Review of: "Creating ontological definitions for use in science"

Christian Stoeckert[1]

1 University of Pennsylvania

Building an ontology correctly is hard. The authors are commended for trying to take one important aspect and making it understandable to the growing number of non-ontologists trying to create ontological terms (and to those ontologists who need reminders). I am glad to see that they used the article by Seppälä, Ruttenberg, and Smith as their basis. Unfortunately the DOI for that article leads to an error when I click it - that should be fixed. This article is certainly an easier read than the Seppala et al one but it would be helpful to have the authors clarify how they have extended the guidelines by Seppala et al. A valuable contribution of the article is the section on dictionary vs ontological definitions which raises multiple important points. There are omissions in the article that the authors should consider addressing. One is providing the definition source. Many term developers use Wikipedia or a resource of some kind for the definition content and that provenance is important to provide. Another omission is highlighting that these are guidelines for textual definitions which should be consistent with any logical representation of the terms properties - one should inform the other about capturing what is important to define the term. A minor quibble is with the sentence "Entities also include immaterial things that contain information (e.g., data items, documents)." Documents and bearers of data are not immaterial things.