

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910824070803321
Titolo	Formal ontology in information systems [[electronic resource] ] : proceedings of the Sixth International Conference (FOIS 2010) // edited by Antony Galton and Riichiro Mizoguchi
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Amsterdam, : IOS Press, 2010
ISBN	6612692839 1-282-69283-6 9786612692833 1-60750-535-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (444 p.)
Collana	Frontiers in artificial intelligence and applications, , 0922-6389 ; ; v. 209
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Disciplina	300.1
Soggetti	Ontology
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Title page; Preface; Conference Organization; Contents; Invited Talks; Fundamentals; Quality and Quantity; Applications I; Ontology Building; Biomedical and Chemical Ontologies I; Products and Functions; Verification and Evaluation; Applications II; Biomedical and Chemical Ontologies II; Subject Index; Author Index
Sommario/riassunto	Ontology began life in ancient times as a fundamental part of philosophical enquiry concerned with the analysis and categorisation of what exists. In recent years, the subject has taken a practical turn with the advent of complex computerised information systems which are reliant on robust and coherent representations of their subject matter. The systematisation and elaboration of such representations and their associated reasoning techniques constitute the modern discipline of formal ontology, which is now being applied to such diverse domains as artificial intelligence, computational linguistics