Termium's looking up

This Canadian collection of French-English terminology has increased Canada's international prestige and is increasingly being used in other countries.

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**Termium** has been widely used for many years in the language professions in Canada. This Canadian collection of French-English terminology has increased Canada's international prestige and is increasingly being used in other countries. Thanks to the continuing efforts of the Translation Bureau, Termium has successfully kept up with the rapid evolution of language. But what are the advantages of Termium for the user? And what are its drawbacks?

First of all, here are the strong points of the 1999 CD-ROM edition of Termium compared to the previous edition of 1996 (version 3):

1. The vocabulary has been noticeably enhanced and updated. Three editing tools are included: *Le guide du rédacteur, The Canadian Style* and *Lexique analogique*.
2. The interface is more user-friendly. For example, it has become easier to consult different subject fields displayed in a window. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to go back and forth between screens. It is also easier to switch between English-French and French-English.
3. The CD-ROM is now more affordable and the price is within reach of the average user. This is true democratization!
4. You can now use Termium on the Internet as well - this makes updates easier.
5. The Internet version is adding more and more Spanish content (50,000 Spanish terms).

Let us now turn to the shortcomings of the CD-ROM edition. In other words, how can it be improved?

1. Spanish terms are not included on the CD-ROM. Caramba!
2. To save a few seconds during look-up, it should be possible to copy a word in the document being translated and then to paste that word into Termium to start a search. The ultimate would be a function for clicking on a word in the source text to start a search in Termium automatically. The technology for this already exists.
3. An interpreter preparing for a conference would find it useful to be able to make a list of terminology relevant to a specific field, for example 'various eye disorders'. The ability to identify terms likely to be used at an upcoming conference would be very useful. This capability would be particularly helpful at technical conferences where relevant documentation is scarce. Such a function could serve in other contexts such as drafting since this is the organising principle underlying thematic dictionaries.
4. For interpreters who use Termium in the interpreters' booth, speed of look-up is a critical factor. Some search results are too numerous to be useful in a conference setting. For example, looking up the word 'cap' in the context of orthodontics would bring up a hundred records,
only one of which is relevant. The search would be faster if the interpreter could limit search results to specific relevant subject fields. The same function could serve in translation as well.

5. Another interesting option would be the ability to customize Termium. If a user finds terminology elsewhere that is not in Termium, why not provide a function for inserting it? An excellent example for this function would be internal terminology used by private companies for designating programs, new products, administrative procedures and position titles. Furthermore, if it were possible to tailor Termium's content to reflect accepted usage outside of Canada, Termium would become more functional in other French-speaking countries. If users acquired the habit of incorporating their own terminology holdings into Termium, it would give rise to two significant benefits: first, it would facilitate enhancements of later editions of Termium for general distribution; secondly, it would create interesting possibilities for using Termium with computer-assisted translation.

The following description is from Termium itself.

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http://www.translationbureau.gc.ca/pwgsc_internet/english/03_tools/03_termium.htm

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