

## **SESSION 2: CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

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It is a great pleasure to introduce this session on Terminology Compilation in Practice. We have four very different papers in the session, which illustrates some of the breadth of the topic.

Glossaries, indexes and term banks are compiled to meet perceived needs. Such compilation takes significant time and effort, and resources tend to be scarce today. On an international scale the problems are daunting, but there are many successes to report, which is tribute to the dedication of many groups of people around the world.

The end users of a term bank may not be known at the time of compilation. One does not know who will use the result, or even indeed if anyone will! The potential users may have little influence during the process or compilation. In my experience it is hard to get the right people to contribute to the work. The glossary that results may not meet the users' needs and much work can be wasted. The unsatisfactory nature of some results leads to proliferation of different glossaries, each with a slightly different emphasis. The same term may be defined in several ways in a collection of such glossaries, such as those within various British Standards. Some years ago I helped Michael Roberts of the Polytechnic of the South Bank to process several hundred glossaries used in the UK construction industry. Terms from these glossaries are often used in contract documents and specifications. Usage of the same term in different trades within an industry can hide subtle differences in meaning, leading perhaps to difficulties and disputes.

Another problem in terminology compilation is that the process often takes so long. The results tend to be obsolete before publication, often even before completion of the work. This is particularly true in my own field of computing and information technology. Entirely new technologies are appearing and developing at phenomenal rates. The pace of change within any one area is bewildering. Fields like computer graphics, expert systems and communications change out of recognition in two years, and there must be similar problems in many other fields, simply due to the present explosion of information and scientific endeavour.

In thinking about the four papers in this session I had a vision of an international standards committee beavering away. Its task was a simple one: the production of a multilingual Hebrew/Eskimo dictionary of welding terms.