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ELECT

The European Localisation Exchange Centre

Annual report (February 2002 to January 2003)

Executive Summary

This is the first annual report of the European Localisation Exchange Centre, ELECT, a project funded under the European Union eContent Programme.

The project started in February 2002 and will be running for 24 months.

ELECT is coordinated by the University of Limerick's Localisation Research Centre (LRC) with Bowne Global Solutions as a contractor (partner).

The report provides background information on the project and its rationale within the wider framework of the eContent programme and the convergence of traditional industries in a new, digital framework.

It breaks down the objectives of the project and follows its progress under six headings:

- Spreading of expertise and best practice
- Access to know-how and technology
- Guidelines for linguistic and cultural customisation
- Enhancing visibility and recognition
- Management
- Assessment of progress and results

A final chapter provides an overview of the major actions planned for year two of the project.

The annex lists members of the ELECT Expert Council and the ELECT Associated Organisation Programme.

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The ELECT Project

The European Localisation Exchange Centre (ELECT) was established under the European Union eContent Programme on 1st February 2002 for a period of 24 months. It is co-ordinated by the Localisation Research Centre (LRC) at the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS), University of Limerick, Ireland, with Bowne Global Solutions, Germany, as a partner. It is an accompanying measure under Action Line 2: Enhancing content production in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment, Sub-line 2.1.3: Fostering new partnerships and the adoption of multilingual and multicultural strategies – accompanying measures.

The main objective of this project is the establishment of the European Localisation Exchange Centre (ELECT) as the focus point for multilingual and multicultural digital content development and publishing. ELECT will connect the eContent industry with the localisation industry. It will provide the technical, educational and infrastructural support to assist and to accelerate the development of the eContent and the eLocalisation industries in Europe with specific actions for experts and new entrants.

ELECT will provide reliable information on best practice, facilitate easy access to know-how and technology, make available guidelines on linguistic and cultural customisation of digital material, and enhance the visibility and recognition of the eLocalisation and eContent industries in Europe and world-wide.

ELECT will be Europe's central information exchange for eContent localisation.

Rationale

Europe's 371 million citizens speak more than 45 national and regional languages. The protection of this rich linguistic and cultural heritage in the information age is a major challenge and a real opportunity for business and politics. For European citizens, it is a prerequisite for participation in the information society in this new millennium.

While European politicians want to ensure such participation through the Information Society Technologies (IST) and the eContent programmes in the language and locale of the people they represent, software publishers are already responding to the demands of their European customers by supporting many local languages and cultures in their products.

The backbone of the digital communications infrastructure for the equal and inclusive multilingual information society must be computer software and hardware, adapted to the linguistic and cultural needs of users.

A dedicated, vibrant and young industry has taken on the task of responding to the requirements both of business and of politics. The localisation industry, initially seen as one of many service suppliers to the general IT sector, has now established itself as a major player; as the industry that is translating the European challenge into new business opportunities and as the industry that will enable the equal and inclusive multilingual information society.

A new role for the localisation industry

The localisation industry has until recently been associated with software applications. However, over the past five years — after developments in vertical markets, global services and new technologies like the web — synergies have been created between the IT sector and other industry sectors, which are dealing with issues similar to those in the software localisation industry.

Among these are the traditional media publishers and the documentation divisions of the aeronautics and automotive industries. Because of the ever-increasing role IT plays in the production cycles of these industries, they are facing, at least in some areas, similar issues when developing their products for the global marketplace.

These issues include the need to handle, control and translate large amounts of digitally produced and stored text into several languages in a short period of time, within a tight budget and according to strict quality guidelines along with the need to adapt — not just translate — their products to the culture and locale of the target market.

The framework for the convergence of these activities is provided by IT; the framework for the convergence of the multilingual and multicultural aspects of these activities is provided by the localisation industry.

The localisation industry has become the catalyst for digital multilingual production and publishing.

The boundaries of what more than a decade ago began to emerge as the localisation industry have been redefined — driven by Internet-related technological advances and by economic and political developments leading to the globalisation of the economy. *Fast access to information, entertainment, (distance) education and electronically traded goods is now possible for most European citizens without restrictions imposed by location or technology — the only restriction remaining being the linguistic and cultural barrier.*

This linguistic and cultural barrier can be removed by the implementation of a coherent localisation strategy by eContent publishers backed by the wealth of experience and expertise of the localisation service providers.

