Belgian computer translation project

Siemens NV, Belgium, is to cooperate with various university institutions on a computer assisted translation project.

Siemens will be collaborating with academics at the Catholic University of Louvain, under Professor van der Eecken, and with the cooperation of Professor M. Debrock of the Department of Applied Linguistics. The international interpreting school at the University of Mons, under Professor Beerden, and the Institut d'Electricité Montefiore, under Professor D. Ribbens of the University of Liege will also be involved. Professor Ribbens's contribution will largely be in the field of artificial intelligence and expert systems.

The project will deal with the Dutch-French language pair, and will be a development of the Siemens METAL system, originally developed by Siemens with the collaboration of the University of Texas in Austin, United States. The first phase of the new project is expected to take up to two and a half years. A further phase will involve the creation of specific lexica and the integration of the system into office information systems in general.

According to reports in the Belgian engineering trade press Siemens has carried out a major market survey, which suggested that the an automatic Dutch-French translation system would have export potential in addition to the demand within Belgium. Siemens was also reported to have been impressed by the wealth of experience in computational linguistics in the Belgian universities.