

## FINAL REPORT ON THE JOURNAL MT

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July, 1970

It is with mixed emotions that I contemplate the end of publication, after 17 years, of the journal MT (MT & CL). There is relief at not having to worry further about its health. There is nostalgia for the enthusiasm of the late 1950's for MT research. There is satisfaction in having performed a service. There is regret that the problems of the journal could not be solved. There is reluctance to see it die. There is sadness for its passing.

At this juncture, the association for which MT has been the official journal for 6 years is considering what it wishes to do in regard to its future publication policy. This report is offered with the thought that my experiences with MT might be relevant to those who may be considering a new journal for the Association for Computational Linguistics.

MT has a total of 1092 subscribers who receive 1121 copies. This includes 583 members. Many of the non-member subscriptions go to libraries. MT is truly an international journal with 343 foreign subscribers (well over a third). It is received in 43 foreign countries, from Germany with 52 subscribers to Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and several others with one each.

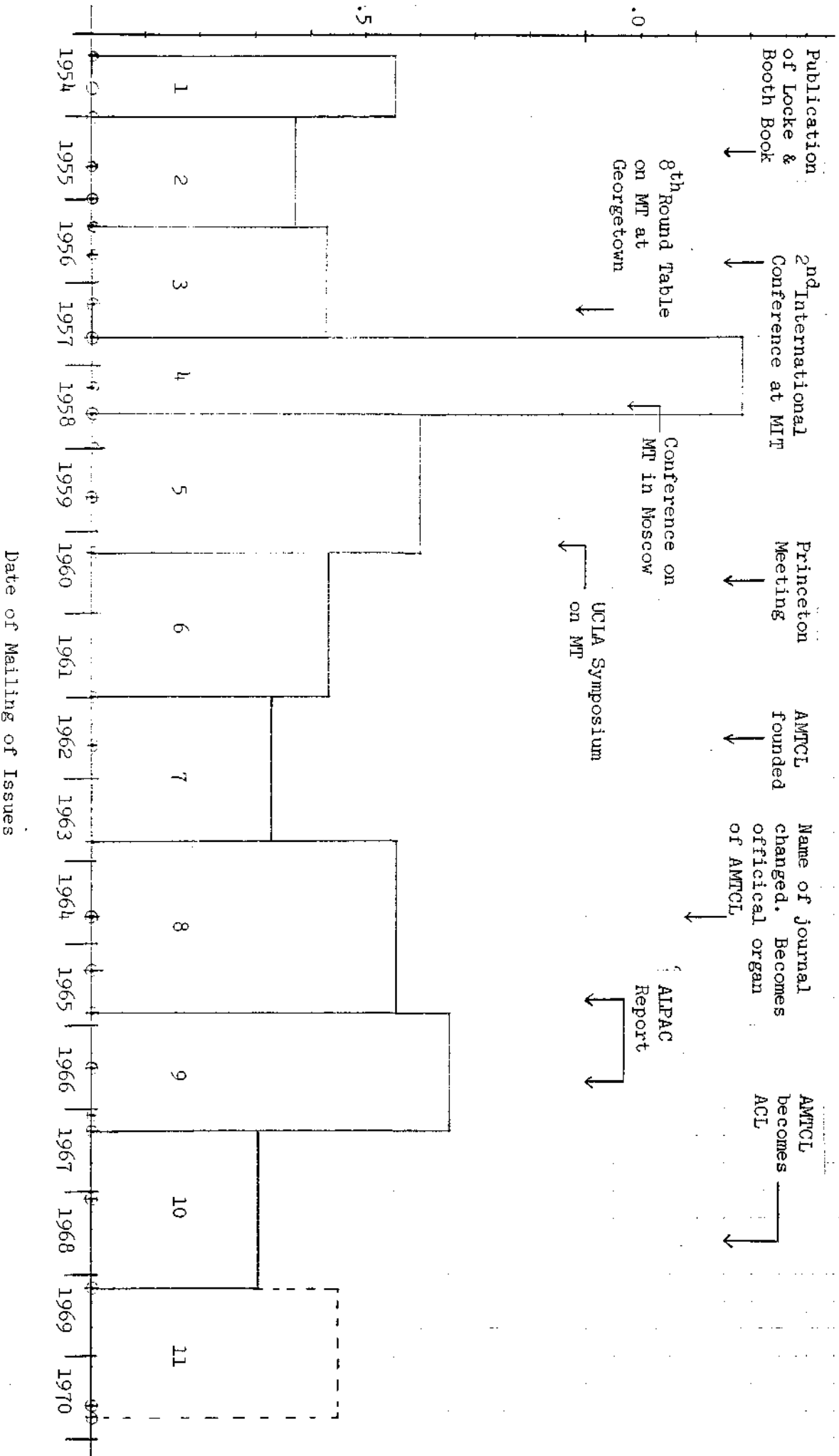
In 17 years there will have been, by the end of 1970, 11 volumes, 27 issues, an even 100 articles by 92 different authors and co-authors, and a projected total of over 1050 pages (956 through volume 10).

