

Profile

An interview with Fernando Navarro on the brand new platform 'Cosnautas'

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Some people may still not be aware of the big news last summer in the Spanish medical translation and writing world: Fernando Navarro's *Libro Rojo* (translated as 'Red Book', one of the most authoritative English to Spanish dictionaries of medicine) was made available online. It is part of 'Cosnautas' (<http://www.cosnautas.com>; Figure 1), a new much acclaimed platform full of resources for professionals in this field.

Some of the key features of Cosnautas are

- *Árbol de Cos* ('Tree of Cos'), a database containing links to online medical resources
- a repository of medical abbreviations in Spanish
- an English-Spanish dictionary of allergology and clinical immunology
- a dictionary of words that are difficult to translate in both directions – Spanish into English and English into Spanish (the so-called *Libro Rojo*).

We turned to *Libro Rojo* author and Cosnautas pioneer Fernando Navarro to gain insight into this new platform.

Medical Writing (MEW): Why 'Cosnautas'? What does this name stand for?

Fernando Navarro (FN): The name 'Cosnautas' contains two main ideas: (a) the Greek island of Cos, in the Aegean sea, where Hippocrates – considered today by any physician as the 'father of occidental scientific medicine' – was born twenty-five centuries ago; and (b) navigation in the Internet and the metaphor of 'cosnaut' or 'cosnautas' in Spanish. We refer to these cyberspace navigators interested in translation and writing of biomedical texts as 'internauts', searching our platform for information they need to perform difficult jobs under the best conditions.

MEW: 'Cosnautas' does not simply host one of the best dictionaries ever in this language combination, but it offers much more than that. Who are the potential users and what are the uses of the platform?

FN: Medical translators as well as writers are often confused by the amount and the diversity of information and resources that can be found on the Internet. Sometimes they are not able to distinguish between what is useful or valuable and what is worthless, that is, separate the wheat from the chaff. The idea of '*Árbol de Cos*' (www.cosnautas.com/arboldecos.html) was born with the intention of being an Internet resources browser within a wide database that contains only valuable and reliable materials, such as dictionaries, lexicographic catalogues, nomenclatures, databases, journals, and blogs. More than a thousand resources which have been tested and validated beforehand are included in this database. These are indexed according to content, topic, and language. As an example, it takes only two mouse clicks to rapidly get to the *Medical Writing* journal webpage, to EMWA's homepage, to the *Medical Abbreviations Dictionary* by Pharma Lexicon, or to the *Engelhardt Lexikon Orthopädie und Unfallchirurgie* by Springer.

The '*Diccionario de Dudas y Dificultades de Traducción del Inglés Médico*', my '*Libro Rojo*' in its third edition and first electronic version, has over 48 000 articles and 48 000 clickable references available online. This dictionary, especially designed for translators from English into Spanish, contains solutions to the most common translation doubts and problems according to rigorous criteria and clear explanations. Thus, users can gain the linguistic and terminological principles that can help them make a translation decision based on solid ground.

The *English-Spanish Dictionary of Allergology and Clinical Immunology* by Juan Manuel Igea is also much more than your usual bilingual dictionary; it is considered as *the* reference book in this therapeutic area.

My repository of Medical Abbreviations in Spanish, on the other hand, is especially designed for those who translate from Spanish into English, and it is the largest collection of specialised acronyms, symbols, and abbreviations published up to now – with over 84 300 possible meanings of more than 28 800 medical acronyms used in medical texts written in Spanish.

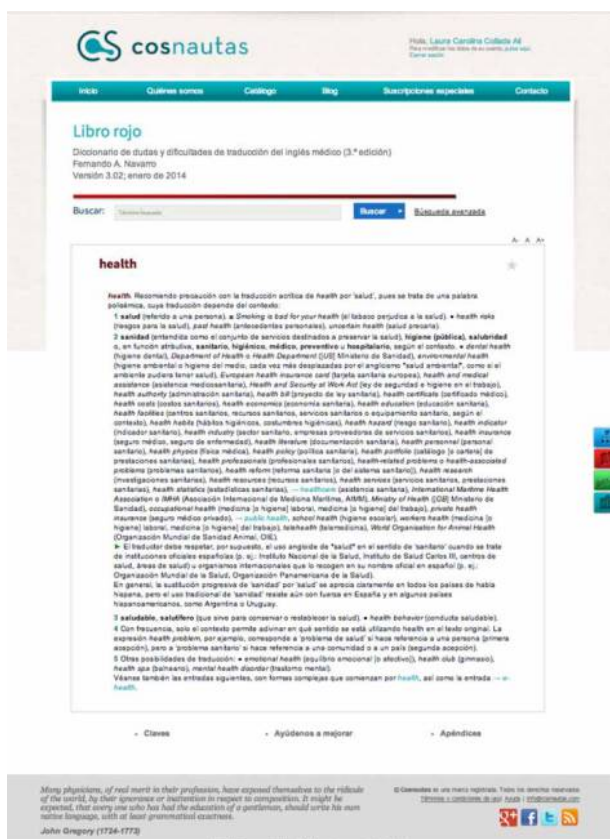


Figure 1: A screenshot from Cosnautas.

MEW: Can the project be considered as complete in its current format or are new resources being added?

FN: Our objective is to provide language professionals in the field of biomedicine with useful resources to work in the best conditions possible. Thus, from the very beginning, we have given great attention to our colleagues' needs; we invited them to get in contact with Cosnautas and send us their comments, criticisms, and suggestions right from day one.

*As a result, the *Árbol de Cos* is continuously being updated (seven versions to date). In November 2013 and April 2014, we uploaded to the platform new versions of the *Medical Abbreviations in Spanish* (with a further 6300 new meanings and 3500 new English equivalents), and in January 2014 we also updated the *Libro Rojo*.*

*The idea, in any case, is not only to keep resources up to date, but also to add new ones to the platform. In March 2014, we published the first electronic version of *Allergology and Immunology*. And I am now working on the project of publishing in Cosnautas a German-Spanish dictionary of*

*medicine with 200 000 entries, as well as on an updated and expanded version of *Patientspeak: A Spanish-English Glossary of Lay Medical Malapropisms*, which was published in *The Write Stuff* five years ago.¹⁻³*

We have many different projects running simultaneously, but time is always the limiting factor. Little by little we hope to increase what Cosnautas has to offer.

MEW: What has been the main challenge in the creation of this platform?

FN: Personally, I have wide experience in the field of medical terminology and lexicographical databases, but almost no experience or knowledge about electronic publishing, business development, marketing, online payment management, dissemination through social media, etc. I would never have dared to embark on such a project if I did not have the constant support of my two partners in this venture: Laura Munoa (Madrid, Spain) and José Antonio de la Riva (Lima, Peru). With them by my side, it was as easy as a pie – indeed, I cannot remember any difficulty or problem.

As we have seen, there is a myriad of resources in the Cosnautas platform. It is of immense value for medical translators and writers, particularly if working in, from, or to Spanish. The so-called Red Book in paper form was already a resource of great value. Now available electronically, it is a milestone that divides translation into two eras – 'before' and 'after' Cosnautas!

Fernando Navarro and his Cosnautas colleagues can be contacted at info@cosnautas.com. Twitter: @navarro-tradmed and @cosnautas

References

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