Novel semantic tagging tool to benefit digital journalism

February 1 2016

Researchers from the EU Media in Context (MICO) project have published highly promising results. These will help independent news organisations in extending their publishing workflows with cross-media analysis and linked data querying tools.

The project primarily worked with two partners, Greenpeace Italy and Shoof (a start-up developing an Android app for user generated content). It focused on organising the news desk of small and medium editorial teams by creating a flexible network of metadata around both text and media.

The MICO researchers learnt that placing news online without providing

adequate context and analysis simply did not work, as the focus for digital news has shifted towards interactive engagement and fostering a sense of community.

By developing their semantic editor, called WordLift (a plugin for WordPress), and then having it utilised by Greenpeace Italy on their magazine website, the project team saw that structuring content with a classification scheme would provide the needed context to [news](#) stories. News content is now indeed being republished in many different forms and on many different platforms and devices.

This in turn allowed the team to realise that by structuring content and creating multiple access points (in the form of web pages), overall content discoverability over social networks and search engines increased dramatically.

By using semantic tagging – in essence tagging information with a specific term or resource – every content publisher begins curating a set of concepts that emerge from the content being produced and analysed. In WordLift these concepts are gathered by applying an internal vocabulary.

During validation tests with Greenpeace Italy, it was shown that this internal vocabulary brought a new level of self-awareness to the organisation. The editorial team began studying more carefully the relationship between the organisation, the concepts they used for tagging and their target audience.

Seamless technology

Overall, this process has helped them to make strategic editorial decisions by considering what connects to what and why.

The project team is still gathering the full data, but it is clear that classifying [news content](#) with a clear scheme is increasing both engagement and traffic.

Overall, MICO researchers have learnt through this stage of the project that journalists need technology to assist their work but this technology should not require too much of their attention.

The primary aim for journalists is to concentrate on writing engaging stories and creating meaningful relationships with their target audiences.

However, tools such as WordLift have proven their ability to help provide them with the all-important content structure and context that is increasingly essential in the digital age to engage, capture and retain target audiences.

More information: For further information please see the MICO project website: www.mico-project.eu/

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