



More languages given a boost with volunteer software translation project

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The localisation company, Translate.org.za, have launched a year long project called Decathlon to translate ten computer programs into various international languages.

PR9.NET January 31, 2008 - South Africa - Language communities in countries where computers still 'speak' only English or other global language will benefit in 2008 from a software translation project launched by the African localisation company Translate.org.za. The company recently received generous funding from the international grantmaking foundation, the Open Society Institute to help volunteers in those countries help make computer programs available in their own languages.

During the project, which is named the Decathlon project, volunteer translators from all over the world will be assisted to translate ten computer applications into their own languages. The Decathlon project is a continuation of Translate.org.za's efforts to promote the creation of translation communities by volunteer native speakers in all countries.

According to Samuel Murray, the Decathlon project leader, many world languages face an uphill struggle in countries where computer programs are in English despite the fact that few people speak English fluently. People who are passionate about their own languages do not always have the technical expertise to help make more software available in their languages, he says.

The Decathlon project was designed to bridge the gap between volunteer translators and developers of opensource software. The project makes use of a web-based translation tool, Pootle, which was created by Translate.org.za specifically to help volunteers do translation without requiring any programming expertise.

"One of the problems with software translation, is that different development teams require different procedures to translate their programs," says Murray. "These procedures can be quite complicated, and this acts as a barrier for people to join translation teams as volunteers."

The Decathlon project will liaise with the development teams of selected computer programs to make their translatable content more accessible to volunteer translators. Translators can then translate directly in their web browsers, or if they prefer, they can use professional translation software of their choice.

The software considered for translation, include an educational drawing program, a blogging system, a music editing program, a multimedia player, and a word processor. According to Murray, the final selection of programs to be translated has not been made, and the Decathlon team is eager to be contacted by developers of other opensource projects wishing to participate in this localisation project.

"We are also eager to hear from translators who wish to form new teams or join existing teams in their own countries," says Murray. "After all, the whole point of the Decathlon project is to help create sustainable translation communities who can help themselves and others to promote software in their own languages."

More information about the Decathlon project can be found on the web site <http://translate.sourceforge.net/wiki/decathlon/mainpage>, or contact the project leader, Samuel Murray, at samuel@translate.org.za.

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About Translate.org.za

Translate.org.za is a non-profit organisation producing Free and Open Source software that enables and empowers South Africans. The Translate Project started in 2001 with the vision of providing Free and Open Source Software translated into the 11 official languages of South Africa. Free Software in your language is true empowerment.

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