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Door-to-door god

Carnegie Mellon's Center for Machine Translation has developed a 400-word vocabulary, continuous-speech translation system that will convert spoken sentences into English, German and Japanese or vice versa. Called Janus after the Roman god of portals and communication, the system uses knowledge-based and statistical processing techniques as well as neural networks. Demonstrated in Germany, the system helped English and German speakers register for an international conference. Alex Waibel, senior research scientist, says, "The Janus project shows it's feasible to build speech translation systems...enabling meaningful conversation between people who have no knowledge of each other's languages."