



## **INDIGENOUS, MINORITY AND LESSER USED (IML) LANGUAGES CONFERENCE**

### **Conclusions**

# Quick Summary ...

**Laura Toby: Google Ireland**

Google's involvement with IML languages:

- cannot support all global languages to the same degree, but...

- Minority language initiatives (Cherokee/Welsh/Irish Gmail)
- Need for local engagement:
  - community effort, crowdsourcing approaches
  - involved with Endangered Languages Project (documenting, preserving)
  - follow the users – let the users create the demand
  - ask the question - what we can all do to promote language use online?



## **Prof. Kevin Scannell: St. Louis University**

- Full stack Language Technology
- Too much for one community to do alone

### Two case studies:

- Language revitalization at Biigtigong First Nation in Ontario
  - New Scottish Gaelic and Manx language learning resources for Irish speakers
- 
- Benefits of open source software, databases,
  - Grammar Bridging
- 
- Recommendations:  
Govt investment; recognise community contributions;  
tech industry support; cross-language collaboration

**Dr. John Judge: Dublin City University**  
**Dr. Elaine Uí Dhonnchadha: Trinity College Dublin**

- Challenges for IML MT: lack of data; lack of linguistic research; lack of expertise (few speakers/ low commercial interest)
- Culture with the MT community for openness and sharing
  - Both statistical and rule-based
  - Shared tasks, open-source frameworks
- Overview of two current government-funded MT projects:
  - MT integrated into translator's workflow
- Future plans for Irish MT
  - hybrid system – combining strengths of both approaches
  - indication of collaboration and sharing of resources

# Case Studies:

## **Prof. Ailbhe Ní Chasaide: Trinity College Dublin**

Abair.ie project: Irish text-to-speech synthesis

- Speech technology can contribute to the preservation and revitalisation of IML languages; assisting with disability learning; support at home
- Understand needs of languages; need a vision; ensure users are involved

# Case Studies:

## **Prof. Ailbhe Ní Chasaide: Trinity College Dublin**

Abair.ie project: Irish text-to-speech synthesis

- Speech technology can contribute to the preservation and revitalisation of IML languages
- Understand needs of languages; need a vision; ensure users are involved

## **Donald Morrison: CEO Stòrlann**

Educational support for Gaelic – making it accessible

- G4P (Gaelic for parents), online support, social media
- collaboration essential; invest and prepare for future demands

# Case Studies:

## **Prof. Ailbhe Ní Chasaide: Trinity College Dublin**

Abair.ie project: Irish text-to-speech synthesis

- Speech technology can contribute to the preservation and revitalisation of IML languages
- Understand needs of languages; need a vision; ensure users are involved

## **Donald Morrison: CEO Stòrlann**

Educational support for Gaelic – making it accessible

- G4P (Gaelic for parents), online support, social media
- collaboration essential; invest and prepare for future demands

## **Gareth Morlais: Welsh Government**

Welsh language digital projects, Welsh Action Plan

- Open-source developments; encouraging creation and sharing of Welsh language digital content; collaborations...

# Smart Tech: the way forward

**Delyth Prys: Bangor University**

Development of speech recognition technology for Welsh

- collaboration with Irish research made it happen (INTERREG)
- sharing work across languages
- different flavours of open-source
- we need to make the most of funding opportunities



# Smart Tech: the way forward

## **Delyth Prys: Bangor University**

Development of speech recognition technology for Welsh

- collaboration with Irish research made it happen (INTERREG)
- sharing work across languages
- different flavours of open-source
- we need to make the most of funding opportunities

## **Michal Boleslav Měchura: Foras na Gaeilge; Fiontar**

A need for tools that:

- facilitate creating original content in a minority language
- a minority-language community can use
- normalize the language in the public eye

# Challenges facing low cohorts of speakers

**Adrian Cain: Culture Vannin, Isle of Man**

Language technology for Manx

- competing with small budget
- the need to be creative, differentiate, point of difference

# Challenges facing low cohorts of speakers

## **Adrian Cain: Culture Vannin, Isle of Man**

Language technology for Manx

- competing with small budget
- the need to be creative, differentiate, point of difference

## **Gordon McCoy: East Belfast Mission**

Irish language learners' use of technology in East Belfast

- impact of dialectal difference on usefulness of technology
- different contexts present different challenges for IMLs

