

# Dialog-Based Online Argumentation

Tobias Krauthoff

Department of Computer Science  
University of Düsseldorf, Germany

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Fachhochschule  
für öffentliche Verwaltung  
NRW



NRW-FORTSCHRITTSKOLLEG  
ONLINE-PARTIZIPATION



HEINRICH HEINE  
UNIVERSITÄT DÜSSELDORF

# Aim of Dialog-Based Online Argumentation

Comments (52)

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The available data shows that the armed forces make a high number of visits to schools in Scotland and that this is higher, per head of population, than for England. Some schools and some areas are visited a lot more than others.

- \* Are the armed forces making too many visits to secondary schools in Scotland?
- \* Recruitment is a key reason for the visits. Is the promotion of armed forces careers in schools acceptable?
- \* Parents and guardians are not always consulted in advance about the visits; should they be?
- \* There is evidence that the visits often give students a sanitised and glamourised view of the armed forces, rather than thoroughly exploring the unique risks, legal restrictions and ethical dilemmas. Should specific guidance be issued to local authorities and schools on how visits can be used to explore the armed forces in a balanced way?
- \* The Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee has investigated armed forces visits to schools in Wales, and made three recommendations to the Welsh Government to increase transparency and balance, all of which were accepted. Should Scotland now do the same?

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I work at a school which has decided to include the cadets as a curriculum 'choice'. I query where the choice lies, when educationalists are encouraged to embark on recruiting child soldiers, as there is funding available for such ventures, targeting youngsters from a deprived background, who feel they have no choice.

**Genevieve Orr**

20:00 on 20 Mar 2016

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There is no place for the military in our schools, most kids are not fully aware of what war actually means and are far too young and easily influenced by the glossy propaganda of the recruiting personnel. The smooth talk of training, travel and adventure never includes dead or maimed bodies, trauma or the suicides of ex-military. If they want to talk to people, they should be obliged to tell the full story, with facts and figures of deaths, injuries, backed up with graphic photos of what war is all about. They should not be allowed to peddle their sanitised version to drag the un-informed of our children into their nightmare of violence and death.

**John Couzin**

16:36 on 19 Mar 2016

I agree that the Armed forces, especially because of the hypocritical situation involving Syria, the situation in Iraq and other middle eastern countries, should not be asked to come to school in an attempt to glorify camaraderie when it is just following orders even though the orders may be morally wrong! In a society where we preach that violence is wrong but yet our government still favour war, its hypocrisy at the highest level!

**Alex Thomson**

13:04 on 18 Mar 2016

In a democracy, our Armed Forces are crucial but the joining of the organisation must be accompanied with real facts and not the glamorous and silky PR festivals that happen just now.

**Paul Cochrane**

16:40 on 17 Mar 2016

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Allowing army recruitment officers into our schools is effectively abuse. Children in poorer communities are most vulnerable and in the current economic climate where work and training are limited it's easy to convince a child that they will access these rights via the armed forces. Children are not told by recruitment officers from MOD that they will be exposed to hate and horror and imperial wars. It is not explained that in return for the training, food, wage etc that they will be expected to become involved in the slaughtered of other children. They are not told about the cuts in MOD funding which leave front line vulnerable to injury and death. Instead children are promised a future that should already exist outside military service. Teach our children peace, diplomacy, understanding and care.

**Rosie Kane**

10:18 on 15 Mar 2016

Army recruitment operating in places where children seek support and education is unethical. Masked within the promises of "training" "travel" "driving license" etc are the facts that children are being selected and groomed to kill. Children from working class areas are most vulnerable in the current economic climate. The lack of work and training housing and a decent future leaves many feeling that the forces are the way out of hopelessness and the MOD know this. The promise of food, bed, training and wage should be guaranteed without putting weapons in children's hands and hate in their minds. Please protect our children and let them learn about peace as opposed to bring conscripted into illegal wars.

**Rosie Kane**

9:39 on 15 Mar 2016

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I do not approve of children being influenced in this way

**joyce Minnis**

15:42 on 12 Mar 2016

As a society we are too open to the propaganda pushed by the Armed Forces and the government. Our soldiers are being now being dubbed "heroes" by the government as a way of reducing criticism of their foreign policy catastrophes .

