Welcome to the ninth MT Summit!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to MT Summit IX, the ninth biennial international conference on Machine Translation. The Summit is the premier international conference to bring together people interested in computer-based language translation, including researchers, government officials, product developers and representatives of industry, professional translators, and members of the public. Every two years we have the opportunity to learn about new research developments, to see what is happening with commercial MT systems, to learn from users and translators what is most needed, and generally to have fun!

We have an excellent program this year. Once again the conference has grown. In addition to an unusually large number of high-quality papers and system demos in the main program, we have several tutorials and four workshops reflecting the variation and ongoing dynamism in the field. As appropriate, several of the tutorials focus on the use of MT. In contrast, the workshops span the gamut from deep methods (interlinguas), to MT evaluation, MT for Semitic languages, and teaching translation technologies and tools.

This year the conference rotation takes the Summit back to the Americas, making it the turn of the Association for MT in the Americas (AMTA) to host. As usual, organizing a conference takes a lot of work. Fortunately, in AMTA, we have a core of people who are dedicated, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable in this respect. It was both an honor and a great pleasure to work with the following team:

> Program Chair: Elliott Macklovitch, RALI, University of Montreal
> Local Arrangements Co-Chairs: Flo Reeder and Keith Miller, MITRE, Washington DC
> Workshops Chair: Harold Somers, UMIST, Manchester
> Tutorials Chair: Laurie Gerber, Language Technology Broker, San Diego
> Exhibits Chair: Laurie Gerber, Language Technology Broker, San Diego
> Webmaster: Jin Yang, SYSTRAN, San Diego
> Conference Registrar: Priscilla Rasmussen, AMTA Focal Point, New Jersey
> Local Arrangements Contact: Kristine Nations, Nations Travel, New Orleans

I thank them gratefully.

The three invited speakers, representing the IAMT's three major areas (Asia, Europe, and the Americas), address three diverse and interesting topics:

> Donald Barabé (Canadian Translation Bureau, Montreal): the government as MT user
> Pierre Isabelle (XEROX, Grenoble, France): a commercial perspective: MT tools
> Akitoshi Okumura (NEC, Tokyo, Japan): R&D in speech-based machine translation

I am delighted that they are able to address us.

The International Association of Machine Translation (IAMT) consists of the members of its three regional component organizations, the AAMT (Asia), EAMT (Europe), and AMTA. Through it, you gain access to international and regional conferences, the IAMT's news magazine MTNI, the MT Compendium of software products and reviews, and people, organizations, and companies interested in translation. I urge you to attend the IAMT Business Meeting and also to join your regional association, through which you automatically become a member of the IAMT.

While we are meeting here to discuss MT, there is still no replacement for personal contact. We have arranged breaks, a reception, and a delightful banquet to facilitate discussion, collaboration, and the continuation or formation of connections. We hope the ambience of New Orleans, as the birthplace of jazz, and the lovely conference venue in the Fairmont hotel help to make this an enjoyable experience for all. We hope to see the results in future MT conferences: new friendships and partnerships, and the continued healthy growth of Machine Translation!

Welcome, and enjoy the conference!

Eduard Hovy
MT Summit Conference Chair
Marina del Rey, 2003