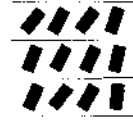


New section at BSO



Herman Klijn

Structural changes at BSO, the Netherlands system development company, include the formation, with effect from January 1991, of a language technology section.

It was at BSO (Buro voor Systeemontwikkeling) head office in Utrecht that the DLT (Distributed Language Translation) machine translation system was developed. The former DLT team will provide the nucleus of the new language technology section. The Netherlands government funding for the six-year (1984-1990) project now having come to an end, BSO's language technology specialists are now free to work in more directions, no longer constrained by the specific parameters of DLT.

Under the DLT project as sponsored by the Netherlands government,

the goal was to produce a prototype of a machine translation system. A first prototype was revealed at a public demonstration in Utrecht in December 1987, and an improved version was shown at the 1988 COLING conference in Budapest. After the autumn of 1988 work proceeded on the evaluation of the prototype, the evaluation being carried out by Professor *Willem Meijs* (University of Amsterdam) and Professor *J. Noël* (University of Liège).

At the end of 1988 an assessment indicated a number of lines of development which could be followed up, not only with a view to improving the system itself, but on ways in which the technology might operate on a much larger scale. Patent applications were made for a number of inventions, including that of a bilingual knowledge bank. Term choice on the basis of context in more or less plain language has possible applications not only in DLT but also in information retrieval systems, or speech recognition, or kanakaji conversions in Japanese. Considerable interest has been shown by some large BSO customers, and one major contract has already been secured.

The new section, or "cell" in BSO parlance, will concentrate on "made-to-measure" one-off solutions for major customers, putting to good account the experience gained over the last six years. The language technology



Klaus Schubert

cell has now moved from the main research division to become part of BSO's multi-media division. This change reflects the shift in emphasis from research to applications and contract work. Head of the cell (and also director of the multi-media division) is *Herman Klijn*. The technical manager is *Dr Klaus Schubert*.

To begin with the new cell will have eight people in it, but this is expected to grow. To accommodate the expansion generally of its activities, and to allow more rational organisation, the multi-media division will shortly be moving from Utrecht to new purpose-built offices in Baarn.

BSO in general has some 1,500 employees, and is the second largest system company in the Netherlands.