**James Mills**

20:17 on 10 Mar 2016

I think that recruitment of those under the age of 18 should end. I consider it wholly inappropriate for military recruitment and what is effectively propaganda to be promoted in schools. Further, until this practice ends, I believe that parents should be given ample (previous term) advance notice of any planned visits by armed-forces personnel, to allow informed consultation and discussion among parents and school staff. Parents should have an option to withdraw their children from such activities (the school should provide suitable alternative arrangements) and children themselves should be told they may opt out if they wish. The content and style of any presentations should be made wholly transparent and on the record. Ideally pacifist and other non-belligerent groups should be given opportunity to present balancing viewpoints. The presentation of armed forces material should include open discussion of the consequences of war, including civilian and troop casualties and ramifications (maiming, death, post-traumatic stress disorder, difficulties in social adjustment back in civilian life) - some case studies would be useful and also of the considerable protests and controversy concerning UK military involvements overseas. Children should not be treated as a captive audience to harness for war.

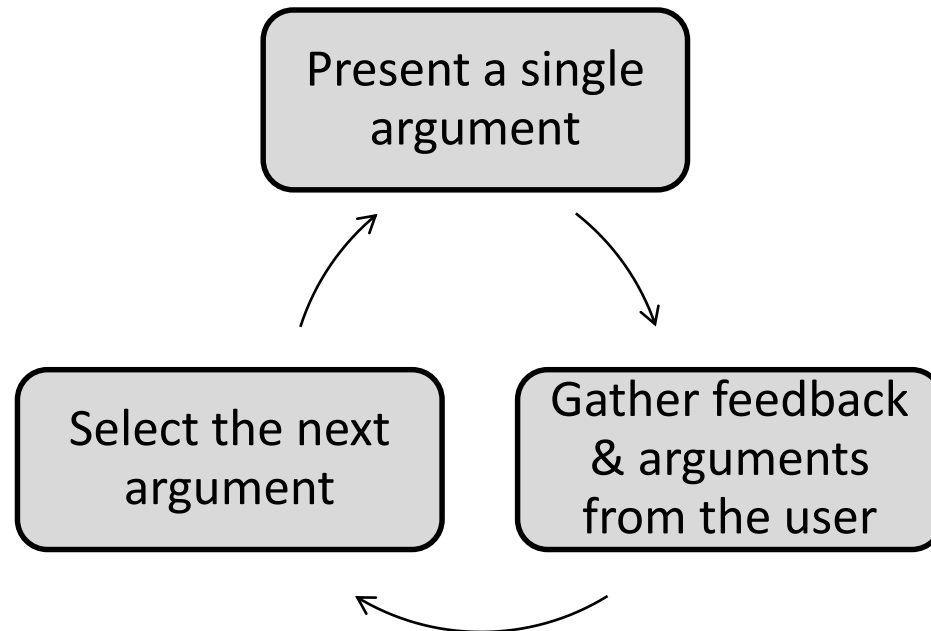
**Graham Peter King**

0:45 on 10 Mar 2016

# Idea: Simulate a Real-World Discussion

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- The system is a representative of all those users that have already participated
- It conducts a dialog with the current user:



# Idea: Simulate a Real-World Discussion

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- Main challenges:
  - Selecting arguments
  - Gathering feedback
  - Adding statements
- Participants do not need to know anything about formal argumentation!
- Discussion starts with an empty database!

# Bootstrapping: City needs to cut spending

What is the initial position you are interested in?

- We should cut the administration costs
- The city should reduce the number of street festivals
- We should shut down University Park
- Neither of the above, I have a different idea!



# Bootstrapping: City needs to cut spending

What do you think about we should shut down university park?

- I agree
- I disagree
- I have no opinion, show me an argument

# Bootstrapping: City needs to cut spending

We should shut down University Park.

What is your most important reason why we should shut down University Park holds?  
Because ...

- Criminals use University Park to sell drugs
- Shutting down University Park will save € 100,000 a year
- None of the above! Let me state my own reason!

# Selecting the Next Argument

We should shut down University Park.

We should shut down University Park because criminals use University Park to sell drugs.

Other participants agree that criminals use university park to sell drugs, but they claim to have a stronger statement for rejecting we should shut down university park. They say: this is the only park in our city.

What do you think about that?

# Providing Feedback

We should shut down University Park.

We should shut down university park because criminals use University Park to sell drugs.

Other participants agree that criminals use university park to sell drugs, but they claim to have a stronger statement for rejecting we should shut down university park. They say: this is the only park in our city.

