

IBM MACHINE TRANSLATION STUDY

IBM Research Centers in Spain and Israel will direct a study by IBM into the feasibility of building a machine translator to help relieve the company's translation burden. Other members of IBM's European Areas Division (all other European countries except the big four: the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy) are expected to join in. Portugal and Finland have already.

"Part of the purpose of the project," states Luis de Sopeña Pastor of IBM Spain Scientific Center, "is to develop internal IBM knowledge and expertise in machine translation."

The current phase of the project, expected to last until the end of the year, is to develop a comprehensive proposal for what could turn into a five-year plan. No single technology is currently favored, although project leader Mori Rimon tends to believe the final proposal will likely be for a system "that will translate, not just be a tool for translators. That it will run offline, and may require post-editing. We are, however, also investigating interactive systems."

Project tasks will be distributed among all the IBM Scientific Centers which ultimately support the project. And universities will also be invited to join. The first one that has is the University of Helsinki.

The project will use LISP, and will not be exclusively IBM-hardware specific. The project will likely use the English parser developed at Yorktown Center in the US. The initial languages will be English to Spanish and Hebrew.