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3rd SIX MONTHS MEETING AND OPEN MEETING OF THE EUFORBIA PROJECT

(PIRA International, Leatherhead, United Kingdom)

MINUTES

September 12th – 13th, 2002

EUFORBIA Delegates:

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France: Gian Piero ZARRI, Peizheng WU, Sébastien HOURCAILLOU;

AXON, Portugal: Fátima PIRES;

PIRA International, United Kingdom: Don ALLEN, Anthony CONSTABLE-MAXWELL;

Department of Computer Science of the University of Milan, Italy: Elena FERRARI, Andrea PEREGO, Andrea MARCANTE.

Apologies for absence have been received by Peter STOCKINGER (MSH, France).

Thursday, September 12th, 2002

The 3rd EUFORBIA Six Months Meeting opens at 2 pm at the Leatherhead premises of PIRA International. Don Allen welcomes the EUFORBIA delegates.

Gian Piero Zarri reminds the EUFORBIA delegates that this Six Months Meeting — the last one of the EUFORBIA Project — concerns two main topics:

- A general discussion about the tasks to be accomplished in the last three months of the EUFORBIA project (last Official Revue in Luxembourg, improvements to the existing software, field tests, industrial perspectives, possibilities of extension of the project, etc.).
- The preparation of the EUFORBIA Open Meeting of Friday, September 13th.

Installing and testing the demos for the Open Meeting has, indeed, occupied a large part of the Thursday afternoon.

With respect to the first point, we can sum up in this way the main conclusions:

- AXON, CNRS and UNIMI unanimously believe that the bulk of the technical developments of the EUFORBIA filtering software can be considered as successfully completed with the release of Deliverable D11 and of the related software in July 2002, in time according to the EUFORBIA Workplan scheduling.
- From a software point of view, the next three months will then be devoted mainly to i) an improvement of some of the existing modules (e.g., a new version of the NKRL Annotation Manager that includes the possibility of constructing directly EUFORBIA labels “from example” will be released before the end of the project); ii) the

enlargement of the existing database of EUFORBIA labels and the expansion (and test) of the collection of existing NKRL filtering rules and of Milan Model filtering strategies.

- According to the EUFORBIA Workplan, PIRA will produce both i) a technical evaluation of the EUFORBIA software; ii) a market analysis of the existing filtering products in order to investigate the possibility of setting up exploitable derivatives of the EUFORBIA modules.
- Delegates agree on the proposal of grouping the residual deliverables into two documents: i) a “Final Version” of Deliverable D11 that, in addition to an updated description of ALL the EUFORBIA software, could also include some demos and (at least part) of the final version of the EUFORBIA ontology; ii) a Deliverable D12 that could comprehend, in addition to the report on the performance data of the EUFORBIA software and a global evaluation of the EUFORBIA results, also the analysis of the filtering market.
- Assuming that the Final Official Revue of the project will be held in Luxembourg end of November/beginning of December, it would be desirable that the two Deliverables could be ready for the end of October/beginning of November, in order to allow the referees to read these documents before the Official Revue.

With respect to the possible continuation of the EUFORBIA work after the end of the project, two possibilities have been evoked.

The first could consist in profiting from the extension of the present IAP-1 Programme for two additional years to propose an EUFORBIA-2 project in the context of the IAP-2 filtering activities. However, according to the Commission document “Follow-up to the multiannual Community action plan on promoting safer use of the Internet” (COM 2002 152), in IAP-2 the rating and filtering activities will be severely restrained with respect to the actual IAP-1 situation. In this domain, focus in IAP-2 will be on “...benchmarking of filtering software and services (performance, usability, suitability for European markets and new form of digital content). Technical development placed within Community research programmes” (page 15). Pure benchmarking activities are not really interesting for the technical members of the EUFORBIA consortium.

The second possibility consists in following the explicit invitation to submit proposals in the framework of the IST filtering activity included in the above quotation and envisioning then a continuation of the EUFORBIA work in an IST context. The problem, in this case, seems not to be that of finding new R&D topics (coherent with the actual EUFORBIA developments) that could justify the submission of a potentially successful IST proposal — as already evoked in the Luxembourg meeting in April, one of this new topics could be the acceleration of the creation of the EUFORBIA labels making use of dictating machines and natural language analysis techniques — but rather the “change of scale” (concerning both the size of the consortium, the budget, the management techniques etc.) that the creation of an IST consortium would imply. A

possibility could be, however, that of making the actual (or slightly enlarged) EUFORBIA group a component of a larger consortium submitting several co-ordinated filtering proposals in an IST framework.

