SYNC3 - What users want: A powerful and simple tool to map the blogosphere

Athens, Greece, 8 October 2009

SYNC3 users want to track the news events that shape public opinion, connect to social networking sites and check the credibility of unknown bloggers. These were the main results of a survey revealed at the latest consortium meeting in Moscow on 1-2 October.

The survey comprised on-line questionnaires, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with potential users, including journalists, bloggers, communication professionals, policy makers and the general public. SYNC3 drew on the feedback of more than 300 people from all EU member states and third countries such as Canada, USA and India.

The results show that users expect an answer to the problem of time-efficient mapping of the blogosphere. They also view SYNC3 as a tool that would help users understand public opinion and identify trends and issues to be reported by professional journalists, or to be addressed by communication professionals. The survey also highlighted issues that require further investigation, such as how to check the credibility of unknown bloggers.

Dr Nikos Sarris, the project coordinator from Athens Technology Center (ATC), said: “There are several ideas on how to help users assess the credibility of blog posts. At this moment we are discussing features such as providing a ranking system or making different search facets available that will assist in indicating which blog posts are particularly credible according to their readership and impact. This issue will be particularly scrutinised during the prototype testing that is scheduled to start in the second half of 2010.”

The user requirements survey also showed a demand to include comments under news articles and blog posts as well as put a focus on micro-blogging tools such as Twitter. While such functionality was not included in the original concept, its relevance becomes increasingly apparent. “Twitter and Facebook have become platforms that actually rule the news information channels. But there is a crucial question we have to face. Who knew Twitter two years ago and how many people will be using it two and half years from now, when the SYNC3 will be completed? We understand that we need to address these new platforms, but at the same time we must remain flexible enough to cater for future changes in users' preferences”, comments Dr Sarris.

The Moscow plenary meeting, hosted by RIA Novosti, concluded the project’s inception period. Starting October, the consortium will focus on developing the components of SYNC3 and their interfaces in order to deliver features such as sentiment, temporal and geography analysis to practical testing during the second half of next year.

SYNC3 Consortium

The SYNC3 project is co-funded by the European 7th Framework Programme for Research and managed by a consortium of companies and organisations with vast experience in semantic analysis, content generation, web-programming, design, and journalism:

- Athens Technology Centre – [www.atc.gr](http://www.atc.gr)
- Leibniz Universität Hannove – L3S Research Center – [www.l3s.de](http://www.l3s.de)
Latest news is available through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn updates. Background to the SYNC3 concept, including its objectives, targets and scientific approach, is available on the project’s website www.sync3.eu.

Contact Info

Athens Technology Center S.A
Dr Nikos Sarris (Project Coordinator)
10, Rizariou Str. 152 33, Halandri
Athens, Greece
Tel: +30 210 6874300
Email: n.sarris@atc.gr