

IBM translation technology bridges language divide between schools, Hispanic community



IBM's ¡TradúceloAhora! enables bidirectional translations (English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English) of e-mails between parents and teachers.

“¡TradúceloAhora! eliminates language barriers between Spanish speaking parents with limited English skills and educators. It’s like a veil has been lifted... Now I can directly communicate with these families about the progress their sons and daughters are making in my classes.”

*Pamela Dennis,
Math Teacher at Washington Irving High
School, New York, New York*

Imagine for a moment if the flood of e-mails you receive daily suddenly became an indecipherable series of fonts and symbols. Unfortunately, this scenario is a reality for many Spanish-speaking individuals with limited English skills. It's a situation that is especially frustrating for parents when it comes to online correspondence with their child's school.

Now, there's a revolutionary solution: ¡TradúceloAhora! (TranslateNow!), a grant program featuring IBM automatic translation technology.

Bidirectional translations

IBM is providing 50 schools and nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and abroad with grants of ¡TradúceloAhora!, enabling bidirectional translations (English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English) of e-mails between teachers and parents. Additionally, the organizations can use the technology to translate Web sites from English to Spanish automatically, helping to address the Hispanic Digital Divide.

¡Tradúcelo AHORA!
TRANSLATE NOW

"The Digital Divide means more than simple physical access to a computer," said Robin Willner, vice president, Global Community Initiatives, IBM Corporate Community Relations. "It's the ability to access relevant Web content and understand important information available on the Internet. It's equally important for Spanish-speaking parents to understand critical e-mails on school-related topics from their children's teachers."

IBM WebSphere Technology

A prior —and continuing— IBM ¡TradúceloAhora! grant program focused on Web site translation and involved nearly 30 organizations in the U.S. This effort enabled thousands of individuals to access information in Spanish, concerning jobs, health care, immigration, legal aid and education.

IBM researchers have now developed an automatic bidirectional e-mail translation feature for ¡TradúceloAhora! The technology, which features an enhanced version of IBM WebSphere® Translation Server software, is available to selected schools serving predominately Latino populations.

"The ¡TradúceloAhora! grant program now enables easy bidirectional communication via email among students, parents, teachers and school administrators," said Michael McCord, manager of Language Analysis and Translation at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, New York.

"This tool uses the latest communication and collaboration technologies, and thus contributes to IBM's goal to increase technological literacy among underserved populations."

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, recognized as the nation's premier Latino think tank, conducted an independent evaluation of the grant program and concluded that the ¡TradúceloAhora! automatic translation software was of significant benefit to the participating organizations and their constituents.

For more information on IBM Corporate Community Relations, visit ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives or call 914-499-1900.



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¡TradúceloAhora! Highlights

- Uses an enhanced version of IBM WebSphere Translation Server software developed by the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, New York.
- Provides automatic e-mail translations (English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English) between parents and teachers in less than three minutes.
- Builds on the success of the IBM ¡TradúceloAhora! grant program, which focused on Web site translation that involved nearly 30 organizations in the U.S.
- IBM is providing 50 schools and nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and abroad with grants in 2006. More grants will follow in 2007.
- Endorsed by The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.



¡TradúceloAhora!, an IBM program that automatically translates Web-based materials, has been expanded to include e-mail translations.