

Bridging Strategy and
Technology

ESG Consulting GmbH

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Using knowledge: – Fraunhofer ISST and ESG Consulting involved in the THESEUS research programme

By order of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi), these two companies will be responsible for the accompanying research in the "THESEUS" programme.

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THESEUS involves designing various applications for Internet-based knowledge infrastructures over a period of five years. The scope of applications will range from automatic analysis of medical images, through supporting business processes, to building up digital libraries and media archives with powerful, customisable and platform-independent user interfaces. In order to create these infrastructures, various different basic technologies will be developed in parallel, such as technologies for automatic semantic analysis of texts and multimedia objects, or for handling ontologies. The aim of THESEUS is to provide German companies with intelligent Internet applications to equip them for the future in an increasingly competitive marketplace, to gain access to existing economic markets and to open up new ones.

The task of the accompanying research is to compare the technologies and applications developed in THESEUS with comparable initiatives in the European and international spheres. To this end, a reference model is currently being developed at the Fraunhofer ISST that will be able to record a network of characteristics of knowledge infrastructures. The structure of this model will make it possible to compare even large technology

projects with one another. This systematic analysis is intended to ensure the effectiveness of the procedures, methods and applications (or business models) developed in THESEUS. In addition to this, the accompanying research will also support the interlinking of the 30 consortium partners in the THESEUS programme with international partners and initiatives, as well as with national small and medium-sized businesses.

"Efficient knowledge infrastructures are traditionally one of the great strengths of both German industry and German science," explains Prof. Herbert Weber. "If we don't want to get left behind in this area, we'll have to learn that knowledge needs to be handled in a radically different way in the age of the Internet." In addition to topics such as "Semantic Technologies" and "Next Generation Internet", which play a central role in the THESEUS programme, Fraunhofer ISST and ESG Consulting will also be dealing with more far reaching demands of knowledge infrastructures during the course of the accompanying research.

The Fraunhofer organisation has previously declared that developing technologies and concepts for efficient knowledge handling is one of the most important application-oriented fields of research, which is one of the reasons Fraunhofer ISST is so heavily involved in the THESEUS programme. "The technical challenges are only the tip of a very large iceberg," Weber emphasises. "Modernising knowledge infrastructures, which are used to develop technologies, products and services in a company, to reach decisions at the management levels or to coordinate and communicate the results of research in the scientific community, involves a radical change at various points in the production, communication and work processes, some of which have grown up over years. To carry out this restructuring without too many interruptions, a large number of experts from a wide range of fields have to work together very closely and decision-makers need to have the courage to take risks and try out new approaches in many areas. In the long term, however, it would be riskier not to do this."

An open specialist portal is being created for communication with experts. In coming years, the scientific and technical discussions will be elaborated further in workshops and at various large symposia and the results will be debated in public. Interested parties from all social groups are invited to become involved. "When the project is completed, we don't simply want to hand over a report: we want to hand over a knowledge infrastructure of our own."

Further information:

<http://www.isst.fraunhofer.de> - Fraunhofer ISST's Internet presence

<http://www.esg-consulting.com> - ESG Consulting's Internet presence

<http://www.theseus-programm.de> - The THESEUS programme's Internet presence

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