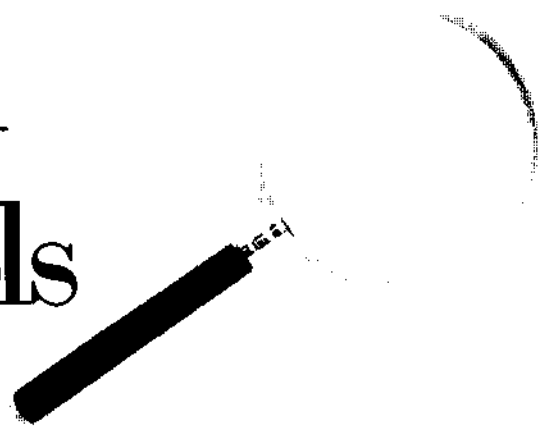
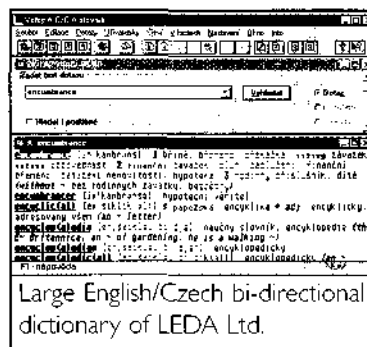


Focus on Czech Translation Tools



Those working in Czech can find a wealth of new translation tools—electronic and online.

It is not always easy for translators into/ from Czech working outside the Czech Republic to find information on terminology tools relevant to their language needs. This is especially true if they do not have access to Czech computer periodicals where products are covered in detailed reviews. *Language International* asked Miroslav Herold, a regular reviewer of translation tools, to overview the principal Czech resources currently available.

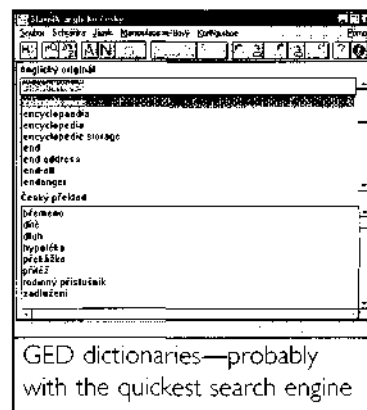


Dictionaries

We are concerned here exclusively with dictionaries for professionals, i.e., general dictionaries with more than 100,000 entries for English (50,000 for other languages) and those providing specialized terms.

Leading the field is the Czech Dictionary Database (LEDA Ltd. Publishing House). This CD-ROM is an absolute "must" for any professional English/Czech translator. It contains:

- the major English/Czech Dictionary compiled by K. Hais and B. Hodek—the highest authority for settling terminological disputes. Printed in several editions by Academy of Sciences Publishing House, it is now available as an electronically inverted (bidirectional) tool with 280,000 English entries, 450,000 Czech equivalents. Price: 14,800 CSK.
- the English/Czech Legal Dictionary, with over 21,000 entries. Price: 3,450 CSK. The only electronic legal dictionary.
- the English/Czech Dictionary of Economics, authored by J. Elman with 80,000 entries and over 100,000 Czech equivalents. Price: 4,260 CSK. The largest electronic dictionary in this field.
- the English/Czech Medical Dictionary with 29,000 entries and over 54,000 Czech equivalents. Price: 2,900 CSK.



- the English/Czech Dictionary of Data Processing, Telecommunications and Office Systems compiled by O. Minihofer. This dictionary is electronically inverted and holds over 28,000 entries and approximately 3,000 abbreviations. Price 2,150 CSK.

There are two other dictionaries on the CD but they are insufficiently wide-ranging for professional use. The user interface for all these dictionaries is identical. However, for each concurrent dictionary, you must call up a separate executable and this takes up more

RAM. The main advantage offered by the system is direct coupling to MS Word.

Oplatek Software

At present, only diskette versions are available, but a CD-ROM is being planned. Their English/Czech dictionary covers over 100,000 entries, and the German/Czech over 65,000 entries. Each-way translation modules are available separately, each costing 790 CSK and the search engine costs 590 CSK. The complete edition consisting of the four above-mentioned modules plus a dictionary of English and American abbreviations (approx. 14,000 entries) costs 2,970 CSK.

WinDict Febra Ltd.

The dictionaries are offered in both diskette and CD versions.

The purchase licenses are defined in the key diskette. The user interface (search engine) costs 620 CSK, and individual dictionaries cost extra. The total package includes 12 dictionaries, but only five are of professional caliber:

English/Czech Technical Dictionary (bidirectional) with 20,000 entries and 55,000 phrases. Price: 1,080 CSK. The only electronic dictionary containing technical terms.

English/Czech Dictionary of Civil Engineering (bidirectional) with 3,000 specialized entries, and 6,000 phrases. Price: 420 CSK.

English/Czech Dictionary of Transportation (bidirectional) with 1,500 specialized entries, 2,000 phrases. Price: 520 CSK.

German/Czech Medical Dictionary with 50,000 entries. Price: 720 CSK.

French/Czech Dictionary with approximately 80,000 entries. Price: 2,460 CSK.

