About Health Speaks

Health Speaks is an initiative to help increase the amount of quality health information online in local languages. A 2004 Lancet article by Godlee et al highlighted the lack of access to health information as a "major barrier to knowledge-based healthcare in developing countries." Within their recommendations, the authors noted that "...among currently available technologies, only the Internet has the potential to deliver universal access to up-to-date healthcare information."

At Google.org, we share the belief that the Internet provides a huge opportunity to improve access to health information. Although a great deal of health information is available online in languages such as English, there's a major shortage in languages such as Hindi and Swahili. The millions of people worldwide who speak those languages are missing out on valuable information that can help improve their lives.

Currently, producers of high quality health content face difficulties in translating their content. Health Speaks hopes to help overcome these barriers by encouraging community-based, crowd-sourced translations with the assistance of the Google Translator Toolkit.

Who should get involved?

Anyone can help spread the word about the Health Speaks program by telling friends, relatives or coworkers about it.

In order to be a contributor of content, we're looking for people with:

Health knowledge As this is a community-based, crowd-sourced project, we do not require specific training to become a contributor. However, because health content can be specialized in nature, we highly encourage contributions from medical, nursing or public health students, professors or professionals or others who work in the health field. Contributors should also choose to translate articles for which they feel comfortable in their understanding of the topic.

Language skill Similarly, no formal language training is required to become a contributor. However, contributors should be fluently bilingual such that they can understand the English version and translate the content in a way that will be understandable to speakers of the local language. Additionally, we strongly encourage contributors to adapt the content to make it relevant and meaningful to the local community.

How Health Speaks works

1. It starts with you: You are bilingual, educated in healthcare, and want to help. Register and start helping today!

2. You pick an article to translate or review from one of the language projects on the Health Speaks website. For this project, all articles are from Wikipedia.

3. Using Google Translator Toolkit and your own expertise, you translate the article or review an existing translation for accuracy.

4. Finally, you publish the translated and reviewed articles to Wikipedia where anyone on the Internet can find and share them.

What's the time commitment?

There is no prerequisite in terms of time commitment. However, we ask that contributors translate entire articles as partial translations are not useful to the community.

As a contributor, what can I actually do?

Translation. A contributor can become the original translator of an article by finding an article and claiming it on the spreadsheet on the language project page. Click on the article name so you can then go to Google Translator Toolkit and upload the Wikipedia article for translation. Google Translator Toolkit will then display the original English article on the left-hand side and the machine translated article on the right-hand side. The contributor should then translate the article, segment by segment.

Adaptation. A contributor should also adapt the article for the local audience. This means making sure the content of the article is not only in the local language, but is relevant and meaningful for the local community. For example, if a portion of an article discusses something that is not available locally, the contributor should not translate that portion. In the case of Wikipedia articles, the contributor can delete that irrelevant and untranslated portion of the article in the pre-publish phase, using the Wikipedia editor.

Review. To ensure health content is of good quality, the English articles chosen for projects are either provided by a reputable source or have been reviewed by others. In the case of Wikipedia articles, only articles of a "B" or higher grading were selected for projects. Read more about Wikipedia's grading system. To maintain the content's quality once the article has been translated and localized, a contributor can choose to review an article by signing up to be a reviewer on the language project page. The contributor can then review the article, segment by segment, and make changes as needed.

Register here!

Why get involved?

We believe that everyone should have access to health information in their language. We hope you agree! Participating in Health Speaks is your opportunity to use what you already know to help improve your community's health.

In addition, Google.org will make a donation to a local health organization of 3 US cents per English word translated. That means your contribution will have double the impact! You'll help increase access to health information and increase the value of Google.org's donation.

Google.org, through its Charitable Giving Fund at the Tides Foundation, will donate up to $50,000 to Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt 57357, the Public Health Foundation of India, and the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) for translations made in Arabic, Hindi and Swahili, respectively within 60 days. Read more.

About Google.org

Google.org is Google's philanthropic organization. We aim to use Google's strengths in information and technology to build products and advocate for policies that address global challenges. We're currently operating projects in the areas of global public health, climate change and crisis response.

About Google Translator Toolkit

Google Translator Toolkit is a powerful and easy-to-use tool that builds on Google Translate and makes translation faster and easier. It brings a human touch to machine translation by making it easy for translators to edit following a first pass machine translation.