Nokia: Kielikone's First MT Customer

"The documentation for one of our digital exchanges can be up to seven meters of binders," says Pertti Nuutila, of Nokia Telecommunications' Customer Documentation Department. While that includes drawings and pictures as well as words, that still adds up to a lot of text. A digital telephone exchange inevitably comes with a mountain of documentation, and Nokia is yet another manufacturer of these systems which has turned to MT to help tackle this problem. "A telephone exchange is not a bicycle," comments Nuutila. "It's a black box that we need to thoroughly document." Not only is such documentation regularly updated, but the company also supplies site-specific installation information – and most of this needs to be translated from Finnish into English.

After participating in the development of the Kielikone system as a pilot customer, Nokia is now in the process of implementing it with the Customer Documentation department. That means integrating the Unix-based MT system with the Vax cluster and the PCs which Nokia's twenty-plus translators and editors use. Nuutila feels that the linguistic issues have been more or less solved; it is mostly a matter now of tying it into the existing documentation process and exploring which parts of the documentation are suited for machine translation.

Nokia has an extensive terminology database on its mainframe with on the order of ten thousand entries for Finnish, English, Russian, German, and, to a lesser extent, several other languages as well. As translators propose new terms, they can also directly add grammatical information which the MT system can subsequently use, thus leaving the terminologist to concentrate on terminological issues. According to Nuutila, Nokia has not yet arrived at an optimal solution for integrating the termbase and the MT system. The Documentation department is currently trying to determine the most suitable interval between batch uploads of terms from the terrnbase to the MT lexicon, or ideally, designing a way to partly automate the process.