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

Harry Caufield[1]

1 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Potential competing interests: The author is an member of the Berkeley Bioinformatics Open-source Projects group at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

This brief review covers the basic concepts surrounding ontologies, term usage, and best practices in this area as they apply to diverse scientific fields. Adoption and application of ontologies is driven by community attitudes as much as by technical needs, and as such the authors' contribution is appreciated as another step toward delineating consistent procedures for expressing ontological relationships. This article could provide additional emphasis on the divergent types of ontologies, i.e., project-specific vs. domain ontologies, or even the point at which an ontology's purpose may be better served by a controlled vocabulary or lexicon. Additional considerations beyond those offered by the Basic Formal Ontology regarding class definitions would also offer more context to the reader.

A minor concern re: namespaces - "This avoids fruitless arguments about the 'true' meaning of labels and allows different perspectives to co-exist while ensuring that they are clearly expressed." – this may certainly be the case for terms with varying definitions across domains, but may still be a point of contention for ontologies occupying similar or overlapping domains.