

Huge order for ALPS

IBM deal means big leap forward for computer translation in Europe

A 2.1 million dollar contract to supply 300 computer translation work stations, has been signed by IBM and Automated Language Processing Systems Limited (ALPS). The work stations, to be supplied to IBM installations throughout the world but mainly in Europe, is thought to more than treble the number of computer translation work stations of any manufacture in Europe, and means a big leap forward for the whole concept of translation by computer. At a stroke it means that more machines will come into use than have ever previously been installed in the history of machine translation (MT).

The ALPS translation support system will be developed for use on IBM's VM CMS operating system.

The deal was signed on October 3 at an informal ceremony in Utah, United States, and in a telephone call to *Language Monthly* after the signing ALPS European managing director Marc Matoza said that the significance of the deal for the future of MT was immense. "These systems", he said, are going to be actual production units used for day to day document production; this is not an experiment, this is not a test. MT has now moved out of the experimental stage, and is

going right into production. For so long people have been saying about MT, it's coming, it's coming. Well now it's here."

IBM's decision was made after the most exhaustive testing of every aspect of the ALPS system, lasting nine months, and a thoroughgoing examination of the ALPS company structure. The whole study actually took 24 months, IBM looking at both short-term and long-term advantages. "I think they probably know more about us than we know about ourselves," commented Mr Matoza.