

ASU Jonesboro Professors Create Innovative Software Program To Translate Text Messages

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Two professors in ASU-Jonesboro's College of Business, Dr. Paula Ruby and Dr. Ralph Ruby, Jr., along with Justin Smith of information technology in the Trumann School District, have developed a software program, the Ruby Translator®, that converts text messages into full words or full words into text messages.



Dr. Ralph Ruby, Jr. and Dr. Paula Ruby

The Ruby Translator is presently a program for the Windows® platform, soon to be available on the iPhone, iPad, Droid, and Mac platforms. This software allows students the opportunity to take notes using text messaging shorthand, which can then be translated into full text and then saved to Microsoft Word for studying later. The Ruby Translator is the first and only program to translate multiple text words at once with the ability to save to a word processing software program. The program is also multilingual; it can translate in any language for which there is an electronic dictionary, and the program contains the largest list of chat acronyms and text message jargon.

The Ruby Translator debuts just as texting, as a teaching tool, is starting to make inroads in the nation's classrooms. An initial Google search, using "texting as teaching tool" as a search term, yielded 64,800 results. The relative merits of using cell phones, now being called multiple learning devices in the educational community, and texting as teaching tools have been covered in news publications as diverse as Edutopia, AOL News, CNN, and Science Daily.

The idea for the Ruby Translator arose from a combination of factors. Children as young as 10 have cell phones and are texting. Children younger than 10 don't miss out, either; toys like Sakar International's Iron Man 2 SMS (short message service) Text Messenger can transmit text messages up to 90 feet from one child to another. So why not harness the power of texting to help students learn?

Drs. Paula and Ralph Ruby knew that students text, and that students' rate of texting is increasing almost geometrically. Texting, a form of writing using an alphabetic shorthand system, requires little or no formal training, yet texting can be a puzzle for the uninitiated. Thus, text dictionaries have arisen on the Internet for translation purposes. NetLingo (<http://www.netlingo.com/>) and MyTextalk (<http://www.mytextalk.com/>) are two of the top three Internet dictionaries, and both of their founders are advocates of the Ruby Translator.

Erin Jansen, president, owner, and CEO of NetLingo, Inc., says, “With the Ruby Translator, featuring NetLingo, parents can decode this secret language and know exactly what their children are discussing with friends online. The Ruby Translator is so easy that parents can enter their everyday language into it, and Ruby will translate it so they can send a text message to their children. Ruby is also ideal for students, who can now use their texting skills to take notes in school. Research shows that taking notes increases a student’s retention level. Thus Ruby can help your children increase their retention levels and their test scores.”

Jansen also notes that, “Physicians, executives, law enforcement, emergency personnel, and others can make full use of the Ruby Translator and can save precious time in the process. In an emergency, precious seconds can make the difference in saving a life. Ruby is a modern miracle whose time has come.”

Christine Temple-Wolfe, owner and CEO of MyTextalk, also endorses the Ruby Translator. She says, “You are applauded for creating the Ruby Translator to integrate a digital texting translation tool into a learning context so that young adults are better prepared, engaged and effective in their note taking skills and communicating practices. We appreciate your diligence in applying your creative and innovative technological expertise in the development of educational texting applications. Keep up the great work!”

Drs. Paula and Ralph Ruby, Jr. presented a research paper on texting for note-taking at the February meeting of Southeast Decision Sciences Institute (SEDSI). The title of their research was “Using SMS Text Messaging as a Note-Taking System.” Their presentation was selected for inclusion in the SEDSI refereed proceedings. Southeast Decision Sciences Institute is the southern member of the Decision Sciences Institute, a multidisciplinary international association dedicated to advancing knowledge and improving instruction in all business and related disciplines.

For further information, contact Dr. Ralph Ruby, Jr. at (870) 819-1770, or visit the website at www.rubytranslator.com.

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