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

Last week W3C published “[Internationalization Tag Set (ITS) 2.0](http://www.w3.org/TR/2013/REC-its20-20131029/)” as a W3C Recommendation. So, what is ITS 2.0, who is behind it, and why should you care?

# Like the Tunnels of Disneyland

Let’s compare this with Disneyland: you may not care about how the magic comes to life, as long as you are entertained. In the same way you don’t care how Web content in your language was created, as long as it conveys the information you need.

But there are many behind-the-scenes 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: it’s a complex process, often involving many people, tasks and tools: content creation in one language, preparation for localization, and actual translation into potentially dozens of languages, quality assurance, and much more.

Like in the tunnels beneath Disneyland, you can be sure that communication in such complex workflows is key to making things work correctly, 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 integrate content management systems, machine translation engines and computer assisted translation tools as well as human players. It enables them to work together seamlessly 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 fast outcome in the standardization realm. This was only possible because we had the [right people at the table](http://www.w3.org/TR/its20/#acknowledgements). To give three of many examples: Pedro Luis Díez Orzas, CEO of Spanish Language service provider Linguaserve, assured that ITS 2.0 was road-tested with major clients such as the Spanish Tax Office during its development. This provided valuable input from the end users on the design of ITS 2.0. And the group co-chairs Dave Lewis and David Filip from the Centre for Next Generation Localization assured that ITS 2.0 feeds into core localization and language technology research goals and 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 a bit unlike Disneyland, you yourself will be able to make the magic of the multilingual Web happen.