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Term lists or multimedia and collaboration? Future directions for online terminology resources

Ten years ago I made a survey into the terminological information on the web. Since then the number of different kind of online resources for terminology have increased in abundance. The largest part of them are glossaries and vocabularies compiled by subject field specialists or enthusiasts without any knowledge of terminological or lexicographical methods. In addition to them, several terminological and lexicographical data bases are made available via a www interface. Has the change during these ten years been anything else than quantitative?

The paper reports on a survey where about 200 freely available subject field glossaries and terminological data banks were analysed. The factors that are targeted e.g. the type of terminological data offered, number of languages, use and function of multimedia (text, images, animation, video) and hypermedia (linking, information retrieval tools) elements, authorship and ownership. The use of online multimedia has spread widely for many purposes since the first multimedia capable browsers were introduced and the Internet was opened to the public more than a decade ago. A question risen here is: to which degree do the sources for terminological information utilize multimedia and hypermedia elements?

Further interesting factors are interaction and collaboration, which have been there since the beginning of the Internet, but their importance has been emphasised lately as characteristics of almost any online service. Terminology work is collaborative work and therefore new collaboration tools such as wiki applications should be interesting for terminologists, too. Is it possible to join in an online project to collaborate with others who are interested in the same subject field? About 20 most interesting glossaries and other terminology sources are selected for a closer inspection. The results of these two surveys will for a basis for discussion on possible directions for the future online terminology work.