



cannot directly import into @prompt. Both of the Reverso and @prompt products can co-reside on the same platform. No other upgrade testing was conducted.

**PROMT linguistic editor.** No comments in addition to those in previous reviews of PROMT-based products.

**Dictionary editor.** This particular module works very well.

**Included electronic general dictionary.** Per our own analysis of the general dictionary entries for the same language directions in PROMT v5-based and PROMT v6-based products, we confirm that the @prompt Professional and Expert (PROMT XT v6) general dictionary contains a significantly smaller number of entries than previous PROMT v5-based products because of the dictionary optimization features and architecture in PROMT 6.

**Dictionary architecture.** There is a significant dictionary entry headword structure optimization modification in @prompt. It is no longer necessary to have separate dictionary entries for all related forms (conjugations, declensions and so on) because such information is now stored in the single entry. Thus, redundant and repeated information in the dictionary is reduced. @prompt is now able to handle accent presence/absence based on the same lexical headword entry, whereas PROMT v5-based products had a dictionary structure that treated them as separate lexical items and thus required separate accented vs. non-accented dictionary entries.

There is a new dictionary entry attribute storage and association mechanism in @prompt Professional and Expert. A new multidimensional approach has been implemented in the Professional and Expert dictionary structures. This multidimensional approach reduces the time and effort for users to create and maintain dictionary entries and to work with the unlimited number of translation variants. The dictionary editor can display multiple units of information for the same dictionary entry.

Our analysis of the thematic classification categories (such as person, automotive and aviation) for assigning a thematic or semantic associative relationship to word entries in a dictionary, we have found more than 60 thematic classification categories in @prompt.

Specialized dictionaries for English>German and German>English are not yet available and are expected to be announced at the CeBit 2004 conference. Specialized dictionaries for English/Spanish directions (ES and SE) are not available. All specialized dictionaries are included with pre-defined topic templates.

SdcMaker, the PROMT Terminology Manager (PROMT TerM) and PROMT Backup were not tested for this review.

Dictionary Services works fine, and we have no comments.

**Topic templates.** The general topic template cannot be modified. The information about topic template is inadequately documented in the product user manual and on-line help. The points to emphasize are that the software/system installation process automatically generates a General Topic template with the name General. After the user installs additional specialized dictionaries, then other topic template categories are displayed and available. The topic templates are customizable, yet the naming and changing of topic templates affect all @prompt translation directions that are installed on the platform. The user can also create topic template categories with specialized dictionaries installed. One concern that we have as translation software testers and users is the current unequal coverage of specialized dictionary entries across all language directions of the product line. All of the Professional and Expert language directions cost the same, yet domain-specific additional specialized dictionaries are not currently available for non-Russian language pairs. Basically, the base cost for further automatic extensibility (for some language pairs) is the same as for only manual extensibility (for other language pairs).

**SmarTool.** The user can quickly and easily enable or disable any of @prompt's Office plug-ins either outside the applications (with the SmarTool) or within any of the respective applications. As Office applications tend to get cluttered and clumsy with a large amount of plug-ins, this is a real advantage over other MT solutions. Other great features are a list of unknown words created while the user translates, which allows entry of those terms into the database to improve later MTs. In contrast to batch translated (File

Translator) Word files, plug-in-translated files keep all their formatting, highlighting and text colors at the right location within the translated texts.

A first problem that Waßmer encountered and which crashed MS Word continuously turned out to be an incompatibility between the @prompt plug-ins and the Adobe Acrobat Writer 6 plug-in. Later another plug-in-compatibility issue was encountered, this time in Outlook between @prompt and a plug-in of the ISDN-Fax application RVS-COM. Both problems are common with heavily plug-in-loaded Office applications and can be temporarily solved by disabling the conflicting plug-in. We feel that the development team should resolve these conflicts. A second negative observation concerns the heavily cluttered plug-in toolbars, which provide way too many icons for functions that are otherwise easily accessible. But the whole toolbar is easily compressed into a single icon, so this is only a blemish.

