers located in the area of this natural disaster.

A risk event has properties like temporal information (creation time, effective date), the source (information provider) and a reliability value. The reliability value is determined by the reliability of the different sources (ERP, newspapers, blog etc.) and by time. For instance, master data provided by the internal ERP-System has a higher reliability than a newspaper message or even a post on a social media platform.

The aspect of time is considered to differ between news and facts. News are statements made about the future, like the news that a company plans to buy a competitor. Facts are statements provided by official sources (company registries) or master data systems like the internal ERP system. Since we express this all in one reliability value, the handling and the risk event evaluation in a risk indicator becomes quite generic.

The reliability calculation is done with the following formula:

$$\text{Reliability}_{\text{Facts}} = \text{Reliability}_{\text{Source}} * 1.0 \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Reliability}_{\text{News}} = \text{Reliability}_{\text{Source}} * 0.7 \quad (2)$$

For example: Consider an event in the future where the information source is the newspaper X from Table 2. Applying the formula (2) we can expect the following result:

$$\text{Reliability}_{\text{News}} = 0.7 * 0.7 = 0.49 \quad (3)$$

Table 2: Examples for source reliabilities.

Source	Reliability
ERP (ex. SAP)	1.0
Serious Newspaper X	0.7
Social Media (ex. Twitter)	0.4
Government service	1.0

The reliability values for the source can be defined by the risk manager when setting up the early warning system.

For each detected risk event the assigned risk indicators are checked.

RiskIndicator

According to The Institute of Operational Risk (2010) risk indicators are metrics used to monitor identified risk exposures over time and these indicators must be capable of being quantified as an

amount, percentage, ratio, number or count. In the EWS we either count the number of events (e.g. number of earthquakes in the last year in a certain area) or we consider the latest event and its value (e.g. the latest company rating delivered from Dun & Bradstreet). In both cases, the result value is rated based on pre-defined ranges. Table 3 gives an example of a metric for a risk indicator, for example to assess the number of *NaturalDisasterEvent*.

Table 3: RiskIndicator scores and ranges.

Score	Ranges	
	>=	<
1	0	2
2	3	3
3	4	5
4	6	-

Assume, in the last six month LexisNexis reported four times about earthquakes in a certain area. According to Table 3, the number of earthquakes would be rated with score 3. The score is a value of 1-4 (1=Low risk, 2=Medium risk, 3=High risk, 4=Extreme risk). Whereas the metric is the same for all risk indicators boundaries differ depending on the type of event. Scores and boundaries of the RiskIndicators can be defined by the risk manager, too.

Taking into account the reliability of the risk event source, we applied the following formula:

$$\text{weightedScore} = \text{score} * \text{reliability} \quad (4)$$

After the weighted scores are associated with the risk indicators, a warning signal is substantiated if a certain threshold is exceeded.

WarningSignals

Warning signals are pointers to risks. Depending on the crisis phase they belong to, they lead to different risk importance.

To take into account the different importance of the crisis phases, from being only stakeholder-related to being critical to the very survival of the firm. (Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner, 2011), phases are differently weighted (value 0.2 – 1). Table 4 shows the four different values the warning signals can get.

Table 4: Crisis phase and their values.

Crisis Phase	Value
Stakeholder Crisis Phase	0.2
Strategic Crisis Phase	0.5
Operational Crisis Phase	0.8
Financial Crisis Phase	1

Each warning signal is assigned to one or more of the top 10 risks according the matrix of (Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner, 2011).

Top10Risk

(Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner, 2011) have determined 10 procurement risks to be the most relevant for

businesses today. These top 10 risks have been implemented in the semantic model as instances of *Top10Risk*:

- Supplier default risk
- Supply quality risk
- Contract management risk
- Pricing risk
- Logistics/transportation risk
- Supply disruption risk
- Supplier capacity risk
- Sourcing management risk
- Socio-political risk
- E-procurement technology, process, and infrastructure risk

As more than one warning signal may trigger the same risk, we would need a formula to somehow aggregate the two warning signals' values to get the overall top ten risk value.

If we aggregated both values by means taking an average, the final risk's outcome would drastically decrease its importance.

For instance let's take "1" (warning signal belonging to the financial crisis) and "0.2" (warning signal belonging to the stakeholder crisis):

$$(1 + 0.2) / 2 = 0.6 \tag{5}$$

In order to avoid this problem, a formula has been proposed and validated by the APPRIS team as well as their business partners. The following is the formula:

$$1 - \prod_{i=1}^n (1 - P_i) \tag{6}$$

Where "P" is the value of an early warning signal, and "n" is the number of early warning signals in a top ten procurement risk.