New and unexploited opportunities for the eContent industry

European corporations have pioneered web localisation. They now must rationalise their efforts to maximise return and prepare for the web's explosion. Forrester Report, European New Media Strategies.

Growth in web usage and e-commerce in Europe and especially in Asia will outstrip that of the US between two and five times over the next two to three years, according to research by ICD (reported in the Financial Times by Julian Perkin, 05 Feb 2001). By 2003, only one third of the projected 603 million internet users will be English-speaking, according to GlobalSight (quoted in the same FT article).

These developments represent new and unexploited challenges for the European localisation and eContent industries. Timely and cost effective delivery of high quality digital content to the global marketplace has become the major growth area which has opened up the relatively narrow software localisation industry to a wider range of players who are broadening roles in the software localisation industry.

These include tools developers (MT, CAT etc.), internet companies (content providers, application developers, service providers), producers of IT-enhanced products (telecommunications, automotive, medical, publishing etc.), film and music producers, publishing houses, games developers, government bodies and cultural organisations (e.g. museums, libraries, archives and cultural institutes), and consultants.

The European **Localisation Industry** has successfully adapted digital material to a variety of linguistic and cultural markets for almost 20 years and is recognised as a world-leader in this area.

Therefore, the European localisation industry has the experience and expertise to remove the linguistic and cultural barriers and make digital material accessible to European citizens independent of their linguistic or cultural background

However, the industry now needs to increase its efforts to address *e*Localisation and localisation of *e*Content.

*e*Localisation utilises the internet and state-of-the-art localisation technologies to expand the offering of localisation services. *e*Content localisation refers to the localisation of digital content such as knowledge repositories, news channels and video feeds.

Digital publishers coming from a traditional publishing background, on the other hand, are often not aware of the technologies and strategies for global digital publishing and are often unaware of the knowledge that is available within the localisation industry.

People and organisations

The LRC is the **co-ordinator** of ELECT with BGS (Germany) as a **contractor** (partner).

Project teams have been established in both organisations with responsibilities for each of the five work packages.

The LRC has also invited localisation companies, *e*Content providers, localisation tools developers, as well as universities, training and research organisations to join the **ELECT Associated Organisation Programme** and to support this project by nominating individuals to the ELECT Expert Council.

Consortium

The consortium consists of two organisations, each a leader in its field:

- University of Limerick (UL) – Localisation Research Centre (LRC)
- Bowne Global Solutions (Germany) GmbH

The Localisation Research Centre at the University of Limerick's Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) has been the educational, research and infrastructural support centre for the localisation community in Ireland, the world centre of localisation, since 1995. It has an Industrial Advisory Board representing twenty of the world's leading localisation service providers, *e*Content publishers, software developers, tools developers, and training organisations.

The LRC co-ordinates the activities of the project and is responsible for most of the work packages.

Bowne Global Solutions (Germany) GmbH, BGS, is part of the Bowne Group, the world's leading provider of localisation services. BGS have worked with corporations in a wide range of spheres – from software development and e-commerce to high-tech equipment for the medical industry. BGS have worked on almost every operating systems and computer platform and regularly localise into 40 languages covering project management, quality assurance, technical translations and web site maintenance. Bowne Global Solutions is a

business unit of New York-based Bowne & Co., the world's largest financial printer and a leader in information and document management.

BGS provides industrial expertise to the project. BGS manages and carries out the localisation of part of the material prepared for dissemination by the project into a number of European languages and locales. Bowne also contributes its expertise to the planning and implementation of the web internationalisation and localisation guidelines referred to in WP4.

ELECT support infrastructure

The **ELECT Associated Organisation** programme consists of organisations who support the aims and objectives of ELECT. Members of this programme are informed and consulted by ELECT at regular intervals. Associated Organisations are also involved directly in ELECT activities by hosting workshops and executive briefings, by providing tools and technology to Localisation Tools and Technology Showcase (LOTS) and by providing services.

The **ELECT Expert Council** with representations from both the 'traditional' localisation sector and the eContent providers / digital content publishers provides guidance, advice, support and feedback during the development and planning of the ELECT actions.

In addition, ELECT has supported the establishment of **The Institute of Localisation Professionals (TILP)** and the **Localisation Teaching, Training and Research Network (LttN)**.

