STOP PRESS: MUNICH MT SUMMIT

This year's Machine Translation Summit, held in Munich (16-18 August), was a rare and fine event. It also presented Electric Word with a golden opportunity to catch up on the latest in this small and singular world. Here with the straight inside poop, from our correspondents, contacts and don't-quote-me-but informants.

The commercial products on demonstration in Munich, Siemens' METAL was the best received. METAL German-to-English is currently installed at 16 commercial sites. Other language pairs are in the pipeline: English-to-German and Dutch-to-French are scheduled for 1990, to be followed by French-to-Dutch and German-to-Spanish.

METAL's advantages – aside from its undoubtedly sophisticated parsing – lie on the terminology side. It has access to Siemens' mammoth inhouse set of technical terminarcs, TEAM, all of which adhere to the MATER information exchange standard proposed by Infoterm, the Vienna-based terminology standardization body (see this issue's Views and Abuse). Any database that adheres to MATER can of course be loaded into METAL.

MT superguru Makoto Nagao presented the Japanese MT report just published by Tokyo's MITI (the "JAL-PAC" report; see "Japan Leys ALPAC to Rest," EW#14), a copy of which was given to each delegate. Interesting tidbits: Japan's current translation volume amounts to between 18 and 23 billion pages per year (where one page equals 400 Japanese characters or 125 English words), and the market is worth a tidy 800 billion yen ($US6.63 billion) per year.

The European Commission's Loll Rolling, a member of the CEC team charged with implementing MT in the EC, came across as a true believer sans pareil: "Only now have we really started using Systran: a total of 2,000 pages were translated with it in all of 87, but 20,000 in the first half of '89."

The Pan-American Health Organization's Muriel Vasconcellos announced that her organization was integrating its ENGSPTAN (English-to-Spanish) system with databases in order to make public health data available in Latin America on a public computer.

EC ONLINE

With 1990 just around the corner and a lot of business people beginning to feel the penalties of ignorance, the arrival of Intertrade, an online European Community database was only a question of time. The Brussels-(where else?) based maker offers updated information regarding such diverse subjects as company law, competition, intellectual property, trade, taxation, and banking. Interested parties should call

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