This is an average of about 6 articles or 60 pages per year, which represents in briefest terms our major problem: too small a flow of publishable articles to sustain a professional journal. This is an average flow of only about 0.5 articles per month. The fluctuations in this rate of flow of articles are shown in figure 1, where

Rate of Publication

Figure 1.

This chart gives the average number of articles per month published in each volume, 1 through 11, of the journal MT (MT & CL), plotted against the actual dates of mailing. The area of each rectangle is proportional to the number of articles published in the indicated volume.



Date of Mailing of Issues

the average flow of articles is separately shown for each of the 11 volumes. For your orientation I have also indicated the dates of certain events of historic interest. The burst of enthusiasm of the late 1950's is clearly evident, followed by a slow decline as more and more workers started finding that the problems of mechanical translation were very difficult. There then followed an increase as AMTCL grew and broadened the scope of our interests. The final decline can be related in part to the report of the National Academy of Sciences (ALPAC), which threw cold water on the activities of some of our members and on some of our sources of funding; and in part to the broadening of the goals of the membership, with a consequent de-emphasis of mechanical translation research which made the title of the journal less and less effective as a magnet for appropriate articles.

A more detailed summary of publication is given in table 1, where the vital statistics are given for each of the 27 issues.

Table 2 lists the 92 authors. I think you will agree that it reads like a Who's Who.

The history of the journal and any lessons its publication may offer us are intimately tied up with the intellectual life of its editors and readers, and with the interests of its sponsoring organizations. When I went to M.I.T. in 1953 to do research on mechanical translation, the total literature in the field would make a pile only a few inches thick on the desk. It was easy then to resolve to collect all relevant literature. The people working in the field were few and widely scattered. It was particularly difficult for someone coming into the field to find out what had been done or even who was doing it. In my own case, I had been working alone for several years and it was only by a lucky coincidence that I heard about the first conference at M.I.T. in 1952 and was able to attend and thus learn what others were doing. I saw a need for a newsletter or journal that would help the scattered workers to keep in touch, provide an appropriate place for them to publish their results, and through circulation to libraries,

Table 1.

## Publication Record of the Journal MT

Volume & Number	Date of Issue	Date Mailed	Number of Articles	Number of Pages	Number of Abstracts of Litera- ture	News	Special Features
1-1	3/54	3/54		18	41		A
1-2	8/54	8/54	2	17	4	yes	
1-3	12/54	12/54	3	21	3	yes	
2-1	7/55	7/55	2	26	7	yes	
2-2	11/55	12/55	2	21	9	yes	
2-3	12/55	4/56	2	13	9	yes	
3-1	7/56	8/56	3	29	4	yes	B
3-2	11/56	3/57	2	39	25	yes	C
3-3	12/56	6/57	2	22	10	yes	
4-1&2	11/57	3/58	6	49	16	yes	
4-3	12/57	7/58	7	33	13	yes	
5-1	7/58	12/58	4	47	18	yes	
5-2	11/58	7/59	4	43	17	yes	
5-3	12/58	3/60	4	43	11	yes	D
6	11/61	12/61	9	111			G
7-1	7/62	7/62	3	29		yes	G
7-2	8/63	9/63	4	40		yes	E
8-1	8/64	8/64	5	51			G
8-2	2/65	4/65	3	38			
8-3&4	6&10/65	10/65	6	89			F
9-1	3/66	6/66	4	20			
9-2	6/66	1/67	4	32			
9-3&4	9&12/66	3/67	3	42			
10-1&2	3&6/67	1/68	4	37			
10-3&4	9&12/67	2/69	3	46			
10-1&2	3&6/68	7/70*	4				
11-3&4	9&12/68	10/70*	5				

A. Introductory editorial

B. Six pages of Conference abstracts and discussions

C. Twelve pages of progress reports from eight groups

D. Eleven-page subject index covering first five volumes

E. Ten pages of abstracts of papers at Denver meeting

F. Reifler obituary

G. Group picture

\* Projected

AUTHORS OF ARTICLES  
PUBLISHED IN  
MECHANICAL TRANSLATION  
MECHANICAL TRANSLATION AND COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS

