URV researchers Àlex Arenas and Sergio Gómez receive the “Test of Time” award from the Web Science Trust

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The award recognises their contribution to the analysis of multilayer social networks applicable to real situations

Researchers from the URV’s Department of Computer Engineering and Mathematics Àlex Arenas and Sergio Gómez have been awarded the “Test of Time” prize by the Web Science Trust (WST) for their “outstanding contribution to the analysis of multilayer social networks”. The award was announced during the opening ceremony of the 16th ACM Web Science Conference, held recently in Stuttgart, Germany.

The winning paper, entitled “Centrality rankings in multiplex networks”, also involved the researchers Albert Solé Ribalta (UOC) and Manlio De Domenico (University of Padova). The research was originally presented at the 2014 ACM Web Science Conference in Indiana, USA, and its contribution has been such that was recently selected by the WST Test of Time Award Committee, chaired by Oshani Seneviratne.

The chair of the conference this year, Steffen Staab, highlighted the importance of the paper: “This pioneering paper made social network analysis applicable to real-life

situations where individuals are involved in not just one, but a multiplicity of social networks, whether these are friendships, work relationships or other relationships.

The Award Committee valued the central theoretical contribution of the work, which has significantly advanced the understanding of centrality in multilayer contexts, especially within the large volume of data from social networks. “The methodology addresses the challenge of quantifying influence across multiple network layers, a fundamental aspect of web science that impacts highly granular dynamics such as opinion dissemination and social change,” commented Oshani Seneviratne.

Noshir Contractor, executive director of the Web Science Trust, who announced the winners at the opening ceremony, said: “The Web Science Trust is delighted to honour this article which highlighted from the outset the inherent complexities of multilayered interactions and, with that, the need to continue to develop new approaches and techniques to address these complexities”.

On receiving the prize, the award winners expressed their gratitude by asserting that “We are proud to say that the line of work which we started here has not only expanded the scope of network analysis to better reflect the complexities of the real world, but has also introduced tools that now play a crucial role in fields such as economics, biology, urban sciences and social sciences”.