

How fluent is your computer?

France celebrates 50 years of Natural Language Processing.

Paris, France, June 23rd 2009. Language is the gateway to information and knowledge. How good computers are at language, or natural language processing, reflects how useful they are in helping us to navigate in the information world, find what we need and even understand foreign languages. This week, at the University of Sorbonne Paris, the French Association for natural language processing (ATALA) is celebrating 50 years of research and development.

The celebration brings together experts from Europe, Asia and North America who will discuss technological advances being made across the globe and what we can expect to see appearing in the future.

The European Commission will share its current impressions and vision of the future in a field it has strongly supported for decades and one which is core in building the global multilingual information society.

Throughout the day demonstrations of state-of-the-art technology will be given by French academia, global companies and a variety of small and medium sized businesses. How natural language is used to build better and better search engines or automatically translate may be obvious but the role it plays in competitive watch, risk detection and opinion mining will be revealed.

“While linguistics has been around since the time of Aristotle, it is at the heart of today’s digital information age” says Frédérique Segond, Principal Scientist at Xerox’s European Research Centre and president of ATALA. “Natural language processing is not only used to understand the text, but is fundamental in building sources of knowledge such as digital libraries or in helping us interact with computers using voice recognition. It can even be used to improve our health by detecting signs of illness from our medical records.”

To learn more and register for the 50th anniversary event, please visit: <http://www.atala.org>

About ATALA

Founded in 1959, ATALA which focuses on the dissemination of work and knowledge on automatic translation in France and other applications which result from the combination of computing, linguistics and statistics. It organizes an annual conference and publishes the journal TAL (Traduction Automatique des Langues).

About Xerox Research Centre Europe

[Xerox Research Centre Europe](#) in Grenoble, France creates innovative document technology which streamlines document intensive processes, bridges the paper and digital worlds and eases the task of information management in multiple languages. The centre is at the heart of many of the components in Xerox’s ‘Smarter Document Management’ suite such as text and image categorization, XML document conversion and advanced linguistic analysis tools which it has been developing for over 30 years.

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