The expanded toolbar also offers a Speak icon, which has a significant limitation because the text-to-speech (TTS) feature is not available for all languages supported in @prompt. The new 2004 version is supposed to remedy this. For the TTS synthesizer, it is important to know that the language identifier in Word determines which TTS language version is enabled. This can be problematic if a Word document is written in one language by someone whose version of the Microsoft application is defaulted to a different language. If the language identifier is not disabled or changed, the TTS system can try to read German text out loud in English. PROject MT's technical explanation on this point is that it is a complex issue due to improper language identification in Word, so they decided that the TTS engine should only rely on the selected language of the text. In addition, there does not appear to be a way to pause or stop the speech synthesizer. PROject MT has replied that the user can stop the speech by right-clicking on Merlin (the Microsoft Agent for speech in @prompt) and selecting the Hide command. This needs to be clearly documented in on-line Help and the user manual.

Waßmer found no specific problems in Word, Excel and Outlook, but the translations in PowerPoint were not reformatted to fit either their text boxes or the slide size. In addition, the Translate Selected Objects function only works if text on one slide is selected but not on multiple slides. PROject MT has replied on this point that there will always be documents with complex structure for which some translation functions might not be performed correctly.

#### System Requirements

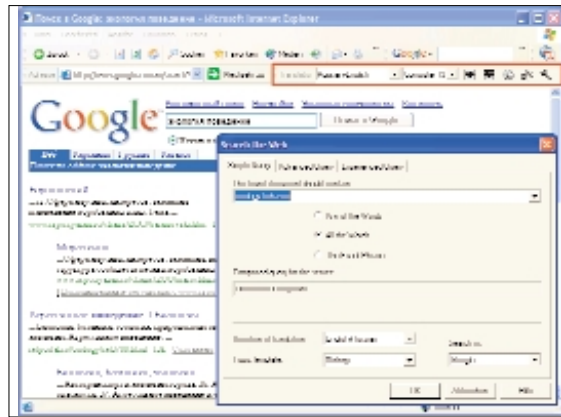
For @prompt Expert: Pentium 166 MHz processor or higher, 32 MB of RAM and 105 MB of hard disk space (up to 230 MB if the electronic dictionary is included). Graphic: SVGA or better, CD-ROM drive (for installation), mouse or a compatible device. Microsoft Windows XP, 2000 Professional, NT Workstation 4.0 SP5 or higher update package, 98 (however, see evaluation comments on Win 98) and Me. Microsoft Internet Explorer 5 or higher. In translation pairs between Russian and other languages, Russian language support should be installed.

**PROMT plug-in for Acrobat.** The translation output from the PDF document appears as plain ASCII text in a separate window (Notepad by default). Although no text formatting is preserved, this is a good start for the introduction of such a feature on the market. Warning: Acrobat Reader 5.0.1 is not supported due to an Adobe Acrobat error at work with plug-ins in @prompt; this is the only sub-version that seems to cause problems. There is currently no support for Acrobat 6, and the Word Acrobat 6 plug-in interferes with the @prompt SmarTool. A new release (expected to support Acrobat 6) is scheduled to appear in time for the CeBit 2004 conference.

**File translator.** The reason for the File Translator (as is the same for any batch file translator in many other PC and server-based MT systems) is to avoid having to launch the application to translate the document and being able to translate many documents at a time. Positive observations are that it offers a convenient and simple interface and allows the user to generate a queue to be translated. It supports drag-&-drop (but in this case, there is no confirmation dialog about the template/converter used to process files), and there is smooth processing of Word files. This module can also be run from a command line. Negative observations are slow HTML processing, no support of PowerPoint and Excel formats and changes in marked text blocks (different colors or highlighting) in Word files (DOC/RTF).

