



PRESS RELEASE
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Symposium on Digital Semantic Content across Cultures

Palais du Louvre, Paris, France 4-5 May, 2006

Why this symposium?

Communication and sharing information between cultures is based on meaning, i.e., semantics. We understand each other by sharing a common, underlying semantic conception about the world and culture. Meaning can be expressed in different languages, such as in French, Finnish, or English, and different conventions of representing and publishing information are used in different countries. This creates challenges for cross-cultural communication.

More and more cultural content is being represented and stored in information systems and published using digital media, such as the World Wide Web. Most cultural information systems today process data only on the syntactic level without concerning the rich semantic structures underlying the content. It is not easy to create advanced cultural applications, if the computers do not “understand” and share the meaning of the content they are processing. Making content machine understandable and interoperable is a goal of the Semantic Web.

Since cultural content is being used not only by the humans but also by the computers, and on the international level, the (meta)data representation conventions and the underlying semantics of the contents need to be explicated also for the machines. This would enable better content interoperability across linguistic and cultural barriers and enable more intelligent and useful cultural services to be built for the end-users.

The French-Finnish symposium Digital Semantic Content across Cultures focuses on the questions of representing cultural content and on publishing it especially on the (Semantic) Web. The objective of the seminar is to discuss the digitalization, archiving, and retrieval of our cultural heritage in all its forms, to deal with the development of methods of compilation and indexing, and to present, in the form of illustrative examples, cultural and recreational services available to citizens (and consumers) including access to contents in different languages from foreign cultures. In addition to textual representations, cultural content can be digitalized and saved in visual and auditive format. This calls for discussion on intelligent multimedia indexing and retrieval.

Over 100 experts in the audience

The symposium gathered more than 100 registered participants, the maximum number of seats in the symposium hall. The participants include researchers, practitioners, and students representing museums, archives, libraries, and companies dealing with information and communication technologies (ICT).

Some 30 Presentations in the Programme

The symposium programme consists of some 30 presentations of research results, application work, and projects in France and Finland. One half of the talks are given by French and the other half by Finnish speakers.

The first day of the symposium is opened with greetings from the organizers and the Finnish Embassy in France. After this, three keynote talks explain the usage and application of new

technologies in French museums and in the national libraries of France and Finland. Then several talks concerning applications related to the Semantic Web, content digitization, ontologies, and multi-lingual systems are given. The day ends with a guided laboratory visit to the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF), and with a symposium reception at the Finnish Embassy.

The second day starts with two keynote presentations from Finnish and French companies. After this, various presentations are given about multimedia indexing and retrieval as well as application case studies. The symposium concludes with a guided tour to the Louvre museum.

The detailed programme is available at the following address:

<http://www.seco.tkk.fi/events/2006/2006-05-04-websemantique>

More Information

Contact the conference chair Prof. Eero Hyvönen (eero.hyvonen@tkk.fi, tel. +358 50 3841618) or the other members of the Programme Committee (cf. the above web site).

Organizers and Contributors

- Association Franco-finlandaise pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (Suomalais-ranskalainen teknistieteellinen seura)
- Helsinki University of Technology (TKK), Media Technology, Semantic Computing Research Group
- University of Helsinki, Department of Computer Science
- Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF)
- VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland
- France Telecom
- L'ambassade de France en Finlande
- Finnish Artificial Intelligence Society
- XML Finland Association
- Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation
- Nokia
- PricewaterhouseCoopers