What do you think about that?

- Wrong, their argument is false.
- Right, their argument is true.
- Right, their argument is true, but I do not believe that this is an argument for their point of view.
- Right, their argument is true and I do accept that this is an argument for their point of view. However, I have a much stronger argument for accepting my point of view.
- I have no opinion. Show me another argument.

# Providing Feedback

We should shut down University Park.

We should shut down university park because criminals use university park to sell drugs.

Other participants agree that criminals use university park to sell drugs, but they claim to have a stronger statement for rejecting we should shut down University Park. They say: this is the only park in our city.

What do you think about that?

What is your most important reason for: It is false that this is the only park in our city?

- The city is planning a new park in the upcoming month.
- None of the above! Let me state my own reason!


# Inserting Statements

What is your most important reason for: It is false that this is the only park in our city?

- The city is planing a new park in the upcoming month.
- None of the above! Let me state my own reason!

Let me enter my reason!

It is false that this is the only park in our city, because...

 park

**Parks are very important for our climate.**

**This is the only park in our city.**


# Inserting Statements

What is your most important reason for: It is false that this is the only park in our city?

- The city is planing a new park in the upcoming month.
- None of the above! Let me state my own reason!

Let me enter my reason!

It is false that this is the only park in our city, because...

 parks are

Parks are **very important for our climate.**


# Inserting Statements

What is your most important reason for: It is false that this is the only park in our city?

- The city is planing a new park in the upcoming month.
- None of the above! Let me state my own reason!

Let me enter my reason!

It is false that this is the only park in our city, because...

 parks are not the only green area in our city

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# Providing Feedback

This is the only park in our city does not hold, because parks are not the only green area in our city.

Other participants have a stronger statement for accepting this is the only park in our city. They say: parks are very important for our climate.

What do you think about that?

- Wrong, their argument is false.
- Right, their argument is true.
- Right, their argument is true, but I do not believe that this is a argument for their point of view.
- Right, their argument is true and I do accept that this is an argument for their point of view. However, I have a much stronger argument for accepting my point of view.
- I have no opinion. Show me another argument.



# Our Next Steps

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- Bootstrapping
- Selecting the next argument
- Providing feedback
- Accepting new statements

# Conclusion

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- Dialog-based online argumentation as an alternative to forums
- First solutions for:
  - Providing feedback
  - Selecting existing arguments incl. bootstrapping
  - Accepting new statements
- Working on:
  - Navigation
  - Handling user input
  - Empirical evaluation



