



Joint UNESCO and ITU
Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet



The UNESCO's contribution for the inclusion of languages and local content in cyberspace: from oral languages to digital objects

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Highlights

- Over 50% of the world's 6000 languages are endangered
- 90% of the world's languages are not substantially represented on the Internet
- Approx. 20% of the world's languages have no written form
- **Africa** presents the higher linguistic diversity index





Highlights

Table 1
Linguistic diversity index scores by region

Region	Languages	Diversity index	Prop World Total
USA	170	0.7809	0.0020
N Am.	248	3.3843	0.0086
E Asia	200	4.4514	0.0112
W Asia	159	26.1539	0.0659
SC Asia	661	29.8093	0.0752
S America	930	30.5007	0.0769
Europe	364	32.4369	0.0818
SE Asia	1317	37.6615	0.0949
Oceania	1322	46.5653	0.1174
Africa	2390	185.6836	0.4681

Source: Ethnologue, www.ethnologue.com





UNESCO & Languages

- Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (32nd General Conference)
- Intersectoral Programme on Languages - 171 EX/20
- WSIS Thematic Meeting: Multilingualism for Cultural Diversity and Participation of All in Cyberspace (Bamako, Mali, 6-7 May 2005)
- 33rd General Conference – International Year of Languages (2008)
- WSIS (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005)
- Task Force on Languages and Multilingualism (DG Note 06/06, of 20 January 2006)





Major Key Issue

From “**oral languages**” to “**digital objects**”!!

Written form of an oral language
Scripts and semantic rules for a particular language
Mapping the symbols into a digital table (UNICODE
Consortium tables)
Standardization of fonts of characters
Software and hardware development

(enabling environment for the development of)

Local content on digital form (including content identifiers)





Recent Initiatives

- Guidelines and Studies – Policy and Awareness
 - Education in a Multilingual World
 - National Terminology Planning Guides
 - Thematic Edition of the International Journal on Multicultural Societies
« Languages on the Internet »
 - **Script Implementations (N'ko - Africa)**





Recent Initiatives (cont'd)

- Guidelines for Development of Writing System Support
- Complex Scripts Data Exchange Format
- Intellectual Property Rights and Writing Systems
- Handbook for Linguistic Data – Collection by Non-linguists
- Publication: Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet (UNESCO Institute of Statistics)





Recent Initiatives (cont'd)

- WSIS UNESCO Stand – Webcast on Multilingualism (Tunis, 16 November 2006)
- WSIS Roundtable: *For a Multilingual Cyberspace with the Participation of All in the Information and Shared Knowledge Society (Tunis, 15 November 2005)*
- Week on Linguistic Diversity: UNESCO 60th Anniversaire – International Mother Language Day (21 February 2006)





Pilot Projects, Online Resources and Multilingual Tools

- The Multilingual Content Management Platform (MLCM)
- SILA – A Multilingual webbrowser
- Modified version of Wordpad
- Graphite Edit Control





Pilot Projects, Online Resources and Multilingual Tools (cont'd)

- Multilingual Cultural Heritage Knowledgebase
- Internet Sound Record Library of Endangered Caucasian Languages in Danger of Disappearing
- Abkhazian-Georgian Dictionary Project
- Ethiopian Computer Standards





Pilot Projects, Online Resources and Multilingual Tools (cont'd)

- UNESCO's Atlas on Languages in Danger of Disappearing (Africa)
- Arabization of Internet Domain Names





What's Next: 2006-07

- All sectors of UNESCO work on the promotion of languages in general, in the framework of an inter-sectoral programme on languages;
- Important initiatives:
 - African Year of Languages
 - Creation of a Portal UNESCO-languages
 - Guidelines for Inclusion of Languages in the Digital World: Research Study, Publication, Web and CD-ROM





What's Next: 2006-07 (cont'd)

- Directory of Experts and Institutions on Multilingualism in the Digital World (including language academies)
- Pilot Projects: scripts encoding in each continent
- Multilingualisation of Webworld





What's Next: 2006-07 (cont'd)

- Participation in the initiative 'World Network for Linguistic Diversity'
- WSIS C8 Consultation (Geneva, 12 May 2006)
- ITU-UNESCO Global Symposium on Promoting Multilingual Internet (Geneva, 9-11 May 2006, <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/multilingual>)





Further Information

- www.unesco.org/webworld/multilingualism
- E-mail: c.menezes@unesco.org

Thank you

Merci

Gracias

Shokran (شكرا)

Spassibo (Спасибо)

Shei shei (謝謝)

Obrigado (my mother language)