This formula is based on the independent events in the theory of probability. It regards a rather general and established concept which can be found in many textbooks and paper such as the fourth chapter of (Billinton and Allan, 1992). The formula is appropriate for this case because it satisfies the following conditions:

- The warning signals are independent, i.e. one signal does not affect another one;

- The formula assigns an increasing value to each potential warning signal based to the crisis phase it belongs to, i.e. a warning signal belonging to the Stakeholder Crisis phase would get a value less than one belonging to the Financial Crisis.
- Also the warning signals' values that are not triggered (with a value of "0") can be considered in the formula because they do not decrease the final importance of the top ten risks.

In the evaluation step, the formula is applied and the respective result is then shown on the monitor suspension system by means of a coloured flag.

2.3.2.2 Technical Implementation

To work smoothly with the risk ontology in Java, an ontology to object mapping framework has been evaluated. Here we had to choose between two approaches the currently available frameworks or the libraries support. So either we generate the objects out of the semantic model or we use Java Annotations. We decided to go with the annotation approach, since this one integrates smooth in the Java environment and provides more flexibility. With Empire (Grove, 2012) we have even found a JPA (Java Persistence API) implementation which fits our requirements best. JPA is well known by experienced Java programmers and it makes it easy to work with the Ontology. The example shows the class *WarningSignal* and it's mapping annotations:

```
@Namespaces({"risk",
"http://ch.fhnw.risk#"})
@RdfsClass("risk:WarningSignal")
@Entity
public class WarningSignal{

    @RdfProperty("risk:hasThreshold")
    private float threshold;

    @ManyToMany
    @RdfProperty("risk:belongsToRisk")
    Private List<Top10Risk> risks;
    ...
}
```

The risk calculation as described in 2.3.2.1 is implemented in Java. More knowledge resp. risks are inferred through SQWRL queries (O'Connor and Das, 2011). SQWRL is an OWL query language. It is based on the SWRL (Horrocks et al., 2004) rule language and uses SWRL's strong semantic foundation. JESS (Friedman-Hill, 2008) is chosen to execute queries written in SQWRL. This library fits well in the Protégé development environment. Protégé supports the creation of SQWRL queries

through a plugin. SQWRL queries have still to be defined by an expert. In the operational environment we use the SESAME triple store.

The calculated risk value is stored in the relational database. The customized supply-chain management system frontend reads the risk value and makes it available in different views and aggregation levels to users like the management as well as the procurement manager.

2.3.2.3 Use Case Example

To illustrate the overall approach of the risk assessment in the following an example is given.

The general risk assessment procedure, depicted in Figure 6, will underpin the use case example along its description.

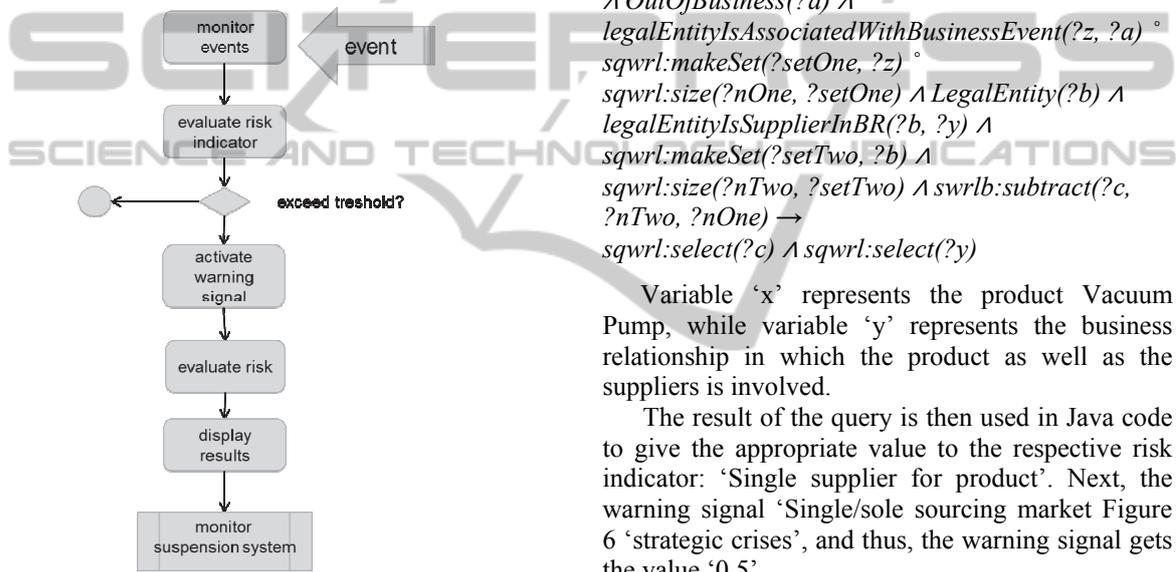


Figure 6: The risk assessment procedure.

