Naval Ocean Systems Center

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The Naval Ocean Systems Center (NOSC) is supporting DARPA's natural language research program in the area of test and evaluation. Preparations are being made for a task-oriented evaluation of text understanding systems, building off the natural language contractors' familiarity with texts taken from naval messages and NOSC's previous experience in carrying out system evaluations. The objective of the work is to devise an evaluation plan that will satisfy the needs for characterizing the current state of the art in theory- and implementation-independent ways and for setting baselines against which progress can be measured.

Sets of texts have been collected to use as development (i.e. training) and test data, and explanatory documentation on them has been prepared. The task to be performed, a simulated database update task, has been defined, and samples of expected outputs have been prepared from texts in the development set. An overall evaluation plan and schedule have been set. Arrangements are being made to host MUCK-II (Message Understanding Conference II) in June 1989, where participants in the evaluation will meet to discuss the results and critique the test design.

In FY90 NOSC plans to continue facilitating evaluation efforts, to determine useful new classes of naval texts to use in research and evaluation, to compile, analyze and distribute such texts, and to investigate opportunities for transitioning research into applications. It might be especially useful to compile a corpus for spoken language systems of voice reports (spoken naval messages) and corresponding written reports.