Christian Galinski at 80: A Pillar of Terminology Studies and Global Communication

Christianui Galinskiui – 80: terminologijos ir pasaulinės komunikacijos ramstis

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INTRODUCTION

The field of terminology is integral to effective communication across disciplines, languages, and borders. The principles of terminology studies are designed to ensure that terms and definitions are used consistently and accurately, facilitating mutual understanding in a globalized world. At the heart of this discipline stands Christian Galinski, whose work over the past several decades has significantly influenced the development and propagation of terminology studies, standardization and cooperation. As Galinski celebrates his 80th birthday, it is pertinent to reflect on his vast contributions to this field, which have left an indelible mark on both academic and practical domains.

CHRISTIAN GALINSKI:
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1944, Christian Galinski grew up in a post-war Europe, where the need for clear and precise communication was more critical than ever, as the continent geared up to rebuild itself in a multilingual, technical environment. His academic journey started at the University of Bonn (Germany), where he studied Japanese, Chinese and communication. After several years in Japan, he started his first business as a Japanese translator in Vienna. This experience and his extensive background in linguistics, communication studies and information science laid a strong foundation for his future work in the field of terminology.

In the late 1970s, Galinski became deeply involved with Infoterm, the International Information Centre for Terminology, based in Vienna. Infoterm was founded in 1971 under the auspices of UNESCO after the long–time efforts of Eugen Wüster, an Austrian linguist–industrialist. The mission of Infoterm was to function as an information and documentation centre to support international collaboration in the field of terminology. In 1986, Christian Galinski was appointed as the director of Infoterm, a position that he holds until today.

Infoterm evolved from that time on to an international information and documentation centre for terminology, established a huge library with a large range of publications related to terminology, and published several bibliographies, such as BiblioTerm (BIT) and StandardTerm (STT).

In the late 1980s, Christian Galinski was instrumental in the formation of TermNet, a membership-based professional organization uniting universities and other professional organizations from all over the world to promote training, exchange information, and provide professional certification. As a long-time Executive Secretary of TermNet, his efforts to conduct workshops and training seminars throughout Eastern Europe and beyond have not only benefited the profession but have also contributed to global understanding and unification.

GALINSKI'S CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE FIELD OF TERMINOLOGY

Christian Galinski's influence in the development of terminology studies, terminology standardization and terminology cooperation is multifaceted. His work has been instrumental in advancing theoretical frameworks and practical applications alike.

Galinski has been a key figure in the development of international standards for terminology. He has been the secretary and committee manager of ISO/TC37 "Language and Terminology" for decades and a driving force for many of the TC37 standards. Christian Galinski is still very active in several subcommittees and working groups, currently in a new working item about concept–based microcontent entities.
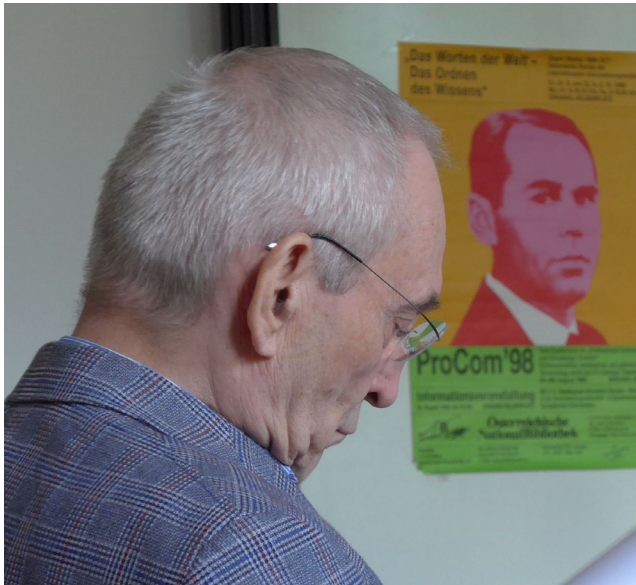
Besides his engagement in Infoterm and TermNet, Christian Galinski also facilitated the foundation of the International Institute for Terminology Research (Internationales Institut für Terminologieforschung – IITF) and actively supported the creation of other pertinent associations, such as

Christian Galinski and Klaus-Dirk Schmitz at the Infoterm office at the University of Vienna (2012)

the German Terminology Association (Deutscher Terminologie-Tag DTT) and the European Association for Terminology (EAFT). Two primary accomplishments are worthy of note:

– During the late 1980s, attention was drawn to the relationship between terminology and knowledge engineering. In 1986, the Association for Terminology and Knowledge Transfer (*Gesellschaft für Terminologie und Wissenstransfer, GTW*) was founded in Trier, with vast support from Infoterm (Christian Galinski and Gerhard Budin). The first conference on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering (TKE), which took place in 1987 in Trier, attracted several hundred experts from various related disciplines such as terminology, knowledge organisation, classification, and computer science. In the ensuing years, TKE conferences were held every three years in Trier (1990), Cologne (1993), Vienna (1996), and Innsbruck (1999). After further events in Nancy, Dublin and Madrid, TKE and GTW were moved in 2005 to Copenhagen, where GTW was dissolved in 2022.

Christian Galinski studying the programme of the Terminology Summer School 2017 in Cologne

– During the 3rd International Congress on Terminology and Knowledge Engineering – TKE'93 in Cologne, Galinski convened experts in the field of terminology to establish a high-level German-language terminology initiative. In 1994, the Council for German-language Terminology (Rat für Deutschsprachige Terminologie, RaDT) was established at the inaugural meeting on the premises of the German Commission for UNESCO in Bonn. As an initiative of the German, Austrian and Swiss UNESCO Commissions, the RaDT is an expert group (approximately 25 members) comprising German language organizations, associations, government agencies, business and educational groups which deal with terminological issues, applications and curricula. The group's goal is to represent all organisations concerned with terminology from all German-language regions, including Luxembourg, South Tyrol and Belgium. Its objectives are to increase awareness of terminology in German language countries, to promote cooperation and collaboration in the field of terminology, to coordinate and support terminological activities and to create, disseminate and help implement guidelines for terminology policy and strategy. Since 1994, RaDT has been meeting twice a year at various locations in German-speaking areas to exchange information and produce publications, and Christian Galinski has remained an active member from the beginning until today.

Galinski has been at the forefront of integrating technology with terminology management. He has championed the use of digital tools to create, store, and disseminate terminology databases, facilitating easier access to special knowledge. I remember his "mantra" during the 1990s, that everybody would soon have a pocket knowledge database (Taschenwissensbank) where they could look up everything, including multilingual terminology; today we see with smartphones, internet access all-around, Google, machine translation and AI technologies, that Galinski's vision has become reality. Christian Galinski was also one of the first experts in the field of terminology to talk about interoperability among different types of knowledge resources and not only multilingual but also multimodal accessibility of content.

As Christian Galinski celebrates his 80th birthday, the significance of his contributions to terminology studies, terminology cooperation, terminology standardization and global communication cannot be overstated. His work has laid the groundwork for much of what we take for granted in today's interconnected world. From developing international standards to promoting multilingualism and integrating technology with terminology, Galinski's legacy is one of unwavering dedication to improving communication across all domains of human endeavour.

Looking ahead, the field of terminology will undoubtedly continue to evolve, but it will do so on the foundation that Christian Galinski has so meticulously built. His life's work serves as an inspiration to all who seek to improve understanding in our increasingly complex world, and his influence will be felt for generations to come.

Gauta 2024-08-13

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