

ALPS TO DROP CONSUMER SOFTWARE

Utah-based ALPS Inc.'s April buyout of Haehl Translations of Stuttgart, F.R.G., turned the US company into "the world's biggest translation network," says ALPS president Fred Zirkle.

The Haehl acquisition was the latest move in a seven-month, \$9-million spending spree during which ALPS bought three other major translation companies on three continents: Interlingua/TTI (London and Hong Kong), Interdoc (Paris), and Multiscript (Montreal).

ALPS's spectacular entry into translation services last November caused consternation in the market. The company had started out in 1980 in the related, but much riskier, field of linguistic software. It developed an impressive array of products: interactive computer-aided-translation (CAT) packages TransActive and AutoTerm; terminology tracer ABC Word; and stylecheckers MacProof, UBS Proof, and PC Proof.

However, the risk never paid off. ALPS lost heavily. And its about-turn onslaught on translation services was a gamble to recoup these losses in a growing market where money was still to be made.

Though ALPS denies rumors that it's now abandoning software in favor of translation, it is shortly expected to sell off ABC Word and MacProof to an undisclosed European buyer, and drop the rest of its low-end packages. In addition, the company is even holding off on the active marketing of its CAT products.

Instead - says Zirkle - ALPS is pinning its hopes on the implementation of CAT on its own recently acquired "productive sites." Zirkle believes this will put the company in a good position to improve TransActive and AutoTerm, and market them more effectively in the future: "Selling translation services is both helping and amplifying the marketing and development of translation software."