

## Overcoming the language barrier – easy as a click?

Nowadays when you type a search into Google and get a non-English website, suddenly the language problem **melts** away like ice cream on **smoldering** summer pavement. An icon appears at the top, **prompting** you to press for a translation. Click! And, like magic, the **gibberish** is understandable.

But before you become addicted to using machine translations at work, you might want to consider your options. While the words may seem correct, there is a serious risk that the text translated by a machine-based application uses terms that are not correct for your business. Also, when you get over the **initial thrill** and look a little closer, you may find that machine translations are often cold, **awkward** and a little **off-sounding** in places. The 'machine-ness' in the machine just **seeps out**.

Anyone who speaks more than one language knows that the use of words is sometimes ever so **subtle**. Pick the wrong word, or make the wrong translation, and the **intended** meaning can dramatically change.

But machine applications do have **value**. Automated language tools that are attached to a desktop are good, by way of example, for emails or discussions with colleagues from around the world about work assignments.

While sometimes **under-appreciated**, translation is more an art form than simple mechanics. Science is needed in getting the words right, surely, but also some **finesse**. Like a painter who knows how to stroke her brush to get the right impact, translators have to know what the author intended and how to best re-state it in the new language to ensure the reader gets the same message.

Sometimes the original words need a **gentle** massage, other times a straight word-for-word translation is **sufficient**. **Judgment calls** – for now, at least – remain hard to train a computer.

## Glossary

<b>awkward</b>	difficult, inconvenient
<b>finesse</b>	great skill or style
<b>gibberish</b>	nonsense, without meaning
<b>initial</b>	happening at the beginning
<b>intended</b>	meant
<b>judgment call</b>	a decision based on experience
<b>language barrier</b>	the problem of talking with people who speak a different language
<b>melt</b>	become liquid because of heat
<b>off-sounding</b>	sounding wrong somehow
<b>overcome</b>	to succeed in dealing with something
<b>prompt</b>	to ask someone to do something
<b>seep out</b>	to flow or spread slowly through small holes
<b>smoldering</b>	very hot
<b>subtle</b>	small but important
<b>sufficient</b>	enough for a particular purpose
<b>value</b>	how useful or important something is

Did you know? AAC offers AAC Language Tools, an intelligent machine translation tool designed to aid in everyday multilingual communication. Integrating state-of-the-art machine translation technology with a company's own customized term bank, AAC Language Tools provide secure and good quality desktop translations.