

How technology is changing Bible translation

Technology is shrinking the world and making it possible for work on one Bible translation to take place simultaneously in different countries.

The image frequently associated with Bible translation, is that of people giving up years of their lives to work in isolated communities in remote areas of the world. While this is still true, recent advances in technology mean that, to some extent, it is now possible for translation consultants to work with their colleagues around the world, without having to leave the comfort of their own home.

Just this year, while checking the translation of the Gospel of Luke, the Simbiti translation team was working in Musoma, a small town in Tanzania, while their translation consultant was checking the text from his home in Holland. The internet connection meant that both the translators and the consultant could see the same computer screen and speak to each other in real time.

“The location of the translation project is not necessarily the greatest obstacle,” says translation consultant John Macaulay. “Thanks to programmes like Skype, we can now have people working together wherever there’s a good Internet connection. What technology hasn’t been able to solve is the problem of working across time zones. One of my colleagues is based on the west coast of America and he’s working on a project in Tanzania, that means an 11 hour time difference!”

Of course, not all communities are blessed with access to the internet, or even electricity, so it will be a while before working in this way becomes the norm. However, for a few, technology of this kind is making a real impact in bringing a completed Bible one step closer.

[Wycliffe Bible Translators](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk), the UK's biggest Bible translation organisation, works with partners worldwide to ensure that every community around the world has access to a Bible in a language that they can fully understand. In more than 70 years of history they have been involved in the translation of 759 New Testaments and Bibles, reaching around 107 million people. Since 1999, Wycliffe has contributed to over 80% of translation projects started in Bibleless people groups. However there remains a massive need, as statistics show that there are around 353 million people from 2,252 languages still waiting for translation to begin.

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Photos can be downloaded from: www.wycliffe.org.uk/pressreleases

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