

InterGraph's Transcend

Intergraph is now shipping eight language directions of its Microsoft Windows-based Transcend MT program. In addition to English, French, English, German, and English, Spanish {both directions), the company is also shipping English-Italian and English, Portuguese. Portuguese has not been a language which many MT developers have tackled, and Intergraph's manager of Natural Language Products Deanne Dayton says Intergraph has a group in Brazil which is excited about the marketing possibilities there. Intergraph is best known, of course, for its high, end CAD/CAM systems, and the company only got into the MT business when, in 1984, the original developer of what was then known as MicroCAT, Weidner Communications, went out of business. Intergraph, which had been using the system to translate documentation, acquired the system and ported it to its Unix-based workstations. The company continued to use it and introduced it to the market under the name Dp/Translator. The system was originally designed for interactive use and Intergraph invested considerable effort in designing an attractive interface for the product. The Windows version can be integrated with WordPerfect for Windows and Microsoft Word for Windows.

A number of large corporations use the Intergraph system, including AT&T, McDonalds, and Upjohn. According to Dayton, the latter uses it for scanning articles in French in order to decide whether to have them professionally translated. Probably Intergraph's best known user is CompuServe (see story page 7), which selected it partly because of its speed and customizability. While it doesn't perform the kind of linguistic analysis that a system like Logos or Metal does, Transcend has broad enough coverage and robust enough grammars to make it comparable, under certain circumstances, to those more sophisticated systems.

At us\$495 per language direction, Intergraph is pricing Transcend aggressively, but it faces considerable competition, at least in the French, German, and Spanish arena. Dayton has two target markets in mind for Transcend: professional translators and business users, both of whom are difficult to reach with this kind of product, and there is still an enormous amount of work to be done in tempering expectations for this admittedly imperfect technology. While Dayton believes that ultimately Europe will be the primary market for Transcend, Intergraph is concentrating for the moment on North America.