

## Welcome to the ninth MT Summit!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to MT Summit IX, the ninth biennial international conference on Machine Translation. The Summit is the premier international conference to bring together people interested in computer-based language translation, including researchers, government officials, product developers and representatives of industry, professional translators, and members of the public. Every two years we have the opportunity to learn about new research developments, to see what is happening with commercial MT systems, to learn from users and translators what is most needed, and generally to have fun!

We have an excellent program this year. Once again the conference has grown. In addition to an unusually large number of high-quality papers and system demos in the main program, we have several tutorials and four workshops reflecting the variation and ongoing dynamism in the field. As appropriate, several of the tutorials focus on the use of MT. In contrast, the workshops span the gamut from deep methods (interlinguas), to MT evaluation, MT for Semitic languages, and teaching translation technologies and tools.

This year the conference rotation takes the Summit back to the Americas, making it the turn of the Association for MT in the Americas (AMTA) to host. As usual, organizing a conference takes a lot of work. Fortunately, in AMTA, we have a core of people who are dedicated, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable in this respect. It was both an honor and a great pleasure to work with the following team:

Program Chair: Elliott Macklovitch, RALI, University of Montreal  
Local Arrangements Co-Chairs: Flo Reeder and Keith Miller, MITRE, Washington DC  
Workshops Chair: Harold Somers, UMIST, Manchester  
Tutorials Chair: Laurie Gerber, Language Technology Broker, San Diego  
Exhibits Chair: Laurie Gerber, Language Technology Broker, San Diego  
Webmaster: Jin Yang, SYSTRAN, San Diego  
Conference Registrar: Priscilla Rasmussen, AMTA Focal Point, New Jersey  
Local Arrangements Contact: Kristine Nations, Nations Travel, New Orleans

I thank them gratefully.

The three invited speakers, representing the IAMT's three major areas (Asia, Europe, and the Americas), address three diverse and interesting topics:

Donald Barabé (Canadian Translation Bureau, Montreal): the government as MT user  
Pierre Isabelle (XEROX, Grenoble, France): a commercial perspective: MT tools  
Akitoshi Okumura (NEC, Tokyo, Japan): R&D in speech-based machine translation

I am delighted that they are able to address us.

The International Association of Machine Translation (IAMT) consists of the members of its three regional component organizations, the AAMT (Asia), EAMT (Europe), and AMTA. Through it, you gain access to international and regional conferences, the IAMT's news magazine MTNI, the MT Compendium of software products and reviews, and people, organizations, and companies interested in translation. I urge you to attend the IAMT Business Meeting and also to join your regional association, through which you automatically become a member of the IAMT.

While we are meeting here to discuss MT, there is still no replacement for personal contact. We have arranged breaks, a reception, and a delightful banquet to facilitate discussion, collaboration, and the continuation or formation of connections. We hope the ambience of New Orleans, as the birthplace of jazz, and the lovely conference venue in the Fairmont hotel help to make this an enjoyable experience for all. We hope to see the results in future MT conferences: new friendships and partnerships, and the continued healthy growth of Machine Translation!

Welcome, and enjoy the conference!

Eduard Hovy  
MT Summit Conference Chair  
Marina del Rey, 2003

## Preface from the Program Chair

Is the number of papers submitted to the MT Summit indicative of the level of world-wide interest in machine translation in a given year? Probably not; but for the purpose of this Preface, let's assume that it is. (Otherwise, I'd be hard pressed to fill this page.) This year's Summit attracted an impressive number of submissions – 104, to be exact – which represents a substantial increase over the previous Summit. Breaking this figure down by continent, we obtain the following: 36 submissions from Asia, 33 from North America, 27 from Europe, with the remaining 8 papers being co-authored by people from two continents.

The reader is free to confer upon these numbers whatever significance he or she sees fit, but I would maintain that they *are* indicative of a growing world-wide interest in translation automation, with one significant exception, and that has to do with MT's end users. It is a truism that more people are using machine translation today than ever before, thanks in large measure to the MT engines that are now offered as options on various search engines and Web browsers. Those millions of casual or occasional MT users are not adequately represented at our conference, which remains by and large a gathering of academic researchers and commercial developers, i.e. MT professionals whose aim is to satisfy the needs of the myriads of actual and potential 'naïve' MT users. It would clearly be preferable, it seems to me, if we could somehow find a way of attracting more of those users to our conference, including more professional translators. For then we would be closer to the stated goal of the MT Summit, which is to bring together all three constituencies that have a stake in translation automation, so that each can benefit from input from the others.

These Proceedings are certainly quite indicative of the current preoccupations of the researchers and developers who are actively engaged in MT. One has only to glance at the themes of the sessions in the Program: no fewer than three of these are devoted to statistical MT. Another three sessions are devoted to MT evaluation, with many of the papers there focussing on the automatic metrics that have emerged to help accelerate the evaluation of statistical MT systems. What is the significance of all this intensive work in data-driven MT, which seems to be driving our field and is even attracting the attention of the main-stream media? Hopefully, the presentations and debates at this year's Summit will allow us to arrive at clearer assessment of recent advances in SMT.

I hope you find the papers in this volume rewarding. I have certainly enjoyed drawing these contributions together and was very impressed, myself, with the overall quality of the submissions. I sincerely want to thank all those who went to the trouble of preparing a paper for MT Summit IX; and I thank as well all the reviewers who took the time to provide those authors with detailed and often incisive comments, which allowed the latter to improve their contributions. (The names of the worthy reviewers on the Program Committee are listed on the next page.) Finally, special thanks go to my colleagues at the RALI, and particularly to Guy Lapalme and Graham Russell, whose constant support and judicious advice helped carry me through to the end.

Elliott Macklovitch  
Program Chair, MT Summit IX