

LISA - global association for billion-dollar business

The first Localisation Industry Standards Association (LISA) Press Conference, attended by journalists, localisation professionals and Information Technology (IT) industry representatives from around the world, was held at the Noga Hilton Hotel, Geneva, Switzerland on December 3, 1997. *Language Today's* Kaiying Yang was one of the more than 50 journalists present.

After a brief introduction of LISA history, Press officer, LISA Newsletter Editor Deborah Fry said that "from an informal discussion group in 1990, LISA has now over 130 memberships from leading companies of the localisation industry, and since this is just the tip of the iceberg growth will continue to be rapid". The membership also includes universities and consultants in the localisation industry.

The localisation industry - which combines translation services, language processing technology, software programming and publishing skills to produce local product versions - has grown rapidly in the last few years. The total sales of the core industry topped US\$2 billion in 1997 and the sales of the localised products alone amounted to more than 25 times this sum (US\$ 50 billion) in the same period.

Michael Anobile, director of LISA, introduced the industry of localisation and said that "timely delivery of localised products and effective multilingual communication are now critical factors for all multinational enterprises".

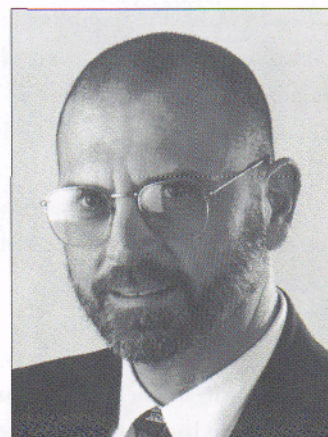
Four invited speakers were from leading localisation and IT professions. The first speaker, Jim Lewis, is the Vice President of Worldwide Translation Berlitz International Inc. He analysed the business drivers for localisation and translation and pointed out that the increasing demand for multiple language services and IT market penetration are the key driving forces behind the localisation industry's 15-20% annual growth rate. An estimated US\$ 500million has been invested over the past 18 months.

Jo Lernout, co-founder and co-chairman of Lernout & Hauspie Speech Products (L&H), explained his focused investment strategy: "Language services and language technology are the building blocks for multilingual applications. An integrated, global approach is the only viable strategy in such a multidisciplinary and geographically widespread industry". L & H is a Belgium based speech and translation technology company. In 1996 and 1997, L & H pursued a policy of rapid expansion, leading to the acquisition of several prominent companies in the language industry. These include dictation specialists Kurzweil AI, machine translation manufacturers GMS and the translation and localisation company Mendez.

Henri Broekmate, Vice President Marketing and Sales for TRADOS Corporation, focused his presentation on the role that language and translation tools is playing in the localisation and translation industry. One of the characteristics of the information is that the life cycle extends beyond one publication cycle which means that the information recycling technology is needed to deal with such a situation. On the tools level, Translation Memory is linguistically motivated database technology for information recycling process in translation. He went on to introduce the LISA's OSCAR (Open Standards for Container/Content Allowing Re-use) and the standards proposed by LISA OSCAR Special Interest Group(SIG): TMX (Translation Memory eXchange and TBX (TermBase eXchange); these standards are designed to allow easier exchange of translation memory data between tools and/or translation vendors with little or no loss of critical data.

The last speaker, Julia MacLauchlan is the Director of Worldwide Products Group Ireland and International Quality Assurance at Microsoft. She gave her vision of how the multilingual information highway and multilingual Web could shape the localisation industry. "The multilingual highway opens new markets for global products, global support and education", she said, "When combined with language technology such as machine translation, the Web will reach a wider audience and, for technology organisations, enable much more effective multilingual customer support. In addition, it will help reduce the localisation management burden and can improve quality. The result will be better products and shorter release times".

The LISA association regularly organises LISA Forums, at which members can listen to acknowledged industry experts and exchange news and views, thus ensuring that multilingual software, documentation and other products are manufactured worldwide to the highest possible standards. In addition, LISA gathers, processes and distributes a wide range of information on the industry and relevant issues. One such forum followed the press conference, held from December 4-5, 1997, in Geneva. The next LISA forum will be held in Salt Lake City, USA, March 1-3, 1998. More information about LISA forum and localisation activities can be found at LISA website or from LISA secretariat.



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