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Mobilizing your content

How the mobile hype affects the work of technical communicators

Finding the right TMS - how hard can it be?

Which Translation Management System is most suitable for your business?

Choosing the right words

An introduction to Search Engine Optimization and why it matters in technical communication

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Dr. Michael Fritz

Rotebühlstraße 64
70178 Stuttgart

ph: +49(0)711-6 57 04-0
fax: +49(0)711-6 57 04-99

www.tekom.de
info@tekom.de

advertising

tcworld GmbH
Martin Stettner
Rotebühlstraße 64
70178 Stuttgart

ph: +49(0)711-6 57 04-44
fax: +49(0)711-6 57 04-99
www.tekom.de
m.stettner@tekom.de

layout

Irmi Hobmaier
irmi@hobmaier.com

editor

Corinna Melville

www.tcworld.info
editor@tcworld.info

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From the editor

Undeniably, there is something convenient in the plethora of content stored in the World Wide Web: No piece of information is ever more than a few clicks away. Then, there is something intimidating to the Internet: Is it still possible to post useful information that hasn't been posted numerous times before? How can I create content that is more to the point, more accurate and more indispensable than anything that already exits? And even if I manage to create such content, how can I get the Web users' attention? Will they find their way to me or will I have to reach out to them? Clearly, whoever wants to be found, needs to take a deep look into the way search engines work and find out what it is that people are searching for. Or as Andrew Bredenkamp puts it: "It is no longer enough to shout very loudly – you also have to listen." In his article he describes the emerging field of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and its growing importance for technical communication (page 10).
The changes that the invention of the smartphone has brought to our society have been compared to the times of Gutenberg, when the invention of the printing press allowed a whole new accessibility to reading material. Now mobile devices start to change the professional lives of many technical writers who find themselves in the need to produce "mobile content." Nad Rosenberg describes the new opportunities of apps, eBooks and pdfs for technical writers (page 21).
eBooks are already frequently outselling printed books and the number of tablet users is increasing at an explosive rate. Still, many companies have yet to create their manuals in an eBook format – something that might be easier than you think. Scott Prentice provides useful instructions on this topic (page 25).
Another task, however, might prove to be a lot more complex than anticipated: Finding the right Translation Management System for your business needs. Berlin-based text & form was faced with this task and quickly learned that it takes a very close look at existing practices and technologies to find out what you really need. Bob Donaldson provides an insight into their thorough decision-making process (page 14).
In order to achieve simultaneous product releases on global markets, localization needs to be integrated into the development process as early as possible. Kit Brown-Hoekstra illustrates ten key tasks that enable the integration (page 18).
Hansjoerg Schuetz explains why Social Skill Trainings are enjoying great popularity (page 29).
Finally, we would like to introduce to you two well-established institutions that are helping to shape the face of the translation industry: The Directorate-General for Translation, the in-house translation service of the European Commission (page 32) as well as CIUTI, the world's oldest international association of universities with translation and interpretation programs (page 33). Both institutions will be present at the AssociationsWorld at this year's tekom Trade Fair.
We hope you enjoy this issue of the tcworld magazine and for those of you who are attending the tcworld conference: Have a great time in Wiesbaden!

Corinna Melville

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Choosing the right words

Web users have come to rely on search engines in order to find the content they are looking for. Companies that are promoting products and services online need to choose their words carefully, so that search enginges can guide potential customers to their web sites. Search Engine Optimization is also becoming increasingly important for technical writers.

page 10

Mobilizing your content

The mobile era brings many opportunities to technical communicators, along with a range of problems and difficulties. Apps, eBooks and pdfs are just some of the platforms for mobile content.

page 21

Finding the right TMS - how hard can it be?

The demos of many Translation Memory Systems hardly fail to impress. But to find the right solution for your business, you need to look way beyond sophisticated new functions and a fancy user-interface. In fact, the search for the right TMS starts with a close look at your own processes.

page 14

SDL EASYTRANSLATOR

SDL has released the beta version of SDL EasyTranslator™, an all-in-one desktop application that enables consumers to translate text instantly from any document and to chat across languages in real-time within several free chat services. SDL EasyTranslator is a free downloadable desktop application allowing users to instantly translate any text from emails, documents, or web pages. Users can type or copy text directly into the application and choose to translate automatically into more than 60 languages.

www.sdl.com

FOREIGN STAFFING

Translation service provider Foreign Translations, Inc. has launched Foreign Staffing, a bilingual staffing and recruiting firm specializing in the placement of professional bilingual personnel all over the world. On the new web site job seekers can view and apply for current jobs in various industries or register for future job openings. With thousands of bilingual applicants across the globe, Foreign Staffing, Inc. has the resources to locate and place bilingual and multilingual candidates anywhere.

www.foreignstaffing.com

MULTILINGUAL BUZZ MONITORING

Global translation company TranslateMedia has launched www.multilingualbuzzmonitor.com. The web site will serve as a focal-point for the production of high-quality multilingual buzz monitoring reports for international organizations. Buzz monitoring, or social media monitoring, involves the checking and analysis of client responses on key online platforms, including blogs, forums, and popular social media web sites.

www.multilingualbuzzmonitor.com

The GALA Standards Initiative: Projects and activities

By Arle Lommel

When the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) launched the GALA Standards Initiative, there were many questions from the industry about how the GALA effort would be different from past efforts. These had suffered from problems such as a members-only structure or an attempt to control all of the standards activities in the industry. The GALA Initiative sought a break with the past by being completely open to any participant, by working on areas other than interoperability standards, and by actively seeking out synergies with like-minded organizations.

GALA's three-year plan outlines three key areas of focus:

1. coordination of standards activities,
2. education and training about standards, and
3. promotion of standards and their use in the industry.

The goal is not to create a new standards body, but to leverage organizational resources and contributions to create a framework to enable work with and to build a case for standards. The following are some of our key activities, which we believe will help to make standards truly work for the localization industry.

The LISA Standards Portfolio

When the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) ceased operations earlier this year, it left the LISA Standards Portfolio in an uncertain state. LISA's standards had been open standards, but were maintained and copyrighted by LISA. As a result there was no official home for the standards. We have been working with the LISA Administration and the creators of these standards to build a repository for the LISA Standards under a Creative Commons Attribution license that will keep them available to the community. In addition, GALA has supported my work in continuing development of the Segmentation Rules eXchange (SRX) specification in ISO TC 37 and serving as the secretary for the new Localization Industry Standards (LIS) Industry Specification Group (ISG) at the European Telecommunication Standards Institute (ETSI), which has taken over the LISA standards portfolio for further development. The LISA Standards are now available online at www.gala-global.org/lisa-oscar-standards.

Coordination and reporting on standards activities

Historically, communication between standards bodies has been ad hoc and inconsistent. As a result, standards have often taken different approaches to the same task or been difficult to integrate with each other, making it hard for end users to take advantage of them. In other cases there is the sense that standards development is an academic activity taking place outside of the industry. In order to address this situation, the GALA Standards Initiative is establishing liaison relationships with a variety of standards bodies. It will use these relationships to advocate the concerns of participants, communicate important activities to the broader community, and inform the various bodies about each other's activities. We have already established official liaison relationships with the new Unicode Localization Interoperability (ULI) group, the ETSI LIS ISG, OASIS (XLIFF and OAXAL technical committees), and ISO TC 37, with other liaisons planned or in process.

The Linport Project

The Language Interoperability Portfolio (Linport) Project, a joint effort of GALA, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, and the Brigham Young University Translation Research Group, is focused on developing a standard "package" format for

Photo: Wu Kailiang

the transmission of translation data and project specifications. The Linport project addresses the needs of translation providers and their clients who wish to reduce the amount of manual work and project management associated with translation projects. Anyone can join at no charge. Two face-to-face development meetings for Linport will kick off the project: the Linport Symposium in September in Luxembourg and a working meeting in Santa Clara, California in October. We encourage organizations from all parts of the value chain dealing with international content to get involved with this project to ensure that the specifications represent their needs.

The Model Service Elements Project

The Model Service Elements Project will focus on developing independent models for localization-related services. This project addresses the critical business need for consistent references for services in localization contracts, requests for quotes, service level agreements, and other business resources. Having consistent models for these resources will help improve transparency of prices, enable companies to benchmark their business practices, and reduce disputes within the industry. All parties interested in helping define these crucial business models and resources are invited to join and to take part in a working meeting in Santa Clara on 10 October (register at localizationworld.com).

The MFAQ Project

The Modular Framework for Assessing localization Quality (MFAQ) Project will develop a new, modular approach for assessing localization quality based on the notion of domain-specific metrics. These metrics will be tied together by reliance on a universal catalog of error categories and a common format to allow different companies and industries to develop quality metrics that reflect their specific needs, while still allowing quality information to be easily exchanged within the localization value chain. These metrics will help overcome the current "one-size-fits-all" mentality of most quality metrics and help buyers and suppliers of localization services to develop metrics that reflect their actual business needs.

It is our hope that these projects will help all parties involved in the localization supply chain to achieve significant benefits and move past the current situation where ad hoc processes of unknown validity and value dominate much of the industry. But to succeed, we need your participation and support. The GALA Standards Initiative is open to all to participate, regardless of membership status or financial contribution. Nevertheless, running the Initiative requires funds to support staff and outreach activities. We thank our initial supporters who have made the program launch possible and encourage those with an interest in our activities to make their pledge of financial support.

More information about these projects and activities and how to get involved can be found at
www.gala-global.org/standards
www.linport.org
standards@gala-global.org

Ten key steps to a business-driven sourcing strategy

Organizations that follow a formal process to develop a business-driven sourcing strategy are more likely to achieve expected cost, performance and business outcomes, and take advantage of opportunities for innovation and low-cost IT from outsourcing, according to Gartner, Inc. A services sourcing strategy enables business executives to achieve their objectives by leveraging internal and external services capabilities. CIOs, IT leaders and sourcing managers can use the sourcing strategy to explain how the IT organization is operating and how it is likely to evolve. Gartner has identified ten key steps in the sourcing strategy phase to help CIOs, IT leaders and sourcing managers understand what steps they need to follow in order to get more from outsourcing:

1. Set context and objectives: Define the business's overall approach to sourcing, the priorities as well as rules and principles that will drive the sourcing strategy and every subsequent sourcing decision and activity. Define specific business, service and technical goals for sourcing initiatives and relevant measures of success.

2. Assess service delivery 'as is': Assess the organization's current internal and external capabilities. Look at the cost, service performance of the internal and external sourcing and service contracts that are in place already. Take a critical look at the enterprise architecture and determine if it is adequate to support the service delivery evolution required to achieve objectives.

3. Assess service and multisourcing management capability: Determine the level, position and maturity of the ten multisourcing competencies within the organization to determine current and required capabilities. Evaluate knowledge and skills for managing service delivery on business, application and infrastructure processes.

4. Evaluate constraints and opportunities: Consider all types of constraints and opportunities, including business forces, overall economic cycles, disruptive technologies, regulatory environment and compliance requirements and internal organizational issues. Build sourcing risk profiles and apply a risk management framework.

5. Analyze gaps: Within the scope of a sourcing decision, define the set of needs and objectives, measure those as much as possible, and compare these with the 'as is' situation. Determine what alternative approaches/scenarios the organization could use to fill the gaps. Compare scenarios against drivers, goals and risks.

