

Robots and humans coexisting, can it be done peacefully?

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Everybody who follows science fiction knows that if you have robots and humans living in the same world, eventually something bad happens to the humans.¹ But we're going to chance it one more time. Every so often, I stumble across a Web site that translates my articles into another language. I occasionally see a Japanese translation, and I think there's a Russian translation out there somewhere. In addition to those human translations, there are also robot translations available through your favorite online translation service. Now the two can coexist. There's a new widget on this page which generates a robot translation, but there's more to it than that. Microsoft Translator's new Collaborative Translations Framework lets you suggest improvements to the robot translation, thereby helping the robot do a better job in the future. Visitors can view the translation alternatives and vote for the best one, and all this information gets funneled back to the Web site administrator, who can select one of the translations to be the one that appears by default the next time somebody asks to translate the page. And just because I'm so cool, the translation folks have provided a team of native speakers to act as the translation administrators for my Web site. That's good for me, because I am not really qualified to rate the quality of translations in French, or Spanish, or, um, pretty much anything other than English. (My understanding of German and Swedish gets me as far as identifying what is intelligible, but I don't claim to have a grasp of the subtleties.) Let's hope this doesn't destroy humanity.² (But if it does, at least your participation puts you on the winning side, right?) **Footnotes** ¹Probably because stories that go "Humans and robots work together, but then the humans turn off the robots" aren't as compelling. ²I'm pretty sure the Microsoft Translator team is not too happy that I'm suggesting that their invention may destroy humanity. Hey, I'm not saying it's going to happen. But it's possible.

Bonus chatter: If you have questions about the Collaborative Translations Framework, you can ask them on the [Microsoft Translator forum](#).

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