CLARIN

February 2009

CLARIN Centres

What is it?

Centres form the backbone of the CLARIN research infrastructure in so far as they offer well-described services to the researcher community at a clearly specified service level based on a persistency statement. CLARIN centres fulfill a number of requirements that support the integration and interoperability goals in the emerging cyberinfrastructure scenario. Centres will offer different types of services such as access to data resources, execution of web-applications and services, support of infrastructure type of services, advisory services and long-term persistency services. CLARIN centres need to support researchers the way they want to use data and tools.

What is it for?

Users increasingly often want to

- move towards a cyberinfrastructure usage scenario and not to first download, install and adapt all kinds of incompatible data and operational resources;

- rely on stable and persistent services to access and enrich all kinds of data resources and to execute a wide variety of operations on these resources;

- combine data resources to new virtual collections and operations to new virtual workflows with one identity and without being confronted with the idiosyncrasies of web portals;

- be freed from (long-term) resource management tasks without losing the direct access to their resources;

- be sure that they can rely on the long-term existence of a number of infrastructure services supporting the integration and interoperability work.

Only centres of new type with a clear service attitude close to the researchers' needs and work processes will enable the emerging discipline crossing eScience paradigm.

Who can use it?

- The CLARIN centres backbone infrastructure offers its services to all researchers that work with language resources and technology be it in written, sound or movie form, in particular in the humanities and social sciences.

- CLARIN primarily organizes centres and researchers from the linguistic domain at large, integrates resources and tools and develops the required standards and best practices from this domain.

- Once setup it will also be open to integrate language resources and tools from other disciplines into its integrated and interoperable domain.

- The CLARIN centres infrastructure will link up with other infrastructure initiatives to benefit from each other as much as possible.

When can it be used?

A first network of centres offering resources will be set up in the preparatory phase of the CLARIN project in a stepwise manner. First we will focus on all integration aspects including a joint metadata domain and a single-identity/single-sign-on domain. Stepwise we

will tackle the very hard to solve interoperability problems. The web site will inform interested users which services will be offered at which moment in time.

How does it work?

CLARIN distinguishes a number of different centre types:

(1) **Recognized Centres (Type R)** offer resources and tools via standard web sites, but that (yet) do not have funds to participate in the CLARIN infrastructure and that cannot give commitment statements;

(2) **Metadata Providing Centres (Type C)** offer machine readable metadata in a stable and persistent way allowing service providers to harvest their metadata and making them browsable, searchable and combinable;

(3) **Service Providing Centres (Type B)** offer services that include the access to resources and tools via specified and CLARIN compliant interfaces in a stable and persistent way;
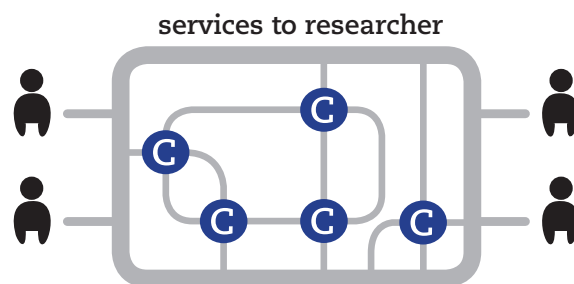
(4) **Infrastructure Centres (Type A)** offer services that are relevant for the infrastructure as a whole and that need to be given at a high level of commitment; in contrast to Type B they offer services that are used by other centres;

(5) **External Centres (Type E)** offer CLARIN relevant services but which are offered from non-CLARIN members.

Most important for the CLARIN backbone infrastructure are Type A and B centres, since they will allow the kind of integration and interoperability users want to benefit from in the emerging eScience scenario. Often we will find mixed types, i.e. Type B centres also will offer metadata, Type A centres may also offer LRT services, etc. It is a requirement for all centres that they adhere to the agreements that will be defined for CLARIN centres. These requirements will change over time dependent on the discussion and implementation process. Currently, we can describe requirements such as: a robust repository system, metadata descriptions according to the ISOcat vocabulary, metadata harvesting via OAI-PMH, association of PIDs with their resources and participation in the emerging service provider federation that will implement a domain of trust. For most of these infrastructure pillars hierarchies will be established, where national contact points will take responsibility for the national level of organization and quality and where the European organization will combine services at the European level.

Centres in CLARIN need to adhere to some fundamental principles: independence of internal organization, explicitness of services, consistency of services, adherence to interaction protocols and responsibility for services.

services to researcher

Who is responsible?

The CLARIN research infrastructure as a whole will be responsible. However, a layered system of responsibility will be required, i.e. similar to the GEANT network services there will be

- a European umbrella with a number of contact points, portals and service centres;
- national coordinators and service centres taking responsibility for the various national contributions and
- institutional centres offering services to researchers.

Whom to contact?

For the CLARIN research initiative the official web-site gives all information also about the national coordination points: http://www.clarin.eu

For all services at European level we suggest to first contact the coordinator's office or the leader of the technical implementation aspects:

Steven Krauwer, Hetty Winkel:
    steven@krauwer.nl; hetty.winkel@let.uu.nl

Dieter van Uytvanck (MPI): dieter.vanuytvanck@mpi.nl

Where to find more information?

The official CLARIN web-site is the source of all information:

CLARIN: http://www.clarin.eu

CLARIN Centres Document:
    http://www.clarin.eu/specification-documents

CLARIN Centre Types Document:
    http://www.clarin.eu/specification-documents

The last version of this document is maintained at the CLARIN Web-Site under documents: www.clarin.eu/documents