6. Analyze external market: Evaluate the IT services market dynamic, changing vendor landscape and adoption patterns of competitors. Consider the availability, maturity, quality versus cost, and stability of service offerings. Leverage the market analysis to decide what type of services to adopt and when. Refine the alternative sourcing scenario to drive business value and stay ahead of competitors.

7. Conduct scenario planning: Compare the risk and potential value of different sourcing scenarios or models in terms of the organization's requirements and potential direction. Assess 'softer' issues, such as the fit of the sourcing solution to business objectives and company culture, the gap analysis, the impact on critical skills and retained competencies. In particular, leverage the type of sourcing models, deals and relationships that best fit the company's objectives, risk profile and current multisourcing capabilities and use this data to determine the best combination of providers and sourcing models.

8. Analyze risks: Analyze the risks associated with a specific scenario. This analysis should identify and understand the most common sourcing and vendor risks using a detailed risk-reward analysis for selected scenarios, use tools and guidelines to assess and manage vendor risk, tailor risk evaluation criteria to the types of vendors and products, and optimize the vendor risk management program for execution across the whole sourcing cycle.

9. Develop business case: Analyze the total cost of sourcing (TCS) for the sourcing scenarios under consideration, the financial implications and the business and more qualitative issues. A TCS analysis should look at the costs of the internal IT sourcing team, selection and negotiation projects, the transition, transfer and transformation, while considering how workloads and service requirements are likely to evolve. Then determine the financial implication of the plan in net present value and return on investment.

10. Construct action plan: Develop the future view of the multisourcing business services blueprint. Define the deals and the expected time frame for completion. Define changes to sourcing governance, the sourcing management organization and the relationship organization. Define the communication and change management plan and develop the program and action plan to implement the strategy.

For additional information, see the Gartner report "Outsourcing Advisory: Sourcing Strategy Phase Overview" available on Gartner's web site at http://www.gartner.com/resId=1771615.

Photo: Anastasy Yarmolovich

International businesses are not as global as they think

Globally, businesses spend $31 billion a year on translation and localization services. But is paying for language services enough to build a global enterprise? Not according to new research from independent market research firm Common Sense Advisory, which found that establishing a link between globalization and shareholder value is more important than ever before.

Photo: Yuri Arcurs

Based on 50 interviews with individuals working at global companies, a recent report by Common Sense Advisory, "How to Excel as a Globalization Champion," provides specific strategies and tactics for eliminating roadblocks that prevent firms from integrating globalization as a business process enterprise-wide. The report describes how localization and translation managers from several industry sectors, including clean energy, consumer, insurance, life sciences, manufacturing, retail, software, telecommunications, and transportation, set up and promote their international initiatives. It also highlights the tactics they use to overcome internal opposition. The report reveals the underlying reasons for the disconnect between upper-level support for global expansion and the actual work required to make it a reality. It also outlines the six steps required to build and maintain sustainable globalization strategies.

Demand for localized products around the world is exploding. "Consumers in emerging markets are now more adamant about local requirements in their role as the engine of growth for many companies around the globe. However, our research clearly demonstrates that hiring a translation manager is not enough to meet their growing needs. Businesses require an internal globalization champion in order to increase and sustain international revenue," comments report lead analyst Rebecca Ray.

"In today's economic climate, worldwide revenue is more important than ever for diversification," adds Ray. "At the same time, many view international expansion as complicated and full of risk. This report outlines the steps that any organization can follow to lessen exposure to the rest of their business operations as they go global."

www.commonsenseadvisory.com.

Choosing the right words

Photo: Sebastian Duda

An introduction to Search Engine Optimization

With an estimated 350 million registered domains, the best information might be lost within the jungle of the World Wide Web. Search engines have become the most important instruments for guiding users through this forest of content and helping them find what they are looking for. Search Engine Optimization (SEO), also sometimes related to as Search Engine Marketing (SEM), is today an emerging field with growing importance for technical communication.

By Andrew Bredenkamp

Search and the Web

When the Web started, you could find all the pages you needed in one simple list. (At http://www.unicom.com/people/chip/stuff/whats-new-9406.html you can see the list for June 1994.) In contrast, over 20 million new web sites were created in 2010. Although nobody knows for sure, most estimates agree that there are around 350 million registered domains, hosting around 45-50 billion web pages. In 2008, Google announced that it was indexing over one trillion (1,000,000,000,000) URLs. IBM alone has around 4 million web pages.

This massive proliferation of content meant that simple browsing very quickly became impractical. In addition to search, the first attempts at organizing the Web mainly focused on classifying web pages into "portals", but even this approach could not keep up with the explosion in content. By the end of the last century most of these were dying out with the dot-com bust around 2000-2001.

Google was founded in the late 90s, and by the end of the century the Google search was already the most popular way for people to find information on the Internet. Today Google provides over 70% of the searches in the US and over 90% in Germany, France, Italy and the UK. This means that Google and other search engines are the single most important channel for delivering content.

Paid vs. organic search

Google (and almost all the other search engines) finance their operations by selling advertising on their search results pages. Organizations pay to be listed in the results for specific search items where they cannot get a high enough ranking in the standard search results. Many studies have shown that the standard "organic" results get more user attention than the paid ones (see graphic showing eye tracking results on a Google results page). This observation has led most companies to dedicate huge effort to getting good organic results. This activity has become known as Search Engine Optimization.

SEO is more than just advertising

Much of the attention surrounding SEO is focused on trying to get customers to buy more products – this is clearly what every commercial organization wants. But recently it has become clear that the information created around a product is crucial in how the product is perceived by customers. Critically, the "after-sales experience" and customer satisfaction are increasingly seen to be a question of getting the right information to the right people at the right time.

What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization describes the process of improving the way content is indexed by search engines. However, it has nothing to do with optimizing search engines, but rather optimizing content for search engines. Most of the time, this actually means Google. The aim of SEO is to make your content findable, by being highly ranked by search engines. The vast majority of people looking for information will only look on the first page of results they receive and only at the first few links. 400 million searches were performed on Search Engines last year. 40 million of those were with the

Eye-tracking results for a standard Google results page.

intention of buying something. (www.Place1.co.uk) This means, logically, that 360 million searches were for information – many with the intention of finding out how to get microwaves, cars, printers and computers to work properly.

Why is it important?

SEO is critical in the context of information delivery because, in many contexts, if search engines do not find your content, it is invisible. You are competing with content written by reviewers, by customers and by the competition, and the customer is going to take the first information he finds. Of course, you can try to buy visibility with AdWords, but as discussed, this will not give you anything like the visibility that good organic search performance will.

Why is it relevant for technical communicators?

For technical communicators, the same imperative applies. An increasing percentage of customers will reach for a search engine when trying to solve issues that they have with a product. They know that they can get answers instantly either from the manufacturer or from other customers.

But getting answers is becoming ever harder. As products get more complex and smarter, it becomes harder to document everything – and harder to justify from a cost point of view. Companies are increasingly moving their published content exclusively to the Web or delivering it embedded in the product. In these contexts, search also plays a critical role in helping people find the content they need.

Many companies, especially in high-tech industries, actively promote customer forums, where customers can help each other, and in many US organizations this has become the most important customer support channel. Several large high-tech companies have re-focused efforts and headcount away from technical publications and towards support and interaction with the customer community.

This model is not just more cost-effective, but also leads to higher customer satisfaction. But in this model the need for complex product information does not disappear. On the contrary, it becomes even more critical to make the right information available (which means findable) to the right people as efficiently as possible – whether it's to your own support staff or directly to the customers themselves. Getting your content to a customer first helps you to ensure that they engage with you and trust you as a company they want to do business with in the future. As the saying goes, good customer service is the best marketing.

Why is it difficult?

So, search optimization of your content is critical to increase the chances of your content getting found and read by customers. In many ways it justifies writing the content in the first place. But why is SEO so difficult? Unfortunately, as we have seen, the World Wide Web is huge, and it is often very hard to get attention. A search strategy involves not only an understanding of your product but also a very detailed understanding of your customers and the way they think. It is no longer enough to shout very loudly and hope that they will hear – you also have to listen. The rest of this article describes some simple steps to improve the way your information can compete in the race to be found.

How to do SEO

The critical factor to achieving good search performance is to get the right keywords in the right places in your content – this is sometimes called keyword optimization. This is essentially the main task of Search Engine Optimization. The difficulty lies in the detail: what are the right keywords for my products, what are the right places, and how do I get my keywords in the right places? Many consultants and gurus promote a certain mysticism around "the Google algorithms", but in fact Google is quite open about how to make content work well – they even publish articles on it (just search for "Google SEO"). There are four basic steps to improving your findability:

1. Find your keywords
2. Analyze your content
3. Deploy your keywords
4. Kaizen – continuously improve

1. Find your keywords

Keywords are the words, which are important for communicating a message. Linguistically these will often be nouns or noun phrases, but they may equally be verbs describing actions. Many of these keywords will relate to your product and its features. A keyword many organizations forget is the name of the company itself! The reason for this is that it is easy to forget that you have to think like your customer to be successful at search optimization. Therefore, it is useful to look at Google Analytics to see what people are searching for. But you should also analyze your content for keywords – quite often this might hold a few surprises! Keywords change constantly as your products evolve and your customers get to know them better. To give an example from my own experience, as Acrolinx's first product "acrocheck" evolved into Acrolinx IQ, we still had to manage both keywords in our content while promoting our new Acrolinx IQ brand. Keywords may also change for reasons beyond your control, like government legislation or something the competition does.

Once you have your keywords, the task remains to see if your content is using those keywords. Best practice for using keywords can get quite complex, but there are four guiding principles:

1. Use keywords that customers are likely to use (the ones you just discovered)
2. Include keywords in titles
3. Mention keywords early
4. Include keywords in the metadata

2. Analyze your content

As with any project, it is a good idea to set a baseline before you start working and measure how well your current content is using the keywords that you want. A content audit can check your content and deliver detailed reports on findability, as well as give you a clearer picture of how many issues you have, and where to start addressing them. This analysis also needs to be tied back to your general strategy around your content: who are you writing for and what do they need to know.

3. Deploy your keywords

Currently most companies are doing something for steps (1) and (2). In other words, they know they have a problem, but many are struggling to find out how to address it. Service companies are emerging whose sole business is built around trying to fix broken content. In many cases the actual work of fixing the content is outsourced to contractors who often haven't had the time to understand the content strategy of the company they are working for. It makes much more sense to promote findability as an aspect of content quality – after all if your content is not found, it doesn't matter how well it is written. For this reason, we have developed the

concept of "search-ready writing" to allow companies to include strong keywords into their content during the creation process.

4. Kaizen – continuously improve

Like all other customer relations, your work with search optimization is never done. Following the proven Japanese quality mantra of kaizen, in order to maintain good findability, you should continuously monitor the search behavior of your customers, then audit and change content for new keywords as they arise.

More than just keywords

When people first started working on SEO, there was a natural tendency to test the limits. The story of why Google blacklisted BMW for trying to manipulate search results shows the risks of trying to "cheat" the system. Good SEO is not just about sprinkling your keywords across your content. Google has recently developed new algorithms under the name Panda, which are specifically designed to punish low-quality content, often to be found in so-called content farms. At the same time, keywords are also important in the structural organization of a web site, and good search practice also involves user-friendly URLs and a simple, understandable web site structure. But it is worth remembering that the actual words that you use will always have the most dramatic effect on your search performance.

