Dive into the Tunnels and make the Multilingual Web work: Internationalization Tag Set (ITS) 2.0.

Last week W3C has published “Internationalization Tag Set (ITS) 2.0” as a W3C Recommendation. So, what is ITS 2.0, who is behind it, and why should you care?

# The Tunnels of Disneyland

Let’s compare this with Disneyland: you may not care about how the magic has come to life, as long as it is entertaining for you. In the same way you may not care about how Web content in your language was created, as long as it conveys the information you need.

But there are underground tunnels in Disneyland, with thousands of people and a lot of machinery interacting to make your experience perfect. The same is true for multilingual Web content creation: this is a complex process, often involving lots of people,tasks and tools: content creation in one language, preparation, the actual translation in potentially dozens of languages, quality assurance, and much more.

Like in the tunnels of Disneyland, you can be sure that communication in such complex workflows is key for making things work in a timely and cost-effective manner. ITS 2.0 provides standard meta-data to support that communication, with a focus on *automation*: ITS 2.0 helps to integrate content management systems, machine translation engines and computer assisted translation tools. It enables them to work together seamlessly in order to reduce the overheads associated with building your Disneyland in your language.

# A key Technology developed by key Drivers of the Multilingual Web

The [European Commission supported the development of ITS 2.0](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/language-technologies/project-multilingualweb-lt_en.html), to foster the vision of a European single digital market. ITS 2.0 was created by the [Multilingual Web – Language Technology Working Group](http://www.w3.org/International/multilingualweb/lt/) in just 18 months – a high speed in the standardization realm. This could only work because we had the [right people on the table](http://www.w3.org/TR/its20/%22%20%5Cl%20%22acknowledgements). To give two of many examples: Pedro Luis Díez Orzas, CEO of Spanish Language Service Provider Linguaserve, assured that ITS 2.0 was applied with major clients such as the Spanish Tax Office already during its development. This provided valuable input from the end users for the design of ITS 2.0. And David Filip from the Centre for Next Generation Localization helped to assure that ITS 2.0 is harmonised with other standardization efforts in the realm of Web technologies as well as localisation and language technology.

# Diving into the tunnels

If you want to learn more, consider as a start to use the [HTML5 Translate attribute](http://www.w3.org/International/questions/qa-translate-flag) when creating Web content in your language. It is understood by both online machine translation systems and [many ITS 2.0 tools](http://www.w3.org/International/its/wiki/ITS_Implementations). Then dive deeper into the tunnels and look into [usage scenarios for ITS 2.0](http://www.w3.org/TR/mlw-metadata-us-impl/). Finally and now different to Disneyland, you yourself will be able to make the magic of the multilingual Web happen.