Legal Lego: Computer modelling as educational tool
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Abstract
This paper explores the transfer of educational tools and ideas from science education to the study of law. We will look in particular at the use of modelling techniques in education, pioneered by Kenneth Forbus and the qualitative reasoning group at Northwestern University. One main strand of their research is an emphasis on the importance of visual models and experiments for efficient learning. Computer modelling allows the creation of such virtual models and experiments, things which in the past incurred prohibitive costs and/or real life constraints such as health and safety issues. We demonstrate a prototype, SHERLOCK, an Assumption Based Truth Maintenance (ATMS) system that we developed to teach specific reasoning tasks to evidence lawyers, police officers and forensic scientists and put our experience with using this approach in classroom settings into the context of pedagogical theory.