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New service is all in a day's SMS

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small village called Kilifi in Kenya, the mother tongue is a language called Giriama.

"An individual in Kilifi receives the text message saying, please translate the word 'address book'.

"They type in that particular word and it gets sent back to our server, which is collecting a lot of responses from that same task until we are confident we have the right answer.

"Once we get the right answer we push it back to - in this case - Nokia.

"This system enables companies like Nokia to build-up a corpus of these translations, so that they can do software localisation," he said.

Exploitation or globalisation

Although the concept seems like an ideal way of helping the developing world, Txeagle could also be seen as a means of profiteering.

Dr Eagle disagrees and feels that given the high rates of unemployment and marginal income sources, much of this population would greatly benefit from even an extra dollar per day.

"One of the things that we would like to see happen is to have lots and lots of tasks and have individuals potentially doing this full-time," he said.

"For the moment this is something that would be a system that enables people to augment their existing income stream and not for them to quit their job and do this full time.



The scheme could possibly lift many from poverty

"If you just look at the business of outsourcing industry, we're talking about hundreds of billions of dollars a year.

"If we could get a small fraction of a percent of these types of tasks going into rural villages in Africa, not only can we affect the lives of a lot of people, we can impact the GDP of the nation," he added.

All payments for completed tasks are received by mobile phones, using M-PESA, a popular mobile banking service.

"I would love to be able to come up with a way that we can do much larger scale translations, but remember we are constrained by this 160 character text message limit," said Dr Eagle.

He is hoping to expand the service to enable a single phone to have multiple user accounts, so that family members could each use a shared phone to create their own individual savings accounts.

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