How to do multilingual SEO

Everything we have discussed so far concerns the content in a single language. It also applies to translated content, only with the added challenge of how a company can communicate and validate keywords with global marketing, sales and support operations.

Of course, delivering content to a global market often means translation and localization of products and product content – but translation is never enough. No company can translate all their content into all the languages in which they sell their products – most are lucky if they can translate 50%. Thus, your original content needs to be optimized for search across the language barrier. This means discovering translations for keywords. Unfortunately, most companies are doing this now by getting their keywords translated without context by localization companies. Not only is this unlikely to lead to good target-language keywords, but it misses the point of trying to think like your customers.

To do multilingual SEO, you need to analyze all the different ways in which your keywords can be translated and will be used by your customers. These lists can only be discovered with tools such as Arcolinx IQ, which can find translations for keywords from existing content. Once you have the list of global keywords, you can work on deploying them in metadata for your non-localized content.

Bear in mind that in many countries Google is not as dominant as it is in Western Europe and the US. In Russia, China, South Korea and Japan, Google has less than 40% of the search market.

Photo: Aleksandra Glustsenko

It is no longer enough to shout very loudly – you also have to listen.

Summary

In summary, the most successful organizations are developing a process of optimizing content, which is not a reactive separate operation, but rather an integrated part of implementing a content strategy aiming to deliver the right information to customers at the right time. If you ask Google to sum up how to get good search results, they will reply: Don't try to cheat, simply create high-quality, relevant content.

contact

Andrew Bredenkamp, PhD, is founder and CEO of Acrolinx, a technology company helping some of the most successful companies in the world with their content strategy.

Andrew.Bredenkamp@acrolinx.com
www.acrolinx.com
Twitter: @abredenkamp

Finding the right TMS - how hard can it be?

As with many other small businesses, Language Service Providers (LSPs) often wade into the technology swamp without fully recognizing the difficulties and dangers lurking there. The demos we see at the many language industry conferences make it all look so easy. Many LSPs are faced with a choice of either continuing to develop and maintain a proprietary TMS or moving to one of the many available commercial offerings. This brief case study will allow you to avoid overestimating or underestimating difficulty when answering that question.

Photo: reddz

By Bob Donaldson

Berlin-based LSP, text & form, was faced with exactly this dilemma. The costs associated with maintaining and extending their proprietary TMS solution were substantial, yet the list of desired functionalities continued to grow. The real question came down to one of return on investment: did the proprietary system create competitive advantages that would justify the additional investment, or would it be more cost-effective to invest in third party solutions? We chose the latter course, and this is our story.

You are here

The first thing you need to know when planning a journey is where you are starting from. This is often more important than where you are going, because it is possible to alter your destination en route. At text & form, we began with a thorough assessment of the existing proprietary technology. In performing this assessment, we looked at three broad questions:

- How well does the system support our day-to-day business needs?
- Is the system designed in such a way that we can easily add new features and integrate with external systems as necessary?
- What level of staffing support is necessary to maintain and extend the system?

Armed with this information, we then made a brief survey of available third party options with the following questions in mind:

- Where can we expect improved process automation from a third party system?
- What kinds of process changes will we need to make to adapt to a third party system?
- What level of investment in licensing and maintenance fees are required for a third party system?

Before moving to a "build/buy decision", though, it was necessary to look carefully at our real business requirements. Too often, these "requirements" are simply derived from current processes, forgetting that the processes themselves often have their roots in a possibly inadequate technological environment. In this case, we put together a relatively short, high-level description of what we needed to run the business more efficiently. This included requirements for improved financial reporting, improved visibility into costs incurred for various types of projects, improved automation of repetitive tasks, improved ability to integrate with external partners and improved support for collaborative workflows.

After performing a gap analysis based on this requirements document, we eventually decided that moving to a third party solution was the best choice. The key factor in that decision was the recognition that technology is changing the business environment, and the ability to integrate with external systems and to support collaborative approaches to delivering language services was essential. Sharing the cost of that capability set with other customers was the obvious financial choice.

Making the selection

Having laid the groundwork above, we were now ready to look at options. All the demos really do look good, so the key at this point is to consider the available features in light of the specific requirements of your business. The demos will typically focus on one or two "standard" processes and amaze you with how easy it is to use the system for those processes. There are three ways this can be misleading. First, the language services business is a lot more diverse than is commonly recognized. Processes that make sense for one segment of the market may not be appropriate for another. These hidden assumptions about process are built into the way prices are handled in the system, the way workflow is automated and the way resources are assigned to tasks. It is important to consider the system capabilities in light of the details and variety of your processes and not rely totally on the vendor. Second, most or all of the tools on the market provide capability for the "traditional" localization projects. Support for stream-oriented translation processing (such as might occur in a user-generated content environment), collaborative workflows, agile localization, multi-media localization, etc. is rare and often immature. Here it is important to look at where your business is going, not where it has been when evaluating options.

And third, it is important to look at the "master data" the system requires in order to make the actual project management go so smoothly. How is it organized? How easy is it to change if needed? How are more complex situations handled? One thing is certain: the way you are organizing your master data now is probably not going to fit into the new system. At text & form, we have found that reorganizing our approach to this data has some benefits, but it certainly comes at a cost.

The only way to really evaluate the degree to which these three areas impact your business is to do some detailed pilot testing. This is often very expensive in terms of staff time, but the alternative is to discover too late in the process that "things just don't work". At text & form, we narrowed it down to three options during our initial screening, and then did our pilot testing sequentially. In other words, we gave our first choice an opportunity to prove itself, and moved on to the second choice only after determining that the first choice would not meet our needs. In our case, we were guided in part by the preferences of our key customers in determining the priority within the set of potential solutions.

In order to run an effective pilot test, all areas of the system need to be exercised within the context of your range of projects. This will

require substantial investment in training, system set-up and configuration, and actual staff time running different scenarios.
In our case, it was only when we delved into the details of our various project types that the shortcomings of our first choice solution became evident. This was not all "lost time", though, because it forced us to think more carefully about the details of the processes we intended to implement. In fact, generalizing from the lessons learned in "round one", we were able to come to the conclusion much more quickly that our second choice also fell short of our expectations.
We eventually were able to assure ourselves that our third choice would meet most or all of our needs. The system provided flexibility where we needed it and seemed to be able to accommodate most of the peculiarities of our processes. At this point we also engaged deeply with the vendor organization itself in order to assure ourselves that they would be responsive to our ongoing needs. One of the key advantages of a third party solution is (or should be) the ability of the vendor to aggregate demand from multiple sources and provide new features and functionality at a rate that would not be possible with an internal development team. Too often companies make the mistake of evaluating only the product and not the vendor, which can lead to future disappointments.

Don't forget the process

In all of the above, it is important to remember that technology alone is not going to solve all the problems. As Ben Sargent (Common Sense Advisory) has recently observed, changing technology without addressing the underlying processes will limit the ROI of any technology investment. At text & form, we tried to keep the future possibilities firmly in mind as we made our final selection. The risk in this, of course, is that some of our "what if" scenarios ended up not being supported in the system we chose. Or at least not supported yet. Managing expectations is an important part of managing a successful technology transition.

From theory to reality

Once the selection is made, the focus shifts to "making it happen". This involves two components. In the first place, it is important to negotiate a business agreement with the vendor that incorporates any of the promises made during the evaluation process. In our case, there was a short list of "must have" features that the vendor agreed to include in the next release. It was important to have those features documented and included in the contract. Depending on the nature of your specific needs and the vendor's policy, there may or may not be extra fees involved, and this is another area that has to be addressed explicitly.
In the second place, it is important to plan for the various tasks leading up to deployment. These fall into several categories:

Data migration and configuration

Some of the effort here became evident during the pilot phase, but there is a huge number of details to work out. The new system will always organize some of the master data differently, and there is a lot of work involved in identifying the logical mapping, eliminating duplications or obsolete data, establishing default relationships for data that is not kept in your legacy system, etc. At text & form, we are still in the process of finalizing this step.

Training & communication

During the pilot phase, it is not often feasible to involve all staff and not often advantageous to involve customers or vendors. It is important, however, to be sure that key stakeholders are aware of the process and have an opportunity to contribute. Once the decision is made to proceed with a particular solution, this communication need becomes an even higher priority.
At text & form, we began with a comprehensive training program for all project management staff. Project managers were then divided into teams with similar concerns to work out the details of process changes, workflow definition, etc. Most systems allow for at least some variation in areas such as how vendors are selected/assigned to projects, how/when email notifications are sent, etc. In order to benefit fully from the system, it is important to develop processes that take advantage of the full system capabilities.
We also need to communicate effectively with external stakeholders. In our case, we have identified a handful of key customers and will involve them in the final stages of deployment planning. We also plan to communicate in advance with all customers so that changes in the format or frequency of our project-related communications will not come as a surprise. Similarly, the new system will provide substantial benefits to our vendors, especially in the area of managing the business communications (purchase orders, invoices, etc.). It is important to include these stakeholders in the run-up period to final deployment.

Final Deployment

At some point the decision has to be made … to go or not to go (live)? That is the question. It is important to minimize the risk when making the final decision to put the new system into production, but it is also important to acknowledge that there will always be some problems associated with using the new system. In an effort to minimize both the risk and the number of problems, consideration needs to be given to the following questions:

- Have the internal staff been trained on the new system well enough to accomplish their daily tasks?
- Is it possible to run the old and new systems in parallel? Often this is not feasible, but it at least has to be considered.
- Is it possible to move to the new system gradually (by customer or project or project manager)? Again, in many cases this is problematic. For instance, since both the

legacy TMS and the new system chosen for text & form handle invoicing, we will need to make a clean break in order to continue the sequential numbering required by German law.

- Is there a deployment support team assembled with both the authority and skills to solve problems that arise?
- Is vendor support available should something unexpected turn up at the last minute?

Lessons learned

At text & form, we are finalizing the answers to these and other more detailed questions as we plan for final deployment later this year. One obvious "lesson learned" is that these kinds of major decisions cannot be easily made or quickly implemented. Moving from an internally developed system, even one that is showing the strains of age, to a third party TMS solution challenges the organization at a number of levels. We have found it challenging to find the staff time to fully evaluate options (whether technological or process). We have also discovered that legacy processes designed to handle specific needs of individual customers or projects are difficult to migrate and adapt to the new environment. And finally, we have learned that some of the most interesting opportunities to automate workflow are still "opportunities" rather than current realities.

The good news, however, is that the new system really does provide those opportunities. It also promises to give us much better insights into the day-to-day activities, both from a customer satisfaction perspective and a financial performance perspective. And having chosen a third party solution allows us to focus our business energies on customer service and language service innovation, rather than on maintaining a proprietary software system.

contact

Founder and Principal at Carson Strategy Group, **Bob Donaldson** is a well-known speaker and strategic consultant in language technology tools and language service business models. He is currently Chief Technology Strategist at text & form and previously served McElroy Translation as VP of Strategy. He has over 25 years of experience in creative technology application.

www.CarsonStrategy.com
www.textform.com
Bob@CarsonStrategy.com
bobd@textform.com
Twitter: @BobD_Austin

Integrating localization and technical communication: ten critical tasks

As more companies move to structured authoring, content management and simultaneous releases on all markets, content development teams face increased pressure to start localizing earlier in the development cycle. How well a team handles issues in the following ten areas can determine the success or failure of the integration.

