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Using the internet as an open-ended corpus to enhance the quality of translations in specialist and technical fields

Translators working in specialist and technical fields are frequently faced with new terms with which they are not familiar. In the search for appropriate target language equivalents a wide range of resources are available to the modern translator, including traditional sources of information such as published dictionaries, glossaries supplied by the translation commissioner, bilingual and monolingual technical literature, and in some cases, access to experts in the relevant field. For the modern translator a range of additional "modern" resources are also available, including electronic dictionaries, computer and Internet based dictionaries and glossaries, online and off-line machine translators, email and online newsgroups, etc. Each of these resources has its limitations, and no one resource can provide the solution to every lexical, syntactic or stylistic problem encountered when working highly specialized texts.

The advent of the Internet has introduced a whole new world of possibilities for the translator and is without a doubt a resource with awesome potential. This paper investigates a low-tech, low-cost methodology which combines use of the Internet as a corpus of authentic texts with basic corpus-based translation theory principles and a number of simple Internet skills to provide the translator with an addition powerful and easily accessible resource, as well as providing a means of enhancing the quality of specialist and technical translation across the board.