Alsop, John R.	Masterman, M. M.
Beebe-Center, J. G.	Matthews, G. H.
Bhimani, B. V.	Matthews, P. H.
Birnbaum, Henrik	Miller, George A.
Boldyreff, Antonina	Mitchell, R. P.
Brandwood, Leonard	Mounin, Georges
Brewer, Jocelyn	Needham, R. M.
Bross, John S.	Nikolaeva, T. M.
Burger, John F.	Oettinger, Anthony G.
Carroll, John B.	Orr, David B.
Cleave, John P.	Pacak, Milos
Cooper, William S.	Parker-Rhodes, A. F.
Crossland, R. A.	Perry, James W.
Cullicover, P. W.	Pfaffin, Sheila M.
Darlington, Jared L.	Pimsleur, Paul
Dolan, John M.	Quillian, Ross
Dolby, J. L.	Reifler, Erwin
Dubinsky, E.	Resnikoff, H. L.
Earl, Lois L.	Reynolds, A. C. Jr.
Edmundson, H. P.	Rhodes, Ida
Garvin, Paul L.	Richens, R. H.
Giuliano, Vincent E.	Robinson, Jane
Gode, Alexander	Rogovin, Syrell
Gough, James Jr.	Rosentsveig, V. Yu.
Gould, Roderick	Sakai, Itiroo
Grimes, Joseph	Salton, Gerard
Halliday, M. A. K.	Satterthwait, Arnold C.
Harper, Kenneth E.	Schwarcz, Robert M.
Hays, David G.	Scott, B. J.
Howerton, Paul W.	Simmons, Robert F.
Jacobsen, William H. Jr.	Small, Victor H.
Jones, K. Sparck	Smoke, W.
Kaplan, Abraham	Stout, T. M.
Klein, Sheldon	Tinker, John F.
Korfhage, R.	Ulvestad, Bjarne
Koutsoudas, A.	Vauquois, B.
Lamb, Sydney M.	Veillon, G.
Lea, Wayne A.	Veyrunes, J.
Lees, R. B.	Wares, Alan
Lehiste, Use	Weintraub, D. Kathryn
Ljudskanov, A.	White, James H.
Lovins, Julie	Wilks, Yorick
Lyons, John	Woodhouse, David
Lytle, Dean W.	Yngve, Victor H.
Madhu, Swaminathan	Zacharov, B.
Martins, G. R.	Zarechnak, M.

hopefully provide a means for any isolated workers to find out what was going on and provide a point of entry to the field for new recruits. My willingness to put out a journal was contingent on there being a genuine need for such a service.

There was another mechanical translation enthusiast at M.I.T. Bill Locke was also interested in the idea of starting a journal, so we did it together. As Head of the Department of Modern Languages, he gave the journal status on campus, and he gave unselfishly of his time and energies. The first issue came out in August, 1954. It was done photo offset from copy prepared on a proportional spacing electric typewriter. Secretarial help did the composition and took care of subscriptions and mailing. M.I.T. soon purchased a special typewriter so it could be done in my office, thus taking the burden off of the departmental secretary.

Volume 1 was supported entirely by M.I.T. and distributed free. Bill Locke applied to Warren Weaver at the Rockefeller Foundation for support. We received a \$3000 grant for three years starting in June, 1955. It helped to cover expenses starting with Volume 2. We also introduced a subscription fee of \$1.00 per volume. This went up to \$2.00 for Volume 5, which turned out to have 133 pages, making the cost per page about the same. Volumes 2, 3 and 4 averaged 76 pages each.

MT was published irregularly. This was our expressed policy for Volume 1. The introductory editorial said, "We have marked this issue of MT (Mechanical Translation) Vol. 1, No. 1. By this we show our intention that there will be other issues. However, we intend that publication will be only occasional and at irregular intervals in 1954." We got out the three issues of Volume 1 in 1954, each issue being dated according to the month in which it was mailed. But the second issue of Volume 2 would fall in December of 1955. Bill Locke argued, and I agreed, that to avoid confusion we should try to put out a new volume each year, so we called the second issue November, 1955 and the third issue December, 1955, although they actually came out in December, 1955 and April, 1956.

We were optimistic and hoped that a sufficient number of articles would be submitted to make it possible to produce a volume each year that contained as many articles and pages as we thought our subscribers were entitled to. It didn't happen. Table 1 shows how our optimism led relentlessly to a discrepancy of 15 months between the date of the last issue of Volume 5 and its date of mailing. It turned out that the confusion of coming out "late" was worse than the confusion of the volumes not keeping step with the years. We produced the first 5 volumes in a little over 6 years.

