

MIRACLE

Machine-readable and interoperable age classification labels in Europe
An international pilot project co-financed by the European Union

Background

Media content is being distributed more and more via electronic networks, and parents as well as their kids receive and access this content with electronic end devices. Where retail boxes traditionally came with visual age labels, the digitalisation of age labels is stuck in a very early stage of development. There is no extensive use of digital age labels yet, especially on the open Internet. One of the main reasons for this is the high fragmentation of classification systems and labeling approaches among European Member States.

A solution that fosters an extended use of machine-readable classification data and age labels by content providers, filter software solution providers and users is a common information exchange reference model that enables cross-border machine-readable electronic labels, thus making existing label approaches and classification schemes technically interoperable. This results in an optimized usage of current classification knowledge and existing classification data, brings cost synergies for content providers and filter software solution providers. It also enables new innovative services in providing classification data.

Objectives

Providers of online content and services face highly fragmented systems of age classification, depending on country, region and type of medium. MIRACLE aims at providing a common technical specification for the machine-based exchange of existing and future classification data, implementing its data model in five different schemes and showing the surplus of technical interoperability in the field of age classifications for all kinds of applications and end users.

MIRACLE is here to provide a common technical specification for the machine-based exchange of existing and future classification data, making age labels truly machine-readable and interoperable.

Steps

The project follows a three-step approach:

First, the project consortium will develop a common information exchange reference model that will be used as the specification for the provided datasets. The data model will build on the draft proposed by the CEO Coalition's Technical Task Force.

As a second step, five partners will implement MIREMO-based APIs and labels as a way to access existing classification data. The implementation process will differ depending on the current form of existing classification data, the issuing body and its specific legal, political as well as institutional context.

In a third step, the provided data will be used by third-party software and services to show possible fields of application of interoperable data and its added value for all stakeholders, e.g. classification bodies, content providers, online services, filter software providers, users, etc. While two project partners providing filter software will work on the feasibility of software modules that can process MIRACLE data, the consortium will organise two hackathons where developers will use the data in creative applications, unleashing the full potential of applications and services on grounds of interoperable classification information.

Partners

MIRACLE's project consortium spreads across eight members from five different member states and systems and includes classification bodies, safer Internet nodes, self-regulatory bodies and filter software providers. Members of the project consortium are

- Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research
- BBFC (British Board of Film Classification)
- NICAM (Nederlands Instituut voor de Classificatie van Audiovisuele Media)
- PEGI SA (Pan European Game Information)
- FSM (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter)
- NCBI (Národní centrum bezpečnějšího internetu)
- JusProg (Verein zur Förderung des Kinder- und Jugendschutzes in den Telemedien e.V.)
- Optenet SA

Data model

The MIRACLE data model builds on currently existing age labeling practices, as it otherwise would undermine the efforts already taken by both companies and rating bodies, including the classification knowledge that goes with these schemes. Hence, for companies and bodies that already provide classification data or label online content electronically, no disadvantages will result from the proposals made. The three basic requirements the data model therefore takes into account are:

- Technology-neutrality, to reach maximum openness and compatibility between different systems and languages. It does not dictate labeling languages that have to be used, but rather the data structure.
- Consideration of existing electronic labeling systems to ensure that these are not undermined by the interoperable data model but can easily be mapped to it.
- Taking into account existing national and supranational classification schemes. By doing so, existing visual labels can easily be extended by respective electronic labels, ensuring backwards-compatibility with both the data model and the underlying traditional scheme.

Main blocks of data fields within the data model are

- the body issuing the classification (<issuer>),
- the scope of the dataset (<scope>),
- age labels (<rating>),
- content descriptors (<content-descriptors>), and
- feature descriptors (<feature-descriptors>).

One fundamental principle of the proposed data model is that no scheme has to provide information in all categories! As long as the data bits that are provided by a label do fit into any of the proposed categories the system is technically interoperable.

More information about the MIRACLE data model is available at <http://www.miracle-label.eu>

Mission Statement

There is a window of opportunity right now to streamline future electronic classification information. Let's seize it!

Join us!

MIRACLE's data model is technology-neutral and considers existing electronic labeling approaches and classification schemes to ensure maximum openness.

Aiming at becoming a de facto labeling standard, all interested parties and stakeholders are invited to provide or use MIRACLE-compatible data.

Please contact us in case of any questions or need for support!

Contact

Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research
Stephan Dreyer, Project coordinator
Rothenbaumchaussee 36
D-20148 Hamburg
Germany

Email: s.dreyer@hans-bredow-institut.de

Website: <http://www.miracle-label.eu>

Tel. +49 40 450217-33



MIRACLE is co-funded by the "ICT Policy Support Programme" of the European Union