



MT News International

Newsletter of the International Association for Machine Translation

In this issue . . .

Spotlight on the News	1
Conferences	3
MT Summit VII	9
Association News	13
MT Marketplace	14
People	15
Publications	16
Users' Forum	16
Calendar	16

Editor's note . . .

This is the second issue of MTNI to be published in San Diego. The process is proving to be faster, more efficient, and less expensive. We appreciate your patience during this transition! Issue #21 should have been the third issue for 1998. We are committed to bringing you three more issues before the end of 1999. Again, we welcome letters to the editor, contributions in the form of news and features, and all offers of assistance, especially volunteers to head up the departments.. —MV

Spotlight on the News

AMTA Launches Certification Initiative, Aims for International Adoption

MV

Ever since the IAMT regional associations were founded, there has been keen interest in giving some form of certification to commercial MT and related products that would serve as an educational and informative guide to potential users and others who follow this field. The panel at AMTA-98, "The AMTA Seal of Approval," chaired by AMTA President Eduard Hovy, not only sparked a lively debate at the conference but also fueled the long-needed impetus for action.

Starting with the panelists as a core, an ad hoc international committee was formed early this year under Hovy's leadership to propose a set of certification standards. The ad hoc committee will report to the IAMT Council, which is expected to eventually promulgate formal standards via an IAMT Committee on Certification Standards. The work being done is not for the benefit of any company or organization. It is not being paid. The certification initiative is an action being taken for the benefit and education of all who are concerned with machine translation. It is hoped to have a first version of the certification system in place by early 2000.

In the meantime, a number of draft proposals have been exchanged and discussed, and a rationalized consensus is emerging. The ad hoc committee has therefore decided to issue a formal statement that prefigures the certification. Basically, it is proposing that MT and related products be grouped into categories, and that

Continued on next page . . .



MT News International

Issue No. 21
February 1999

Editorial Board

CO-EDITORS:

Colin Brace (on leave of absence)
Language Industry Monitor
Tel: +31 (20) 685-0462
Fax: +31 (20) 685-4300
E-mail: cbrace@lim.nl

Muriel Vasconcellos
Tel: +1 (619) 272-3360
Fax: +1 (619) 272-3361
E-mail: MurielVasconcellos@compuserve.com

CONSULTING EDITOR:

John Hutchins
Library, University of East Anglia
Fax: +44 (1603) 25-94-90
E-mail: WJHutchins@compuserve.com

REGIONAL EDITORS:

AMTA: David Clements
Globalink, Inc.
Tel: +1 (619) 490-3680 x 302
Fax: +1 (619) 490-3684
E-mail: dclements@lhs.com

EAMT: Jörg Schütz
Institute for Applied Information
Sciences (IAI)
Fax: +49 (681) 389-5140
E-mail: joerg@iai.uni-sb.de

AAMT: Hirosato Nomura
Kyushu Institute of Technology
Fax: +81 (948) 29-7601
E-mail: nomura@dumbo.ai.kyutech.ac.jp

... Certification continued

each category have a "necessary and sufficient" set of criteria that describe it adequately and at the same time differentiate it from the other categories. Ultimately, a system will be *certified* in a given category because it meets the stated criteria.

There is agreement already that there should be two broad headings, (1) machine translation systems, and (2) translation support tools, and that each of these will be subdivided. It is proposed to categorize the MT systems by *levels*: basic, standard, and advanced. It is planned to break down the translation support tools into electronic dictionaries, terminology management systems, translation memory systems, etc. Each of the categories will be defined by a distinctive set of criteria, which are in the process of being developed.

The resulting statement will help orient users and MT developers in the rapidly expanding world of machine translation systems and will allow the ad hoc committee to collect more accurate feedback.

At this point the ad hoc committee wants to know what MT developers think, and a letter will soon be sent to them outlining the detailed criteria for each category and inviting their comments. The committee will be asking the developers (1) if they are open to having their systems classified; (2) whether they consider the categories appropriate; (3) what additional information the statement should contain; and (4) who the statement should be sent to.

If you or your company wants to be included in this process, please contact Eduard Hovy at hovy@isi.edu. He may also be reached by regular mail at the following address:

Dr. Eduard Hovy, President, AMTA
USC Information Sciences Institute
4676 Admiralty Way
Marina del Rey, CA 90292-6695