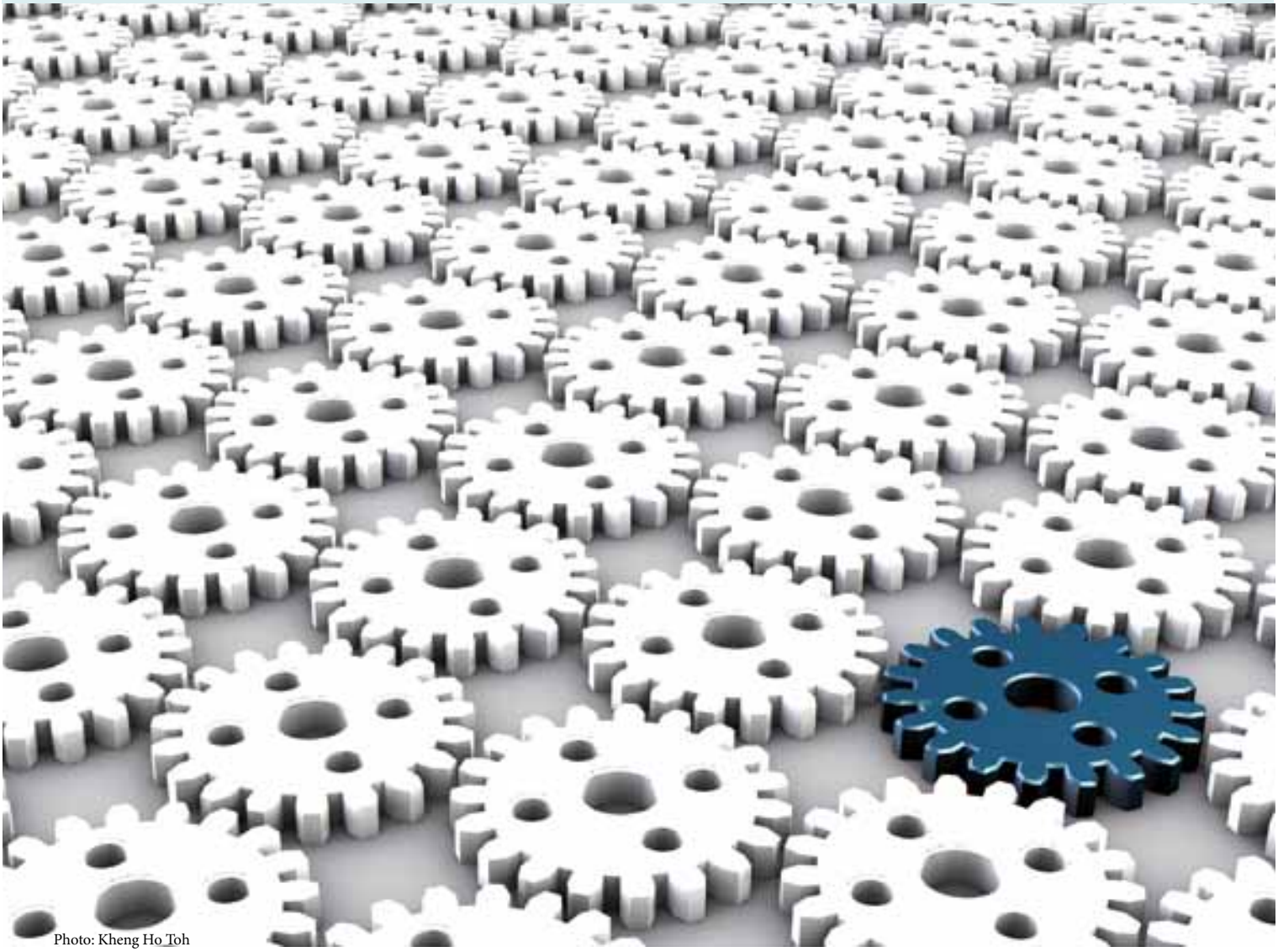

Photo: Kheng Ho Toh

By Kit Brown-Hoekstra

1. Communication

Communication is often the biggest issue mentioned at project reviews. You can never have enough timely and relevant communication. With multicultural and virtual teams, it is especially critical to communicate early, often, and in multiple ways. For example, if you have a conference call, follow up with an email verifying agreed action and due dates, and post the information in a team portal.

Don't assume that everyone has the same ideas about time, project requirements or responsibilities. Instead, be explicit about expectations at the beginning of the project and, wherever possible, identify and address any potential areas of conflicting assumptions.

Provide training to make sure that the localization and content teams understand the similarities and differences between the two roles. Name primary and secondary points of contact to act as liaisons with the translation team. If something comes up in a project meeting that affects the documentation, it also affects translation. Work with the localization vendor to find out what they need from you in order to be successful.

2. Needs analysis

Companies tend to get excited about tools and methodologies, which often results in choosing a tool or process before really clarifying the problem and need. However, no tool is a panacea.

If you are implementing DITA, XML, content management (CMS), or other systems that require considerable resources to implement, you must evaluate your existing processes and content before jumping to something new. The best CMS in the world and the most effective XML/DITA implementation won't help you if you lack effective QA, editing, and change management. Localization costs could go up, not down, if you don't include the localization team in the analysis, integrate them into the new processes, and provide clear instructions.

Also, when calculating your return on investment (ROI), you need a baseline so that you can determine how much the new system improves efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

3. Tool selection

A tool that worked for one or two languages might not work for managing larger language sets. Some tools are better for certain types of content than others. Some tools simplify the localization process, while others complicate it. Desktop publishing and formatting costs are often a huge percentage of the overall localization costs, so work with your localization vendor to identify tools that will help you minimize these costs, while managing your source content effectively.

4. Content analysis

Some content is independent of a project, and can be translated separately from the project-specific content – a content analysis can identify this information. When content is translated, the localization team loads it into the translation memory and checks it against existing content. Translators must evaluate "fuzzy matches" (where the new content is almost, but not exactly, the same as the existing content) for context. When you analyze the content for areas of overlap, duplication, preferential edits, information types, consistency, and so on, you can reduce the fuzzy matches, improve consistency and quality, and lower localization costs.

The localization vendor can assist you by providing a source-to-source comparison of the new and existing content. If the analysis shows a lot of 90-95% matches, look at your editorial processes to ensure that preferential changes are not being made to previously translated content. In addition, examine your CMS to ensure that existing content is easy to retrieve and reuse.

Conduct periodic audits of your content. These audits help you identify appropriate metrics, what you are doing well and where there is room for improvement. When done consistently, the audits help you to prioritize your efforts, and give you the information you need to make sound business decisions.

Creating content 'chunks'/components/modules allows you to send only the untranslated content to the vendor, which saves 10% or more of your localization costs because vendors charge you even for 100% matches. This charge is because the human translator has to do context verification. Sending only new or modified content eliminates this. Reuse facilitates consistency. Instead of rewriting a note, caution, or warning every time it's needed, you write it once and reuse it many times. Do the same thing with graphics, tables, regulatory information, and other content that's used in multiple places. However, that consistency doesn't equal quality. You also need to spend time internationalizing the content to ensure that it is clear, concise, and accurate.

5. Internationalization

Ideally, internationalization is not a separate process, but built into the very design of the products, strategic planning and cultural milieu. It's much easier to design something that considers global needs, than it is to retrofit it later. It takes time to build the initial understanding and shift the corporate culture. And this is an ongoing process as the teams reach new levels of knowledge and understanding. Once that integration occurs, however, companies begin to reap the rewards in terms of faster times to market, fewer cultural issues, improved customer service, and potentially, larger market share.

6. Editing

Localization is very much a "garbage in, garbage out" process. The higher the quality of the source content, the better the translation will be. Inaccurate, poorly written, source content results in inaccurate, poorly done translations. For example, if you have an error in the source that costs €10 to fix, multiply that amount by the number of languages and the number of errors and you can see how quickly the costs escalate (€10 x 20 languages x 100 errors = €20000). Without an effective editing process, both content management and localization are doomed to failure. Poorly edited CMS output is inconsistent in tone and style, which confuses the user and makes translation difficult.

In addition, localized content also needs an effective in-country review process, where the reviewers are knowledgeable about the products, fluent in both the source and target languages, and

perform the review as part of their job description. Part of having an effective editing process is having and using a style guide and templates to ensure consistency. The localization team can help you identify potential localization issues with the style guide and templates, thus optimizing them for localization. Get this input early in the project cycle so that you have time to implement the recommendations.

Desktop publishing and engineering are often the largest costs in a translation project. By ensuring that the templates work with all languages, you can significantly reduce problems and overtime costs at the end of a project. Better yet, automating the publishing by using a content management system and structured authoring saves costs and enables you to focus your resources more effectively on the quality of the content itself. (Cautionary note here: It takes significant effort to move to content management and structured authoring and doing so is not a panacea - so be sure to perform a cost/benefit analysis before transitioning.)

7. Terminology

Consistent terminology makes your content significantly easier to translate. Like the style guide and the templates, you can manage terminology outside of a specific project. Terminology development also provides an excellent opportunity to engage your in-country reviewers and localization vendor early in the cycle. Create a sub-team that includes a representative from the documentation, localization, and development teams, as well as the in-country reviewers. When done as an ongoing activity, especially when new products are developed, this ensures more consistency throughout the product, documentation, marketing materials, and language products. The approved terms can be loaded into the translation memories early in the project and can be used in software projects for testing the user interface.

8. Metadata and attribute management

If you are using XML or other structured authoring tools, you need to clearly identify which metadata get translated and which don't. It's a horrible feeling to get all the way to the final QA, only to realize that some text strings have not been translated when they should have been and other metadata aren't functioning properly because they were translated when they shouldn't have been.

9. Change management

Like the editing process, effective change management is critical to the success of any large content management project, especially when localization is involved. Change management allows you to be more proactive about how and when you submit changes to localization. If a project is already in post-editing or desktop publishing when you make the change, it will cost a lot more than if the content is just being started. If in-country reviewers demand changes and don't follow the process, they can completely derail the project because the translators depend on them for QA approval. Ensuring that the reviewers are trained in the products, are native speakers of the target language, and that the review is part of their job description will help facilitate a smoother process.

10. Workflow

Integrating localization into the content development process earlier in the project cycle requires some modifications to the workflow. It's a good idea to start with a pilot project staffed by innovative, motivated, and open-minded team members who understand the business reasons for integrating the localization and documentation processes, as well as having the technical skills succeed. Pilot projects allow you to work out any kinks and to set up metrics before the new processes are introduced. Involve the localization vendor and set up metrics to evaluate how well each part of the process is working.

Consider modularizing your content so that you can submit small portions to localization as they are approved, rather than waiting until the end of the project. Also, if you are using a CMS, you can send only the altered content to the translation team, automate the publishing, and modify the translation QA process to ensure that the output is correct. DTP/output formatting is the largest cost when localizing content. The business case for each company will be different, but you could potentially save over 20% of your localization costs by implementing an effective workflow.

Conclusion

Companies that successfully integrate localization into the documentation and product development process reap the financial benefits of simultaneous global releases, improved customer service, as well as high quality products that meet the needs of all their customers - regardless of locale. Such integration requires the localization vendor to view the client relationship from a long-term perspective.

