MT: APPLICATION   IN CANADA?
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The traditional definition for automated translation, or, more specifically, computer-assisted translation (CAT) must be extended since CAT resorts to a whole range of technologies, from well established one, such as word processing, to others hardly proven. CAT encompasses linguistic analysis and transfer, but also interactive access to terminological, documentary and text data bases, communications and information transfer. In the longer term, CAT will draw on artificial intelligence and make use of voice recognition and knowledge acquisition. The problem of automated translation can therefore be viewed from all these angles, in a modular approach.

Early in 1987, government of Canada established broad objectives for the implementation of a policy entitled "Building on Strengths: A Communications and Information Technology Strategy for Canada". This policy entails a national CAT research program. Meanwhile, isolated activities are being carried out by various, primarily academic groups, usually on their own initiative. Our objective is to encourage these individual projects and to direct them toward a common goal - CAT - so as to fit into the broader picture. The federal research program will act as a catalyst by laying the foundation for a long-term effort in the development and use of information technologies.

What exactly is the role of Canada's Translation Bureau in this field? With almost 1,500 employees, over 800 of whom are translators and terminologists, the Bureau is one of the largest suppliers of linguistic services in the world and as such, a very large user of information technologies. The leverage of its technology procurement and implementation strategies is therefore enormous.

The Translation Bureau is also a centre of excellence. Because of its size and expertise, the Bureau plays a leadership role among translation supplier and client organizations in terms of system evaluation, organizational counselling and research programs direction. Individual users incapable of assuming the risks associated with the application of CAT must depend on the experience and leadership of large organizations to set the pace.

The Bureau has a responsibility to lay the groundwork for CAT so that professionals do not continue to view it as a threat - or a panacea - but rather as a tool. How will CAT affect the organization of work? Even though tools are adapted to the needs of people, people still have to adapt to tools.

In conclusion, the Government of Canada has opted for a modular and multi-faceted approach to machine translation by aiming for specific and attainable mid-term sub-objectives rather than a broad, long-term, single goal.