

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE WORKSHOP ON COOPERATION IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Mr Pigott opened the discussion by outlining the history of the Systran system since it had been invented by Dr Toma. There were now two systems, the European one being used by the Commission and the Universal system in use in the United States. Mr Pahl outlined the major differences between these systems and outlined four areas which needed to be studied.

Mr Pigott stressed the importance of a suitable interface for any future developments. Mr Pahl explained that it would not be too difficult to integrate the two systems. Although the initial development of the French-Dutch and the English-Dutch language pairs had been done in La Jolla, there had been to real difficulty in integrating these into the European system. There were differences in the dictionaries, the ones used in the United States being multi-target as compared to the single target approach at the Commission, but there were similar needs in this area on both sides of the Atlantic.

A possible area for unification would be programming macros and also the semantic area. Ms Homer agreed that semantics could be further developed. Mr Bostad explained that the USAF had at its disposal roughly 500 semantic codes, 100 of which were currently used very frequently. Mr Pigott explained that the European system had approximately 25 semantic codes, and that this list could obviously be extended if precise semantic requirements could be clearly defined.

Lexical routines were obviously more difficult to reconcile on account of their individuality. Mr Pahl explained that treatment of these varied considerably between the two systems. In the European system they were generally restricted to one language pair while in the Universal system they usually had a wider application. Mr Severini praised the practical approach of WTC to the question of lexical routines. He stated that the routines were usually adapted form one system rather than replaced completely.

Many of the lexical routines required for the English-Italian system came from the English-French or English-Spanish pairs.

Mr Pigott considered that it was extremely important to look carefully at the work which had been done in La Jolla. Much work could be done on the dictionaries; duplication of effort between the American and European development groups should be avoided. Terminology was, of course, extremely important.

Various aspects of the problem were looked at, including users' approaches to incorporation of terminology into the Systran dictionaries, the question of classified documents and 'problem' terms. Mr Bostad raised the question of input quality. He wondered whether entries were tested prior to incorporation in the dictionaries. Mr Pigott replied that he could vouch for the quality of work done on the European systems. It was not usual practice to test dictionary entries before an update. He wondered about the possibility of providing an information exchange mechanism.

Mr Jean Gachot agreed that the problem of quality control merited careful consideration and that a mechanism could be drawn up with this in mind. He was of the opinion that revision and development of the system could be carried out concurrently. He hoped that enhancements would cut down on post-edit time and lead to a 90/95% error-free system. He consented to Mr Pigott's request for the unification of the system, but stressed the medium-term advantages of both the Universal and the European systems.

Commenting on Mr Rolling's suggestions regarding possible ways of proceeding with the unification of the systems and the Commission's acquisition of the Universal system (of which there were two versions), Mr Jean Gachot replied that much would have to be discussed.

Summing up, Mr Pigott expressed his satisfaction at the development of the discussions. There were not so many fundamental differences in the systems as he had first imagined. He witnessed a willingness on the part of the various people concerned to put the component parts together. There was a general feeling that Systran would be further developed quickly. It was perhaps a good omen that, at a time when the Commission was expressing an interest in the unification of the systems, Mr Jean Gachot had purchased WTC and Systran Institut, and there was now agreement among the Germans, Americans and Japanese.

There were firm undertakings at the Commission that Systran would be introduced on a wider scale into the translation service. The only really negative aspect of the various discussions had been the problem of compatibility, which seemed to be shared by many. He thanked the delegates for their attendance and hoped that a similar event might take place within the next two years.