The early issues contained a number of features besides articles. The first issue consisted entirely of abstracts of 41 pioneer articles, which covered, hopefully, everything that had been written up to that time. This service of providing abstracts of the literature continued through Volume 5 and included 180 items. Abstracts were produced by various members of the M.I.T. mechanical translation research group and other friends. Toward the end it got to be quite a burden. If only all journals would insist on publishing author-prepared abstracts with each article!

In fact our first issue editorially requested our authors to provide abstracts, but they never did until we started requiring it with Vol.3, No.3. MT has published author abstracts ever since, and has editorially maintained their quality.

Early issues also had news and research in progress sections. These features also continued through Volume 5. At the end of Volume 5 we did a careful author and subject index of the entire first 5 volumes. It ran to 11 pages and had over 700 entries.

Bill Locke wanted to get the subscriptions out of the departmental office. He had performed the valuable service of supplying help, enthusiasm, and council to get the venture started, but he didn't want to tie himself to a long-term commitment. So the job of handling subscriptions came to my office with Volume 5, where it fell on my secretary, who had already been doing the page composition.

It wouldn't have been so bad, but secretaries from time to time left to get married or start families and I had been faced more than once with having to train someone new in the rather intricate and meticulous procedures for preparing camera copy of publishable quality.

Subscriptions rose in numbers effortlessly. Since our philosophy was to supply a service only if it were needed, we never advertised or promoted the journal. Yet, to our satisfaction, more and more people wrote in to subscribe and articles kept coming in. Volumes 4 and 5 contained 25 articles for an average of 0.8 articles per month or 9.6 per year. We projected a further increase in numbers of subscribers and articles. It seemed to us that if we were to have MT printed commercially by letterpress, we could greatly improve its appearance and quality and at the same time unburden my secretary and eliminate the uncertainty and lack of continuity we had been experiencing in page composition.

The problem in going to letterpress was a financial one: printing costs would be much higher. We didn't want to make a commercial venture of it and take advertising. Our purpose was merely to provide a needed service to the field. Neither did we want to give the journal to a commercial publisher who would have to put his own profit ahead of service considerations. We felt the journal belonged more to the workers in the field. If we were to give it to anyone it would have to be to a professional society as its official publication. But such a society did not yet exist although some people were already working toward the founding of one. We decided to hold the journal in trust until such a society was formed and proved strong and stable enough to take the responsibility for a journal.

At this point we were extremely fortunate in receiving an offer of help from John Mattill. John was in charge of the office that produced all of the official M.I.T. publications such as the catalog, phone book, various announcements, brochures, etc. Some of the pieces



that he put out were quite spectacular from a typographic design and artistic point of view. They had been winning awards in publishing circles. John offered to help us with typographic design, copyediting and styling, proofreading, preparation of figures and tables, page layout, and dealings with the printer – in short, every service that a good publisher would perform except handling subscriptions and mailing. M.I.T. would subsidize the journal to the extent of all these services, but we still would have to find a way to pay typesetting, printing, and mailing costs.

John Mattill put a professional designer to work for us. This man was visiting M.I.T. from England on a special grant for the summer. He produced the stunning cover design and crisp modern typographic style which is familiar to you all.

In order to cover the rest of the costs of the venture, we devised a plan. The remaining costs could be broken down into two components: a component proportional to the number of pages, which included typesetting, illustrations and page layout, etc., and a component proportional to the number of subscribers, which included the cost of paper stock, the press run, addressing, mailing, and postage. We estimated these two components separately and instituted a page charge adequate to cover the first component and a subscription charge adequate to cover the second component. In this way the number of articles published and the number of subscribers could vary independently and our total costs would always be covered. The scheme proved a sound one and the journal has always been in the black.

For page charges we adopted the scheme used by the American Physical Society for its publications. A combined reprint order form and page charge bill was sent to each author with the galley proofs. The page charge was optional, that is, he did not have to pay it personally or at all, but in this event he got no reprints. If he paid the page charge he got 100 free reprints. Alternatively, he could purchase 100 reprints for the amount of the page charge.

Additional reprints were available at cost. In case the article reported sponsored research, the page charge was usually paid from the author's grant or contract. We expected that some authors would be unable to pay a page charge, particularly foreign authors and individuals reporting unsponsored research. Our charge was set high enough to cover costs anyway, and the possibility of receiving a page charge was never taken into consideration in accepting or rejecting articles for publication. A copy of our latest page-charge form is attached.