An automaker that uses vacuum pumps for generating negative pressure to the brake booster of passenger cars and light trucks has two suppliers of the pumps. Assume that one of the suppliers runs out of business. The news of the supplier’s bankruptcy is delivered by an information provider electronically, and the relevant terms for risk detection ‘SupplyAnyWhere’ (*BusinessActor*) and ‘Bankruptcy’ (*BusinessEvent*) are extracted.

After the event is detected (top of Figure 6), the risk indicator ‘company went bankrupt’ is identified. The risk indicator value, that comes out from the step ‘evaluate risk indicator’ (Figure 6), exceeds the respective threshold and thus, it triggers the warning signal ‘A subsidiary/ sister company of the supplier recently filed for bankruptcy or was recently

liquidated’. This warning signal belongs to the ‘Supplier Default Risk’. As this warning signal is classified as ‘financial crises’ it is considered of high importance (the warning signal gets the value ‘1’).

However, this is not the only risk the automaker faces. Exploiting the backward-chaining strategy, inter alia creating queries written in SQWRL, it allows inferring further risk indicators’ values.

In our use case, as by now one supplier of the vacuum pumps dropped out, the number of the left suppliers should be checked. With the following SQWRL query it is possible to determine the number of the suppliers delivering vacuum pumps.

```

Product(?x) ^ BusinessRelationship(?y) ^
productIsInvolvedInBusinessRelationship(?x, ?y) ^
LegalEntity(?z) ^ legalEntityIsSupplierInBR(?z, ?y)
^ OutOfBusiness(?a) ^
legalEntityIsAssociatedWithBusinessEvent(?z, ?a) ^
sqwrl:makeSet(?setOne, ?z) ^
sqwrl:size(?nOne, ?setOne) ^ LegalEntity(?b) ^
legalEntityIsSupplierInBR(?b, ?y) ^
sqwrl:makeSet(?setTwo, ?b) ^
sqwrl:size(?nTwo, ?setTwo) ^ swrlb:subtract(?c,
?nTwo, ?nOne) ->
sqwrl:select(?c) ^ sqwrl:select(?y)
    
```

Variable ‘x’ represents the product Vacuum Pump, while variable ‘y’ represents the business relationship in which the product as well as the suppliers is involved.

The result of the query is then used in Java code to give the appropriate value to the respective risk indicator: ‘Single supplier for product’. Next, the warning signal ‘Single/sole sourcing market Figure 6 ‘strategic crises’, and thus, the warning signal gets the value ‘0.5’.

So far two different warning signals have been activated which belong respectively to two top ten risks: ‘Supplier Default Risk’ and ‘Supply Disruption Risk’.

After that, the formula for evaluating each top ten risk value (step ‘evaluate risk’ of Figure 6) is applied.

In this case all the warning signals, except the ones mentioned, have ‘0’ as they are not been substantiated. Thus the results of the formula appear as follows:

Supplier Default Risks Value

$$1 - (1 - 0_1) * (1 - 0_2) * .. (1 - 1_{25}) * (1 - 0_{26}) = 1$$

Supply Disruption Risks Value

$$1 - (1 - 0_1) * (1 - 0_2) * .. (1 - 0.5_{15}) * ... (1 - 0_{30}) = 0.5$$

In the last step, the risk values are passed to the risk monitor and the display now shows a red flag associated to the Supplier Default Risks and a yellow flag for the Supply Disruption Risks.

2.3.3 Risk Monitor

Detecting and assessing risks are one part of an early warning system, the presentation of the results is another. The calculated risk values shall be shown to the users on an aggregation level appropriate to their role. The management board is interested in overall figures on the company level, whereas the individual procurement manager is mostly interested to see the risks of suppliers, resp. products he is responsible for. Another view can be based on the location of risk events and suppliers as shown in Figure 7.

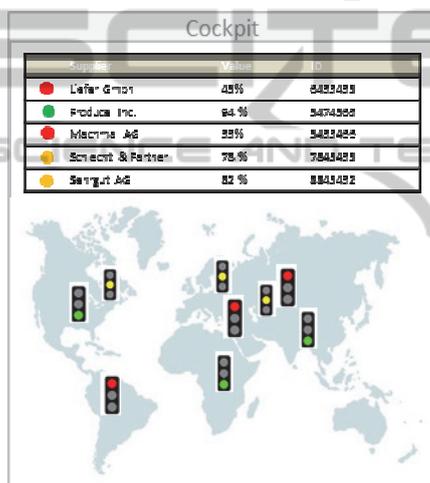


Figure 7: Risk cockpit and dashboard.

