

SYSTRAN and Xerox announce long-term agreement

On February 1, 1994 SYSTRAN Translation Systems, Inc. and the Xerox Corporation jointly announced the signing of a five-year software licensing agreement. The agreement licenses use of SYSTRAN's newly developed machine translation software on existing mainframe platforms. The program is a self-supporting, fully automatic machine translation system currently offering 27 combinations of language pairs. It can be integrated with most of the major desktop publishing programs and word processors. SYSTRAN was originally founded for the development of the Russian into English language pair for the United States Air Force.

According to SYSTRAN's president *Denis Gachot*, the five-year contract with Rank Xerox represents a gigantic leap in the machine translation industry. "Most software licensing contracts are written on a year-to-year basis," Gachot said. "We are quite pleased to have Xerox playing such a large part in our long-term plans."

Gachot stresses that the significance of the alliance cannot be overestimated. Sophisticated machine translators using the latest natural language parsing technology have so far run primarily on mainframe computers, but the microcomputer revolution has now arrived. Proceeds from the sale of the licence will help fund the conversion of the SYSTRAN software system into the C language. C-conversion is a necessary step for porting over to desktop workstations and PC's.

According to *Arnold G Lewis*, Xerox's Manager of Support Services for Multinational Customer Service and Education, "this speaks well for the productivity of the tool and the machine translation process itself, as well as the technical support received from SYSTRAN." In response to the move to the UNIX platform, Lewis adds, "By converting from mainframes to the desktop workstations, we shall now be able to decentralise our machine translation process, adding services flexibility for our global markets. Such a move fits in well with today's changing world."

With the move on to desktop computers, SYSTRAN expects to develop a full-featured, comprehensive translator's workstation. Eventually, the company expects to develop products that will be sold on the low-end retail market.

Another benefit of the conversion entails several new machine translation software tools. These include expanded "search and replace" functions for whole groups of text, intelligent extraction of information from large multi-lingual text databases, and a powerful feature termed "revision management software". The result is considerable cost savings, especially in texts containing previously translated material.

SYSTRAN Translation Systems, Inc. of La Jolla, California, is one of the world's leading providers of machine translation software and services. Originally deriving its major income from the US government, the company responded to the end of the Cold War by aggressively pursuing the commercial marketplace. In 1993, SYSTRAN announced the largest commercial services contract in its 25-year history, a joint contract with Berlitz Translation Services to translate technical documentation and on-line information for a top-five CAD/CAM software developer.

The Xerox Corporation, also known as "The Document Company", is still involved in multinational placement of products and services which require localisation for worldwide markets. In 1978 they purchased their first machine translation software licence from SYSTRAN Translation Systems. To the extreme satisfaction of the translation group located in Webster, New York, the companies have been doing business ever since, though this represents their first five-year contract.