While integration results in short-term loss of revenue on a project, the overall budget for localization doesn't typically go down. Instead, those short-term savings go toward adding languages, improving the product's internationalization, localizing marketing, or other initiatives that improve the company's global presence, all of which represent revenue opportunities for the savvy localization vendor.

contact

Kit Brown-Hoekstra, Principal of Comgenesis, LLC, is an Associate Fellow for STC, speaks regularly at conferences worldwide, and has authored many articles on a variety of technical communication and localization topics. She also coauthored the book *Managing Virtual Teams: Getting the Most from Wikis, Blogs, and Other Collaborative Tools.*

www.comgenesis.com
kit.brown@comgenesis.com
Twitter: @kitcomgenesis

Mobilizing your content

The mobile device has affected us tremendously – certainly in our personal lives – and now it is about to affect our professional lives, if it hasn't already done so. This year, smartphone sales will equal PC sales. The proliferation of content on these devices is so great that some people have compared the mobile phenomenon to the invention of the printing press. But what does this mean for technical communicators? Certainly, there are many new opportunities for technical communicators in "mobileland." And as always, opportunities bring along their own set of problems and solutions.

Photo: Aaron Amat

By Nad Rosenberg

Let's look at some statistics that illustrate the size and growth of the "mobile monster":

- There were 500,000 Android activations per day as of June 28 (an increase of 25% over the previous month).
- By 2014, more than 1 billion information workers will be using smartphones.
- According to the International Data Corporation (IDC), by 2020 there will be 35 billion connected mobile devices.
- U.S. consumers spend as much time with mobile media as they do with print magazines and newspapers combined.

The impact on society can well be compared to the Gutenberg era. An interesting quote from Matthew Battles, a Harvard historian and librarian, reveals: "It took writers, authors, and publishers a while to figure out how to use the press, how to organize information, and tell stories in new ways. It took awhile for the format to catch up to the new tools and technology." Obviously, some of the same things are happening today.

The mobile era brings many new opportunities to technical communicators: In this article, we'll look at the following mobile content platforms:

- Mobile apps and mobile web sites
- PDFs
- eBooks

Mobile apps and mobile web sites

Mobile apps (applications) and mobile web sites pose a unique set of challenges in regard to content and usability. But before we discuss these, here's a little background:

Native apps

Mobile apps that run on the device's operating system are called "native" apps. They are typically written in C, C++, Java ME, etc., and are considered "real" apps by some people. Games as well as entertainment, reference, and educational apps are some examples of native apps. Probably the most significant fact about native apps is that they do not need connectivity to work – and because of this, they run faster than non-native apps.

Since they reside on the mobile device, native apps can store and retrieve phone data. Further, they can take advantage of the mobile device's hardware features such as the accelerometer, camera, and compass. While this is certainly a plus, the negative side is that native apps can run only on the devices for which they were designed. The net result is that, for example, you cannot use a native iPhone app on your Android.

Mobile web sites

Mobile web sites can be designed to look just like native apps (and are called web apps), or they can simply be web sites optimized for the mobile environment.

They run inside the browser on the mobile device, even though with web apps you often cannot see the browser buttons. They are typically written in HTML or JavaScript, and they generally cannot use the device's resources (contacts, calendars, photos) or features (accelerometer, camera, compass).

But mobile web sites have one major issue – they require Internet connectivity and thus tend to be slower than native apps. On the plus side, mobile web sites can be accessed on any type of smartphone or tablet and on some e-readers.

Hybrid apps

Hybrid apps are a combination of native apps and mobile web sites. Many hybrids receive data from the Internet (and thus require connectivity), but they also perform functions in native mode on the mobile device.

Design factors

So now that we've reviewed the types of mobile apps, let's take a look at some of the factors that we, as technical communicators, need to deal with when working with mobile apps and mobile web sites.

Size matters

First of all, in the mobile environment size really does matter. While the size of mobile devices is definitely a blessing for users, it's a curse for designers. As you can see in the table, there are considerable differences in size and resolution.

The bottom line here is that you cannot simply shrink what's on an existing web site and slam it into a mobile device. You have to redesign the look and feel, the text, and the graphics.

Touch

"Touch" is next on the list of differences between the mobile and the PC/Mac platforms, and it also significantly affects design. Many mobile devices are touch-oriented – or at the very least, they're not mouse-driven. Essentially, these devices are gesture-oriented, and there's a vocabulary of gestures that technical communicators should be aware of, including:

- Tap – To press or select a control or item (analogous to a single mouse click).
- Flick – To scroll or pan quickly.
- Double-tap – To zoom in and center an image. Double-tap to zoom out.
- Pinch open/close – To zoom in/out.
- Shake – To initiate or undo an action.

Touch functionality has many ramifications for technical communicators. First of all, icons need to be large enough to accommodate a finger tap. According to Apple, that means 44 points by 44 points (see the link to Apple design standards under *References*). Apple defines these "points" as areas drawn on a screen. On a standard-resolution device screen (iPhone 3GS), one point equals one pixel. But other resolutions may have a different relationship. On a Retina display, i.e., the iPhone 4, one point equals two pixels. And of course the bad news here is that in some circumstances, you may need two sets of graphics, one for standard resolution and one for Retina displays.

Along these same lines, you have to make sure to leave enough space between links – otherwise a large fingertip might tap the wrong link. For this reason alone, you can see why standard web sites should not be ported directly to mobile.

Mobile Device	Resolution (number of distinct pixels in each dimension)	Screen Size (measured diagonally in inch)
iPhone 4	960 x 640	3.5
Droid X	854 x 480	4.3
iPhone 3GS	320 x 480	3.5
BlackBerry 9800 (Torch)	480 x 360	3.18
iPad 2	1024 x 768	9.7

Loading speed

Interestingly enough, loading speed affects design. Unless you're developing a native app, such as a game, your mobile device will probably need to download at least some information from the Internet. As most of you probably know, mobile download speed will depend on many factors, but one thing you can count on is that it probably will not be as fast as your PC or Mac. This translates into a design issue, specifically the need to reduce the amount, size, and complexity of graphics.
Then there's the variability issue. On mobile web sites, for some users, pages will download instantaneously, while for others, it will take much longer. It often depends on the user's WiFi access. Since you have no control over this, it's best to make sure pages load as quickly as possible. In other words, keep the graphics at a minimum. Additionally, you'll want to reduce the need to move through a lot of links to get to the point, because it may take time to download each page. And don't forget that there are some PC/Mac features, such as rollovers, that won't work on mobiles. (If you're not using a mouse, you can't have a rollover.)
One more thing – make sure your layout is flexible. You never know which device someone will use to access your site or what the orientation will be (portrait or landscape).

Navigation

Navigation on mobile devices needs to be significantly different from PCs or Macs. Because of the issues of physical space and graphics downloading, the typical graphical tabs at the top of the page are not suited for the mobile environment. Most people start using their smartphones in portrait mode, where there's just not enough real estate to build a long row of tabs. Other navigation solutions need to be found, and you can get some good ideas from looking at a variety of mobile web sites (see *References* for links to interesting sites).

Quick access

It's important to remember when and where people access their smartphones. It's usually when they're away from home or the office and want to get some piece of information quickly. So you need to make sure important information is positioned appropriately and chunked adequately so users can get what they want as soon as possible. And keep in mind that nobody wants to read a long article on a mobile.

Additionally, no one wants to do complicated searches on their smartphones. It's difficult to enter text on a mobile device, so you should reduce the need for text entry. If possible, provide drop-down selections instead of making users type full search criteria.

Test, test, test

Before launching your app, make sure it's been tested on many different devices. There are mobile simulators on the Internet, but nothing works as well as testing on a real device. The guiding principle when moving to mobile is KISS, the famous acronym that stands for Keep It Simple, Stupid. Basically, with mobile, the simpler, the better.

PDFs

PDFs are often accessed on mobile devices. Most of the problems with PDFs are exacerbated on smartphones, in particular. Many smartphones come with PDF readers. But if they don't, you have to install the app. On some phones, even when the reader app is installed, you may have to wait for it to load when you click on a PDF link.
The genesis of most PDFs is a Word document, which is designed for the printed page (8 ½ by 11 in the US and A4 elsewhere). This means that when you access a PDF on a smartphone, typically the type is too small.
If you or your customers are using the older PDF readers, you have to enlarge the PDF manually and then scroll horizontally to read it (which is annoying). However, if you use Adobe Reader X or some of the non-Adobe readers (e.g., GoodReader), you can enlarge the text, and it will reflow, that is, readjust its size to fit the device.
Note: At present, Adobe Reader X only works on the Android and Nokia. So if you really want PDFs to be legible on your smartphone, you may need to advise your users to select the appropriate reader.
One positive note about PDFs is that they are easily legible on the iPad, primarily because the iPad's larger size and aspect ratio are more similar to the printed page.

eBooks

eBooks are electronic books that can be easily read on special devices called e-readers (like Amazon's Kindle or the Barnes & Noble Nook), or they can be read on smartphones or tablets

if there's an e-reader application installed (there are many free or nearly free e-readers available). The number of books published on the eBook platform is growing exponentially. Here are some interesting facts:

- In February 2011, U.S. publishers sold more eBooks than they did books in any other format, including paperbacks and hardcovers, according to a report from the Association of American Publishers. This is the first time ever that eBook sales have surpassed those of all other formats.
- The government of South Korea has said it will replace paper textbooks with electronic tablets in all state-run schools by 2015.
- The share of adults in the United States who own an eBook reader doubled to 12% in May 2011 from 6% in November 2010.

This has significant ramifications for technical communicators.

Reflowable text

The big advantage of eBooks over PDFs (viewed on many PDF readers) is that the eBook text is reflowable. This means the text automatically adjusts itself for legible reading according to the size of the display. There's no horizontal scrolling to finish a sentence. The user can adjust the size of the text to his or her liking, and the entire book readjusts to fit appropriately on the screen. So if the text is too small, you can enlarge it, and all the text in the book will adjust perfectly. The other plus about eBooks is that there are no gaps between pages as with PDF, and readers typically swipe horizontally to move to the next page.

Other nice features

The library management tools that come with most e-readers provide many other great reading enhancements, including:

- The ability to change font selection and size – a nice way to accommodate different reading preferences.
- Night reading – which lets readers change the book's background color to black and the type to white – a perfect feature for a road warrior stuck on an airplane in the middle of the night.
- Search, annotate, and bookmark – all handy tools if you need to find and collect information for future reference.

Creating your own ePubs

One of the most interesting things about eBooks, is that you can make them yourself using the open source ePub standard – you don't need the resources of a large publishing house to tap into this new mobile content platform. An ePub, which is based on HTML/XHTML, is really just a .zip file that contains the necessary files for display on an e-reader. ePub is the most widely used eBook format and is supported by all major e-readers except Kindle (but that is about to change).

To create an ePub, all you need is some software, a formatted document, and some time (more time if the document's formatting isn't simple). The bottom line is that once you're done, you can easily read the document on a smartphone, tablet, e-reader, or even a PC or Mac.

You can create an ePub from many different types of documents. HTML is the easiest format to convert from, but you can also convert from PDF, FrameMaker, RTF, and TXT.

To perform the conversion, you can use Calibre, the most popular free ePub conversion software (http://calibre-ebook.com/), or a commercial software package such as Adobe's InDesign (for more information, please see page 25).

