

PREFACE

The MT Evaluation Workshop was the first event to be organized under the auspices of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA) and the International Association for Machine Translation (IAMT), founded in 1991 at MT Summit HI in Washington, D.C.

Evaluation was chosen as the topic chosen for this first meeting in light of its growing importance for all areas and aspects of machine translation, from research to practical use. MT evaluation has seen a surge of spontaneous interest in recent years, and it is helping to sharpen focus on the research issues which hold the key to progress in the science of machine translation.

Since its earliest beginnings, MT research has stood at the cutting edge of linguistic theory and has quickly drawn on the latest insights. In some cases MT itself has been the impetus, enabling and spurring research in related fields such as natural language processing and computer science. As a testbed for linguistic theory, it has consistently attracted eminent scholars.

Mindful of the importance of evaluation for the dynamic development of machine translation science, the National Science Foundation saw fit to sponsor the Workshop and entrust its organizers with broadening the agenda for research in machine translation. The Workshop's program was specifically designed to bring out the link between evaluation and future directions in MT research—evaluation being seen not as a results-oriented activity but rather as an exercise that focuses attention on areas in which further study is needed.

More than 100 participants attended the Workshop. The discussions were lively, and they certainly they brought out the full range of issues. In some cases the record of the panels is given here in the form of verbatim transcripts. We took the trouble to capture and publish them because we felt that many of the views, insights, and subtle lines of argumentation would be best preserved in the speakers' own words. We have also included extended abstracts of most of the papers presented. We hope that our readers will like the freshness and informality of this format, and that they will find it as compelling and thought-provoking as we did while we were putting the volume together. IAMT and AMTA gratefully acknowledge the support of the National Science Foundation.

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Editor