

OPEN LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF ATA

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to invite you to join the Association for Machine-Translation in the Americas (AMTA). This initiative is now a reality, and it is an idea whose time has come. Interest in machine translation has never been greater. Inquiries about MT pour into ATA every day, sparked both by the increasingly widespread use of PCs and by rumors that MT systems are getting better. It is indeed true that systems are gradually becoming more reliable: the dictionaries and rule bases that drive them are constantly growing and being refined with context-sensitive codes, parsers are making fewer mistakes, hardware and programming languages are getting smarter and more powerful, and fresh approaches are coming out of the laboratory.

Now more than ever there is need for an association devoted exclusively to machine translation--one free of other competing concerns that can concentrate its energies totally on fostering the technology. In response to this need, AMTA was incorporated last April in Washington, D.C., and held its first meetings at the time of MT Summit III. Its stated purpose is to:

...bring together researchers, commercial developers, users, sponsors, and other individuals or institutional or corporate entities interested in machine translation in order to promote and foster the development and active use of machine translation systems.

In joining together individuals and institutions that approach the MT challenge from different perspectives--representatives of academia, the marketplace, and government; researchers and commercial developers; users,would-be users, and just plain watchers--AMTA's intention is to encourage new relationships, create a climate for the exchange of ideas, and give importance to all points of view. This commitment is reflected in the composition of the initial Board of Directors and in the Board's determination to perpetuate a balanced representation.

AMTA's effort in the Americas is being replicated in Europe and Asia, and the three regional associations are banding together to form the International Association for Machine Translation (IAMT), which also held its first meetings at the time of MT Summit III. Members of the regional associations are automatically members of IAMT as well.

AMTA, together with IAMT, is already looking forward to a full plate of activities. It will participate in the publication of a worldwide newsletter, the first issue of which is scheduled to appear in January 1992 under the international editorship of Professor John Hutchins and with ATA's Joseph Pentheroudakis as editor for the Americas. In addition, AMTA will be co-sponsoring the biennial MT Summit and other workshops and conferences, cooperating in the establishment of an information clearinghouse, proposing criteria for the evaluation of MT systems, and engaging in many other related initiatives. Happenings planned for 1992 include an "MT Mart" to showcase MT systems to potential buyers, and also a tutorial on MT to be offered in cooperation with ATA at the 33rd Annual Conference in San Diego. Members will receive a free subscription to the newsletter, and they will also be entitled to discounted purchase of the Association's publications and to discounted registration at conferences and other events.

There are three categories of membership: individual, either active or associate (associate members do not vote or serve on committees), institutional (non-profit), and corporate (for-profit). Dues paid now are good through the end of 1992, and individual active members who join before January 1, 1992, pay the "founder's special" rate of only \$50.00. Details are given in the application form (see block below). Exciting times are ahead. I hope that you will be with us as we embark on this new undertaking.

Sincerely,
Muriel Vasconcellos
President, AMTA

Association for Machine Translation in the Americas

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I hereby apply for membership in AMTA as:

- Active Member \$65, U.S. (\$50 before 1 January 1992)
- Associate Member \$25, U.S.
- Institutional Member \$200, U.S. Representative _____
- Corporate Member \$400, U.S. Representative _____

Please type or print the following information:

Name: (Dr./Mr./Ms.) _____

Address: _____

Telephone: H: () _____ W: () _____

Fax: () _____

Email: _____

Area of Specialization (check one or more):

- MT User Translator
- MT Developer Manager
- MT Researcher Other

Affiliation (if not in address): _____

Professional Associations: _____

Please mail this form with your check or money order payable to AMTA to Roberta Merchant, 5420 Storm Drift, Columbia, MD 21045