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Language Engineering and the Commission

Abstract

The advent of the information society creates formidable challenges for Europe. The digital revolution will trigger profound structural changes which will affect societal and cultural life and eventually lead to a knowledge-based economy. The Commission's White Paper acknowledges the importance of this process and develops a positive vision stressing the impact of information and communication products and services on competitiveness, employment and quality of life.

The push for economic growth and social integration, and the growing interest in new ways of decentralising work and other activities of daily life are leading to demands for language-aware products and services to be made available to business and professional users and to the general public.

Language Engineering, one of the main sectors of the Telematics Applications R&D Programme, aims to promote technology-mediated business and inter-personal communication both in and between European languages, thus contributing to better usability and wider deployment of telematics products and services in Europe.

Pilot projects are the focus of Language Engineering and a major means for stimulating collaboration between users, providers and researchers of language technology. The domains covered are document creation and management, information and communication services, and translation and foreign language acquisition.

In each of these domains there exist many opportunities for innovative applications based on well-mastered language and IC components, as well for leading-edge applications bringing together existing and novel technologies expected to reach a sufficient degree of maturity over the next few years.

Language Engineering provides support for the development of reusable language resources and for focused research efforts. Pre-normative guidelines, assessment methods and performance analysis techniques are developed, and their use promoted within projects;

The starting-point for all R&D work is an analysis of user needs, and users are associated at each stage of a project's life, from initial planning right through to validation in a real-life environment. Validation itself receives a greater priority than in previous activities, and more emphasis is placed on publicising project results, including "best practice" guidelines for designing, setting up and running telematics systems.