

# Software Localisation in Ireland

## SLIG '95

*Ireland, one of the world centres for the localisation of software, now has his own Software Localisation Interest Group (SLIG) which held its first day-long Conference and General Meeting on October 11, 1995, at the University Industry Centre of University College Dublin. The conference was attended by representatives of most Irish based localisation companies, among them Microsoft, Lotus, Claris, Apple, Symantec, Intel, Berlitz and ITP, as well as researchers and members of the translation profession.*

**Reinhard  
Schäler**

Ireland has established itself internationally as one of the major software localisation centres in the world, and the leading European location for such activity. Currently, 40-50% of the PC based software sold in Europe originates in Ireland. It is expected that this figure will rise to over 60% over the coming years. In Ireland, the localisation industry accounts for around 2 billion pounds worth in exports. There are approximately 4,000 people employed directly in the manufacturing and engineering of localised products. It is estimated that for every person directly employed two others are employed in dependent industries.

As part of the drive to maintain the momentum which has been built up in this sector, the National Software Directorate (NSD) proposed and facilitated the establishment of a special interest group for all parties involved in software localisation. This interest group, the Software Localisation Interest Group (SLIG), first convened in late February 1994, with representatives from academia and both overseas and indigenous companies attending.

On October 11, SLIG held its first annual meeting and conference at the University Industry Centre at University College Dublin. SLIG '95 was officially opened by *Minister Pat Rabbitte*, TD, who underlined the government's commitment to maintain and strengthen Ireland's role as the world's prime location for the localisation of software. *Barry Murphy*, the National Software Director, and *Helen Wybrants*, SLIG's chairperson, both highlighted in their opening remarks the remarkable work done by SLIG in the first year of its existence. They cited the active involvement in the preparation of proposals within the European Community's Fourth Frame-

work Programme, activities within Ireland's own Strategic Research Programme, and SLIG's support for the setting-up of a Localisation Resources Centre under the Technology Centres Programme. Localising Multimedia Products, Education and Training for the Localisation Industry, Localisation Tools and Terminology Issues and Localisation were the topics discussed during the 4 main sessions of SLIG '95.

*Seamus Gallen* (Forbairt) chaired the first session which was introduced by *Helen Wybrants* (ISC-Europe) giving an overview of the SLIG's activities in the area of Multimedia. The first speaker, *Paul Fenwick* (Intel Ireland), focused on localisation of multimedia training materials. *Marie Redmond* (X-Communications), outlined the activities of her company which localises multimedia products for commercial markets. *Marion MacDonald* (Cormorant) concentrated on localisation issues which have to be addressed during the development of multimedia software.

The second session, chaired by *Miriam Broderick* (Dublin Institute of Technology), dealt with the educational and training requirements of the localisation industry. Introduced by *Tony Mulqueen* (Isocor) speakers came from a commercially-run training institute (*Alfie Keary*, Centre for Advanced Technology Training — CATT), the Irish Translators' Association (*Gabriele Milch-Skinner*, ITA's Chairperson) and a tertiary level college (*Richard Sutcliffe*, University of Limerick). All three speakers presented the training programmes offered by their organisations and invited the localisation industry to become more actively involved in course development for specialised localisation training schemes.

'Localisation Tools' was the title of the third session, chaired by *Paul Holden* (Redacteurs Software Documentation). *Reinhard Schäler* gave an overview of SLIG's Tools Group and announced that the negotiations with Forbairt to establish a Localisation Resources Centre at UCD — an initiative which has the backing of SLIG and a great number of individual localisation companies — was at a very advanced stage which envisaged an opening date of January 1996. Further contributions to this session came from *Orlagh Neary* (Corel Corporation) who

talked about her company's experience with machine translation, *Orla Connolly* (SSE) covering computer-aided translation for software localisation, *John Rowley* (Symantec) discussing the option of in-house vs third party development of localisation tools and *Alan Barrett* (Lotus Development Ireland) outlining Lotus' involvement with the European Commission's 4th Framework Programme and its in-house development of a new tools suite for translators.

The session on Terminology Issues and Localisation was chaired by *Deasun O Conchuir* (NPi Training). Following the introduction of the SLIG Terminology Group by *Marion Gunn* (Everson Gunn Teo.), *Jennifer Pearson* (Dublin City University) reported on the European Terminology Initiative co-ordinated in Ireland by DCU, *Anna Mazzoldi* (Irish Translators' Association) gave an introduction to terminology resources on the Internet and *Catherine Gavin* (Berlitz) raised a number of important issues in relation to the industrial use of termbanks.

During the last session of the day, Helen Wybrants reported on the results of a survey carried out during the day among the participants of the conference. The objective of the survey was to give participants an opportunity to express their opinion on SLIG's first year of operation and to formulate strategies for future development. Participants had also been asked to indicate their interest in becoming more actively involved in one of SLIG's special interest groups or in SLIG's committee. The overall result of the survey showed a strong backing by those present for the ground-work performed by SLIG's outgoing committee. It also showed a very encouraging interest among participants in becoming more directly involved through participation in one of SLIG's committees.

Helen Wybrants closed the conference thanking Forbairt, and especially the National Software Directorate, for their support in establishing SLIG and expressed her hope to be able to welcome the participants again next year, for SLIG '96.