TILP is owned by its members and directed by an elected Council. Its main objective is development of professionalism in the industry. As such, it has taken ownership of a certification system for localisation professionals based on the results of the EU ADAPT-funded Certified Localisation Professional (CLP) project co-ordinated by the LRC and supported by around 40 organisations. (www.tilponline.org)

LttN will formalize and facilitate contacts already established between the LRC and other third level educational bodies in Europe and beyond, all involved in the teaching of and research into localisation-related subjects. LttN has members in Ireland, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada. LttN has regular meetings and operates under the umbrella of the LRC. (<http://www.localisation.ie/LttNWeb/index.htm>)

Activities

The ELECT work plan is structured around four central strands of activity with an additional two supporting strands.

The four central strands of activity are:

1. Spreading of expertise and best practice
2. Access to know-how and technology
3. Guidelines for linguistic and cultural customisation
4. Enhancing visibility and recognition

The two supporting strands of activity are:

1. Management
2. Assessment of progress and results

Spreading expertise and best practice

Events, an executive briefing and two courses, one on internationalisation and the other on localisation of web content, have been planned to take place in Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic and Germany in cooperation with local partners. ELECT has developed the content for these events. They will be organised by ELECT and supporting organisations in these countries.



Achievements

- Preparation of expert workshops: (1) Development of global web sites (internationalisation); (2) Localisation of eContent and web sites including cross-cultural aspects;
- Holding of the annual International Localisation Summer School;
- Holding of the annual Localisation Conference;
- Bi-annual Localisation Europe Newsletter (printed and on the web);
- Compilation and publication of the Localisation Directory;
- Development of the beta version of the localisation portal, electronline.org, review and planning of the final version;
- Support for the establishment of a professional institute and the certification for professionals;
- Support for the establishment of a network of third level bodies offering courses in and conducting research into localisation-related subjects.

Access to know-how and technology

The **Showcase/Repository** of localisation technologies and tools, the Localisation Research Laboratory and Showcase (LOTS), is based at the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at the University of Limerick. Where appropriate and feasible, these tools and technologies will soon be made available on the web. Online access is currently possible for selected beta testers. Once the central showcase/repository is established and working at ELECT, the establishment of satellite repositories will be considered together with supporting organisations in other European countries.

**Achievements**

- Keynote speech at the International Unicode Conference;
- Organisation of a special workshop on standards in localisation at the International Unicode Conference;
- Preparation of executive briefings in four different EU member states;
- Development of a foundation course in web development for the global market and web localisation for delivery in four different member states and accession states;
- Establishment of a showcase / repository for localisation tools and technologies to facilitate access and evaluation of these to new entrants;
- Organisation of an annual Localisation Europe Conference and Industry Showcase.

Guidelines for linguistic and cultural customisation

Publications have been prepared by technical authors and subject experts at the LRC and have been reviewed by subject experts. This material has also been made available by ELECT in a number of European languages, including in a language of the accession countries and a language with a non-latin based writing system. Thus, the publication of this material in digital format itself served as a case study for best practice. These publications include different issues of Localisation Europe and Localisation Focus. Further publications, including electronline.org and the proceedings of the Expert Workshops are planned for year two of the project.



Achievements

- Publication of a number of issues of Localisation Europe in five European languages;
- Support for the publication of Localisation Focus;
- Development of the beta versions of practical guides to web localisation covering linguistic and cultural aspects:(1) Internationalisation of web content (2) Web localisation – tools and technologies.

Enhancing visibility and recognition

Awards will be announced for the Best Thesis, the best European Scholar and the Best Global Web Site by ELECT in 2003. These awards will be sponsored by industry leaders and be organised similar to the LRC Best Thesis Award which has been sponsored over the past six years by Symantec Ireland.



Achievements

- Secured sponsorship by Symantec for the Best Thesis Award;
- Secured sponsorship by IBM for Best Scholar Award;
- Secured sponsorship by Euro RSCG for Best Global Web Site Award.

Management

ELECT has been established within one single centre, allowing for the streamlining of operations and financial management and keeping administrative overheads to a minimum. At the same time, all strands of activities are supported by the ELECT Expert Council and the members of the ELECT Associated Organisation Programme. Actions are also co-ordinated with the Institute of Localisation Professionals (TILP) and the Localisation Teaching, Training and Research Network (LttN), both established within the framework and with the support of ELECT.

Assessment of progress and results

The ELECT Expert Council has met on a number of occasions to review the progress and the results of ELECT. In preparation of these meetings, ELECT prepared a review for the members of the Council.