# Challenges facing low cohorts of speakers

## **Adrian Cain: Culture Vannin, Isle of Man**

Language technology for Manx

- competing with small budget
- the need to be creative, differentiate, point of difference

## **Gordon McCoy: East Belfast Mission**

Irish language learners' use of technology in East Belfast

- impact of dialectal difference on usefulness of technology
- different contexts present different challenges for IMLs

## **Mike Tressider: Cornish Language Partnership**

Cornish language movement

- 3 main online language learning environments

# Challenges facing low cohorts of speakers

## **John Murray: Ulster Scots Community Network**

### Challenges for US

- traditionally oral, no standard, many variations, mixed perception
- collaboration (digitisation), radio broadcasts, internet, web, social media

## **Tony Scott Warren: L'Office du Jèrriais**

### Online presence:

- repositories for language learning
- Twitter feeds, FB translation, Jèrriais Wikipedia
- YouTube channel and SoundCloud account

# Workshops Summary ...

## **How can IML language communities work together?**

- Important to have networking/ information sharing events like this
  - Suggestion for FB page or mailing list
  - Perhaps a website is needed?
  - General feel is that the landscape is better today with active networking and collaborating
- 
- Some technologies are easily ported to new languages
  - (e.g. similar language families)
  - Learn from strategies of other languages
  - Avoid duplication/ making similar mistakes
  - Open-source: easy to port

# Workshops Summary ...

**What more can we do to make IML languages more attractive to multinational companies?**

- Corporate social responsibility
- Importance of volunteering with expert volunteers. Needs to be sustainable. (academy of software localisers?)
- Need backing from bodies such as BIC or lobbying at government level
- If there's a movement towards open-source localised options, MS etc. will take notice
- Obligation for companies to support local languages
- Suggestion for tax contribution.... 😊

# Tuesday's summary

**Dr. Jeremy Evas: Cardiff University**

## Availability of Welsh language interfaces

- force a choice, don't choose for them
- normalisation of minority language use
- debunk the myths regarding use of Welsh “versions”
- change the defaults
- people appear not to like being threatened/ manipulated emotionally
- language rights and use do go hand in hand, if choice is architected correctly
- focus attention on how speakers can be “nudged” towards using localised technology



# Role of media in promoting IMLs

**Rónán Mac Con Iomaire: RTÉ**

Normalising Irish language use

- 1.8 million “declared speakers” – why are they not speaking?!
- Positive disposition, shift in attitude is promising
- Irish not part of normal life, not naturally present
- Role of media: introduce Irish into daily life, normalise it

# Role of media in promoting IMLs

## **Rónán Mac Con Iomaire: RTÉ**

Normalising Irish language use

- 1.8 million “declared speakers” – why are they not speaking?!
- Positive disposition, shift in attitude is promising
- Irish not part of normal life, not naturally present
- Role of media: introduce Irish into daily life, normalise it

## **Ciarán Ó Cófaigh: ROSG**

Role of technology in providing access to other minority language speakers

- Irish language community – geographically separated
- suggests: online virtual worlds (avatars), MS HoloLens
- forum for one-to-one access for learners worldwide
- Irish media: make connections with learners across the wor...

# Languages and technology for young people

**Janice Feighery: Techspace**

Techspace as Gaeilge (with DAHG)

- Provide training to teachers/ youth in using technology
- Inspire confidence in early years
- Translation projects (Adobe Youth Voice, dubbed videos)
- Get young people to influence use of language in technology

# Languages and technology for young people

## **Janice Feighery: Techspace**

Techspace as Gaeilge (with DAHG)

- Provide training to teachers/ youth in using technology
- Inspire confidence in early years
- Translation projects (Adobe Youth Voice, dubbed videos)
- Get young people to influence use of language in technology

## **Alan Esslemont: MGALBA**

Web-based language learning for young people

- only 1% speak Gaelic
- significant growth in numbers visiting language learning site
- Social media has helped (connecting Gaelic speakers)
- Non-linear tools are the way forward
- Collaboration to build basic language toolkits

## A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page. It features a light beige background with a subtle grid pattern. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles in shades of beige and cream. A small, solid blue sphere is positioned near the bottom right, partially overlapping a larger beige circle. To the right of the blue sphere is a small, hollow blue circle. Below the blue sphere is a solid beige rectangle.





Go raibh maith agaibh