

Preface from the Conference Chair

This Conference is a watershed event in our organization's history: it's the first time that papers and presentations about MT at work in government and industry have outnumbered those from developers and researchers. This is a clear indicator that MT is coming of age and finding a range of useful applications outside of the laboratory.

For AMTA 2008, we innovated on several fronts. We co-located the conference with IWSLT and EMNLP to broaden the scope of the events that are available. We partnered with NIST and LISA to offer new content and build bridges with neighboring communities. We included a student research workshop in the program, with very important support from the NSF. With organizations in the US and Canadian governments, we gathered together a wide range of use cases for MT that provide a remarkably complete overview of how governments are using MT. The most palpable result of this is that there were almost 250% more papers and presentations than at previous conferences. We did more publicity than in previous years and we even got web-based registration going with payment by credit card. We sponsored an off-year event, as well: we provided student scholarships for the the *Syntax and Structure in Statistical Translation Workshop* at NAACL in April, 2007.

None of this would be even remotely possible without the outstanding help of everyone on the Organizing Committee, and I would like to thank them all personally as well as in the name of all of our AMTA members. A special word of thanks also goes to our several sponsors, who have made much of the conference possible.

Our goal over the few days of the Conference was to provide both a snapshot of the state of the art in machine translation and many opportunities to discuss it in person and across disciplines with expert researchers and expert users. The main topics of discussion for these five days were:

- what's going on in research to drive MT technology forward;
- what the next generation of researchers is working on;
- what are the innovations in business models and market analysis for the field;
- what users of machine translation need from machine translation;
- what problems commercial users are solving with machine translation;
- what government organizations accomplishing with machine translation.

Mike Dillinger, President (2006-2008)
Association for Machine Translation in the
Americas

Preface from the Program Chairs

Research Program Committee

We would like to thank all of those who submitted papers to the conference and all the people who helped review this year's submissions:

Necip Fazil Ayan, Robert Belvin, Ralf Brown, Chris Callison-Burch, Jennifer DeCamp, Chris Dyer, David Farwell, Ariadna Font Llitjos, George Foster, Robert Frederking, Ulrich Germann, Dan Gildea, Stephen Helmreich, John Henderson, Silja Hildebrand, Graeme Hirst, Fei Huang, Liang Huang, Pierre Isabelle, Kevin Knight, Muntsin Kolss, Shankar Kumar, Philippe Langlais, Young-Suk Lee, Gregor Leusch, Lori Levin, Yang Liu, Elliott Macklovitch, Bente Maegaard, Daniel Marcu, Arul Menezes, Keith Miller, Jan Niehues, Boyan Onyshkevych, Matthias Paulik, Mark Przybocki, Florence Reeder, Philip Resnik, Hassan Sawaf, Jean Senellart, Harold Somers, Kathryn Taylor, Carol Van Ess-Dykema, Michelle Vanni, Clare Voss, Taro Watanabe, Andy Way, Eric Wehrli, Fei Xia, Jia Xu, Nianwen Xue, Joy Zhang, Bing Zhao, Andreas Zollmann

Research Track Chair:
Stephan Vogel, CMU

Government MT Users Program Committee

Responses to the AMTA Call for Papers for the Government Users portion of the conference were outstanding! Several federal agencies and the respective prime contractors supporting them answered the call for participation in this year's event and submitted over 30 papers and abstracts for review. All of the topics were timely and pertinent to the U.S. government's interest and usage of machine language technologies. Regrettably, not all submissions could be included due to time constraints in the conference program or overlap with other similar topics. Where possible, we explored with the abstract presenters whether some of their topics could be condensed or consolidated with other similar topics. They were most generous in working with the reviewing staff and made adjustments as requested. Throughout the reviewing process some presenters indicated conflicts that came up with their not being able to present a previously submitted topic and had to withdraw. These were certainly few and far between but assisted in the review process so that in the final determination only one actual presentation topic had to be reassigned for inclusion in the Research Track.

The reviewers of the Government Users Track would like to thank all those who submitted and encourage their continued future participation in the AMTA. We would especially like to thank everyone for their timely responses to requests for additional information and meeting the format and presentation deadlines.

Government Users Track Co-Chairs:
Clare Voss, PhD., Army Research Lab
Reggie Hobbs, PhD., Army Research Lab
Nicholas Bemish, Defense Intelligence Agency

LISA @ AMTA – Commercial MT Users Program Committee

This was a unique opportunity to profile the interests and accomplishments of commercial users of machine translation. LISA solicited presentations from its membership, fielded submissions from many organizations, and organized the Commercial Users track as a Symposium within AMTA 2008: LISA@AMTA.

We are particularly pleased with the focus on uses of MT in the conference in general and in the keynote presentations.

We would like to thank the presenters for all of their submissions, Laurie Gerber for her assistance in reviewing the proposed presentations and organizing the sessions, and Michael Anobile of LISA for his support.

LISA @ AMTA Co-Chairs:
Arle Lommel, LISA
Mike Dillinger, AMTA

Student Research Workshop Program Committee

This was the first student workshop to be organized under the auspices of AMTA - the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas. We are excited to present a new forum within AMTA to foster the professional growth of the next generation of MT researchers. Students at all levels of study (undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate) were invited to submit papers describing their research work. A diverse collection of 18 papers were submitted to the workshop and the reviewing process was quite competitive. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our reviewing committee, listed below; each student author received four reviews. We hope that this process cultivated an atmosphere of learning for all involved. Of the 18 papers received, 6 papers were ultimately accepted for presentation at the workshop. To highlight its significance, AMTA embedded the student research workshop as an integral part of the research program at the AMTA 2008 conference, and the workshop papers are included as a separate section of the conference proceedings.

Student Research Workshop Reviewing Committee:

Josh Albrecht (University of Pittsburgh), Chris Callison-Burch (Johns Hopkins University), Michael Carl (Institut für Angewandte Informationswissenschaft), Yee Seng Chan (National University of Singapore), David Chiang (Information Sciences Institute), Steve DeNeefe (Information Sciences Institute), Bonnie Dorr (University of Maryland), Jesus Gimenez (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain), Nizar Habash (Columbia University), Sanjika Hewavitharana (Carnegie Mellon University), Jae Dong Kim (Carnegie Mellon University), Philipp Koehn (Edinburgh University), Ding Liu (University of Rochester), Jonathan May (Information Sciences Institute), Dennis Mehay (Ohio State University), Robert Moore (Microsoft Research), Dragos Munteanu (Language Weaver), Smaranda Muresan (University of Maryland), Eric Nichols (Nara Institute of Science and Technology), Maja Popovic (RWTH Aachen University), John Tinsley (National Centre for Language Technology, Ireland), Nicola Ueffing (National Research Council, Canada)

We are most grateful to the US National Science Foundation (NSF), for providing a generous grant in support of this workshop, which financially subsidized the travel and participation costs of all students presenting at the workshop.

We would like to thank Alon Lavie, our faculty advisor, for his advice and guidance in organizing all aspects of this workshop. We would also like to thank AMTA, and the AMTA 2008 conference organizers in particular, for giving us the opportunity to organize this student workshop and for the many “learning experiences” we had along the way.

Student Research Workshop Co-Chairs:

Behrang Mohit (Student Co-Chair)

Aaron Phillips (Student Co-Chair)