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From the editor

Information overload is a well-known problem of our information society. Researchers have analyzed this phenomenon and collected quite impressive numbers:

A study conducted by knowledge economy research firm Basex revealed that knowledge workers in the US lose up to a quarter of each working day to information overload. In total, the loss of productivity could potentially cost the US economy more than US\$900 billion a year.

Other research conducted by the Stanford University reveals that multitasking – in particular trying to divide one's attention between several media – does not actually increase our productivity, but in fact impairs our cognitive control. People, who try to perform several tasks at once or attempt to take in electronic information on several channels simultaneously, are more prone to distractions

and lose focus more easily than people who focus their energy on one task at a time.

Yet, we often feel forced to multitask at work, to keep hacking our thoughts into the computer while answering the phone or engaging in a small conversation with our colleague.

Extracting relevant pieces of information from the sheer flood of content available to us has become more than a natural subconscious exercise. Today we rely on skilled knowledge workers who are able to present us with only the relevant information at the right time.

And this is, of course, where the technical communicator comes in. Technical communicators carry the huge responsibility of filtering large amounts of information and passing on just the right fraction to their audience. Failing to deliver sufficient information might lead to product misuse or even injury to the user. However, delivering too much information might trigger the overload effect – readers can't find the vital information that is relevant to them at the time.

At the tcworld conference 2012, a two-day track is devoted to content strategy – the practice of managing content with the bigger picture in mind. Our focus pages give an introduction into the topic, with articles from Scott Abel (page 12), Sarah O'Keefe and Alan Pringle (page 11). Don DePalma explains how translation and localization departments can elevate their functions to a corporate role: By centralizing translation and other language-related activities under the concept of enterprise language processing (page 14).

Uwe Muegge introduces strategies to reduce translation turnaround times for time-sensitive projects (page 18).

Leah Guren explores the benefits of glossaries and how to design them to add real value to the documentation (page 25).

Jang Graat outlines old and new practices in desktop publishing and compares the different types of editors (page 21).

Kim Yangsook takes a look at Korea and explains the challenges that the technical communication community is facing here (page 29).

Last but not least, Tony Self discusses the need for certification in the field of technical communication around the world (page 32).

We hope that this issue of our magazine sparks your appetite for the plethora of topics that will be discussed at this year's tcworld conference. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Corinna Melville



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Building a business case for a content strategy

Technical writers are not simply creating their documents in isolation, but rather need to collaborate with various departments in order to gather all the information involved. A content strategy helps technical communicators to align their efforts with the organization's business goals.

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From translation management to enterprise language processing

All too often processes are repeated in multiple business units or countries across one organization, causing unnecessary costs. Enterprise language processing offers a concept for centralizing translation and other language-related activities to support business objectives.

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ARANCHO DOC GROUP ACQUIRES LINGUAPOL

The Aranchodoc Group has acquired the Swiss Translation Service Provider Linguapool GmbH. As the latest company to join the Aranchodoc Group, the Linguapool team will combine forces with the Zurich branch of Aranchodoc and operate from the current Aranchodoc address on Hohlstrasse 216 under the name of Aranchodoc Switzerland. The resulting company will be able to provide an enhanced customer experience and improved service offering to customers of both companies.

www.aranchodoc.com

LINGUIFY.MOBILE LAUNCHED

LinguaNext™ Inc., developer of enterprise software language management, has launched its Linguify™ .Mobile language translation/localization solution for mobile applications. Linguify.Mobile enables mobile applications to work in any language and any terminology without requiring any modifications to the code or data. Working completely on the client front-end, the solution translates all app screens and application data to the language of the user's choice in real-time based on manually pre-created high-quality translations.

www.linguanext.net

SITECORE TRANSLATION SERVICES CONNECTOR

Globalization Partners International (GPI), a provider of comprehensive document, software and website translation services, has released its Sitecore Translation Services Connector, which enables users of Sitecore's Web Content Management System (CMS) to initiate translation workflows and achieve more cost-effective and efficient translation workflows for multilingual websites.

www.globalizationpartners.com

Translators without Borders hires first full-time employee

Translators without Borders has appointed Rebecca Petras to be its first Program Director and the organization's first full-time employee. A dedicated volunteer for the past 2 ½ years, Petras brings her background in communications and management to the role as the organization strives to give more people worldwide access to vital knowledge in their languages.

The appointment points to the growth of the organization and the deep support from the translation and localization industry. "This big milestone for Translators without Borders is possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsors and the hard work of our volunteers," said Lori Thicke, founder of Translators without Borders. "[Rebecca's appointment] will help us realize our vision of a world where knowledge knows no language barriers so that people can access the information they need to live healthy and productive lives." Propelled by over 2000 volunteers, Translators without Borders has grown by leaps and bounds in the past two years. In just over a year, the organization has initiated its automated translation

portal, the Translators without Borders Translation Workspace, greatly increasing the number of words translated for non-profits. This year, Translators without Borders is on track to translate more than five million words. Additionally, in 2012, the organization opened its first training center in Africa, Nairobi's Healthcare Translators' Training Center, and initiated a number of special projects including a medical translation project (80 articles into 80 languages) for Wikipedia.

