Dr Te Taka Keegan

Google's Translation Technologies and Te Reo Māori

Google has developed translation technologies which allow users to undertake cross language retrieval searching, the automatic translation of texts, the automatic translation of web pages and Google has committed to localising its products into 40+ languages. These services do a great job for the larger languages of the world, but what about the minority languages such as Te Reo Māori? Dr Keegan recently spent 6 months working with Google at their head office in Mountain View, California on this issue. This talk will discuss that work, and focus on the recently released Google Translator Toolkit (GTT). The GTT is a computer assisted translation tool that has already begun to alter how the translation industry world-wide undertakes translation work. Dr Keegan will discuss how this tool could impact Te Reo Māori if (when) it is enabled to be used by Māori language speakers and translators.

Dr Te Taka Keegan (Waikato-Manaipoto, Ngāti Porou) is a senior lecturer of Computer Science at the University of Waikato and classifies himself as a Māori language activist. He received a Diploma in Computer Engineering from CIT (Wellington) in 1987, a BA (through the Te Tohu Paetahi stream) in 1992 and a MA in 1996 from the University of Waikato. He completed a PhD in 2007 with a thesis entitled 'Indigenous Language Usage of a Digital Library: He Hautoa Kia ora Tonu Ai.' Dr Keegan has taught computer science concepts through the medium of Te Reo Māori since 1993 and has been instrumental in many technological advances for Te Reo Māori including the Microsoft Keyboard template, the on-line Māori Niupepa Collection, Microsoft Windows and Office in Māori, Moodle in Māori, and the Google web search interface in Māori.