

## **6 Technology & Language in Europe 2000: The UK Perspective**

Symposium - London, 15 January, 1993.

This symposium was arranged by DG XIII-E (Information Industry and Market; Language Processing) in the European Commission to promote a greater awareness of the needs and opportunities which existed in Europe in the area of Linguistic Research and Engineering (LRE).

Mr. Brian Oakley set the scene in global terms, drawing attention to the social importance of languages for individuals and countries, and pointing out that language translation and multilingual word-processing were here to stay. In conclusion he said it was in all our interests for economic and social reasons to take language technology seriously.

M. André Danzin, author of the report "Towards a European Language Infrastructure" began by emphasising the importance of language in the maintenance of national identities within the European Community, which led to the pressing need to be able to process vast quantities of multilingual information quickly and economically.

This need provided enormous opportunities for modern technology in language processing of all kinds, written and spoken.

He concluded by reminding the audience that technological change in language processing must be regarded as a positive factor in the creation of a unified Europe.

M.de Bruïne, Director of DG XIII-E, then spoke about the Community's proposals for creating a Language Technology Infrastructure in Europe as described in their publication "Language and Technology (Sept.1992)".

Their strategy incorporated three main objectives;

- To increase the competitiveness of European Industry, Services and Administration.
- To enhance the social fabric of Europe by overcoming language barriers.
- To preserve the cultural diversity of Europe by protecting its many languages in the electronic age.

This was to be achieved by stimulating research, development and demonstrations of Language Technology by;

- Strengthening cooperation between various actors in a standardised framework.
- Building and exploiting common tools and resources.
- Stimulating and strengthening the supply of European products and services.
- Encouraging the use and integration of these products and services in the various application areas.

The aim was to coordinate and build on existing CEC language technology research initiatives such as, EUROTRA, the LRE, ESPRIT, EUREKA, SYSTRAN, MAP, IMPACT and TELEMATICS projects to develop a community wide linguistic infrastructure embracing all its languages.

Mr.Gerry Gavigan of the Department of Trade and Industry spoke about the UK initiatives in the field of Speech and Language Technology (SALT) within the Joint Framework for Information Technology (JFIT) operated by the DTI and SERC (Science and Engineering Research Council).

Further information available from Mr.Gavigan at the DTI, London, SW1W 9SS.

Mr.Jan Roukens, from the European Commission, then spoke about "Le 2000" Programme. This is a "macro" study planned to identify major social, economic and technological and linguistic trends for the next decade having an impact on the Language Engineering Field. The study will assess the position of Europe in the world, particularly in relation with the US and Japan.

Other speakers spoke about the European market in Language Engineering, existing applications, and concluding with a summary of future opportunities.

Note. DG XIII publish a quarterly Magazine and News Review, called "XIII" which provides articles over a wide range of technical subjects including machine translation and multilingual computing, and reports on progress of European IT projects. This is free and obtainable from;

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