**D-BAS**

Dialog-Based Argumentation System

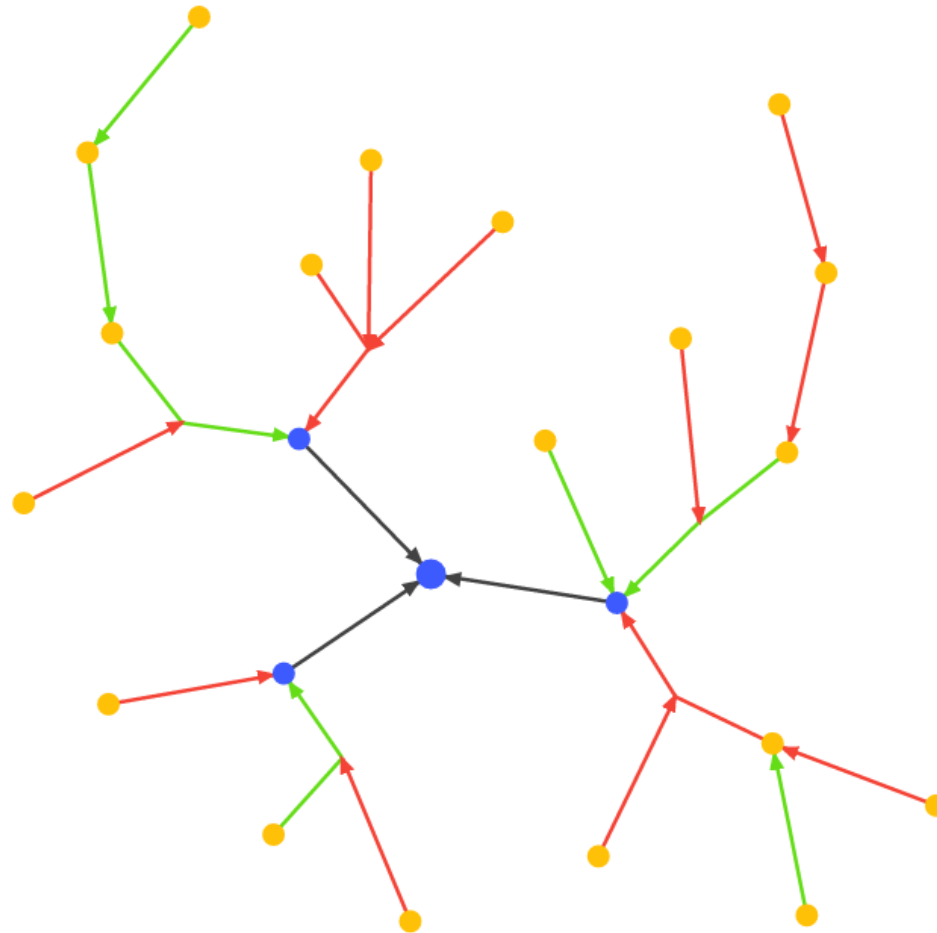
Tobias Krauthoff

[krauthoff@cs.uni-duesseldorf.de](mailto:krauthoff@cs.uni-duesseldorf.de)

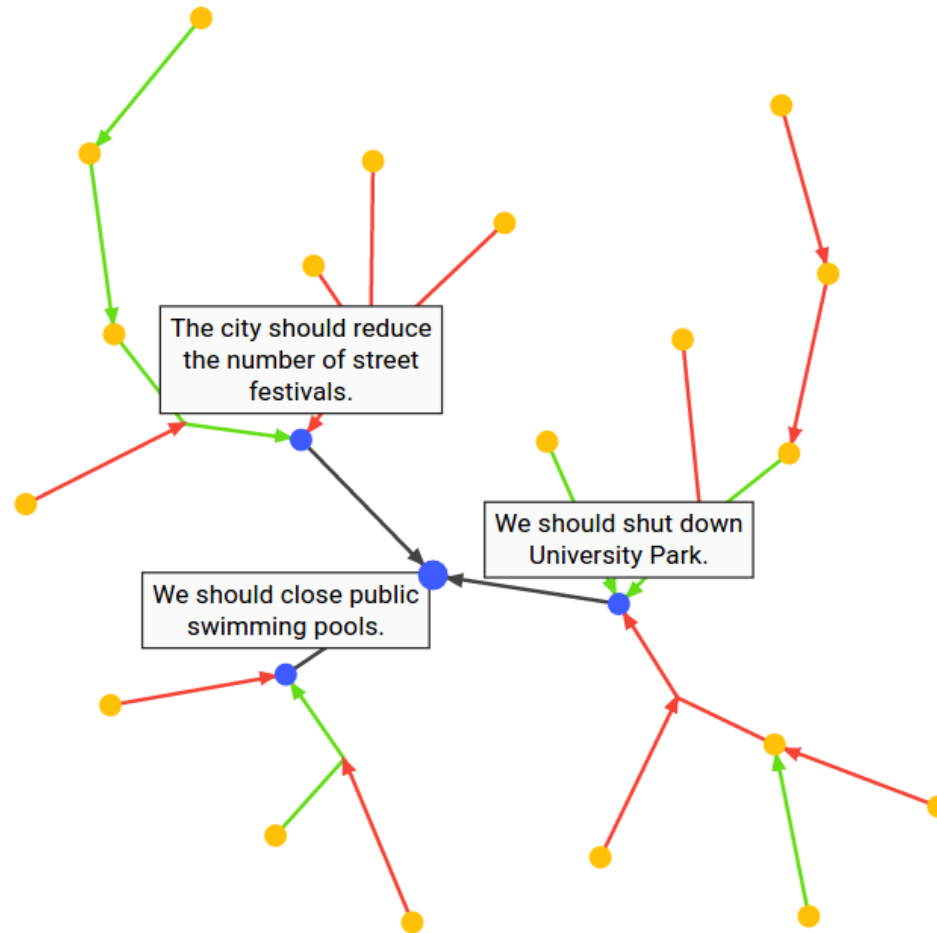
<https://dbas.cs.uni-duesseldorf.de>

# Appendix – Example of the Graph

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