Along with our redesigned format we instituted several other changes. We eliminated both the news section and the bibliographical abstracts section. The field had expanded to the extent that it was difficult to do an adequate job on either of these two sections without a greatly expanded effort. We corrected the discrepancy between the date on each issue and the date of mailing and went back to our earlier policy of not trying to keep the volumes in step with the years. A volume was closed when we had published enough articles to give our subscribers their money's worth. We hoped eventually to become a quarterly, but realized we would need a larger flow of articles for that. Another change we instituted was to mark each article as to date received so as to protect author's priority and interests.

We had always thought of MT as an international journal. With the new design format we were able to add the words "an international journal" at the bottom of the front cover. To further aid in strengthening the journal, particularly the international character of it, we invited leaders in the field from eight countries to serve on an editorial advisory board. We hoped this would add prestige to the journal and stimulate the flow of good manuscripts. Actually 25% of the articles we have published in the last 17 years have been foreign. We rarely received page charges for these articles, but were happy to publish them.

Articles from non-English-speaking countries have usually caused us problems. The one article we published in French presented problems

in typesetting and proofreading. With many of the others there was much that we had to do editorially with the manuscript to put it into acceptable and publishable English. We have had to reject a few articles because the English in them was beyond repair and the authors apparently could not get adequate local help.

So Volume 6 came out with a handsome new look that matched the enthusiasm of the day for mechanical translation research. However, the expected increase in flow of articles did not materialize, instead there was a decline in both Volume 6 and Volume 7. There were several factors that may have been partially responsible for this decline. In the first place, we were being more selective of the quality of articles. Then much of the work was being done on government grants and resulted in voluminous reports to sponsors, often quarterly, which gave the authors the feeling that they had discharged their obligation to publish. This feeling was reinforced by official efforts at the time in Washington to encourage wide circulation of such reports to mailing lists. Also a few of the groups encouraged quasi-secrecy because they felt they had "the solution" to mechanical translation nearly in their grasp.

Perhaps the greatest reason for the decline was the growing competition of other publishing ventures, often centered around ad-hoc meetings such as the National Symposium on Machine Translation, held at UCLA in February 1960. This symposium, as can be seen in Figure 1, came just as we were bringing Volume 5 to a close and just as we were collecting papers for Volume 6. The symposium resulting in a valuable 525-page book under the editorship of H. P. Edmundson. An effort was made to retrieve the situation: I had hoped that the proceedings could be published in MT, possibly under Edmundson's editorship. But it was too late. UCLA had already signed a contract with a commercial publisher. The best that Edmundson and I could do was to make the volume a special volume of MT, and include a subtitle to that effect. However, this did little good for the journal. Nearly every MT group in the country

had a report in the proceedings, and that took care of a good share of their publishing for a while.

At about this time there was more activity in an effort to found an association. Many of us had hoped for a truly international association. We felt this would be particularly appropriate for an organization involved in trying to improve the means for international communication through mechanical translation. However, it proved too difficult to set up such an organization. There were certain practical problems at that time in the way of setting up a viable organization that would simultaneously meet the needs of the several countries. In particular, the cost of travel and various restrictions and the difficulties of communication stood in our way. Volume 6 carried a picture of the participants at the first Princeton meeting where the possibilities of forming an association were discussed. AMTCL was founded in June 1962 as an international but predominantly American association.

It did not seem appropriate to push MT as the official journal of the Association while I was President, but shortly after, in July, 1964, the step was taken. Volume 8, No. 2 was the first issue published for the Association.

The Association had two desires, that the name of the journal be changed from Mechanical Translation to Mechanical Translation and Computational Linguistics, with a broadening of its scope, and that the journal become a quarterly. Everyone agreed that it would be good to broaden the scope of the journal to include anything related to language and computers. It was thought that changing the name of the journal would in itself help to attract articles from this broader field. Working against a name change was the thought that it might confuse librarians and bibliographic services, who might treat it as a new journal. Also, the reputation, integrity and identity of a journal is associated in the minds of the readers with the name of the journal and with its size, color, cover design, etc. We had just recently changed to a new design and did not want to give it up. The course we adopted was to change the name, but make as

small a perturbation on the look of the cover as possible. With regard to becoming a quarterly, it was realized that this would require a greater flow of articles. The Association had a particular reason for desiring a quarterly: members were billed for dues on a yearly basis and they would likely expect a volume of the journal each year. It was agreed to work toward quarterly publication. We started dating issues according to regular quarterly dates again, and when there were not enough manuscripts for four issues in a volume, we would mark some issues as combined issues.

