

# THE DANGERS OF USING AUTOMATIC TRANSLATION WEBSITES


Imagine that you need something translated into Spanish, but you don't know where to start. You Google "translation" and find that there are several web sites offering instant translation for free! It's done automatically by a software program, but you think that surely they've worked out the bugs, and it beats paying someone and waiting for days or even weeks to get a document translated.

You decide to go with Google's own translation program. You try entering some English text, click the "Translate" button, and instantly get text back in Spanish. You don't speak Spanish, but it looks good, so you figure it must be okay. You publish it in your document or on your web site.




What's wrong with this scenario? Let's see what happens with an example. We'll translate "Unbridled Spirit Gift Card" with Google's translator.

*Here's the English:*



**Kentucky Unbridled Spirit Gift Card**  
The new Kentucky Unbridled Spirit Gift card makes a unique gift.

*And the Spanish translation:*



**Tarjeta desenfrenada del regalo del alcohol de Kentucky**  
La tarjeta desenfrenada nueva del regalo del alcohol de Kentucky hace un regalo único.

Looks good, right? Now let's bring it back to English to see exactly what this says. We'll do the same thing we just did to re-translate it – except this time, from Spanish to English.

Spanish to English

*Here's what the translation really means:*

**Wild card of the gift of the alcohol of Kentucky**  
The new wild card of the gift of the alcohol of Kentucky makes a gift only.

Obviously, this isn't what we meant to say. If we put our faith in online translation automatically performed by a software program, we often find that the results are inaccurate at best.

These automated online translation programs have made great strides in recent years, but it will be a long time before we can rely on them to accurately convey meaning. For that, humans are still best.

