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The future of documents.



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In my last e-newsletter, I promised to tell you about some exciting innovations in the field of document and information management. So let's get started.

A new way to deal with information overload.

A small start-up company called Meshin recently launched a tool that uses advanced semantic technology to help Outlook users quickly find the information they need.

The new tool—which shares the company's name—works almost like a personal assistant, because it automatically pulls together relevant information from a variety of digital sources, including e-mail, internet databases, RSS feeds, web sites and social media.

Meshin can handle this complicated task because it understands the context of digital information and creates linkages between related content. As a result, it helps users automatically search through their ever-expanding in-boxes to find documents and data on a particular topic. Traditional keyword search technology can't come close to this level of performance.

The Meshin introduction is exciting news, because it is a prime example of semantic technology and context-ware computing. Both of those advancements will play a key role in the next generation of the internet and the coming Document 3.0 era.

Meshin is an outgrowth of research in natural language processing conducted at PARC, the renowned Palo Alto Research Center. And the start-up bringing the technology to market is a Xerox company.

Is 2011 the Year of the semantics? That was the topic of the panel I recently participated in at the Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA) in New York City, discussing with other panelists Brad Allen, VP of Elsevier Labs, Adriaan Bouten, SVP and CIO for McGraw-Hill, and Kevin Jiang, SVP of Technology Development for Thomson Reuters.

My answer was, not quite, semantics is already here. We at Xerox Innovation have worked on it for close to 20 years. In fact, 2011 might well be the Year of semantics awareness to the masses, as the Watson Jeopardy demonstration showed everyone.

But is there more to semantics than just fun question-answering games?

Can “text mining” save lives?

Factspotter® is another natural language processing technology that is making headlines with its remarkable ability to improve the productivity of information and knowledge workers. This innovative tool—which comes from the Xerox Research Center Europe based in Grenoble, France—essentially turns unstructured text into a form of coded data. Once that’s accomplished, you can mine unstructured documents like a structured digital database.

That may sound futuristic. But the French government has already launched a three-year research project called ALADIN to see if the text-mining capabilities of Factspotter® can help create an early warning system for hospital-acquired infections (HAI).

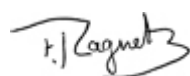
Here’s how it works. Medical researchers will use Factspotter to automatically review patient records and red-flag terms for symptoms, drugs, bacteria names and other information that might indicate a patient has contracted HAI prior to an official diagnosis. The patient’s medical team can then take action to prevent or treat the infection before it develops into a serious health risk.

This is a fascinating application of natural language processing technology. But Factspotter will undoubtedly have many other uses in medical research, litigation, risk management and other fields in the years ahead.

Semantic technologies will change the way we work in very big ways. For more information, take a look at this [white paper](#).

It gives you a preview of the coming attractions in the Document 3.0 era.

Sincerely,



Francois Ragnet

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