ELECT has invited localisation companies, eContent providers, universities and training organisations to join its Expert Council and Associated Organisation Programme which provide guidance, advice, feedback and support for the ELECT actions.

Co-operation

In addition to the partnerships established within ELECT, the project has also established partnerships with, secured support from and initiated discussions about mid- to long-term cooperation agreements with the following organisations:

EEEL – another eContent project established with the aim of publishing case studies and developing a self-assessment tool;

GALA – the Globalisation and Localisation Association was established in 2002 to represent the localisation service providers;

LISA – the Localisation Industry Standards Association is based in Geneva and provides regular fora and meeting places as well as special interest groups and publications;

Multilingual Computing – one of the leading industry magazines for Web site globalisation, translation, international software development and language technology;

OASIS – the Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Systems is a consortium of more than a hundred digital publishers and service providers, developing XML-based open standards;

The Localisation Institute – this US-based private organisation provides training and meeting places for localisation professionals;

PAL – the US-based Professional Association of Localisation represents localisation professionals;

UNICODE – this consortium owns and develops the international standard for character encoding.

Outlook

Having laid the foundation for all of its major actions in 2002/2003, the ELECT project will focus on their implementation in its second year of operation.

Events

Executive Briefings (2 hours) and two **full-day courses** in web internationalisation and web localisation will take place in September in the following European capitals:

- Athens
- Madrid
- Munich
- Prague

The annual **Localisation Conference** will take place in November in Dublin.

The **International Localisation Summer School** will take place in June in Limerick.

LOTS

LOTS will be officially **launched** in June 2003. **Online access** to the facility will, as far as possible, be offered to professionals and researchers across Europe. Possible **cooperation agreements** including the offering of LOTS and tools and standards certification will be explored with TILP, GALA and OASIS.

Publications

ELECT will continue with the publication of **Localisation Europe** in five European languages.

Electonline.org will be launched as the localisation web portal in the third quarter of 2003.

Two one-day courses in web internationalisation and web localisation will be published as a reader and used for the delivery of courses in four European capitals.

Awards

Three major awards, sponsored by companies who are global leaders in their field, will be announced in 2003 and awarded at the Annual Localisation Conference in November in Dublin. These awards include:

- Best Thesis
- Best Scholar
- Best Global Website

APPENDIX A: The ELECT Expert Council

NAME	SURNAME	COMPANY	POSITION	EXPERTISE
Monia	Admad	EBM	Business Manager	Globalisation
Tim	Altanaro	Austin Community College	Associate Dean	Localisation training and research
Juan José	Arevalillo	Hermes Traducciones y Servicios Lingüísticos, S.L.	Managing Director	Localisation in general
Maria	Asnes	MTS	DTP Specialist	Globalisation
Gabriela	Boiero	Freelance Translator		Translation, Terminology & Cultural Issues
Simon	Bratina	IOLAR DOO	Business Manager	Translation
Liam	Connolly	Piseog	Freelancer	Globalisation & Unicode
Don	DePalma	Common Sense Advisory, Inc	President	Globalization, Business issues of globalization and Mainstream Technology in support of Globalization.
Isabelle	Dussert	SDL International	Translator	Globalisation, Translation of Software, Documentation and online help, reviewing and proof-reading
Gretta	Fitzgerald	Larsen Localisation Recruitment	Country Manager	Publishing ISO and Business Strategy Planning(holder of MBA from OU)
Carla	Grieco	CG Language Services	Translator	IT, Telecommunications, Microelectronics, Electrical, Mechanical, Hydraulic Engineering, Heavy Machinery
Gintautas	Grigas	Institute of Mathematics and Informatics	Researcher	Translation, Terminology & Cultural Issues
Nina Maria	Hartog		Freelancer	Translation, Teaching & Training, Press Releases, Promotional Material
Christian	Horn	Lionet Technologies		Tools Developer
Isabel	Jimenez	SLS International	President	Translation
Jonathan	Jordan	McDonald Corporation		Cultural Issues/Extensive International Experience
Thomas	Kahler	BowneGlobal	Training Manager	Localisation Project Mgt. Trng.Prof Localisation Prof. L10N Training/Dev of post-graduate studies for SW L10N in co-op with HR
Till	Klump	DTS Systems	Freelancer	Project Management, Hardware, Communications, GPS, Web, German
Irene	Koppenaal	WH&P		Project Management
Michele	Lamarche	Traductions Serge Belair Inc.		
Declan	Lawless	Commercial Translation Centre	Software Engineer	Project Management
Thomas	Louis		Web Developer	Software Engineering, Website Development, Web based Trainings, Content Management, Inter-/Intra-/Extranet Solutions, eCommerce, B2B platforms, Complex Database Applications, L10N experience.
Prasenjit	Maiti		Consultant	Training
Irene	Malcolm	Scottish CILT	Researcher	Language, Culture and Development of e-commerce in the Scottish Economy
John	Malone	Archetypon International	VP	Strategy, Change Management, Business Development and Accounting

