Interview with José-Luis Ortega Lleras

**Project manager "Automatic Translation", Siemens
language department**

*Mr. Ortega, what tipped the balance in favor of introducing an automatic
translation system throughout the corporation?*

J. Ortega:
Siemens is an international corporation in which English is increasingly spoken and
written. A lot of information and business documents are in English. Previously the
staff often used the free translation services available on the Internet to improve their
understanding and to help them write their own correspondence. But, because of the
unprotected exchange of data over the Internet, this confronted us with significant
security problems. So access to Internet translation was blocked. As an alternative
and to improve the protection against use of data by unauthorized third parties, it was
decided that we would install our own system in the secure Siemens intranet.

What do you, as a translator, think of having a machine translation system?

J. Ortega:
We see in automatic translation systems a complement to human translation in
certain applications. The e-Translation Server is an effective translation aid which we
make available to all Siemens staff through the intranet portal. The language
department doesn't use the automatic translation because, from the translator's point
of view, it is only useful for providing information and for rough translations as the
basis for day-to-day correspondence. Despite all the recognizable progress in recent
years, it is not suitable for unchecked use. And we do remind potential users of this in
the translation portal. Legally relevant texts such as catalogs, manuals or similar
should still be translated in the conventional way.

*What is the everyday benefit of your automatic translation portal in the
intranet?*

J. Ortega:
With our own translation portal, we have better information security and we achieve
better quality, because the terminology can be managed centrally by the language
department. We can thus be certain that every department isn't using a different
translation tool and building up their own unsynchronized terminology. A dictionary
here, a collection of phrases there, a translation program here – collectively this was
incurring high acquisition costs and unnecessary support. Now the e-Translation
Server has finally been installed and is stable. It is accessed platform-independently
via the browser which all staff uses to access the intranet anyway. The handling of
the e-Translation Server is really very simple.

How was the project implemented at Siemens?

J. Ortega:
The project was managed by the language department in close collaboration with IT and IS. The e-Translation Server from linguatec was trialed in an intensive 4-month test phase throughout the Siemens organization, during which, for example, the interface was adjusted to meet the wishes of the users. The translation service has been in normal operation for four months now, with the server being managed by IT. The language department with its linguistic expertise is the central point of contact for user queries on the automatic translation service. It also compiles subject-specific dictionaries and ensures smooth operation.

How do you assess the project results?

J. Ortega:
The quality of translation from the e-Translation Server is exceeding our expectations. We can see from the frequent positive feedback that the e-Translation Server is going down very well. It simply allows more productive work. Further proof of the high acceptance is the high access figures – currently over 50,000 a month. Bearing in mind that it always takes a while for word to get around that a new service is available on the intranet; we can expect the access figures to still increase considerably. We are also interested in statistical evidence. We were surprised, for example, that mainly the language pair German/English is used, and that noticeably more staff use the full-text translation than the dictionary. The previously high expenditure throughout the corporation for different local translation programs will be lower in future.

How elaborate is the maintenance and servicing in day-to-day operation?

J. Ortega:
Because the vocabulary of the e-Translation Server is very extensive, it was enough for the time being to add a list of Siemens-specific abbreviations to cover the typical vocabulary. We regularly check and collect the unknown words that crop up in the translations, and update the dictionary from time to time. Fortunately the work involved is less than we expected. Even so, there are many terms which have a different translation at Siemens than in the general system dictionary, and this can only be improved by adding our own terminology. Technically speaking, the system is running stably, and the IT department doesn't have to do much maintenance either.

Thank you for the interview

Contacts:

Herr José-Luis Ortega Lleras
Siemens AG
Sprachendienst, PT 66
Werner-von-Siemens-Str. 50
91052 Erlangen
jose.ortega_lleras@siemens.com

Frau Kristina Henry
linguatec GmbH
Gottfried-Keller-Str. 12
81245 München
089-896664153
k.henry@linguatec.de