EU project MESHes semantic search technologies for new platform

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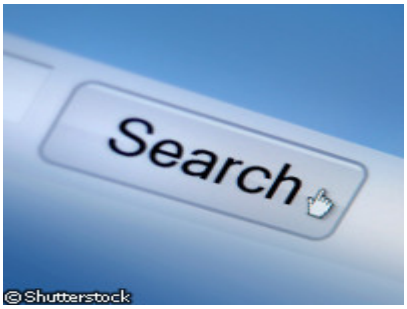

EU-funded researchers have developed an integrated platform for the Internet by combining advanced semantic search technologies and necessary tools. The MESH ('Multimedia semantic syndication for enhanced news services') project partners have set the pace for what's in store for search engine technology. MESH received EUR 7.4 million under the 'Information Society Technologies' (IST) Thematic area of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6).

The MESH partners said that searching fuels activity on the Internet and reduces the confusion that people feel when surfing the Web. They successfully established a working platform for a semantic search that generates results based on content and context of film and audio files, and text.

Existing search engines provide answers for individual keywords introduced. MESH is unique in that it initially evaluates the query and then provides results for the actual meaning of the query. Already the project's platform has been used in two restricted news domains: natural disasters, and civil unrest and street violence. Results show the platform has potential market opportunities.

'We developed a manual annotation tool to create manageable annotations for all types of media, and it is a very strong program that is easy to use,' said Dr Pedro Concejero of Telefónica Investigacion y Desarrollo, the coordinating body of MESH. 'This tool could become a commercial product.'

MESH partner Deutsche Welle of Germany also developed 'Full Story', a dossier-developing tool that supports editors in linking to audio, video and text that are related to specific topics. A typical situation in a TV editing room is when editors sort through many media archives to find material suitable for a compelling dossier. The difference with Full Story is that the editor can use the programme to perform the same task in just hours, not days.

'Deutsche Welle is currently evaluating the future prospects of Full Story with further extensive user testing, a comprehensive technology implementation plan and an outline concerning potential commercialisation,' Dr Concejero said.

The results obtained in the MESH project could also benefit user-generated content in the short-to-medium term. Experts say user-generated content plays a central role in Web 2.0 applications, which is the material used for networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

The MESH partners said the platform is a winner thanks to the project's automated annotation tool. 'Here at my company, Telefónica, we are very interesting in developing semantic search and annotation for user-generated content on mobile phones, but more work would need to be done on the technology developed in MESH to make it ready for that sort of application,' Dr Concejero remarked.

Participating in MESH were 12 partners from 7 EU Member States including Greece, Cyprus, the Netherlands and the UK.

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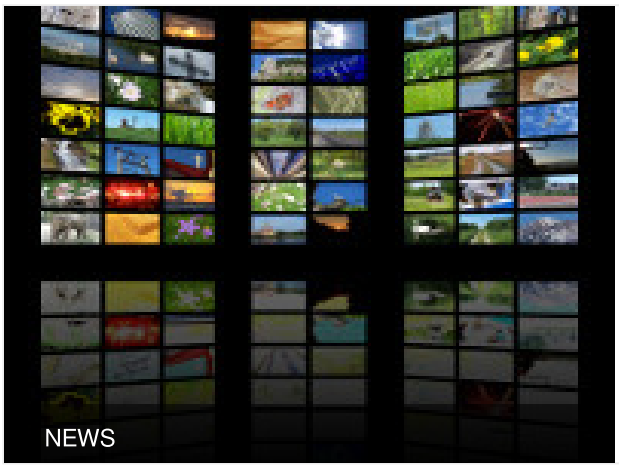

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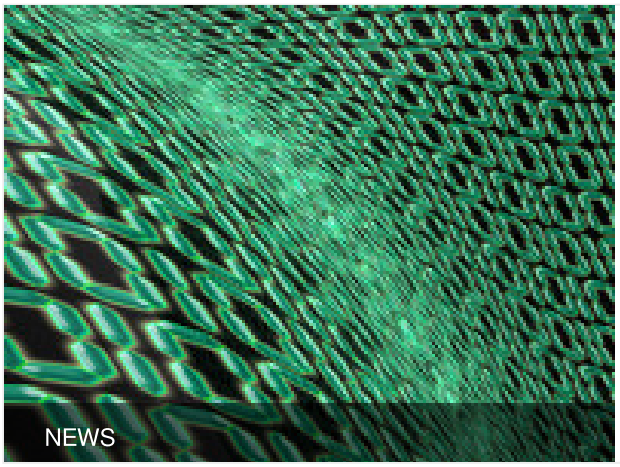

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