Batch file processing in commercial MT applications has been primarily aimed at inbound translation content gisters. Requiring content gisters to open files one by one for a whole set of files is not adequate for this type of public. Requiring outbound translation for publication producers to open the Microsoft applications could be considered acceptable because they need to compare the original with the translation and modify the target text. It is possible, however, that translation professionals and agencies — the target user groups of the Expert edition — would want batch processing of Office file formats. Thus, we consider that the reduced extent of file format support in File Translator, as compared with the plug-ins, is a limitation of this module with regard to both inbound and outbound translation users.

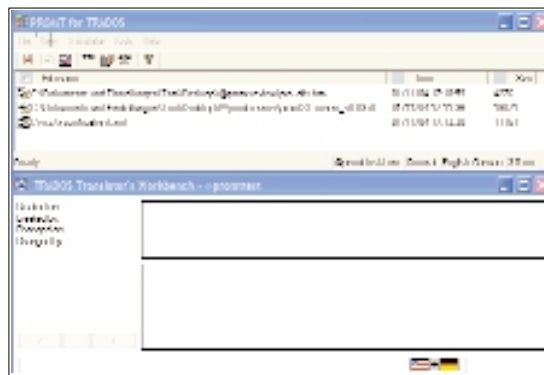
**PromptX clipboard translator/ keyboard/ key-stroke interceptor.** This feature works for both selecting a specific application or choosing All Windows. However, Allen found that when the interceptor is activated for a given application and when you click on Translation>



*PromptE translates Web pages and allows Internet searches*

Interception of Keyboard Input to set the pointer to another application, the menu disappears and the operation has to be performed a second time to get the keyboard interceptor dialog to appear. This gives the user the impression that the feature does not work. This action also seems to reset the interceptor to All Windows. This was validated several times with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, WordPad and Notepad. When the interceptor pointer is set already for a Windows application, it would be more useful if the user only needs to click on Translation>Interception of Keyboard Input one time to get the dialog box to appear again for redirecting the interceptor to a specific application or to set it manually to All Windows. The user documentation (at least the release notes, but maybe also on-line Help) should clearly state these requirements. The PROject MT development team also states that it is necessary to make the PromptX window active before pressing the button on PromptX Toolbar for this function activation or the appropriate command. Unfortunately, the Help window can prevent the correct focusing of windows.

**PromptE Web site translator.** The Web site Translator (PromptE) only supports Internet Explorer (IE) version 5.x and later. This is,



*PROMT for TRADOS allows translation using the opened TRADOS memory as well as the @prompt MT system*

however, a common feature for most MT applications. The toolbar conveniently embeds into IE and can easily be switched off. Additional support for Netscape/Mozilla and Opera should be considered since these other Web browsers are also widely used. The problems encountered in IE include the translation of Web pages designed in frames, in which case the main middle frame was translated but not the navigation frames. When trying to override this by selecting the whole page (Ctrl-a) and using the Translate instead of the Translate Page command, no translation action was performed. PromptE also offers the automatic translation and submission of queries searching the WorldWide Web supporting various popular search engines with highly customizable search strategies.

**Associated Memory (AM) manager.** This offers another chance to include TM-like functionality into MT. In order to conveniently set up and edit such associated databases, however, it should be possible to import and align document pairs already available in all supported formats for the source and target languages of such AMs. In addition, or alternatively, it should be possible to import TMs directly or by means of common exchange formats such as TMX and XLIFF.

**Note:** The new @prompt 2004 version for the EGGE translation directions will include pre-filled data bases for business correspondence and idioms.

**PROMT for TRADOS (P4T).** The testing of this module by Waßmer resulted in crashing the program by selecting an isolated TMW file that he had copied without taking the other associated files. This can be avoided with more documented information in the Online Help and the user manual. Due to irresolvable conflicts which crash both programs, we suggest that PROject MT create and publish a special P4T supplement walk-through tutorial on the module. Such an upfront investment for users would save much follow-up technical support time. Readers can obtain the list of specific concerns about P4T from Waßmer.

