

2nd IATIS Conference

SPECIAL PANEL

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Global Initiative for Local Computing

Chair:

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Presentation and Themes

Localisation is generally defined as the linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content to the requirements of *foreign* markets. Mainstream localisation efforts have so far concentrated on languages and cultures rich enough (in monetary terms) to provide a profitable market for localised products. Therefore, companies have localised their products for the Danish market (with 3 million Danish speakers), but not for the languages of Asia and Africa, some of them spoken by more than 100 million people.

If it is true that access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is crucial for economic and social development, then the lack of access must increase the already existing divide between the rich and the poor. There is a strong argument that says that all peoples of the world, regardless of culture or language, religion or ethnicity or gender, geographic location or economic means, should benefit from the use and application of ICT. The use of ICTs should take place in the language and culture of those peoples' choice, with no negative effects on that language and culture and their continued existence. In the recent past, a number of largely uncoordinated, commercial and non-commercial initiatives have been established which aim to foster what could be called development localisation, i.e. a strand of localisation which uses new and fresh criteria to decide whether applications or digital content should be localised or not. Among those are:

- Open Source Localisation Initiatives
- University-based Localisation Projects and Research
- Initiatives by commercial developers

Now that there is a critical mass of development localisation happening, it makes sense to pool together the resources, to exchange knowledge and expertise, and to publicise and develop these efforts through a broad, coordinated initiative. This initiative, the Global Initiative for Local Computing (GILC), inspired by Pat Hall of the Open University (UK), was launched at the annual conference of the Localisation Research Centre (LRC) in Limerick on 13 September 2005. GILC work with appropriate organisations around the world to ensure that all people have access to computers and information technologies in their preferred language and following their favoured cultural practices.

The organisers of this panel invite papers which relate to or report on any one of the following issues:

- Development of ICT systems able to work in all major languages, with encodings and rendering engines for their writing systems and freely available software and fonts to support their use;
- Activities of working groups which are actively adding new languages to those for which computers have already been enabled;
- Local human activities in all their diversity, which are being supported by appropriate software and information technologies.

These could cover, in particular:

- Websites and databases maintained as a source of knowledge about software localisation and associated technologies, providing advice as needed via the web;
- Projects researching into fundamental issues in technologies, social sciences, and translation studies related to the digital divide;
- Projects developing technologies to help endangered languages survive;
- Input into relevant standards development, notably through agencies such as W3C, ISO, OASIS and the Unicode consortium;
- Initiatives of major technology providers addressing the digital divide;
- Activities of governments and their agencies concerning policies and practices related to the digital divide;
- Collaboration among research and educational institutions in projects and programmes aimed at overcoming the digital divide;
- Relevant consultancy services;
- Training programmes around the world, both as face-to-face courses and as e-learning courses.

This panel aims to contribute to unlocking the enormous potential of localisation to create equal access to ICT for billions of people currently excluded – and independent of their culture or language, religion or ethnicity or gender, geographic location or economic means.

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts (maximum 300 words, in English) for 30-minute papers (including 10 minutes' discussion time) can be sent:

- either by e-mail to Reinhard.Schäler@ul.ie. Subject: IATIS GILC Panel.
- or by post to

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Key Dates

- **Deadline for submitting abstracts:** 30th November 2005
- **Notification of acceptance of abstracts:** 15th January 2006