The one major problem with ePubs is that complicated formatting (especially complex tables) will undoubtedly need tweaking following the conversion. So if you're going to jump into the ePub world, you should have at least a basic knowledge of HTML. To perform post-conversion editing on your ePub, you can use Sigil (http://code.google.com/p/sigil/) a free editor, which provides both WISYWIG and code views of the ePub.

The future of ePubs in tc

Although ePubs are now primarily published for the commercial book market, it seems likely that this format could soon move into the world of technical communications. As with most mobile technologies, ePubs (plus other forms of eBooks) are rapidly evolving. Many of the ePub issues that require HTML tweaking are sure to be improved in future versions of the standard and the software on which it's based. Further, as the proliferation of ePub continues, the software used for ePub creation is bound to improve in terms of options, usability and power. And once this happens, it seems likely that technical communicators will be producing documents in ePub format.

The bottom line

The mobile monster is basically good news for technical communicators. Many segments of the mobile industry can use people with our talents. And, as always, it's a matter of involving yourself in learning new technologies and convincing your companies, customers, and colleagues that you can add tremendous value in taming the mobile monster.

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Nad Rosenberg is president and founder of TechWRITE, Inc., a technical communications company based in the U.S. Before starting TechWRITE in 1985, Nad managed documentation departments for several large corporations.

www.techw.com
twnad@techw.com

Is there an ePub in your future?

In April of 2011, the Association of American Publishers stated that eBooks were the Number 1 format among all trade categories for the month. If you have been watching the news, you are likely to see frequent reports of eBooks outselling printed books. Among all dedicated readers and applications, ePub is the most widely accepted eBook format. Let's take a closer look at what an ePub is and how it might help you produce more customer-oriented, cost-efficient documentation.

By Scott Prentice

If you want to make your documentation available on virtually all devices and platforms, an ePub may be the easiest way to provide a usable solution. By default you'll get a table of contents and full text search. Additionally, with most reader applications you'll also have the ability to place bookmarks and customize the user interface. This is almost equal to the level of functionality that you'll see in more popular Help systems. Granted, this may not be a replacement for online Help systems like HTML Help or WebHelp, but depending on your requirements it may be all that you need.

Photo: George Tsartsianidis

Some other benefits offered by eBooks are:

- Instant gratification - your customers can download and read your documentation right away without any complicated installation process.
- Lower cost - as compared to traditional physical books, eBooks are considerably cheaper to produce.
- Makes your documentation, "ultra portable" - your documentation will be available for use on any device at any time that it's needed.
- Nice for books with a "limited lifespan" - certain types of documentation can become out of date rather quickly. Rather than wasting the resources to produce books that will just be disposed of when the new version comes out, eBooks can provide a more viable alternative to print.

What is an ePub?

An "ePub" is a file format that defines an electronic publication or an eBook. It's a format which is a collection of files that specify the content, organization, and formatting of an eBook, conceptually similar to HTML Help (a CHM file). To view an eBook requires a reader application on your computer or a dedicated reader device. The ePub format is just one of many eBook formats, although it is by far the most widely used and accepted format. Technically this format name is cased "EPUB," but "ePub" seems easier on the eyes, so that is how you will see it in this article.

The ePub specification is maintained by IDPF (International Digital Publishing Forum). ePub 2.0 became an official standard in September of 2007, which superseded the older Open eBook standard (OEB) from 1999. ePub 2.0.1 was approved in May 2010 and, as of this writing, is still the current stable release. The ePub 3.0 first public draft was released in February 2011, and published as a IDPF Proposed Specification in May 2011. ePub 3.0 is scheduled for completion later in 2011. For the latest information, visit their web site at www.idpf.org.

The ePub specification is a combination of the following specifications:

- Open Publication Structure (OPS) - defines the standard for representing the content of electronic publications.
- Open Packaging Format (OPF) - defines the structure and semantics as well as the mechanism by which the various components of an OPS publication are related.
- Open Container Format (OCF) - defines the mechanism by which all components of an electronic publication are packaged into a single deliverable.

Underlying technologies

The underlying technologies of the ePub format are XML, XHTML, and CSS. All of these are formats you are likely to be familiar with. The ePub format supports images, standard formatting, and linking. However, do keep in mind that there is often a disconnect between the features defined by a specification and how those features are supported by "real world" applications. This is very much the case with the ePub format and eBook reader applications.

Content in an eBook is intended to be re-flowable to fit the constraints of the rendering device or application. This is similar to the way simple content in a web browser will adjust to fit the width of the application window. Most eBook readers work on a screen-based "paged" format, meaning that the number of "pages" in the book will depend on the size of the device or application window and the size of the font. Typically the font size as well as color (both character and background) is user-definable. Because of this, you can never expect that a passage will be on the same page, in the same eBook, in different readers.

The content in an ePub may be "open" or locked through the use of DRM (Digital Rights Management). An open ePub can be copied to various devices and shared with others. It can also be converted into other formats if necessary. However, just because an ePub is unlocked, does not mean it is okay to share it with others; be sure to honor the copyright requests of the publisher. An ePub that is locked through the use of DRM cannot be copied or converted and will often be tied to a specific reader device.

What does an ePub look like?

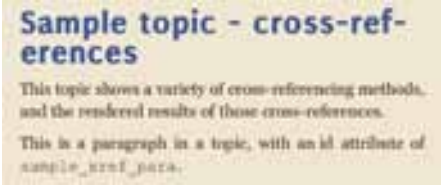
As with most things, the answer to that question is "it depends." Fundamentally, an eBook reader application is just a web browser, so in general, ePub content will look a lot like a simple web page. However, each reader and application may render the same ePub quite differently. If you're familiar with the problems that arise when trying to get the same web page to look good on all of the popular web browsers, this is a similar problem, but worse, because there are many more eBook reader applications to deal with.

To illustrate some of the issues that you may run into, lets review the rendering of the same "page" on different devices and applications.

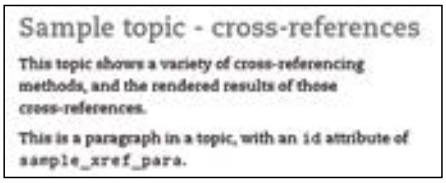
Tablet and dedicated readers

Tablet and dedicated reader devices are a popular way to read eBooks. Lets compare the following three different devices:

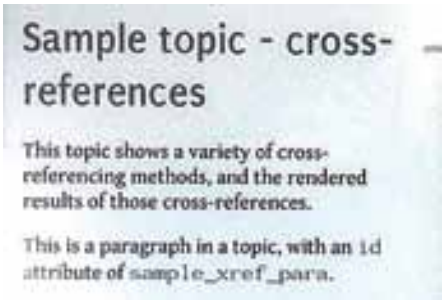
- Apple iPad 1 (running the iBooks application)
- Amazon Kindle 3
- Sony PRS-600



iPad/iBooks – inline formatting sample



Kindle – inline formatting sample



Sony Reader – inline formatting sample

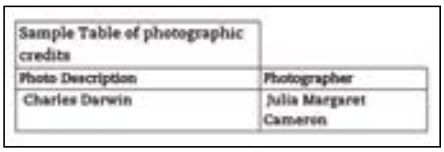
The page we'll be discussing is titled "Sample topic cross-references" from the "DITA Style Guide" by Tony Self, published by Scriptorium Press. In general, the rendering of this page looks reasonably consistent on all three devices, but if you look carefully, you'll see a number of variations.

First, because the iPad has a color screen and the others are black and white (or grey tones), you'll see the headings and other text objects in color on the iPad. This is to be expected. If you look a little closer, you'll see that in the second paragraph, there is some text with inline formatting. On the iPad, only the "sample_xref_para" is formatted in a monospaced font, but on the other two devices the word "id" is formatted in addition to "sample_xref_para". It would appear that the underlying styling has been applied differently and on some devices that styling is honored, but not on others.

Elsewhere on this page is an image and image caption, which is rendered in a consistent manner on all devices. But when we look at the table that follows the image, we see that the Kindle has put the table title in an odd single cell where the iPad has rendered it in a more traditional manner.

Photo Description	Photographer
Charles Darwin	Julia Margaret Cameron

iPad/iBooks – table sample



Sample Table of photographic credits	
Photo Description	Photographer
Charles Darwin	Julia Margaret Cameron

Kindle – table sample

If we take a look at another page, one that contains code samples, we see more disparity. On the iPad, the indenting of the code sample is honored, and it wraps lines that are too long. On the Kindle, the indenting is not honored (all lines are left justified), and long lines wrap. While on the Sony, the indenting is honored, but long lines do not wrap, causing that content to be lost.

Mobile phones

While a mobile phone may not be the ideal device for reading an eBook, it can be convenient at times. The situation on mobile phones is similar to what we have seen on tablets. We will compare the following phones and applications:

- iPhone (1G) (running the Stanza application)
- Nexus / Android (running the Aldiko application)

As you'd expect, the headings and fonts will vary based on the user's settings, but interestingly, on Aldiko, we see that the first line in each paragraph is indented (other devices don't do this). As seen before, the text "id" is formatted on Stanza, but not on Aldiko while "sample_xref_para" is formatted on both.

Code samples on a phone can be a bit of a challenge due to the very small screen. In the samples reviewed, we see that both readers honor the indenting, and Aldiko wraps the long lines while Stanza does not (again causing that content to be lost).

Desktop reader applications

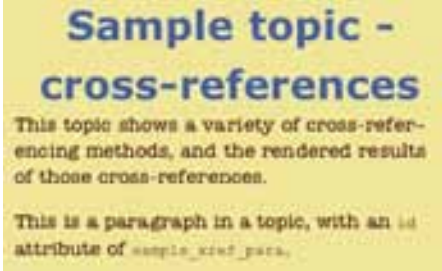
There are a number of eBook reader applications available for the desktop. We compare four of them here.

- Calibre - Mac
- Adobe Digital Editions - Mac
- Firefox, EPUBReader plugin
- FBreader - Windows

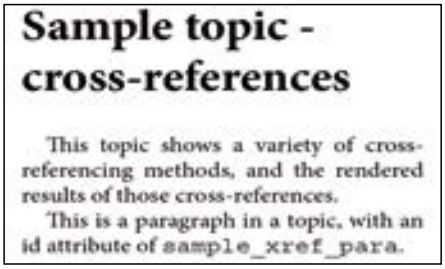
Three of these applications (Calibre, Digital Editions, and EPUBReader) render our page in a fairly consistent manner. The headings are similar, the inline formatting is handled the same way, and the image and figure title look the same. Digital Editions does seem to format the table title and headings a little differently, but with no serious problems. FBreader renders this page quite differently than the others. The "id" text isn't formatted, the "sample_xref_para" is italicized (all others render this in a monospaced font), and the paragraphs are indented (like Aldiko). FBreader also centers the image and doesn't even make an attempt at rendering the table (each cell displays as separate paragraphs).

Caveats?

Yes, there are some potential drawbacks with eBooks. One issue is the fact that the "paged" format may not be well suited to some types of documentation. However, assuming that your content works well in a printed book, it should work equally well in an eBook format.



iPhone/Stanza - inline formatting sample



Android/Aldiko - inline formatting sample

At this time, eBooks have no capability for context-sensitivity with an associated software program you may be documenting. This is often a feature of more traditional online Help formats, but those formats are typically able to receive direct communication from the related program. This communication pathway does not typically exist for eBooks, especially since the documentation (ePub) is likely to be running on a different device from the software program. This capability may become a reality in the future.