Ursula	Marme	L & L Languages Live!		Project Management, Workflow design including CMS
Joe	McCormack	McCormack Associates	Proprietor	Training Services/Training Management in the localisation/testing industry in Northern Ireland also localisation Brokering
Shilpi	Mehrotra	Rockwell Software	Project Manager	Project Management, Software Localisation, Testing Localised Software
Paula	Moen		Freelancer	Desktop Publishing, QA, DTP Co-ordination
Jesus	Moroto	Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper	Consultant	Web site, Web advertising Localisation
Brendan	Murray	IBM	Software Engineer	Software Engineering, Character Sets, Unicode, ICU, Java, C, C++
Shailendra	Musale	F-Secure Corporation	Software Engineer	Project Management, Localization for mobile & handheld devices. Writing articles for localization related magazines.
Francesco	Musso	Vivendi Universal Interactive Publishing		Quality Assurance, Project Management, Business Development and Globalisation
Tony	O'Dowd	Alchemy Software Development	President	Globalisation, Software Application Localization Technologies
Pat	O'Sullivan	IBM		Globalization, Software Testing/Quality Engineering, Localisation, Internationalisation, Tools and Software Engineering
Stephane	Peyrucq	WH&P	Software Engineer	Software Engineering and i18n related issues
Ihab	Ragaa	Tip-Top	Freelance Translator	Translations, Quality Assurance & Localization Tools and Evaluation.
Adriane	Rinsche	Language Technology Centre		Business Development, Translation, Tools Development, Sales & Marketing, Human Resources
Christian	Sestier	Sestier		Translation
Angela	Starkmann	Medtronic Technical Literature Group		Translation, Medical Technology, Manuals, Software, Hand Held Devices
Christian	Taube	Atlas GmbH	Project Manager	Project Management, Web Technologies
Tex	Texin	Xencraft	Software Engineer	Software Engineering Project Management, Globalization, Cultural Differences
Enric	Tortajada	Syntax	Business Dev. Manager	Globalization
Jaap	van der Meer	SDL International	Vice President	Globalization
Lucie	Vrabcová	Moravia IT	Marketing Coordinator	Marketing
Helga	Wissesbach	NetManage	Localisation Manager	Localisation Project Management
Ahmet Ozhan	Yigitler	Microsoft	Software Engineer	Software Engineering, Localization, DTP, Terminology, Video Editing

APPENDIX B: The ELECT Associated Organisation Programme

Alchemy Software Development	SLS International
Aquino Developments S.L.	STAR Technology Solutions
Archetypon International	Syntax
Atlas GmbH	Tip-Top
Atril	Trados
Austin Community College	Traductions Serge Belair Inc.
Bowne Global Solutions	Universidad Europea De Madrid
Canadian Bureau of Translation	Université de Montréal
CG Language Services	Université Libre de Bruxelles
Commercial Translation Centre	University of Innsbruck
Common Sense Advisory, Inc	University of Leeds
DTS Systems	University of Maastricht
Dublin City University (DCU)	University of Stirling
EBM	Vivendi Universal Interactive Publishing
Erasmus Hogeschool	WH&P
Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper	Xencraft
F-Secure Corporation	
Hermes Traducciones y Servicios Lingüísticos, S.L.	
IBM	
Institute of Mathematics and Informatics	
IOLAR DOO	
L & L Languages Live!	
Language Technology Centre	
Larsen Localisation Recruitment	
Lionet Technologies	
McCormack Associates	
McDonald Corporation	
Medtronic Technical Literature Group	
Microsoft	
Moravia IT	
MTS	
NetManage	
PASS Engineering	
Piseog	
Rockwell Software	
RWS Groups translation.com	
School of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies	
Scottish CILT	
SDL International	
Sestier	