IGNCA TRAINING CUM WORKSHOP ON XML

Indira Gandhi Nationa Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)organized a three-day training cum workshop from 25th to 27th June 2003, in Delhi for the technical professionals working in all the nine CoIL-Net Resource Centres in India.

CoIL-Net is a special package developed by the Ministry of Communciations and Information Technology (MCIT). Government of India, for the net sueers and common people of the Hindi heartland stages - Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttranchal, Madhy Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Rajsthan. The entire database is in Hindi. There are nine CoIL-Net centres and each one has been assigned a specific task. The area covered by them are E-education; E-health; E-business; E-Herbs etc. But the experience of IGNCA is different from the others as the Centre is working on cultural heritage. The data available on cultural heritage cannot be kept in a universal model. Since the basic aim of CoIL-Net is to make available database to all, IGNCA worked out a model, with a little innovation and appropriate use of the available technology. This Training cum Workshop is a benchmark in this direction.

CoIL-Net Project inauguration by Member Secretary Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri (centre)

The Inaugural session began with the chanting of *Manglacharan* by Dr. Ajay Mishra, Dr. Om Vikas, Senior Director, (MCIT), Government of India, graced the occasion with his presence as chief guest. Dr. Om Vikas also participated in discussion on all three days of the workshop and shared his experience with the participants as a curious learner. three senior officers from MCIT, Dr. Pradeep Chopra, Additonal Director, Dr. P.K. Chaturvedi, Additional Director, and Shri Manoj Jain, Assistant Director attended all the sessions of the Workshop.

Participants at CoIL-Net workshop

Dr. Pradeep Chopra explained the significance and use of XML for the database. he stressed that, "Instead of knowing what is XML, as scientists we must ask why XML? If we are able to answer this question the very purpose of organizing this workshop is met. We should also work in cooperation with one another to ensure that the project is successfully over within the stipulated time frame", he concluded.

Dr. Kailash Kumar Mishra, Co-Investigator, IGNCA, shared the experience of the CoIL-Net project of IGNCA. The Cetnre has achieved wonderful success. We have digitized 2400 page of text and a huge quantum of audio, video material, graphics, sketches etc. The Centre has also made a format of guidelines for collecting and documenting the data from various cultural pockets. This format of guidelines was distributed among the participants of all the Resource Centres during a workshop in the BHU, Varanasi, in the month of May 2003 with a response sheet to offer their opinion about it. We have received acknowledging comments from most of the Centres. The laurels and appreciation we have received are the true indicators of our success.

Prof. Indira Nath Choudhri, Member Secretary, IGNCA congratulated the IGNCA team of CoII-Net for achieving the target. He also urged people to think in terms of coordinating thoughts with action and adopt measures to sustain the tradition of philosophic orientation of India and other countries in our region. Senior professors IGNCA, Prof. G.C. Tripathi, Prof. R.K. Bhatrtacharya and Dr. L.M. Gujral also interacted with the participants during the Workshop.

At present, all the Centres had created their database in HTML which is a presentation based programme. Cascading style sheets used in HTML are not powerful. As a result it was a very difficult task to address individual elements in this technical language. An alternative language was therefore immediately required to arrange all the information in a universal and web enabled pattern. Instead of what a document looks like, the XML describes what a document means. This excellent technical ability of this language makes it an appropriate language to be sued universally by all. C-DAC, a Pune based IT Company has the required professionals who could sensitize and train the computer professionals of all CoIL-Net Resources Centres.

Among those who participated in this workshop were: Dr. Om Vikas, Dr. Pradeep Chopra, Dr. P.K. Chaturvedi, Shri Vijay Kumar, Shri Manoj Jain and Shri Somnath Chandra, Dr. Rajendra Sahu, Shri Parag Dewan and Shri Paras Mahrotra, Shri Akash Saini, Ms. Kanupriya Bansal, Ms,. Pratishtha Mathur, Shri Naveen Gupta, Shri Ratna Shankar Mishra, Shri Ahri Abhisheki Singh, Shri Anurag Srivastava, Prof. D.P. Singh, Shri Mahendra Prasad, Shri Abhishek Mitra, Shri Anshuman Sinha, Ms. Hema and all technical members of Cultural Informatics Lab (CIL) of IGNCA. The trainers came from the C-DAC Pune and Delhi.

The workshop concluded with drawing up of a detailed plan, to make the project target oriented and time bound. The MCIT officials appreciated the work done by IGNCA and also requested IGNCA personnel to help other Centres in achieving their target.

Report by Dr. Kailash Kumar Mishra