Symposium on Digital Semantic Content across Cultures
C2RMF
Palais du Louvre, Paris
4 May 2006

Mesdames et Messieurs,
Hyvät naiset ja miehet
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In welcoming you all to this symposium on behalf of the Association franco-finlandaise pour la recherche scientifique et technique - French-Finnish Association for Science and Technology, I would like to express our gratitude to Les Musées de France for making it possible for us to convene in these prestigious surroundings

One can hardly imagine a more inspiring venue for discussing the conservation of our cultural heritage, albeit in the modern digital form.

When we got the idea, during a board meeting, to propose a workshop of this kind, it was in the spirit of the main themes of our association. We want to promote the idea that the concept of the information society, or knowledge society for that matter, has to include all the implications of the new technology, not just the technology alone.

We also saw very little point in duplicating one of the many conferences held concerning IT and even the semantic web. As we can see in the programme there is a very nice balance between the technology and culture-related applications. This is the unique feature of our seminar. Indeed, it is opportune to begin with the culture-oriented part today and have the technology-weighted sessions tomorrow.

From the Finnish point of view, we were eager to propose this topic as we admire, not only the magnificent cultural heritage of France, but also your efforts to conserve it and to make it accessible to people, including future generations, both in France and elsewhere.

From our point of view, we would also like to encourage our own politicians and authorities to provide the necessary means to conserve our own heritage and make it accessible as widely as possible. On this occasion, the semantic Web technologies offer an efficient avenue even for a smaller nation and a more remote culture. This is why we are pleased to see that the scope of the seminar includes access to contents in different languages from different cultures.