In order to encourage manuscripts, we did two things. At annual meetings, people who had presented papers were encouraged to work up their material for publication and submit it to MT&CL. And members of the Association, particularly officers and former officers, promised to be on the lookout for suitable manuscripts. The flow of manuscripts did increase, both in Volume 8 and in Volume 9. Lots of credit is due to the loyal members who helped encourage manuscripts. It wasn't easy. It's hard to ask someone to prepare a manuscript and send it in for publication when you know it will be refereed and perhaps rejected in the end, for we also wanted to improve the average quality of published articles. Although Volumes 8 and 9 did show an increase in flow (and in quality too) the flow was not yet even enough for two issues per year, and far from enough for a quarterly. Inevitably the dates on the issues began to fall behind the calendar and issues began coming out "late," the familiar pattern from the early volumes that had caused us to change to the other system of dating. It's easy to decide to publish a lot of articles, but without quality manuscripts in quantity, there is nothing an editor can do. And when an editor has a manuscript of borderline quality, he is in a quandry. Should he accept it and increase the flow of papers in the journal, or should he reject it and increase the average quality of articles published in the journal?

A year after the journal had become the official organ of the Association, your editor moved from M.I.T. to the University of Chicago. The final issue of Volume 8 was brought out with the help of John Mattill

at M.I.T. and mailed three months after I had moved. Discussions and negotiations took place since new arrangements would have to be made. The University of Chicago Press was the obvious place to consider, since it is one of the leading University presses and has a full-fledged journal department that puts out a large number of high-quality scholarly and scientific journals. (See appended brochure.)

The University of Chicago Press is run by a board consisting of faculty members of the University. This board insisted on assurances of the quality of the journal and its financial solvency. Although the journal had never been in the red, they wanted to know who would guarantee any deficit. They did not consider AMTCL, a 3-year-old association with only a few hundred members, as being solid enough to provide such a guarantee. Fortunately Don Swanson and the Graduate Library School were willing to provide such a guarantee. The School was willing to pledge that it would cover any deficit from its publication contingency fund, which it had laboriously saved up from past successful publishing ventures. AMTCL owes a debt of gratitude to the School for this pledge of support and confidence. The School also provided office space and faculty and secretarial time. Under the arrangement with the Press, they would handle everything including subscription fulfillment. I have found the Press most cooperative and helpful during the publication of these last three volumes. I can recommend them highly should the Association wish to consider trying to work out an agreement with them for any future publication.

At about this time the ALPAC report was in the making. In April 1964 a committee called the Automatic Language Processing Advisory Committee had been formed by the quasi-governmental National Academy of Sciences of the National Research Council. Its job was to look into government spending in areas of interest to us. The report of the committee was submitted in the summer of 1965, and after it had been considered, it was released in the summer of 1966.

This report put the damper on government funding of large-scale mechanical translation efforts directed toward immediate implementation. It was explicitly not the intent of the report to discourage research in computational linguistics, but it did in fact have a generally depressing effect on the field. Mechanical translation "became a dirty word in a blind and unreasoning sort of way, and other related endeavors tended to be suspect or even guilty by association.

The flow of articles fell to an all-time low of only 4 per year for Volume 10, but your editor did not immediately realize what was going on. He felt personally exempt from the sting of the ALPAC report since he had been pushing for a long-range scientific-research type of approach to mechanical translation. Also, he had a long-term commitment to the field and had already weathered periods of discouragement and antagonistic public opinion. It is probably the case, however, that the title of the journal was now a significant handicap with the result that we got only about one third the number of articles that would have been expected otherwise. If the flow of articles had increased as we thought it would, MT&CL would today be a strong and healthy journal.

In the summer of 1968, two years after the release of the ALPAC report, your Association dropped Machine Translation from its title and became the Association for Computational Linguistics. At the annual meeting at which that happened, there was some discussion about the journal. It is my opinion now, with 20-20 hindsight, that we should have determined at that meeting to cease publication at an early date and embark on a study of what if anything to do in its stead. But at the time, the full effect of the decline in manuscripts had not yet been felt, and no one even suggested such a course. If it had been suggested, my long personal commitment to the journal and the field and the recency of the move to the University of Chicago Press would probably have led me to argue against it. An editor needs personal qualities of optimism and persistence, but these qualities

make it hard for him to accept the thesis that an enterprise like this should be abandoned.

