

MEDAR

Mediterranean Arabic
Language and Speech Technology

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www.medar.info

Mission

The goal of MEDAR is to promote Human Language Technologies for Arabic through the establishment of a network of partner centres of best practice in Arabic.

Background

The development of language resources and tools for the Arabic language is important for the economy in the Arab countries: The industry itself provides new jobs, but more importantly the use of language technology makes administration faster and more efficient.

At the same time it is important for the culture. By focussing on Arabic language technology and making both the technology and content available in Arabic, the use of Arabic will grow. Language technology can also help access information in foreign languages, even without a very good knowledge of these languages. And finally, it can help spread Arabic ideas and culture to non-Arabic languages.

MEDAR builds upon the NEMLAR project, 2003-2005, funded by the European Commission with the goal of supporting cooperation between European actors and actors in the Arab Mediterranean region.

The MEDAR project

MEDAR is also supported by the European Commission. The project is running until July 2010. See www.medar.info.

MEDAR has 4 main objectives:

1. Developing the **Cooperation Roadmap** based on a clear picture of the foreseeable technological trends, market potentials, and cooperation possibilities.
2. Supporting the **Development of tools and resources** on the basis of partners' technologies and open source code for a baseline MT system that will be made available as a MT kit for education, research and technology development after the project time.
3. Updating the **Basic Language Resource Kit (BLARK)**: the minimum set of resources and tools necessary for carrying out research and training on LRs and HLT, with a focus on MT and MLIR.
4. Consolidating the **Network** of players in all areas of Arabic HLT.

Dissemination is a very strong component of MEDAR. Dissemination takes place at scientific conferences, at workshops, through the website and newsletter etc. MEDAR organized the **2nd International Conference on Arabic Language Resources and Tools** in Cairo, April 2009.

The MEDAR roadmap

MEDAR has proposed a Cooperation Roadmap with the purpose of building sustainable Human Language Technologies for the Arabic language within and outside the Arabic world.

The following summarises those components and directions that will lead to success of the strategy:

- Universities and other educational institutions should collaborate to create the proper training and re-training (rehabilitation program for personnel from other disciplines who could be re-trained to fit the new requirements)
- Universities and research centres should collaborate to provide the basic and applied research in cooperation with industry to produce solid products
- Governments and funding agencies should facilitate, support and help companies and universities to initiate and sustain their products
- Governments should launch services/applications for citizens (e.g. e-government sub-projects, other e-initiatives) that will be accessed and navigated in Arabic language
- International companies specialized and interested in the HLT (and Arabic HLT) in particular should be encouraged:
 - to maintain the interest in Arabic
 - to provide services to the region and should be given the facilities to make this attractive for them
 - to maintain relationships with local companies and task forces
 - to utilize what is available locally.

The Network

You can join the new **NEMLAR Network** in LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

The Network is open to all experts in the field of Arabic language technology who share our goals. It is the intention that all members use the network to discuss new activities, find partners etc.