

Session 3: Summary of the discussion

Isabella Moore of COMTECH had two questions to put to Ami Segal:

- 1) How did the TOVNA system interface with PC-based software?
- 2) What support was offered to old Weidner users in the UK?

Ami Segal replied that the TOVNA system did indeed interface with the usual packages, and with some more exotic ones as well. It was possible to use the PC as a terminal.

As for the second question, the answer was sorry, no! It was however possible to convert MacroCat.

Pamela Mayorcas commented that the new generation of MAHT systems requires users to buy the hardware. Why should this be so? It did have implications for users, who would be restricted in their choice as a result.

Stephen Kerce replied that Intergraph could only be run on the company's own platforms – the company offered its own computers for technical reasons. He realised that this narrowed the market, but if it proved not to be large enough, the possibility of transfer could be considered.

Ami Segal mentioned that it was not necessary to buy the hardware from TOVNA Systems; existing computers could be used.

Trevor Holloway of Tradwise Plus put a question to both Ami Segal and Stephen Kerce: As the system learns, it makes massive demands on storage, and search times increase. Was this a problem?

Ami Segal offered to demonstrate this aspect of the TOVNA system. With its 600 Mb hard disk, it was very capacious, and searching took only a few seconds.

Stephen Kerce said that it was not really a problem – Intergraph computers had very large disks, and in any case having more vocabulary speeded up the overall translation time. Ami Segal agreed with Stephen Kerce on this point. Ready-made expressions were easier to find.

Marie-Gaïlle Monteil, Electricité de France, asked Brigitte Engélien whether Siemens had encountered problems with METAL?

Brigitte Engélien replied that there were no problems. METAL was an efficient system and Siemens could support it. She did not know why the Siemens in-house translation department did not actually use the system.

Dr. Coltof of Van de Bunt, Amsterdam, asked Brigitte Engélien to clarify the figures she had given. For instance, when she mentioned potential customers, what did she mean by a potential customer? Was she sure that the take-off point of the growth curve would be in 5 years?

Brigitte Engélien replied that the potential market represented 38 million Ecus in the year 2000 – quite a small figure when compared with other markets.

The potential users were those who said they did written translation daily. The figures supplied had been weighed up by experts, and it had been estimated that 3-6% of the potential users would use language technology equipment, but that this figure would be more like 60% for full-time translators.

Dr. Coltof also commented to Ami Segal that he was pleased to hear about the rise in productivity of 80% after the TOVNA machine had gone through its learning process.

Ami Segal said that for measuring productivity, they had used the World Bank's own figures. They related to a trained user who had been working with the system for several months. He recommended everyone to go and see actual users and ask them about their experiences. The World Bank had bought the system, after all!

RAPPORTEUR

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