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Linguattec - Personal Translator 2008 Home World Edition review

Software reviews > Office application reviews > Linguattec Personal Translator 2008 Home World Edition superior quality translation suite (03/03/2008)

It would be handy to own something like the Babel fish from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. When Arthur Dent inserted one of those little blighters into his ear canal, he could immediately understand any alien speech or form of communication. Even a drunk Glaswegian.

And if you're after a Babel fish for your PC, Linguattec's Personal Translator is a linguistically strong swimmer. The Home World Edition handles seven language pairs, although one of them - French to German - will have a limited appeal to the UK market. The other six involve English being translated to and from French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Chinese.

The program's interface is fairly basic but neat and tidy, laying itself out like a word processor except with two text windows, one for the original text and the other displaying the translated version. Usage is simply a matter of pasting in the text (document or Web page) you wish to translate and clicking a button.

Some of you might be thinking why not hop onto Google, or indeed AltaVista's Babel Fish Web page, for a free online translation? Quite simply it's an issue of quality, which a quick initial test illustrated aptly. We translated one sentence into German and then back into English to see how warped the meaning would get using this program, and then via Google. The sentence was: "Does this translate properly; or does it perform some vague literal translation, which messes up the word order?"

Personal Translator 2008 translated it back and forth to produce: "Does this translate correctly or does it execute a vaguely literal translation which spoils the word order?" Pretty impressive. Google came up with: "Is this really translate, or were there some vague literal translation of the word until medium?" Enough said. Of course that's just a quick test, but the difference speaks for itself (AltaVista did perform better, but still not as adeptly as Linguattec).

Dealing with bigger chunks of text, Personal Translator performed admirably, producing easily readable news stories from a selection of foreign newspaper sites. It wasn't always perfect, however, and it can be a little sluggish, sometimes taking up to twenty seconds to complete a translation (which an online site typically deals with in just a couple of seconds).

Any unknown words are clearly highlighted in red, but there wasn't much the program couldn't handle. When there are errors to correct, editing the translation is made easier by features such as automatic sentence pairing. This lets you highlight a sentence and then marks up the corresponding phrase in the translation. A one-click dictionary is included so it's possible to quickly check up on words with multiple meanings that may have been mis-translated.

The whole process runs pretty smoothly and the results can be formatted and printed with the program's simple word processor functions. A further neat touch is PT Direct, a mini version of the main application which runs in the background, giving you integrated translation and dictionary functions in your Web browser or word processor.

Linguattec - Personal Translator 2008 Home World Edition features - Verdict

Personal Translator 2008 has some nifty features, and it produces impressive results over the six languages covered (seven if you count the French to German language pair). It's a touch slow in processing the text, and a little pricey, but that aside we've no real moans here.

Linguattec - Personal Translator 2008 Home World Edition price

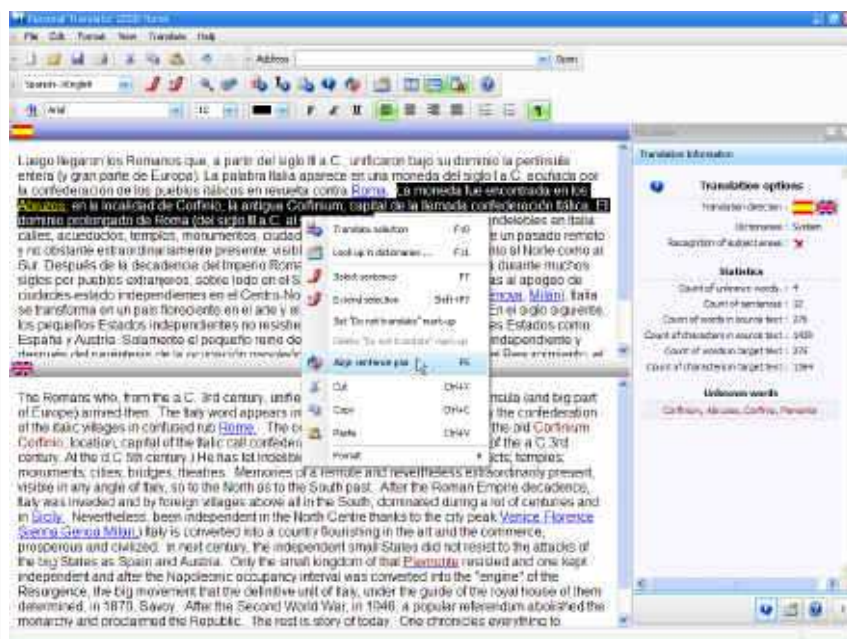
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