**XML translation.** The @prompt Help topics for the XML rules editor contain only a basic description. A better introduction to the XML translation strategy would be very helpful. Unfortunately, there is no such document on the Web site; not even the rule editor is described other than a very brief help file. Besides the need of a special tutorial on how to set up translation rules for XML files and how to translate this file format efficiently

and correctly, Waßmer found no way to use a previously defined XML-rule/filter. And XML can not be translated within the linguistic editor PROMT, which would give the most control over a translation. XML translation is currently limited to using the batch processing File Translator or in Word using the SmarTool plug-in. The XML rule editor conveniently reads tags and attributes from existing XML files but does not offer to read underlying DTDs or Schemas, which would make the rule definition much easier. Minor shortcomings of the rules editor are the lack of a "Collapse/Explode All Rules" function and an inconsistent rule ordination that does not subordinate child tags under the corresponding main tag. Since the translation of XML documents is a complex process, PROject MT prefers to offer customized consulting on XML integration depending on clients' specific needs.

**Regression testing points.** Some regression testing was conducted on points from bug reports submitted for previous PROMT versions. The issue of multiword terms not translating correctly in uppercase format appears to be corrected. Also, the issue of uppercase letter dictionary entries for abbreviations resulting in fully spelled-out translations seems to be fixed.

**Some general comments.** One of the major shortcomings of the whole suite is the limited amount of user documentation. The 79-page user guide for @prompt 2003 does not provide a complete description of all features nor

walk-through tutorials. The on-line Help needs much more content. User documentation and tutorials are a key to successful implementation with users. The material also should be edited by a native speaker.

Another general disappointment is that some file types, especially Office formats, are only supported either in the PROMT interface, the File Translator (batch processor) or the SmarTool (Office plug-ins). As an example, one can not translate XML/SGML in the linguistic editor PROMT. A second example is Excel (XLS) and PowerPoint files (PPT), which cannot be translated as part of a batch queue in the File Translator — which, on the other hand, avoids problems due to the background activity of Office applications encountered in other MT solutions.

**References**

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**Conclusion.** @prompt Expert is a much more professional package than most of its competitors. It presents very advanced and flexible features for pre-processing (MT dictionary building) and post-processing (MT postediting) texts. Several new features (such as the Acrobat plug-in) are the first to enter the market, so they have limitations that will most likely be improved in future versions.

Given the relatively high price charged just for one language pair, all language pairs should have the same standard package, along with similar sets and quantities of additional specialized dictionaries and pre-set topic templates. Furthermore, additional language pairs for each product should be offered at a significantly reduced rate.

Additional version comparison details will be posted at [www.multilingual.com/allenWassmer62.htm](http://www.multilingual.com/allenWassmer62.htm)

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*Jeff Allen is project manager and knowledge manager of the Mycom International Software Product Division and also a member of the MultiLingual Computing & Technology editorial board. He can be reached at [jeff.allen@free.fr](mailto:jeff.allen@free.fr)*



*Thomas Waßmer is a science educator, multimedia developer, Web designer, translator, software reviewer and information specialist. He can be reached at [tom@infotom.com](mailto:tom@infotom.com)*



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The @prompt® product line, based on PROMT® XT technology, includes translation solutions for the Internet, PCs, corporate network infrastructures and handheld devices for English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Russian languages. In March 2004 PROMT released a new version of its translation software product line called @prompt 2004.

PROMT also offers intergrated MT+TM solutions which help language-industry professionals to dramatically improve translation productivity and accuracy for all types of content.

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**PROMT**

16 Birzhevaya Liniya  
 Vasilyevsky Island  
 St. Petersburg  
 199034  
 Russia

Tel: +7 812 331 75 40  
 Fax: +7 812 327 44 83  
 E-mail: [info@e-prompt.com](mailto:info@e-prompt.com)  
 Corporate: <http://www.e-PROMT.com>  
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