WinDict StormWARE

This CD contains a total of 12 dictionaries, but only four up to professional standard:

English/Czech Medical Dictionary (bidirectional), with approximately 50,000 entries.

English/Czech Dictionary of Forestry (bidirectional) compiled by Drs. K. Sigler and V. Vacata. This specialized dictionary is unique on the electronic market.

Dictionary of American Expressions, with over 9,000 entries.

Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs which lists a number of entries that cannot be found even in the large dictionaries.

The entire CD-ROM costs 2,980 CSK.

GED

This diskette/CD-ROM dictionary is one of the few that do not derive from a print original. The authors, D. Hofbauer and S. Vacek, have compiled much of their material from working notes made by a professional translators. And this represents both the main strength and principal weakness of the product. On one hand, it is continuously being expanded, especially in the field of multi-word items. The English/Czech bidirectional dictionary currently contains over 245,000 entries, and the German/Czech bidirectional dictionary over 190,000 entries. On the other, it is unreliable since there is no guarantee that the translators submitting new items have drawn their terms from authoritative resources.

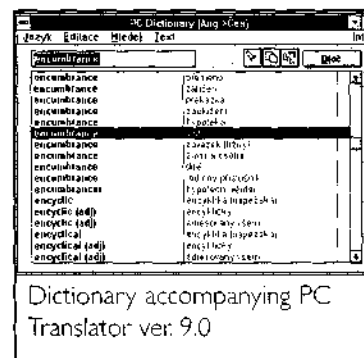
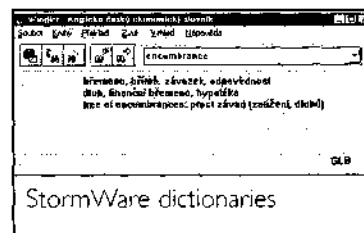
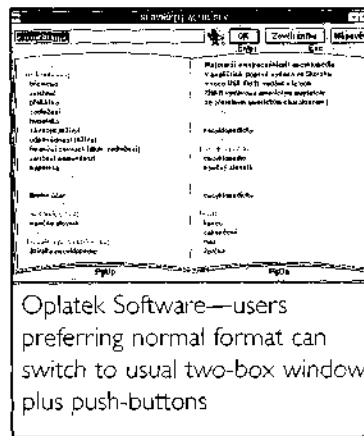
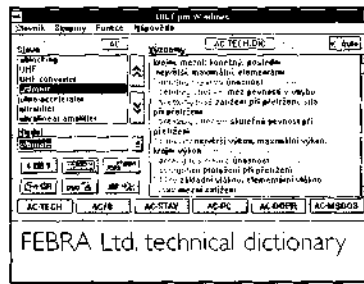
Prices: Each language separately (diskette) 1565 CSK. Both languages (CD): 2,090 CSK.

Computer-Aided Translation Tools

Although these tools are obviously not yet up to professional translation output standards, they allow users to scan foreign-language texts for useful information. They should probably not be ignored, since they will dominate the translation market for target language information in coming years.

SKIK 2.0

This translation tool produces an English-to-Czech version with correct inflections. The dictionary currently contains some 100,000 entries and is constantly being developed. It operates in both directions, and the user interface is bilingual Czech or



English. It is suitable for batch translations, and the output allows users to decide which parts of the source text require professional translation for detailed utilization.

Current price: approximately 4,000 CSK for each module. Modules for German are now under final testing.

PC Translator 9.0

Currently in version 9.0, the tool is suitable for occasional translators in online mode. In a sense it offers an "automatic dictionary" functionality. The translated sentence in the middle window is split into individual words and offers a list of target-language equivalents. The sequence of words can be changed, and the suffixes determining the Czech inflections must be entered manually in the third window.

The target text is available only in TXT format. The fairly large Czech/English bidirectional dictionary contains some 150,000 words. Modules for French, German, and Italian are also available, but the dictionaries offer smaller coverage.

This product is obviously not much use to a professional translator who can type target text directly into an advanced text editor with full formatting capabilities. A range of two to 10 searches per page in a good electronic dictionary would take less time than manually correcting the suffixes and additionally formatting the TXT file output by PC Translator. And coverage of idiomatic expressions is far from satisfactory.

I have not referred to proprietary translation systems used in large computer and software companies. Experience suggests that when such systems are put to work outside their native environment and file formats, they usually get into severe difficulties with Central and Eastern Europe Code Pages.

The figures show that the translation unit usually specified in the product datasheets can vary in size enormously, and this can be of critical significance in evaluating the use of products. Those seeking full reviews in Czech of any of the products mentioned above should email a request to miroslav_herold@telecom.cz. Some of these reviews can be found at <http://www.idg.cz>.

Prices are listed in CSK (Czech Crowns); the recent rate of exchange for the most frequent currencies:

- 1 USD = 30.9 CSK
- 1 GBP = 50.06 CSK
- 1 CHF = 21.02 CSK
- 1 FRF = 5.3 CSK
- 1 DEM = 17.9 CSK

Miroslav Herold is a freelance interpreter/translator/journalist and independent consulting engineer in the field of applied Computer Science, working in Prague.