

RAISING THE ROOF

Buying, renting — and just looking — around the world

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Company focused on translating property listings sees interest soar

Posted by [Kevin Brass](#) in [News](#), [General](#)

These are boom times for [Immobel](#), a company specializing in translating real estate listings into 13 different languages. More than 500,000 agents, primarily in the United States, use the company's translation services these days, up from 300,000 in 2006, according to C.E.O. Janet Choynowski. She expects that number to double in the next year, as more agencies look to woo international clients.

"It says that American Realtors have developed a deep appreciation for the international buyer," Choynowski said. "Instead of being afraid to deal with them and a little skeptical, they have recognized that this is a pool of ready, willing and seriously able buyers."

Hard times in the U.S.—as well as the continued favorable exchange rate between the euro and dollar—have only served to heighten interest in the service, which can translate listings into Spanish, Brazilian-Portuguese, Italian, French, German, Polish, Russian, Chinese (both traditional and simplified), Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese, in addition to English.

Agencies understand "if they are waiting for local buyers to take up the slack, it's not going to happen," Choynowski said.

While there are other translation services targeting real estate, Immobel bills itself as the largest doing "live," non-automated translations for the property industry. Immobel has also started tracking how consumers access the listings in different languages, which has revealed some interesting cultural blips.

For example, French-language listings generated 1.4 million page views in May, after the launch of a listings-sharing program between Paris and Miami agencies. And not long ago there was a surge in Japanese viewings in Dallas and Korean viewings in Alabama, apparently the result of negotiations to move facilities from Asia to the U.S.

"We think [the tracking information] will be pretty interesting, and will help Realtors see how to focus marketing efforts and have some insight into what buyers want," Choynowski said.