@promt Office 8.0 is a great complement to foreign language studies

1. Summary

Country	Germany
Challenges	- Reliable support for foreign language study - Fast, effective translation to help with everyday foreign language communication
Solution	@promt Office 8.0 translation software (in use for one year)
Conclusion	@promt translation software helps with: • Foreign language knowledge improvement • Communication across language barriers • An easy-to-use method of understanding foreign language information.
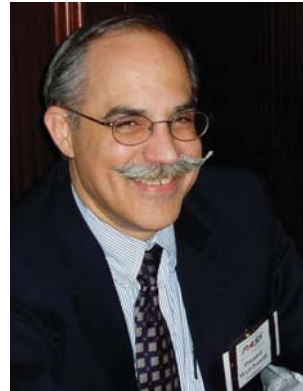
"@promt helps me learn the Russian that people actually use, as opposed to the sometimes stilted and artificial conversations in textbooks."

DANIEL WEISBAUM

2. Overview

Daniel WEISBAUM, a 51-year-old IT worker, has many friends in Russia and other CIS countries and wants to be able to communicate with them across language barriers more easily. He is studying Russian, but it is a slow process, and Daniel needs to find a way to practice real-world conversation skills, not just simple expressions. He uses @promt to help him with ongoing conversations with his friends whenever he wants.

@promt not only enables Daniel to converse easily with Russian friends but also to get more practice using the language, which supports and extends the work he does in his formal Russian study program. Daniel regards @promt as an integral part of his language studies and he's convinced it has improved the speed of acquisition of his Russian language skills.

3. The Challenge

"I often travel to former Soviet countries on business," – says Daniel. "During my travels, I meet many people and some of them have become close friends. But my inability to speak Russian was a real barrier to communication."

Daniel decided to learn the language, and hired a private tutor. The Russian language courses he took laid a strong foundation for his Russian language knowledge, but he still felt very hesitant when using the language. Daniel was anxious to be able to communicate more automatically and fluently with his friends, without needing to keep referring to textbooks and dictionaries.

He realized that he needed to jump-start the process and, being in IT, his immediate thought was to look for a software program that would help both with translation and study support.

> "I needed a solution that would allow me to stay in touch with my friends in real time, and also help improve my Russian-language skills"

Daniel was looking for a program that would be easy to use and provide instant, high-quality translation so that he could quickly translate the many messages and emails he exchanges with his friends. As a Russophile, Daniel also likes to follow the Russian news and be able to understand the Russian perspective on cultural, political and economic events. Daniel's search for a program that would meet all his needs ended when he found @promt.

4. The Solution

Daniel decided that a high-quality machine translation (MT) program would probably be the best solution to provide reliable support for his formal learning as well as communication and instant understanding of information in Russian.

Daniel thoroughly researched the MT solutions that supported translations between English and Russian, and read magazine reviews of the products he shortlisted. He concluded that @promt offered the most appropriate – and well-reviewed - capabilities for his needs. @promt Office 8.0, which was Daniel's ultimate choice from among the wide range of PROMT products, has proved an ideal mix of educational and operational support.

While translation software is not designed to function as formal language tuition, @promt does provide an effective complement to language study.

Daniel's need for an up-to-date flow of information about Russia in Russian is satisfied by @promt's ability to provide instant web page translation; he uses it all the time when he's surfing the Russian Internet (known as RuNet).

The main attraction for Daniel is the translation quality. He needs software that can not only help him form a general understanding of the text, but is also capable of interpreting the nuances in the source text so that the correct meaning comes across and helps to reinforce his Russian studies. Daniel was happy to find that @promt Office 8.0 satisfies all these criteria.

> "One of the difficulties with many MT solutions is their inability to correctly translate idiomatic expressions; @promt has surprised even some of my Russian friends with the accuracy of its translation, both from Russian to English, as well as English to Russian. "

In order to improve his Russian language skills and make the best use of @promt's teaching abilities, Daniel has designed a simple but extremely efficient Russian language training system. He translates short texts from his textbooks and checks his homework by comparing his translations to those of @promt. @promt Office 8.0 has proved to be quite the perfectionist.

> "@promt generally does an excellent job of translating both simple and medium-level sentences."

He also writes short essays in Russian and uses @promt to make the prose more rich and refined. He finds this process very informative and useful in terms of written language practice.

> "@promt makes my writing more expressive. Sometimes I can only write a simple version in Russian but, with @promt, I can write longer, more descriptive sentences."

Daniel also uses some of @promt Office 8.0's special translation tools to help customize his translations.

For example, with the help of the @promt Office 8.0 Translation Rules option, he can configure the program to use either the familiar or formal form of "you". It can also be configured to use the correct adjectival and verb endings, depending on whether the person is male or female.

Using these options ensures grammatically correct sentence structure and the appropriate relationship between different elements of the sentence.

On top of this, Daniel finds @promt very helpful in sharpening his reading skills. He reads the original in Russian, and then translates it using @promt to get the best understanding of the text and discover new alternative words.

He also uses the Text-to-Speech tool to hear the Russian text spoken. As the text is pronounced by a native speaker, this simple tool reinforces the authentic Russian pronunciation.

Thanks to @promt Office 8.0, Daniel has the opportunity to improve his language skills every day by exchanging e-mails or instant messages with his friends. Now, all the communication barriers he faced before are easily overcome with the help of @promt instant translation tools.

> "@promt lets me communicate with people with greater ease and confidence, because I can use the language more effectively, not just in simple sentences."

5. Conclusion

By using @promt software, Daniel has been able to refine his Russian language knowledge and to communicate and share information more easily with his friends.

Currently, Daniel communicates with them on a daily basis without any difficulties and with minimum time spent on translation.

He is always in the loop of all significant events in Russia and is aware of the Russian perspective and assessment of world events in a way that makes his everyday conversations with friends more relevant, more productive, and more profound.

The most important achievement for Daniel is that, thanks to the special exercises he designed and his daily conversation practice assisted by @promt, his Russian language skills are considerably improved.

> "By allowing me to converse more easily with native Russian-speakers, @promt not only helps me learn Russian, but helps me learn the Russian that people actually use, as opposed to the sometimes stilted and artificial conversations in textbooks."

About PROMT

PROMT was founded in 1991 with the goal of creating tools to enable people to communicate easily and effectively, breaking down the language barriers between them.

Today, the company is a leading provider of innovative machine translation solutions for web sites, corporate Intranets, PCs and handheld devices under the trademark @promt.

The company offers automatic bidirectional translation in eight languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Lithuanian and Russian, with a total of 25 translation directions for over 100 specialized domains.

PROMT customers include Cisco, Xerox, Lucent Technologies, Siemens AG, NASA, DHL and SAP. Further information is available at www.promt.com.

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