In the APPRIS project we customize a solution of one of the project partner. This system is integrated through a relational database and allows already viewing different aggregations levels. The location of supplier and its risk value can be shown on a map. The system provides also notification service and allows sending emails triggered by risk value changes. This alerting service might be a first simple step towards an active monitoring system, instead of a simple risk reporting dashboard. But monitoring means more. Events and risks should be integrated in the enterprise risk management processes. An advanced system might run automated workflow processes and support the management in the active risk mitigation and handling.

3 RELATED RESEARCH

Tah and Carr (2001) figured out, that procurement managing teams of an enterprise use different terminology to describe risks, use different methods and techniques for analyzing and managing risks and thus produce different and contradicting results. Furthermore, risk management is often performed on an ad hoc basis and is depending on individual assessments of responsible staff members. To address the afore mentioned issues, Tah and Carr (2001) introduced a common language for describing risks. Therefore they provide a hierarchical risk breakdown structure for risk classification quite similar to the approach chosen in the APPRIS project by Grosse-Ruyken and Wagner (2011). The class diagram for project risk management suggested by Tah and Carr (2001) provided valuable input for modelling ArchiMEO, too. However, ArchiMEO goes beyond their approach by formalizing the knowledge in a machine understandable and executable way.

Xiwei et al. (2010) suggest the use of linguistic techniques for risk evaluation. To cope with the problem of fuzzy information about risks the authors presented a method, based on linguistic decision analysis to assess an overall risk value and suggest ways of mitigating risks. Whether the approach of Xiwei et al. (2010) could be re-used or adapted for APPRIS will be further investigated in a later phase of the project.

The use of ontology for modelling supply chain (interoperability) has been investigated by Grubic and Fan (2010). Based on literature review six supply chain ontology models were identified. Although the authors explain method and search criteria, the selection seems somehow arbitrary. Ontologies were evaluated that have not been specifically designed for supply chain issues, for example the Enterprise Ontology (Uschold et al., 1997) and TOVE (Fox and Grüninger, 1998), but are general approaches for representing enterprise architecture (description). Other ontologies, developed for a similar purpose but less well-known, like REA (Geerts and McCarthy, 2000), CEO (Bertolazzi et al., 2001), the Context-based Ontology (Leppänen, 2005) or the Context Ontology (Thönssen and Wolff, 2010) were not considered. However, Grubic and Fan (2010) developed a comparison framework to evaluate the six selected ontologies and identified nine gaps in existing supply chain ontology models. Five of them are addressed by the ontology used for APPRIS (Thönssen, 2012).

However, for operational use – as APPRIS strives for – knowledge representation is not enough but an enterprise ontology must be enhanced to an enterprise repository as suggested by Hinkelmann et al. (2010), Thönssen (2011), (2010)). In our approach we go in this direction by mapping entities of the Supply Management System's database to ontological concepts.

Chi (2010) developed a rule-based ontological knowledge base for monitoring partners across supply network. Although Chi (2010) provides a sound methodology for modelling the domain of the supply network in an ontology, its content remains application specific since no standard is considered. Furthermore, as forward-chaining is the applied technique for inferring new knowledge it can be assumed that the knowledge base increases largely over time and thus becomes unmanageable in the end. But most important is that the approach is not integrated in the daily operations but an isolated task.

4 CONCLUSIONS / FURTHER WORK

Detecting risks as early as possible is of vital interest for all enterprises. At present risk management is performed – if ever – on the basis of in-house information, e.g. extracted from ERP systems like delays in delivery. More and more information would be available, either offered by information providers like Dun & Bradstreet or LexisNexis or publicly available on the web. Yet, risks are often detected too late due to late publication, not recognized importance or hidden impacts.

Our approach of an early warning system addresses this problem by combining the analysis of different information sources, types and formats in order to early identify and assess risks in the supply-chain. We showed how an enterprise ontology is used to represent domain knowledge and how it is integrated into the EWS by Direct Mapping to entities of an RDBMS, and ontology to object mapping based on Java annotations. The results of our approach, i.e. of the risk evaluation, are interpreted and displayed within a commercial Supply-Management-System that has been enhanced for this purpose. Our approach contributes significantly to improving risk management in the supply chain and thus is of considerable economic importance.

The EWS will be formally evaluated by the APPRIS project's business partners and the

technical partner will implement the prototype's functionality in his Supply-Management-System.

However, there are still several aspects not considered yet, for example how the EWS could be improved to identify not only risks but also opportunities, how a replacement for a product could be automated, or how supplier selection could be supported, to name a few.

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