

Google in translation pact for European patents

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(AP) -- Google said Thursday it has reached an agreement with European patent authorities to use its online technology to translate some 50 million patents.

Google Inc. and the Munich-based European [Patent](#) Office will cooperate to use [Google](#) Translate technology to translate patents into 28 European languages as well as into Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian.

The deal will enable researchers and the curious to search for patents in the EPO's three official languages - English, French and German - and translate them on the fly on the EPO's website. The translations are to serve informational and research purposes only, and will not replace legal requirements for patents to be translated by professional translators.

The project is expected to be completed in 2014.

"Machine translation helps to overcome language barriers and make information contained in patents globally accessible and available," said EPO President Benoit Battistelli. "The new translation tool is a further stepping stone to improving innovation in Europe, and enabling European businesses to play level with their competitors in other regions," he said.

The Google-EPO deal is also a chance to simplify the European patent

system and "facilitate the development of the unitary patent," Battistelli said. Years of infighting between the 38 EPO member countries prevented an agreement on the official language of the unitary patent. The new deal could bring up that issue back on the agenda.

Mountain View, California-based Google will gain access to all the translated patents - more than 1.5 million documents and 50 000 new patents each year - which will help improve its machine translation technology. Moreover, it will also deal with the growing amount of technology-related information in Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Russian.

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