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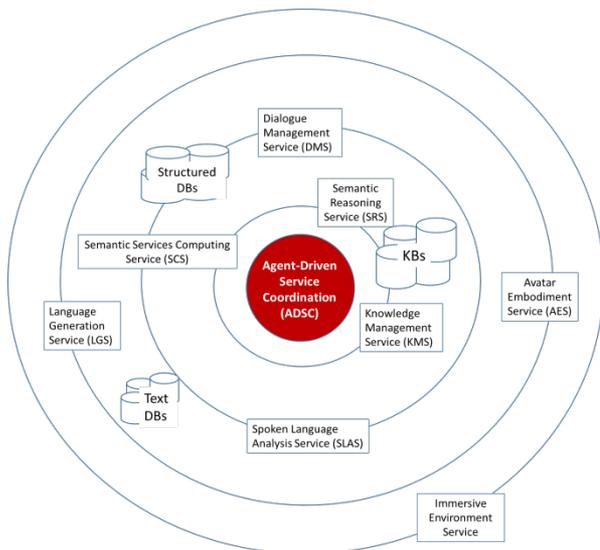
EU Project

WELCOME

Service-based design

Impact and results

Impact

WELCOME will deliver a mobile device-based platform, which will facilitate the interaction of migrants and refugees with virtual agents, and a desktop-based solution for the support of authorities.

Results

o Quality of the migrants and refugees reception and integration practices
o Protection of vulnerable groups in our society
o Efficiency of public administrations to manage migrants and refugges reception / integration
o Solutions for intelligent conversational personal assistants and coaches

Contact

If you want to be informed or get involved with the progress of the project, please contact:
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WELCOME Concept

Vision

The reception and integration of migrants and refugees remains a fundamental societal challenge for many European countries. Tackling this challenge requires a committed effort in order to ensure the provision of personalized communication, education (including language learning), cultural and social immersion. Recent advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can be instrumental for the success of this effort.

Overall goal

The overall objective of WELCOME is to facilitate the reception and integration of migrants and refugees through comforting, easy to comprehend, personalized technology solutions.

Concept

WELCOME will research and develop intelligent technologies for support of the reception and integration of migrants in Europe. It will offer a personalized and psychologically and socially competent solution for both migrants and public administrations. The solution for migrants will consist of immersive environments and teams of intelligent conversational agents, which will act as dedicated personal assistants. The solution for public administrations will provide situation-aware decision support and thus facilitate more efficient migrant reception and integration.

WELCOME

Challenges and objectives

personalized embodied conversation agents - language teaching - social and societal inclusion - decision support multilingual language technologies - virtual/augmented reality - knowledge processing

The WELCOME Project

Challenges

The number of refugees in the world has reached the highest level ever recorded of 25.45 million people. In 2015 and 2016 alone more than 2.5 million people applied for asylum in the EU. In 2017, 2018, and 2019 the numbers decreased significantly, but in the first months of 2020 they skyrocketed again. This means that both the reception and integration of migrants and refugees remain a leading societal challenge for many EU countries. This challenge is threefold:

(1) the assistance of such a high number of people seeking admittance, as recently witnessed within Europe, requires the allocation of significant human and financial resources;
(2) people who come to Europe do not form one homogeneous group: they have diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds that are all radically different from those within Europe;
(3) Third Country Nationals from outside of the EU are often required to deal with more complex documentation than migrants within the EU.

Objectives

- Co-design of technologies for migrants and refugees reception, integration and inclusion and support of authorities
- Development of service coordination and dialogue management technologies for intelligent conversational agents
- Development of multilingual language technologies
- Design of knowledge representation schemata and development of knowledge acquisition and interpretation technologies
- Realization of personalized immersive migrants-agent interaction environments
- Provision of personalized decision support for authorities

How can WELCOME help me if...

I am a professional social worker

To ensure that social workers are able to provide adequate services for migrants and refugees, the key is personalization in communication, training, and cultural and social processes of immersion in the host country. To achieve this personalization, WELCOME will develop a mobile devise-based platform of intelligent conversational agents that will be able to interact with Third Country Nationals (TCNs), learn their background, needs and social and cultural contexts and act as personal assistants in accordance with the acquired information to ensure optimal reception, orientation and integration.

I am member of a public administr-ation or an NGO

Members of public administrations and NGOs involved in the reception, orientation, and integration of migrants and refugees will have at their disposal the platform of intelligent conversational agents – as the social workers will, in order to carry out more efficiently the activities related to reception, orientation and integration. On the other hand, WELCOME will offer an intelligent situation-aware decision support that will help them in their daily case-to-case decision making, taking into account the needs and context of each migrant or refugee without time consuming consultation of records.

How can WELCOME help me if...

I am a migrant or refugee

When you arrive in Europe, and also later when you are in the process of integration into the society that has welcomed you, there are many barriers and difficulties that you must overcome: the new language, the complexity of the documentation you have to deal with and the educational, cultural and social distance with your new compatriots. Interaction with social professionals and public administration who are there to help you is not always easy. Maybe they don't speak your language, they don't have the right solutions for your needs, or they just don't understand your problems.

WELCOME is a project that offers you tools that you can use very easily on a tablet or PC/laptop to overcome these difficulties and obstacles. You will discover that there will be an avatar that will act as an intermediator between you and the public administration and as your personal assistant or coach. It will speak to you in your language, ask for information that the public administration needs, answer your questions, help you with your language, social inclusion and labour courses, and so on. It will be always there to support you! And don't worry, we will always make sure that your personal data are well protected and are not misused.