

A NEW MT REPORT – THEY KEEP ON COMING

Leading US technology tracker Frost & Sullivan has recently brought out a 200-page Technology Impact Report (#T041) on Machine Translation. Covering the usual range of subjects—history of MT, distinctions between different types of MT systems, identification of suppliers, technology platforms and applications—Frost & Sullivan suggests that as far as the commercial prospects are concerned, MT is the victim of weak marketing muscle and low sales drive. In particular the report pinpoints the need to "concentrate on better educating users on how to apply existing capabilities" rather than continually promising better products.

However, if the press releases accompanying the report are anything to go by, seekers of state-of-the-art documentation on MT might be less than satisfied. For example, Frost & Sullivan seems to believe that while US MT vendors throw all their money at product development, European actors such as Siemens and Philips are MT 'leaders' who concentrate greater resources on promotion. Just which MT product puts Philips at the top of the list is a mystery to us. There are also suggestions that information on other systems cited in the text might be less than up-to-date, leading one to conjecture that, as is often the case in such compilations, the report (costing the buyer a cool \$1,200) is on occasions based on secondary (and obsolete) material. In the rapidly-moving area of MT, it might well prove preferable to go straight to the horse's mouth when it comes to hard facts.