MFP-BASED DOCUMENT TRANSLATOR

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MFP-Based Document Translator

Abstract: A paper document printed in a foreign language is automatically translated into the native language of a user by a multifunction printer that scans and OCRs the document, translates the text, and reprints the document in the desired native language.
This disclosure relates to the field of language translation.

A technique is disclosed that translates a document printed in a foreign language into the native language of a user.

It is difficult for people to read information printed on paper in a language they don't understand. This can occur, for example, when traveling in a foreign country, or obtaining a technical journal written in a different language. Computer-based translators and translation websites exist, but the text on the paper has to be input into a computer (e.g. laptop or smartphone) to take advantage of these translation tools. In some cases, the amount of text is so large that it would be tedious and time-consuming to enter it. In other cases, the keyboard of the computer may not have keys for all the characters, for example those with diacritical marks. In still other cases, the text is written using a different alphabet that the user cannot even read to input.

According to the present disclosure, a multifunction printer (MFP) facilitates translation of paper documents. In an MFP-based document translator, the user first selects his native language (into which the document is to be translated), and feeds the paper into the MFP (manually, or automatically via a sheet feeder). Each page of the document is scanned. OCR software in the MFP then recognizes the alphabet and language used in the document, and converts the scanned paper into text form. Translation from the document's language to the user's native language is then performed. In one example, the MFP includes embedded translation software. In another example, the MFP is network-connected and uploads the OCR'd text to a translation service (e.g. Google Translate or similar), and then downloads the translated text after translation is complete. Finally, the MFP prints out the translated version of the paper in the desired native language of the user.

Such a system can be advantageously utilized in many environments. One illustrative example is a hotel frequented by international travelers. Tourists can collect information such as travel guides and maps that are printed in the local language, and use the MFP to obtain printed versions in their native language. This can reduce or eliminate the need for the hotel to maintain multiple versions of these documents in various languages. An on-demand scan/OCR/translate/print solution such as that provided by the MFP-based document translator is more efficient and cost-effective.

In one example, the MFP has a menu item for "Translate", with a number of native language options.

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