As noted, the formatting will vary on each reader and device. For this reason, it is important to keep your formatting as simple as possible. In fact, some of the best looking eBooks are those that apply the least amount of formatting. If your content makes extensive use of tables, especially wide tables with more than two columns, you may not want to consider eBooks. Tables on a small screen are typically rendered quite poorly, and in many cases the data in multiple columns is lost to the reader. Hopefully this limitation will be addressed in future reader applications by allowing horizontal scrolling.

Additionally, some reader applications don't support linking. Although most do, you cannot be guaranteed that your links are available to all readers, so you may want to consider keeping links to a minimum.

The ePub specification does not natively support an Index. This would be the perfect companion to a table of contents (which is supported), and will hopefully be supported in future versions. For now if you want an index you will need to craft one by creating multiple pages of links to the indexed content. If done properly, this can work quite nicely (as seen in the "DITA Style Guide") but it does require a bit of extra work.

All reader applications don't support the same level of the ePub specification, and few are totally compliant. This is the drawback of providing content for a large number of different devices and applications. Even though your ePub content may adhere to the specification, you have no way of knowing what type of reader application is being used. Again, the best option is to keep your layout and formatting as simple as possible.

How do you make an ePub?

Because an ePub is just a collection of XHTML, CSS, and XML files, you might consider creating it "by hand," but using a tool is far more efficient and error-free. Your current authoring tool may export to ePub, if not, there are many conversion utilities available. As with the reader applications, tools for creating an ePub will vary in their support of ePub specification; try as many tools as possible before choosing one. It is a good idea to spend as much time as possible testing the conversion process. Be sure to have a document that includes a representative sampling of all of the "features" in your documentation. This doesn't have to be a real document, just one that will expose any potential weakness of the process or resulting file.

The easiest method for conversion is to save to HTML, then use one of the conversion tools to convert from HTML to ePub (many are free). Do keep in mind that you want your HTML to be as free from needless styling and formatting as possible. This will result in the most usable and best looking eBook.

There are many authoring tools that export to ePub as well as a large number of conversion tools, both desktop applications and online converters. The tools are constantly changing, so be sure to spend a little time searching on the Web for what is currently available.

Desktop authoring tools

The following authoring tools export to ePub:

- Adobe RoboHelp - (USD 1000), Windows
- Adobe InDesign - (USD 700), Windows/Mac
- Apple iWork Pages - (USD 70), Mac
- eCub - (free), Windows, Mac, Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris
- Jutoh - (USD 40), Windows, Mac, Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris
- Atlantis Word Processor - (USD 35), Windows
- Sigil - (free), Windows, Mac, Linux

Desktop conversion tools

The following tools convert from one or more formats into ePub:

- Calibre - (free), Windows, Mac, Linux
- DITA Open Toolkit + DITA for Publishers plug-in - (free)
- eScape ODT2ePub converter - (free), Windows, Linux
- Pincette ODT to ePub - (USD 55), Windows, Mac, Linux (Java)
- DNAML PDFtoePub - (USD 40), Windows.
- epub-tools (code.google.com) - (free), Windows, Mac, Linux
- epubcheck (code.google.com) - (free), Windows, Mac, Linux

Online conversion tools

There are many, many online conversion tools available, the following list provides a few options:

- Feedbooks (www.feedbooks.com)
  - author and develop eBook content directly in website
- EasyEPUB (www.easypress.com)
  - create ePubs from InDesign, Quark or MS Word files
- 2EPUB (www.2epub.com)
  - convert PDF, DOC, ODT, HTML, and eBook formats to EPUB, MOBI, and others
- Epub2Go (www.epub2go.com)
  - free PDF to ePub converter

I've used the 2EPUB tool to convert HTML-based specifications (those found on web sites like the W3C and other organizations) into ePub files for my phone and tablet. Perhaps there's a specification or document on the Web that you refer to frequently? This is a great way to produce a very usable eBook from that content.

So, is there an ePub in your future?

eBooks are definitely here to stay. If you produce documentation of any kind, it's worth considering how your customers would benefit from having your documents available as eBooks. If you already produce HTML-based documentation, taking the step to offering that as an ePub is not a huge effort. Just remember to keep it simple. The best looking and most usable e-Books are those that apply the least amount of formatting.

contact

Scott Prentice is the president of Leximation, Inc., based in San Rafael, California, USA. He provides consulting services for the development of custom online Help systems and FrameMaker applications. He has been involved with DITA for many years and created the DITA-FMx plugin for FrameMaker.

www.leximation.com
scott@leximation.com

Acquiring social skills – the key to professional success

Social kills, often also referred to as "soft skills" or "people skills", are personal skills and abilities. Besides technical knowledge, they are crucial success factors at work. Or, in other words: technical expertise alone is not enough. For the requirements placed on employees and managers also change, especially in times of transition and globalization.

Photo: Kheng Ho Toh

By Hansjoerg Schuetz

Companies have a high demand for employess with social skills. Especially in the race for survival in the market, no company can afford to dispense with quality in customer care and service, and lag behind in differentiating itself from the competition through these. Thus, companies need employees with excellent social skills.

However, social skills rarely feature in the syllabi of schools and colleges. Many companies have noticed this gap and organize training measures in the area of social skills and competencies. There is a reason why the field of "People Skills" training has been a growth segment in the training and advanced training sector.

What's involved?

Social skills can be classified into the following categories:

- General social skills: Emotional intelligence, flexibility, commitment, ability to handle stress, willingness to learn, readiness to perform, openness, analytical thinking, creativity
- Self-management skills: Personal responsibility, self-confidence, discipline, self-criticism, self-management
- General skills in dealing with others: Respect for others, mutual regard, tolerance, empathy, ability to give and take criticism, communication skills, team capabilities
- Special skills in dealing with others: Managerial skills, negotiation skills, selling and marketing skills, presentation skills, intercultural skills

Can skills and competencies be acquired?

Whether social skills can also be acquired at a later stage in life is usually a matter of controversy: some feel that social skills cannot be acquired, or can be learned to a very limited extent only. Of course, every human being is born with specific traits and strengths. Specific traits of character get reinforced or repressed during childhood.

However, every person is capable of developing further. If we define social skills as the sum of skills and competencies, the limitations and possibilities facing each individual become clear.

Ability is the name given to a set of conditions that are inborn, or even acquired through external circumstances and influences. Many abilities, such as analytical thinking, creativity and communication skills, need not be acquired explicitly. Every individual possesses these to a greater or lesser degree, and these can be improved and refined over time.

Skills on the other hand are acquired only through practice and training. This includes, for instance, presentation skills, sales and marketing skills and management techniques. Given a certain level of basic ability, acquiring a skill becomes easier.

For instance, a person with musical talent will be able to learn the piano with greater ease than someone who is less talented musically. In principle, anyone can learn to play the piano, but a person lacking musical ability is definitely not going to make a career as an internationally celebrated concert pianist.

Similarly, empathy for certain target groups, for instance, is a natural ability whereas creating a user manual for this target group is a skill that can be acquired. Anyone who learns to recognize the individual authoring and editing steps and puts these to practice repeatedly can learn to create a manual. Persons with a greater capacity to empathize will be able to do this better, because they will be able to get into the situation much faster and recognize the special requirements. Nevertheless, the competency of a technical writer can be acquired to a very large extent.

Thus, certain abilities make it easier to acquire certain skills. However, ability can be honed further through training, while skills can be learnt. Hence, anyone can add to and enhance his or her social competencies through training.

Room for improvement

Different professions require different social skills as pre-requisites. Depending on the requirements profile, abilities such as talent for organization, leadership abilities or communication skills are given different weight. Therefore, the first step is the analysis. The basic operating principle here is to improve the strengths and reduce the weaknesses. Here, it is useful to obtain feedback from others, so as to have a different perspective and not just one's idea of oneself.

Another possibility is to use personality tests, for instance. These can be used to determine how a person perceives himself and his abilities and skills. While choosing a test, it is important to make sure that neither behavior nor preferences are evaluated, since there is no good or bad profile. However, specific profiles are better suited to specific areas of work, thereby increasing the chances of being successful and satisfied in a certain job. There are tests that can be completed within fifteen minutes. However, these tests should be analyzed, as far as possible, with a qualified expert.

Recommended steps

Every employee should be aware of the following:

- What abilities are particularly important for the given area of work? What is mentioned, for instance, in the job announcement or job description? What is my own estimate?
- Where do my own skills and abilities rank in this area.
- In which areas do I need to improve?

If a technical writer is also responsible for others in a team, then he should conduct an analysis for every individual member of the team:

- What are the abilities required by the employee for his area of work?
- How does the manager rate his abilities in these areas?
- How does the employee rate himself?
- Are there any gaps or mismatches between the requirements profiles for social skills, the manager's rating and the employee's self-assessment?
- In which areas does the employee need to improve?

In addition to this, one should also consider if help from outside is necessary, such as assistance from a training company.

Acquiring social skills

- **Techniques and methods** for acquiring skills. Anyone who knows and understands how communication processes take place and what interferences can affect it, can change his or her own communicative behavior. Anyone who is aware of the various stages of a work process will know what each stage is about. And those who keep applying these insights repeatedly can work with greater success.
- **Changing the thought processes:** An important means of expanding social competencies lies in changing one's thought processes. Through positive thinking and by visualizing goals, it is possible to enhance one's social skills. For instance, many people are afraid of speaking in front of a large group of people. A person who conjures up a convincing appearance repeatedly in his mind will be able to overcome this fear.
- **Practice, practice and more practice!** What percentage of the technical expertise that is acquired by a technical writer over the course of his education does he really need in day-to-day work? And what percentage of his personal skills did he have to acquire through hard work even as his career took shape? The same applies to skills such as reading, writing or driving, which all of us take for granted, but have had to learn and practice. Similarly, personal barriers in other areas can be overcome through the knowledge of the proper methods and a high level of motivation.

Another point that makes practice so important is a result of the scientifically determined "curve of forgetting". The curve was the result of research conducted by the psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus, who lived between 1850 and 1909. The curve shows that a person quickly forgets what he has learnt, if it is not repeated or applied. Thus, after two days, we will have forgotten more than 70 percent of what we have learned. For the subject matter to remain fixed in the long-term memory, regular and continuous repetition of the training content is necessary.

What is the use of "people skills" in day-to-day life?

Improving one's social competencies and skills does not just impact one's professional life. It also comes with benefits in the personal arena. Thus, our communication skills not only shape our relationships with colleagues, supervisors and staff, but even affect our relationships with our family and friends. The importance of social skills extends to all situations in life, for greater success, happiness and security at work, within the family and in our social circle.

Summary

The importance of social skills is often not recognized correctly. It is a topic that is considered only too rarely, even in training departments. But it is a competitive advantage to the employer and the employee, especially in the fast changing global economic scenario. Hence, in the future, business and education sectors should make it their concern to support prospective new recruits with encouragement for or greater emphasis on these skills in preparing them for the job market. If social skills were not already part of the actual education, they can be acquired later as well. While doing so, the focus should be on carrying out a correct analysis, and providing sustained support - if necessary, even through external partners. In any case, engaging with this topic is a worthwhile exercise.

