TERMDOK: THE ULTIMATE TRANSLATOR'S TOOL?

Most industry observers agree; CD-ROM has reached that stage of critical mass. In real terms, the volume of titles being published is such that specialized fields like multilingual lexicology and terminology management are now winning serious representation.

Electric Word's Scandinavia correspondent Tim Davies recently touted Walter's multilingual heavyweight Termdok through its pages. He reports back on this most recent emancipation from the confines of paper, discussing how it might serve today's microprocessor-compatible translator.

Introduced in January 1988 by Sweden's WALTER Lexiken and Tekniks Namn- 

kleturen Centralen (TNC), the aim of providing access to all TNC's mutes, et al. Walter describes the TERMDOK CD-

ROM as "probably the largest, PC-accessible, multilingual technical termbank available."

The Swedish retrieval program Optosof is used, and you can select an English, French, or Swedish version when you install it. It requires approximately 360 

KB of disk space. The program can run alone or together with your WP program, the latter enabling you to cut and paste text at cursor location. (TERMDOK is activated online by pressing CTRL—F6.)

Both free and structured searching are supported. In other words, you could search for a word in any context or within a specific context/language field. Retrieval is effected by search menus, the results being screened in windows. Help texts are available via F1 (in one of three lan-

guages). There is a brief tutorial.

The termbank consists of items classified under main term, synonym, definition, equivalent in other languages, etc. Scandinavian letters are interchangeable: e.g. search for "primär" traces "primär" and vise versa. Other digraphs with grave, acute, circumflex or cedilla are treated as if unaccented (e.g. ide/ide, måcon/macon).

Search can be done by term, definition, or translation. Having found the info, you can then print it (Print Screen) or transfer it to disk (FTD).

Each entry gives the Swedish (main term with grammatical info, abbreviated and related forms, synonyms, references, applications, context) and translations. These vary in number, as equivalents are not given consistently for every term. Reference numbers are also given for relevant documents, plus a classification code.

TERMDOK contains a total of over 225,000 technical terms with definitions, synonyms, related concepts and translations to English, French, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, and Russian. Searches are possible in all languages.

Fields include energy, environment, building, materials and chemistry. In fact, TERMDOK incorporates data from seven termbanks; three Swedish, one Finnish, tool, both for the linguist and for the scientific specialist. Without doubt, it will be the most useful for those dealing with Swedish, English and French. Inclusion of the other languages is more haphazard (e.g., Russian terms, in transliterated form, are included only where the Finnish collaborator concerned knew their equivalents). Retrieval time is rated at a maximum 30 seconds for all databases. (Our search for the English compound "fuel oil" took only three seconds.) Unless you're planning to buy your next computer from NASA, you'd say that was extremely fast, given the volume of data involved.

If, by way of comparison, I search for a term using the Dutch-produced INK online terminology software, TermTracer, a complete search for a word including a commonly occurring root (e.g., "computer")
cheap.

Hardware requirements: PC/compatible with a minimum 640 Kb of RAM, harddisk or twin floppy drives, EGAcard recommended, plus a CD drive supporting Microsoft CD-ROM extensions.

– Tim Davies