

Amazing Translation Device is a Real Life Babel Fish

- 1 While every interstellar traveler knows that the most massively **useful item** you can have with you is a towel, **placing**
2 a Babel Fish in your ear, where it can translate foreign languages for you, is a real **close** second on the must-have list
3 of any spaceship-hopping hitchhiker on the go. It's so "mind-bogglingly useful" that those of us that only traverse
4 within the **limits** of our own planet would find our journeys to new places a lot less intimidating if we could easily
5 transcend language **barriers**.
- 6 Well now we just might be able to, thanks to the Pilot from Waverly Labs, "the world's first smart earpiece which
7 translates between users speaking different languages." In the video above, you can see how an English speaker and
8 a French speaker are able to carry a conversation in their **native** languages.
- 9 The small **device** with the potentially huge implications for **worldwide** communication, that we first **came across** at
10 Laughing Squid, looks less **noticeable** than a normal Bluetooth earpiece, and uses "the **latest** technologies in speech
11 **recognition**, machine translation, and **wearable** tech." The device works offline, though you will have to download
12 the languages you want through the Pilot's **accompanying** app. The first **available** languages will be the western
13 European ones: English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese followed by other **widespread** languages and
14 language groups such as Germanic, Slavic, Hebrew, Arabic, African, Hindi, and East Asian. The makers say they'll
15 have some other languages **eventually** at a "premium **fee**."
- 16 This is a wonderful example of science-fiction being the inspiration for amazing real technology. In the late, great
17 Douglas Adams' **classic** five-part trilogy *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series, Earth's own Arthur Dent is
18 able to perfectly understand and communicate with the different **alien** races he **encounters** because he has a Babel
19 Fish in his ear. If you are not **familiar** with the books here is the first part of the guide's entry for the Babel Fish, a
20 device so incredibly perfect "that some thinkers have chosen to see it as final, and **proof** of the *non*-existence of
21 God."
- 22 "The Babel fish is small, yellow, leech-like, and probably the **oddest** thing in the Universe. It feeds on brainwave
23 energy received not from its own carrier, but from those around it. It absorbs all **unconscious** mental frequencies
24 from this brainwave energy to **nourish** itself with. It then excretes into the mind of its carrier a telepathic matrix
25 formed by combining the conscious thought frequencies with nerve signals **picked up** from the speech centers of the
26 brain which has **supplied** them. The practical upshot of all this is that if you stick a Babel fish in your ear you can
27 **instantly** understand anything said to you in any form of language. The speech **patterns** you **actually** hear decode
28 the brainwave matrix which has been **fed** into your mind by your Babel fish."
- 29 As an Adams' disciple, I have been obsessed with the idea of an **immediate** translation device since I first read about
30 a Babel Fish, so I'd happily pay a lot for one of these (I'd give anything to be able to talk to a Scottish person), but
31 incredibly they say they will retail for only between \$249-\$299. Even better, there will be an early-bird discount,
32 where some will be available for as little as between \$129 to \$179. The app should be good to go this summer.
- 33 Your order gets you two earpieces, so you can actually talk to someone that doesn't speak the same language as you,
34 **though** if you don't have the other device on you, the app, via your iPhone speakers, can **stand in for** the Pilot, if
35 not quite stand in your ear. They plan on making future models **capable** of hearing and translating everything around
36 you, not just the other person you are speaking to, so one day you might truly be able to experience what it's like to
37 use Arthur Dent's Babel Fish.
- 38 Just think of the **implications** of this **potentially** world-changing device. One day soon you might be able to travel
39 anywhere on the planet and have a perfectly normal conversation with someone, **regardless** of whether or not you
40 actually understand one word coming out of his or her mouth. You won't need any translation dictionaries, or a local
41 guide. You won't have to worry about what you just ordered off the menu, or if you are about to **accidentally** do
42 something **insulting** to the local culture. You'll be able to hitchhike anywhere.
- 43 Just don't forget your towel.