

Building a Knowledge Structure

This is a dictionary definition of the verb To Beach (through a machine interface).

Actual Query: beach
Description: beach
Category: Verb
Feature count: 1
Feature 0: Subcategorization: Transitive
Sense count: 1
Sense 0
Definition: run or haul up (a boat or ship) on to a beach
Domain count: 1
Domain 0: Nautical
Example count: 2
Example 0: at the water's edge a rowboat was beached
Sub Sense 0
Definition: (of an angler) land (a fish) on a beach.
Domain count: 1
Domain 0: Angling
Sub Sense 1
Definition: (of a whale or similar animal) become stranded out of the water.
Note count: 1
Note 0: grammaticalNote: no object
Sub Sense 2
Definition: cause (someone) to suffer a loss
Example count: 1
Example 0: competitive procurement seems to have beached several companies

A small rowboat might weigh 100 kg – a ship might weigh 100,000 tons – can we really describe a range of a million to one so easily, or expect it to be useful?

The sub senses are not children of the sense (Sense 0) in any useful way – a whale is not a boat.

A beached whale loses its life – can we really compare that with a company losing a bit of money, or is it too gasping its last?

The definitions may be adequate for human use – they do not represent an efficient, coherent knowledge structure for implantation in a machine. How would you go about doing this, when there are tens of thousands of such definitions, and the words in the definitions have multiple meanings (“run” has 74 meanings)?

