

Welcoming address
ELAG 2003

Dear ELAG Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you in Bern, at the National Library of Switzerland, for this ELAG 2003 seminar.

First I want to thank our hosts, Mr. Jean-Frédéric Jauslin, Mrs. Genevieve Clavel and the other colleagues from the Swiss National Library for the invitation to meet in this place and for all the efforts they already have done in the preparation of this conference.

Bern is the capital of Switzerland, a country situated in the heart of Europe, where several, quite different, cultures meet. Thanks to this special location the country is rich in four languages: German, French, Italian and Romansch. This multi-lingual characteristic, of our host country, inspired us to chose as the main topic for the seminar « Cross language applications and the WEB ».

Thus looking into the programme we have two kinds of papers and workshops, one part concentrating on multi-lingual applications in our profession and the other part handling more ITC oriented developments.

Cross language issues were only touched on occasionally by ELAG in the past. It is an excellent idea to have this subject as the main theme on the programme now. While the global village is installing itself progressively, it is important for all of us to learn more about the management of electronic data in a multi-lingual environment. Cross language access to our rich collections is a vital service we have to offer to the end-users. So the major part of the papers of this meeting is devoted to multi-lingual access projects. As we all now, authority data play a key role in accessing the information we want to find. Other language issues such as for example the language aspects of metadata are treated in separate presentations.

Looking somewhat more into the new ITC developments some specific WEB issues such as the challenging Semantic WEB opportunities, will be addressed too.

The workshops, as usual deal with very varied subjects. I think you have all found a topic of interest to discuss during the workshop sessions. I even heard that some of you wanted to be able to attend two or even more different workshops. This, unfortunately, is not possible.

As for the progress reports, we had some problems while preparing the meeting. In fact it was not easy to get the progress reports done. But thanks to some pushing from the organisers I am happy to tell you that we finally got more than 30 documents to discuss and comment here.

So, this is a very brief introduction to this meeting. I hope the ELAG 2003 seminar will be of much interest to each of us.

Paula Goossens
President of ELAG