Friday, September 13th, 2002

The EUFORBIA Open Meeting has been really a success — anticipated, in a sense, by the flattering interview on the EUFORBIA project given by Don Allen to the BBC in the morning of Thursday 12th. We can only regret the absence, in this meeting, of the consumer associations and childhood protection organisations that had been invited — an absence largely due, of course, to budgetary problems. This has been compensated, however, by the presence of institutions — like ICRA, the Port Sunlight Laboratories of Unilever, or the Institute of Educational Technology of The Open University — surely better equipped to assure, in case, some follow-up developments of the EUFORBIA results.

The Open Meeting opens at 9h30 am; Don Allen welcomes the audience on behalf of PIRA International and the EUFORBIA consortium. Gian Piero Zarri and Elena Ferrari introduce the main principles underpinning the EUFORBIA project by emphasising, among other things, the connections about the NKRL and Milan Model approaches obtained through the use of the EUFORBIA labels and of a common ontology. After some questions from the floor, Fátima Pires enters into some technical details about the general architecture of the NKRL filtering module.

After the coffee break, the assistance moves to the room where the demos have been installed. The NKRL demo is carried out by Fátima Pires assisted by Peizheng Wu. Fátima shows how the NKRL approach can deal with the overblocking problem characteristic of many filtering software by allowing the distinction between, e.g., a “real” violence site and a site devoted simply to the discussion of violence in films. She also shows how this approach can block specific pages within a site — e.g., pages of a rap music site concerning “lyrics” where sex, violence and drug consumption are exalted — allowing, at the same time, the free access to the other pages of the site. Peizheng gives some technical details about the inference engine that is at the core of the NKRL filtering module. At the request of the audience, Fátima shows in depth the functioning of the module for the creation of the EUFORBIA (NKRL) labels: as well known, “annotating” the sites with some indications about their content is one of the most critical operations in both the ICRA and the EUFORBIA approaches. Peizheng also shows briefly that, by using NKRL to set up the EUFORBIA labels, it is then possible to make use of the usual NKRL tools for “intelligent” information retrieval, allowing, e.g., to retrieve the “profession” (rap star) of the Snoop Dogg rapper, or the presence of photo of naked, “ordinary” housewives in a well-known English porn site.

Andrea Perego carries out the Milan Model demo. The Milan Model approach to filtering concerns mainly the utilisation of “user profiles” according to a credential based mode of functioning. Credentials represent the characteristics and qualifications of the users; a credential consists of a credential name and a set of credential attributes. Each user is associated with one or more credentials. For each user, there is a value for each attribute present in his credentials. Examples of credential names in a school context are Student and Teacher. The Student credential has attributes like “name”, “age”, “grade”, whereas the Teacher has attributes like “name” and “specialisation”. Giving values to the attributes, it is then possible to define access policies like: “The students who have an age < 18 can see objects dealing with guns, only if the violence rating is = 0”. Even if — at the difference of the NKRL tools which address more specifically the individual user — the Milan Model tools are mainly intended for the use of a community of users (e.g., the students who have an age < 18), this Model can allow the definition of specific access policies for specific users.

After a break for lunch, the Open Meeting resumes at 2 PM with a general discussion. The assistance expresses its deep interest for the theoretical principles and the practical realisations of the EUFORBIA project, and expresses also the wish that the EUFORBIA be continued and improved in a commercial context. In particular, the ICRA representative, Phil Archer — after having evoked the new IAP filtering project where ICRA is involved, SIFT, which aims mainly to define and implement an integration Platform based on existing filtering technologies to minimise the amount of software development needed — expresses the hope of a collaboration between ICRA and the EUFORBIA consortium on specific points of mutual interest. For example, ICRA is trying to set up a project to define a full "PICS-RDF" standard in the near future. Giving that NKRL — thanks to the work accomplished in the framework of a previous European project, CONCERTO — is already RDF-compliant, this new project could really profit from the NKRL/EUFORBIA experience.

The open Meeting ends at 3h30 p.m. of Friday.