The promise of the Semantic Web, at its most expansive, is to allow knowledge to be freely accessed and exchanged by software. It is now recognized that if the Semantic Web is to contain deep knowledge, the need for new representation and reasoning techniques is going to be critical. These techniques need to find the right trade-off between expressiveness, scalability and robustness to deal with the inherently incomplete, contradictory and uncertain nature of knowledge on the Web. The International Conference on Web Reasoning and Rule Systems (RR) was founded to address these needs and has grown into a major international forum in this area. The third RR conference was held during October 25–26, 2009 in Chantilly, Virginia, co-located with the International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC 2009).

This year 41 papers were submitted from authors in 21 countries. The Program Committee performed outstandingly to ensure that each paper submitted to RR 2009 was thoroughly reviewed by at least three referees in a short period of time. The resulting conference presented papers of high quality on many of the key issues for reasoning on the Semantic Web. RR 2009 was fortunate to have two distinguished invited speakers. Robert Kowalski, in his talk “Integrating Logic Programming and Production Systems with Abductive Logic Programming Agents” addressed some of the fundamental considerations behind reasoning about evolving systems. Benjamin Grossof’s talk “SILK: Higher Level Rules with Defaults and Semantic Scalability” described the design of a major next-generation rule system. The invited tutorial “Uncertainty Reasoning for the Semantic Web” by Thomas Lukasiewicz provided perspectives on a central issue in this area.

Regular papers addressed fundamental issues of reasoning with topics including deduction procedures for ontologies with defaults and for conceptual logic programs, evaluation procedures for path query languages, analysis of production systems using fixed-point logic, and general perspectives on control in rule engines. The importance of scalability was reflected by papers on distributed resolution for ontologies, parallel logic programming techniques for Abox querying, and the separation of terminological from assertional data. The topic of knowledge amalgamation was studied by papers on alignment, modularity and paraconsistency for ontologies. Uncertainty was explored by papers on semantics and inference procedures for fuzzy reasoning, and a paper on inference procedures for a logic of belief.

The results of Web Reasoning and Rule Systems are not confined only to foundational issues, but are being applied to Web standards and real-world applications. Papers considered paraconsistent and fuzzy extensions to the RDF standard, which just celebrated its 10th anniversary and is becoming widely used. Another paper explored scalability of the OWL-2 standard, which is soon to be
published by W3C. Finally, one paper described how Semantic Web techniques were applied in a risk-assessment system for elective surgery.

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We are particularly thankful also to the authors, the invited speakers, and attendees for contributing and discussing the latest results in relevant areas to this conference, as well as to all members of the Program Committee, and the external reviewers for their critical reviews of submissions.

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# Table of Contents

## Invited Papers and Tutorial

Integrating Logic Programming and Production Systems in Abductive Logic Programming Agents ........................................... 1  
*Robert Kowalski and Fariba Sadri*

SILK: Higher Level Rules with Defaults and Semantic Scalability  
(Abstract of Invited Talk) ............................................. 24  
*Benjamin N. Grosof*

Uncertainty Reasoning for the Semantic Web ....................... 26  
*Thomas Lukasiewicz*

## Proof/Deduction Procedures

A Preferential Tableaux Calculus for Circumscripive $\mathcal{ALCO}$ ........ 40  
*Stephan Grimm and Pascal Hitzler*

A Reasoner for Simple Conceptual Logic Programs ................ 55  
*Stijn Heymans, Cristina Feier, and Thomas Eiter*

Search for More Declarativity: Backward Reasoning for Rule Languages Reconsidered ............................................................. 71  
*Simon Brodt, François Bry, and Norbert Eisinger*

## Scalability

Distributed Resolution for Expressive Ontology Networks .......... 87  
*Anne Schlicht and Heiner Stuckenschmidt*

Scalable Web Reasoning Using Logic Programming Techniques .... 102  
*Gergely Lukácsy and Péter Szeredi*

On the Ostensibly Silent ‘W’ in OWL 2 RL ............................ 118  
*Aidan Hogan and Stefan Decker*

## Uncertainty

Answer Sets in a Fuzzy Equilibrium Logic ........................... 135  
*Steven Schockaert, Jeroen Janssen, Dirk Vermeir, and Martine De Cock*
Belief Logic Programming with Cyclic Dependencies
Hui Wan

A Minimal Deductive System for General Fuzzy RDF
Umberto Straccia

Knowledge Amalgamation and Querying

An Efficient Method for Computing Alignment Diagnoses
Christian Meilicke and Heiner Stuckenschmidt

Paraconsistent Reasoning for OWL 2
Yue Ma and Pascal Hitzler

A Formal Theory for Modular ERDF Ontologies
Anastasia Analyti, Grigoris Antoniou, and Carlos Viegas Damásio

The Perfect Match: RPL and RDF Rule Languages
François Bry, Tim Furche, and Benedikt Linse

Rules for Decision Support and Production Systems

A Hybrid Architecture for a Preoperative Decision Support System
Using a Rule Engine and a Reasoner on a Clinical Ontology
Matt-Mouley Bouamrane, Alan Rector, and Martin Hurrell

A Logic Based Approach to the Static Analysis of Production Systems
Jos de Bruijn and Martín Rezk

Author Index