

SYNC3 Annual Report



Synergetic Content Creation & Communication

www.sync3.eu

SYNC3 takes media monitoring and tagging to another level by comparing the latest news from traditional media sources and the blogosphere, enabling users to track their evolution and share favourite stories. More specifically, SYNC3 will automatically build a 'thematology' of *news events*, based on a statistical modelling approach, providing brief labels (descriptions) of these events and determining temporal, geographical, and causal relationships between them. Most importantly, SYNC3 will appropriately update the statistical news event models to the blogosphere, allowing the system to automatically find blog posts that comment on these news events, and through a 'sentiment analysis' module determine the blog post author sentiment towards these events. Furthermore, through the use of graphs and maps on an interactive and intuitive user interface, SYNC3 will present a mine of information to the system users, allowing them to update such information individually or collaboratively.

Summary of Activities

The SYNC3 project has now completed its first 8 months. The most important achievements of SYNC3 during this period have to do with the identification of user requirements, the specification of the project architecture and the individual components comprising it, as well as the definition of the specific routes to be adopted, in order to effectively approach the target markets and communicate the project results. Furthermore, development work has been initiated on all technical components necessary in the path towards the first SYNC3 prototype, scheduled for the fall of 2010.

Collection of SYNC3 User Requirements

The SYNC3 user requirements identification phase has been successfully completed. Through a comprehensive and detailed survey, SYNC3 has managed to approach a significant number of end users, ranging from professionals and bloggers to policy makers and communication professionals. SYNC3 has prepared and released the "User Requirements and Specifications" Report, analysing input from 173 online questionnaires, 80 participants of Focus Groups that took place in four European countries, and 81 one-to-one interviews with bloggers from all EU27 countries. The results of the user requirements survey are being further processed to drive the activities for the development of SYNC3 and support all features and possibilities identified as crucial or important. In addition, this first specification of user requirements will be further refined based on the progress of the implementation phase, as well as user feedback collected during testing and evaluation of the SYNC3 prototypes.

Design of SYNC3 Architecture

During 2009, the project has designed the architecture of the SYNC3 platform, including the specifications of all SYNC3 components and the integrated platform. The project has reported on the concepts of the SYNC3 architecture, the internal functionality of the separate components, and the integration principles governing the collaboration of the different components. The SYNC3 architecture has been based on the user requirements report and the project objectives and has deduced the necessary use cases and usage scenarios, which need to be addressed during the implementation of the individual components. Within this context, the SYNC3 architecture report acts as the reference map for every stage of the development phase,

providing guidelines for the implementation of the individual components and their integration into the SYNC3 platform.

Initial Work on SYNC3 Component Development

The SYNC3 components have been defined in order to address the project objectives and serve user requirements. They provide innovative solutions by advancing the state-of-the-art in the following areas:

- Annotating the previously unstructured content of the blogosphere
- Clustering blog posts and news articles around news events, defined at a more accurate micro-detail than any current method
- Determining news event relations and blog post sentiments towards news events, by analysing clusters of text, instead of plain named entities
- Providing an easy-to-navigate user interface that is also rich in information
- Creating a community for collaborative blog content browsing and creation

Through the work performed in this period, SYNC3 has provided the following:

- A first approach for clustering news items into news events and for classifying the former into the latter
- Specifications of a knowledge representation language for blogs
- Specifications and document analysis for news events labelling and relation extraction
- A very early prototype of the exploration and browsing features of the SYNC3 User Interface
- A first corpus of news items and associated blog posts

User Involvement, Promotion and Awareness

During this period, SYNC3 has started building a community of supporters and enthusiasts, who have joined the project and contributed to the specification of SYNC3 user requirements. Through the creation of social networking groups in Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, SYNC3 has invited people to join the project and has established an efficient route to provide them with news on its progress. The SYNC3 Web Site has also been set up with the aim to make specific user target groups and the general public aware of the SYNC3 concepts and to constitute the main dissemination channel for maintaining the project developments and key achievements. Finally, within this period, the Consortium has studied the 'competitive landscape' by identifying and analysing market solutions and projects related to SYNC3 goals.

Future Work

Over the next year, SYNC3 will continue its core development phase, in which the first version of the main functionalities of its individual components will be finalized and integrated into a common platform. The developed components will perform automatic analysis of news items to detect events, topics, and themes, extract their labels, and find temporal, geographic and causal relations between them. Furthermore, SYNC3 tools will perform reasoning, search, and processing of blog posts, linking them to news events and determining their authors' sentiment towards them. Finally, SYNC3 will provide an intuitive and interactive user interface to allow browsing of relevant news and creation of news stories by the user. These components will be integrated into the first SYNC3 prototype using the already designed architecture. This prototype will be then released to the SYNC3 community of potential users for the first round of user evaluation. In addition to the above developments, the project will continue approaching

interested users for disseminating its concepts and first results, and for exploring business opportunities to allow SYNC3 penetration into targeted markets and user groups.

Further Information

- www.sync3.eu
- [SYNC3 Press Release](#)
- http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/content-knowledge/sync3_en.html
- <http://twitter.com/sync3>