OPERATION UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TRANSLATATHON PROPOSAL

ATTN: Tim Ballard, Founder & CEO

PROPOSAL

In cooperation with the Operation Underground Railroad (O.U.R.), the MIIS Underground Railroad plans to organize a Translatathon on Saturday, Friday September 9th, during which MIIS volunteer students will translate blog posts from the O.U.R. website. Participation will be limited to current and former MIIS students to ensure quality translation. In addition to translating content for O.U.R., the Translatathon will also raise awareness for the ongoing O.U.R. translation crowdsourcing project and will work to build a sense of community among volunteers. We hope to attract new volunteers and to increase the motivation and dedication of current members. This Translatathon will be sponsored by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and by Room for Dessert, a local bakery.

Goals

The three main goals of this Translatathon are as follows:

- Translate blog posts of O.U.R.
- Raise awareness of ongoing O.U.R. translation crowdsourcing project.
- Foster a sense of community among volunteer translators.

What to Translate

We want the Translatathon participants to translate content that is both meaningful and enjoyable. We feel that the O.U.R. blog posts would be rewarding to translate, as volunteers could see them once they are published and could also share them with friends and family and add them to their portfolios, and they would also be fun, as the content is slightly lighter than that of the main homepage, so translator volunteers could feel comfortable writing in their own style. The blog posts have an inspiring, hopeful tone that will likely build excitement and interest in the cause as the volunteers translate the content.

Depending on the number of participants for each language, we may be able to translate all of the blog posts into certain target languages during the Translatathon. However, since some languages are underrepresented at MIIS (most notably, Portuguese), we do not anticipate translating all of the content into every target language (see next section) so we will translate them in chronological order, from oldest to newest, beginning with the first post, "Reflections from 2015."

Languages

The blog posts will be translated into the following languages, in no particular order:

- Spanish
- French
- German
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean

When to Translate

We have tentatively scheduled the Translatathon for Friday, September 9th 2016 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. We hope that this date will be convenient for our volunteers, as there should be relatively few other factors competing for their time. This date is early in the semester, so that MIIS students are back on campus from their summer travels or internships but are not as busy as they might otherwise be in the middle of or toward the end of the semester. We have selected a Friday because many students do not have class on this day, whereas some students may have weekend plans that would conflict with our event. Of course, we will allow volunteers to participate at any time they like, allowing those who do have class or other obligations to arrive late or leave early. This date was also selected because it falls one week after the Student Club Fair. This gives the MIIS Underground Railroad an opportunity to introduce the club and the upcoming event to new students in time for those interested to participate. Finally, Student Services will host a "Social Hour" for all MIIS students and their guests on Friday from 5:00 – 7:00 pm, giving our Translatathon participants an opportunity to enjoy some pizza, beer, wine, and soft drinks after a full day of meaningful hard work.

The schedule for the Translatathon is as follows.

09:00	Registration: hand out program, translation guidelines. Mingle and enjoy refreshments.
09:30	Introduction: talk about O.U.R. and translation goals, watch short video.
10:00	Translate
10:45	Break, refreshments
11:00	Translate
12:00	Lunch: taco bar
13:00	Translate
14:00	Break, refreshments
14:15	Translate
15:00	Break, refreshments
15:30	Translate (hand out evaluation form)
16:45	Closing: thank volunteers, collect evaluation form
17:00	End. Some may choose to continue translating and enjoying remaining food/drink; some may attend the nearby Social Hour event.

How Content is Translated

Unlike our usual translation crowdsourcing activities, the translation during this Translatathon will be more group-centered. Volunteers will sit in groups according to their target language, where they can either work together on translations or work individually but collaborate as needed. We aim to keep the mood light and fun and to foster a sense of community among participants.

Participants will translate into Google Documents prepared beforehand by members of the MIIS Underground Railroad. Club members will act as project managers and create projects in Trados and export the bilingual documents, which are then uploaded onto Google Documents. Participants access the Google Documents at the Translatathon, entering their translations onto the right side. After the event, project managers can download the updated bilingual documents for import into Trados. The reason for this is that we use Trados for our ongoing translation project, so we want to update our translation memories with the new content. However, we do not want to make the use of Trados a requirement for participation in the Translatathon event. We anticipate getting volunteer MIIS students who are not necessarily familiar with Trados, and we do not want to ask our volunteers to learn the software before they can begin translating. Thus, the actual translation during this event will take place in shared Google Documents.

Preparation

The Translatathon will be posted as an official MIIS event, so that students can see it on the MIIS website and around the screens on campus. It will also be promoted during the Student Club Fair mentioned in the "When to Translate" section. In addition, we will make an official Facebook event, which will be shared on the MIIS student Facebook page. We will ask participants to RSVP on the Facebook event page, leaving a comment indicating the language they translate into. This will allow us to estimate how many participants we are likely to have and to prepare accordingly.

Members of the MIIS Underground Railroad will reserve a room on campus, most likely Casa Fuente 434, as its openness and table-and-chair arrangement, as opposed to individual desks, makes it a good environment for casual and relaxed group work, and there is ample space to set out the provided refreshments. Choosing a location on campus will be convenient for our participants, as they are all MIIS students.

A local bakery (conveniently located next to the Casa Fuente building), Room for Dessert, has offered to cater a selection of cupcakes for the event. The MIIS Underground Railroad will provide the other refreshments, soft drinks and a build-your-own taco bar, using club funds.

Follow-up

Before leaving, each participant will be asked to complete a short evaluation (see attached). MIIS Underground Railroad members will read and record the responses and use them to plan future Translatathon events.

O.U.R. TRANSLATATHON

Evaluation Form

Firstly - Thank you!

We would like to thank you for participating. We hope you have enjoyed the experience and that you will join us at future events.

In order to make these events better and more effective we would value your feedback. Please note that all responses are optional and confidential.

Personal Details

Name:

Email Address:

May we add you to our mailing list? (please circle)   Yes   No

May we send you information about future Translatathons? (please circle)   Yes   No

Language(s) translated at this Translatathon:

Facilities

What did you like least about the venue?

What did you like most about the venue?

Do you have any suggestions for a future venue?

Catering

Did you enjoy the food and drink?

What would you change?

What can we do better?

What did you enjoy most about this experience?

Is there anything you feel we could do better?

Getting the word out

How did you find out about this event?

Do you have any ideas for how we could get the word out more effectively?

Lastly

We would love to host Translatathons for O.U.R. again.

Would you like to participate again? (please circle)   Yes   No

Would you be willing to help organise one? (please circle)   Yes   No