Instead, the association offered more help in obtaining manuscripts, and it was suggested that an associate editor should be appointed. Paul Garvin and Susumu Kuno in particular were very helpful, but the associate editor idea was doomed to failure, although through no fault of Paul Chapin, who should be given a great deal of credit for an heroic try. The flow of articles was so small that it seemed much easier to process them at Chicago as before than work out new procedures involving someone new. Paul and I were not well-acquainted, and the one long-distance phone call we had was not enough to set up the kind of rapport that co-editors should enjoy. Then, too, at that particular time I happened to be overburdened with a number of other high-priority demands on my time. This, combined with a temporarily disastrous secretarial situation, caused me to fall behind in my correspondence and have to postpone answering Paul's long and carefully considered letters. I owe him an apology for this and I'm sorry that the resulting confusion and lack of communication caused an excellent article to be withdrawn. It had been accepted and would have been published in Volume 11.

The general idea of co-editors for a journal, however, is not a bad one. It does, however, require careful coordination, which can be achieved, easily if co-editors can meet often on a face-to-face basis. This was fortunately possible in the case of the other co-editors that I have been privileged to work with. First there was William N. Locke for the first five volumes. Then there were W. Keith Percival, Jared Darlington and John M. Dolan at M.I.T., with valuable assistance from other members of the research group. At the University of Chicago it has been John M. Dolan and William S. Cooper. The Association and I owe all of these people a deep debt of gratitude. Without their considerable help, the journal could not have been kept going.

And so we cease publication of MT&CL. What do we do now? I think it is terribly important that the Association make a wise decision.



I hope a clean start can quickly overcome the inevitable difficulties of starting and develop quickly into an endeavor much better suited to the needs of ACL today. As for further editorial help, after 17 years I've had it.

A quarterly should have 4 to 6 articles in each issue, which is a flow several times greater than our previous effort enjoyed. In estimating the probable flow of articles for any future publishing effort, be sure to take into account the currently existing competition from other related journals and book publishers, both domestic and foreign. Also try to determine what your prospective authors might be expected to desire. Authors tend to want to publish for the most appropriate audience. They also may wish to reach a wider, more varied audience by publishing different articles in different journals. Thus you can certainly not count on getting the total output of any single individual. There is also a desire to publish in journals of great prestige and wide circulation. It takes time and effort to develop such a journal.

Authors desire prompt publication. When they mail off a manuscript, they would like to see it appear in print the next day. In reality it may take 6 months to a year or more in most any high-quality journal, and authors often do not appreciate why. The delay in publication is the sum of a buffer wait and a pipeline transit time. The buffer wait varies from 0 to the length of time between the appearance of successive issues. For any article it depends upon its date of submission in a complicated way that is related to its particular pipeline transit time. The pipeline transit time is simply the total time that it takes the article to go through the many steps in preparation for publication. For MT&CL they are the following:

1. Input screening by editor to determine suitability of subject matter and minimum standards of writing, abstract, references and the like. Either return to author with appropriate comments or send to referee.
2. Consideration by referee. This step results in an often detailed report to the editor plus a recommendation as to

whether article should be published or not.

3. Careful consideration of full article and referee's report by editor. Either acceptance, conditional acceptance, rejection or, in cases of some doubt, decision to send to another referee. Often this step results in the manuscript going back to the author with detailed suggestions and quotes from referee's report.
4. Final decision to publish. When article is acceptable and all questions of content and details of form of footnotes, references, etc. are clear, send article to be copyedited.
5. Copyediting by professional at Press.
6. Check by editor of copyedited article to be sure that proper typography and style has been imposed, that no violence has been done, and to answer all queries. This step often requires further correspondence with the author. An editor often checks references in the library for completeness and accuracy. If OK, send to be set in type.
7. Typesetting. This step results in galley proofs.
8. Proofread and check galley proofs against manuscript if not already done carefully by Press. Send to author for him to proofread.
9. Final galley check. When galley proofs come back from author, editor looks them over and sends to Press for making into pages. If there have been extensive corrections indicated on the galley proofs, the page proofs might also be sent to the author for checking.
10. Printing.
11. Binding.
12. Mailing.

Since each of these steps requires careful and often lengthy manual processing, and many steps require detailed correspondence and often looping back to earlier steps again, it is clear that an average pipeline transit time could easily be 6 months or more.

Shorter transit times can be achieved by eliminating some of the steps, but the quality of the finished product can be expected to suffer.

