

## **Terminology in the Web (accessibility), via the Web (distribution) and through the Web (creation)**

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Terminology in the meaning of terminology science and terminology work still suffers from a number of “old” ailments, the most important of which are the lack of recognition for its importance, the relative low degree of availability of high-quality resources, the labour-intensiveness (and therefore costliness) required to prepare terminological data using conventional approaches, the lack of esteem for terminology work among domain experts, etc. just to mention a few factors. Terminology in the meaning of representation of a set of closely related concepts is often considered to be a dull and uninspiring subject.

The potential users more often than not cannot find reliable terminological data when they need it and in the form fit for their purposes, or at the location needed. And there are quite a few neglected user groups in the real world who suffer from this lack of terminological data when, where, how they are needed in a given situation.

Let us consider the following scenarios:

(1) You are a beginner in a given application e.g. as

- an apprentice, trainee, etc.
- job newcomer: new hire, job transfer, new profession, etc.
- domain student, researcher, etc.

whether in education, research, business, publication or any other field of new professional engagement.

What are your problems in:

- understand new terms or terms with a new/different meaning, abbreviations, etc.
- positioning new facts in some domain knowledge structure,
- memorizing lots of new names,
- memorizing lots of new facts,
- understanding the new community “culture”, etc.

(2) “The best time to start terminology management for a project is the specification phase, i.e. the time before the actual development effort for the product or service begins. Controlling project terminology at this early stage is the most efficient method for ensuring that all communicators, including developers, use the same terms for the same features and functions throughout the life cycle of a product or service. Starting later, e.g., during the documentation or even in the translation phase, prevents effective source control. For example, once software development has reached a certain point, correcting inconsistencies carries such a heavy cost and time penalty that such changes are prohibitive. And if software is inconsistent, the documentation, as well as the translated versions of the software and the documentation, will be as well.” (Uwe Muegge 2007, p. 18)

Conclusions to be drawn from these scenarios, considering that hundreds or thousands of new concepts are born and named every day, in a more or less uncoordinated fashion, often in several languages simultaneously all over the world:

- (1) If any of us at a given time is a beginner, and if the terminology in a wider meaning in that phase is most probably not available when needed most, not to mention in the

form needed, then billions of people – in fact all of us – at some point or even several times in their lives have substantial problems, which so far has not been solved satisfactorily.

- (2) Most terminology work is performed after terminologies already exist in the form of inconsistent and not well organized data, which mostly lack the most essential information for being regarded as “quality data”, because they have usually been prepared long after the emergence of the respective terminologies and not by the people most involved in their emergence.

With traditional methods, which are largely governed by paper-based approaches for publication purposes, we will never be able to remedy this situation efficiently and effectively. The respective tools for supporting this traditional terminology work cannot solve the above-mentioned fundamental problems. On the other hand it is undeniable that terminological data exist and are used (most of them even many times every day) by a multitude of people, but are not “harvested” because of the lack of appropriate approaches and tools. In the course of development of the Internet from a semantic web to a social web this might radically change towards the better. In the course of this development pragmatics will play an ever important role.

This contribution will elaborate on ongoing new approaches towards tackling the “old” terminology problems, and on the impact this will have on terminology theory and methodology – and of course on pertinent standardization in ISO/TC 37 and beyond.