

SDL Workshop

The joint ITU-T and SDL Forum Society workshop on "ITU System Design Languages" was held on 15/16 September in Room B2 in the ITU Tower with about 20 participants. It covered the plans for language development with focus on SDL, MSC and URN. Papers showed how modelling with the ITU System Design Languages were used in various domains, such as for ad-hoc networks and protocols, early warning systems for earthquakes and complex routing protocols. On the second day, plans were presented by the tool vendors Telelogic and Pragmadev, which showed a continued strong, though not growing interest in SDL. This was followed by a presentation on how the new version of the SDL-UML profile could be used in a self-constructed tool environment. The final presentation made a case for the use of meta models for the future development of languages.

The discussion placed some emphasis on the availability of open source, free or cheap tools to supplement the more expensive tools used in a production environment, also as an appetizer for the languages discussed. Another issue discussed was the need to reduce the barrier to entry via education, as well as the need to communicate the usefulness of the languages much more. It was pointed out that there is a strong base for the use e.g. of SDL by major manufacturers of 2.5/3G mobile phones, but also that take up in the Internet world was low, while the automotive and aerospace branches were retreating from modelling approaches altogether. Many who started with UML with high expectations dropped it later in disappointment, and this rejection of model driven design was also affecting ITU-T languages. Telelogic reported that the merge of SDL into UML was dropped, and it is now the intention to maintain SDL as a separate line of tools.

It was further discussed to address application areas beyond event driven ones, such as by including service platforms and management systems with huge data bases, as well as Identity Management data bases and protocols.

It was agreed that education and modelling with formal methods needs to be promoted.

The issues discussed here will be continued in the work of the ITU-T SG17 language questions, as well as at the next SDL Forum in Bochum, Germany, in September 2009. The addressed issues should be on the agenda for the Conference and it was considered critical to involve users in the process, both for the Conference and in the ITU-T work. The tool vendors are expected to play a major role here.
