

Controlled Language Translation
Conference
15th-17th May 2003
Dublin City University

From May 15th to 17th 2003, Dublin City University will host an international conference on Controlled Language Translation. This unique conference brings together the 8th International Workshop of the European Association for Machine Translation and the 4th Controlled Language Applications Workshop, and, as its name suggests, has a double focus.

Firstly, delegates are interested in the use of controlled languages, that is subsets of natural languages like English or French, where rules are used to restrict the grammatical structures and even the vocabulary that writers are allowed to use in particular domains. Traditionally, controlled languages fall into two major categories. There are controlled languages that are designed to improve a text's readability for human readers, particularly non-native speakers of a language. A good example here is a controlled language that simplifies the English writers can use in aircraft maintenance manuals. There are also controlled languages that are designed to improve the computational processing of texts. For example, technical writers might have to write in a controlled language to facilitate machine translation, ie translation by computer.

Machine Translation (MT), the second focus of the conference, has a history dating back to at least the 1950s, but became a mass consumer good at the end of the 1990s with the advent of free (low-end) MT on the world wide web. Unlike casual users of MT on the web, users of higher-end MT systems, for example in industry or international organisations, typically customise these systems for their own needs, by adding relevant vocabulary and translations to the systems' dictionaries, or changing grammatical rules, for instance. They may also endeavour to improve the system's chance of producing acceptable output by controlling the input that the system has to deal with in the first place. This is where the areas of Controlled Language and MT begin to overlap; and it is this overlap that the Controlled Language Translation Conference intends to address, for the first time, in a dedicated international forum.

Up to 100 academic and industrial researchers from over 15 countries are expected at DCU for the conference, which has received substantial support from companies such as IBM and MSX International, as well as our main sponsor Science Foundation Ireland.

Dublin City University has a proud history of research and teaching in the area of translation technology, with two major research centres active in the area (the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies <http://www.ctts.dcu.ie/>) and the National Centre for Language Technology (<http://www.computing.dcu.ie/research/nclt/>), as well as undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in translation studies and computational linguistics, in the Schools of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies and Computer Applications. The local organisers, Andy Way, Sharon O'Brien and Dorothy Kenny, are particularly pleased that DCU is hosting this prestigious conference on behalf of CLAW and the EAMT.

For further details on the conference programme, registration and other sponsors, see <http://www.eamt.org/eamt-claw03/>.