If ACL feels it cannot swing a quarterly, other suggestions come to mind. One is a yearly "Proceedings" or "Current Research," which would contain refereed papers, with an announced deadline for submission of manuscripts, perhaps 1 month or 6 weeks after the annual meeting. Such a venture could fly on as few as 3 or 4 articles per year and could easily accommodate any larger number within reason. Style sheets and announcement of the submission dates could be provided with the call for papers for the annual meeting and again at the meeting. I believe you could easily garner a dozen or more good articles per year in this way. Editors and referees would know when to expect manuscripts and could schedule their time for it.

But prior to answering questions of an appropriate publication policy for ACL, we have the question of what are its needs. Where is the Association going? Does it serve an important purpose that could not be served by other existing professional organizations? And after 8 years of existence, I wonder if it still contains any of the spark that started it, namely the hope and dream of the eventual satisfactory translation of languages by machine.

#### Attachments

- August 4, 1964 announcement.
- Cover and table of contents of University of Chicago Press Journals brochure.
- Instructions to authors.
- Page-charge request form.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

August 4 1964

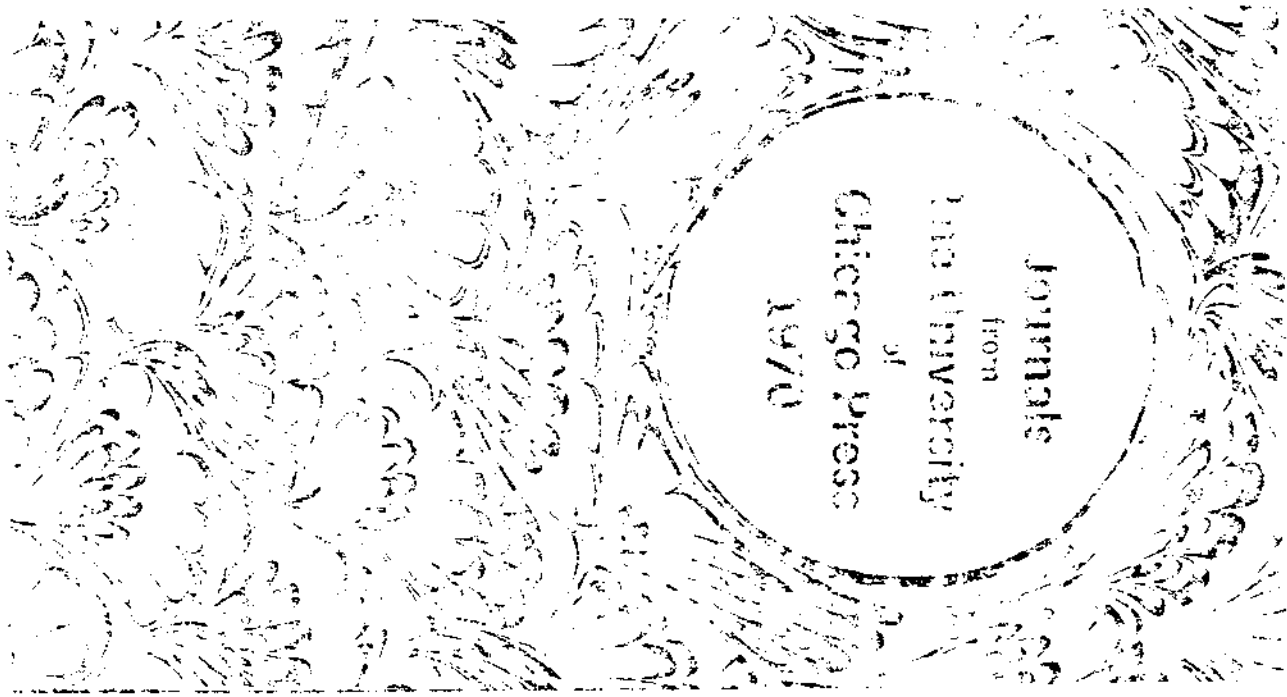
Dear Subscriber,

MECHANICAL TRANSLATION will become the official journal of the Association for Machine Translation and Computational Linguistics. An agreement to this effect was concluded between the Association and the Publisher last week at the 1964 annual meeting of the Association in Bloomington, Indiana. It is expected that this arrangement will greatly benefit both members and subscribers. Although there were only two numbers in volume 7, we anticipate 4 numbers in volume 8, and are working toward regular quarterly publication.

If you are a member of the Association, your renewal for volume 8 will be taken care of by the Association.

If you are not a member of the Association, you will soon be given the option of renewing your subscription for the remainder of volume 8, or of joining the Association under very favorable terms that have been extended to you, as a loyal subscriber, by the Association.

The Editor



**Journal**  
 from  
**the University**  
 of  
**Chicago Press**  
 1970

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