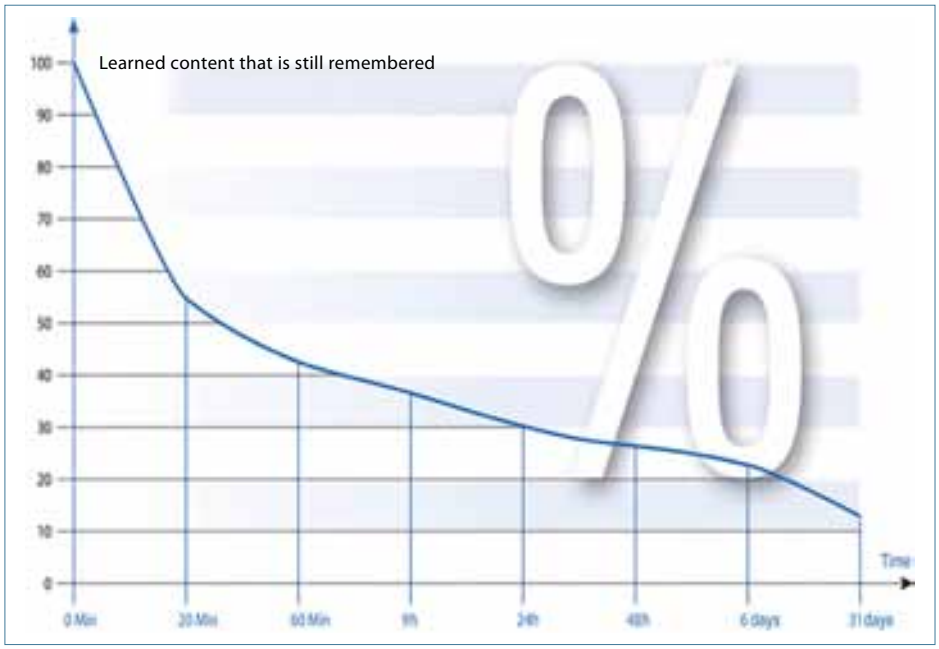


Fig.: The subject matter needs to be refreshed regularly. Otherwise, people tend to forget more than 70 percent of the matter in a very short time, as shown by Hermann Ebbinghaus's curve of forgetting.

contact

Hansjoerg Schuetz worked for several years at Daimler AG, including eleven years in a managerial position in the department of Technical Documentation. Today, he is the Director of BEI-TRAINING for the region Stuttgart East and hence also the local representative of BEI, an international training company.

hschuetz@bei-training.de
www.bei-training.de

Introducing the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission

The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) is the European Commission's in-house translation service and one of the biggest public translation services in the world. The DGT offers high quality translations into and from the 23 official languages of the EU. Its aim is to bring European institutions closer to European citizens and to ensure that the latter have access to information on European policies.

Given its key institutional and political position, the DGT has great responsibility toward the translation community. It is not merely an operational service providing high quality translations. It contributes to the definition of multilingualism policy and develops actions and activities in this field to raise awareness about policy issues and to enhance the profession of the translator. It cooperates with both EU bodies and external stakeholders in order to raise the status and visibility of the profession, to disseminate best practices, to steer training in directions that reflect the needs of the market, and to improve the employability of future translators.

Within the European institutions the DGT promotes and disseminates best practices, raises awareness about the linguistic implications of all European policies, and works to integrate the linguistic dimension in all EU policies. Beyond the EU and Europe, the DGT can act as a powerful catalyst and as a point of reference for the whole translation community. It can apply vital skills and competencies to address and channel political and technological issues, promote and disseminate best practices, and bring together stakeholders and professionals. Last but not least, the DGT plays an important role in designing the training of future translators.

One of the most recent projects in this context is the Web Platform for the Language Industry. The idea of developing and launching the web platform grew out of a study on the size of the EU language industry, published by the European Commission in November 2009. Besides its main finding – that the language industry has shown resilience in face of the economic crisis and that it is set to continue growing steadily – the study also revealed that the language industry, in spite of its vitality and weight, is still largely unrecognized. It suffers from lack of visibility, and statistical data and information are not easy to find.

Hence it became apparent that there was a need for a tool which could gather information relevant to the translation industry and which could make that information available on a European level. Such a tool would promote synergies and exchanges among language professionals, and raise awareness about the output and potential of this sector. In the long run, this instrument should make enough data available to modify the international statistical classification system (NACE) so that the language industry is fully recognized as an industrial sector per se. With the NACE classification system taking our industry into account, industry policy measures can be better implemented.

It is with a view to filling this void that the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation decided to develop the platform, which was officially launched on 18 November 2010. It is an interactive online tool for collecting and exchanging data on the European Union language profession and industry. It is managed by the DGT, but input is welcomed from companies, associations and individuals active in the language industry as well as national statistic and academic bodies. It covers all subsectors of the language industry and offers document search and upload, as well as a news section in which news and documents can be highlighted.

Its objectives are manifold and ambitious:

- to bring language professionals together,
- to improve the exchange of know-how,
- to raise awareness of the business,
- to collect more comparable data from EU countries,
- to inform language professionals about research on and by the language industry, and
- to carry out surveys on market trends and on the state of the sector (the first survey was published on the site a few months ago).

The platform is actively promoted in order to make it known among stakeholders and other interested parties and to attract their contribution. A new editorial board has just been set up, which is composed of representatives from various sectors of the language industry and has the primary task of monitoring and evaluating the contributions sent for inclusion in the repository. It can also propose any necessary addition to its functionalities. The platform has been presented Europe-wide in the course of several international events, notably the Translation Studies Days in Brussels, the Gala conference in Lisbon, the EUATC conference in Rome, the META-FORUM conference in Budapest. It will also be presented at the upcoming tcworld conference.

Links:

Directorate-General for Translation: ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index_en.htm

Web Platform for the Language Industry: ec.europa.eu/language-industry

Introducing CIUTI

Initiated in 1960, the Conférence Internationale Permanente d´Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprétes - CIUTI - (pronounced ['sju:ti]) is the world's oldest and most prestigious international association of university institutes with translation and interpretation programs. Devoted to excellence in T&I training and research, the CIUTI family tries to address the continuous challenges of T&I in the light of changing market needs and ongoing research.

Full membership of CIUTI is restricted to institutions of higher education offering degrees in translation, interpretation and multilingual or intercultural communication. This status is acquired upon successful completion of a quality-based admission procedure. Associate membership of CIUTI can be bestowed on institutions, organizations and associations who subscribe to the CIUTI mission statement and cooperate with CIUTI, and is by invitation only. CIUTI is a non-profit association under Belgian Law, and is run by a Board whose members are elected by the General Assembly of CIUTI member institute delegates.

CIUTI anticipated and formulated central objectives of the European higher education reform – especially the promotion of student and teacher mobility – as long as fifty years ago.

CIUTI shares the goals of the recent EMT (European Master's in Translation) network project of the EU DGT, namely to safeguard translator and interpreter training based on state-of-the-art courses of study, didactics and practice. But there are also fundamental differences. As the "I" in its name signals, in contrast to the "E" in EMT, CIUTI is not limited to Europe, but operates on a truly international level. For this reason, CIUTI has member institutes in Beirut, Minsk, Monterey (California), Montréal, Beijing, Saint Petersburg, Shanghai and Seoul, among others. A major difference between CIUTI and EMT is the importance attached to T&I research: Applicants for CIUTI membership must demonstrate that they are not merely "translation trainers" (even if they are very successful in this regard) but also productive and respected in T&I research, e.g. in terms of publications, conferences, doctorate programs and number of Ph.D. graduates.

Typically, the CIUTI admission procedure takes one year from the application. In addition to checking its documentation (similar to EMT), the CIUTI Admission Commission sends two neutral university teachers to the applying institute on a fact finding mission. This may involve the inspection of didactical-technical equipment (e.g. simultaneous interpretation training systems, language laboratories, computer workstations, etc.), checking the availability of up-to-date software such as specific translation tools (TMS, terminology management, automatic translation software, localization tools, subtitling tools etc.) and generic word processing and DTP software and looking at the library collection and its availability. They talk to teachers and students, sit in on courses, are present at interpreting examinations, check written examinations as well as Bachelor's and Master's theses. The Admission Commission assesses the evaluation results from the documentation and visits on site and writes a recommendation for admission or non-admission. This is presented to CIUTI members at the annual General Assembly as a basis for their decision. Given these requirements and efforts, it is understandable why the circle of CIUTI members is growing only very slowly and that the CIUTI projects a certain elitist image, which is indeed even cultivated by some members.

Graduates from CIUTI institutes work in various fields of intercultural communication; most of them are translators or terminologists engaged in technical documentation. Thus it is logical that CIUTI cooperates with tekom. Already in the past, tekom was present at CIUTI institutes (e.g. at Lessius, Antwerp, or IALT, Leipzig), and an important step forward towards more visibility is CIUTI's presence at the tcworld conference 2011.

Links and contact:
www.ciuti.org
Schmitt@ciuti.org

tcworld calendar

when	what	where
Oct 18-20, 2011	**tcworld conference 2011** www.tekom.de/conference	Wiesbaden, Germany
Oct 26-28, 2011	**Languages & Business 2011** www.sprachen-beruf.com	Berlin, Germany
Nov 7-8, 2011	**DITA Europe** www.infomanagementcenter.com	Prague, Czech Republic
Nov 10-12, 2011	**ELIA Networking Days** www.elia-association.org	Athens, Greece
Nov 29 - Dec 1, 2011	**Gilbane 2011** gilbaneboston.com	Boston, MA, USA
February 20-22, 2012	**2012 Outsourcing World Summit** www.iaop.org	Lake Buena Vista, FL, USA
Feb 23-24, 2012	**tcworld India 2012** www.tekom.de	Bangalore, India
Mar 11-14,2012	**Conference for Software User Assistance (Writers UA)** www.writersua.com	Memphis, TN, USA
Mar 26-28,2012	**GALA 2012: The Language of Business. The business of Language** www.gala-global.org/conference	Monte Carlo, Monaco
Oct 17-19, 2012	**Localization World** www.localizationworld.com	Silicon Valley, CA, USA
Oct 23-25, 2012	**tcworld conference 2012** www.tekom.de/conference	Wiesbaden, Germany

For both global players and small to medium-sized companies, preparing for new situations is vital. Smooth and effective communication with international partners is more important than ever and is the key to operating successfully on the world market.
At the **LANGUAGES & BUSINESS Conference**, everything revolves around the interaction of foreign languages, intercultural communication and successful international operations.
The 10th Languages & Business conference will be opened by Russell Stannard and Kathryn Board. The British Principal Teaching Fellow Stannard is renowned for his "hands-on" online videos for teachers who are keen to learn about the use of Web 2.0 tools, with which their students are already very familiar. Thanks to her extensive international professional experience and career, Kathryn Board is familiar with the intercultural and multilingual challenges of collaboration in business. In the opening, both experts will give exciting insights into language training and its technical possibilities in business.
The agenda of this year's Languages & Business also includes new developments and important trends in teaching languages and intercultural skills. Meet management coaches, consultancies and trainers, find out what new challenges trainers face when teaching language and intercultural skills, and let yourself be inspired by new developments in this field.

GALA 2012 will bring the global content delivery community together for informative and energizing interactions. The attendees represent a wide selection of professionals including owners of language service providers, sales and marketing managers, project managers and localization/globalization managers from all facets of the language and localization industry. In 2011, 65 percent of GALA conference attendees were top executives.
The Call for Papers is now open until Oct 21st, 2011. Download the papers at:
http://www.gala-global.org/conference/call-papers.