"I have been very lucky to work with the dedicated volunteers that make up Translators without Borders, and I am now honored to have the opportunity to lead the charge toward further growth," said Petras. "I hope to harness the energy of our volunteers, sponsors and in-kind donors to accelerate access to knowledge in local languages worldwide."

To find out more about Translators without Borders, visit the organization's booth in the Foyer on the first floor at the tcworld conference 2012.

www.translatorswithoutborders.org



Image: Anna Omelchenko

Key trends for the mobile industry



Image: Scott Betts

Free apps will account for 89 percent of total downloads in 2012, according to research firm Gartner, Inc. Worldwide mobile app store downloads will surpass 45.6 billion in 2012, with free downloads accounting for 40.1 billion, and paid-for downloads totaling 5 billion (see Table 1).

"In terms of the apps that consumers are buying, 90 percent of the paid-for downloads cost less than \$3 each," said Sandy Shen, research director at Gartner. "Similar to free apps, lower-priced apps will drive the majority of downloads. Apps between 99 cents and \$2.99 will account for 87.5 percent of paid-for downloads in 2012, and 96 percent by 2016."

Gartner expects Apple's App Store to have more than 21 billion downloads in 2012, which is an in-

crease of 74 percent over 2011 and indicates continued strong demand for mobile app content.

"Apple's market share is the largest, considering its App Store accounts for 25 percent of available apps in all stores," said Brian Blau, research director at Gartner. "The number of apps available is driven by an increasing number of stores in the market today that include platform owners, device vendors, communication service providers (CSPs) and others who want to offer core mobile app services. These stores will see their combined share of total downloads increase, but demand for apps overall will still be dominated by Apple, Google and Microsoft."

www.gartner.com

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Free Downloads	22,044	40,599	73,280	119,842	188,946	287,933
Paid-for Downloads	2,893	5,018	8,142	11,853	16,430	21,672
Total Downloads	24,936	45,617	81,422	131,695	205,376	309,606
Free Downloads %	88.4%	89.0%	90.0%	91.0%	92.0%	93.0%

Table 1: Mobile app store downloads, worldwide, 2010-2016 (in millions of downloads)

Source: Gartner (September 2012)

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Public IT cloud services spending to reach \$100 billion in 2016

Worldwide spending on public IT cloud services will be more than \$40 billion in 2012 and is expected to approach \$100 billion in 2016, according to a new forecast from International Data Corporation (IDC). Over the 2012–2016 forecast period, public IT cloud services will enjoy a compound annual growth rate of 26.4 percent, five times that of the IT industry overall, as companies accelerate their shift to the cloud services model for IT consumption.

“The IT industry is in the midst of an important transformative period as companies invest in the

technologies that will drive growth and innovation over the next two to three decades,” said Frank Gens, senior vice president and chief analyst at IDC. “By the end of the decade, IDC expects at least 80 percent of the industry’s growth, and enterprises’ highest-value leverage of IT, will be driven by cloud services and other third platform technologies.”

By 2016, public IT cloud services will account for 16 percent of IT revenue in five key technology categories: applications, system infrastructure software, platform as a service (PaaS), servers,

and basic storage. More significantly, cloud services will generate 41 percent of all growth in these categories by 2016. “Quite simply, vendor failure in cloud services will mean stagnation,” Gens added.

Software as a service (SaaS), which is the combination of applications as a service and system infrastructure software as a service, will claim the largest share of public IT cloud services spending over the next five years. But other categories, notably basic storage and platform as a service, will show faster growth. Accelerating PaaS roll-outs over the next 12–18 months will be critical to maintaining strong cloud momentum.

Geographically, the United States will remain the largest public cloud services market, followed by Western Europe and Asia/Pacific (excluding Japan). But the fastest growth in public IT services spending will be in the emerging markets, which will see its collective share nearly double by 2016 when it will account for almost 30 percent of net-new public IT cloud services spending growth.

IDC defines public IT cloud services as those offerings designed for, and commercially offered to, a largely unrestricted marketplace of potential users. The forecast does not include revenue from private cloud deployments, which are dedicated to a specific customer. While private clouds provide the customer with the ability to specify access limitations and the level of resource dedication beyond what is currently available in public cloud offerings, IDC’s expectation is that public clouds will mature and eventually incorporate many of the capabilities (particularly security and availability) that make private clouds an attractive option today.

The IDC study, *Worldwide and Regional Public IT Cloud Services 2012–2016 Forecast* forecasts revenue growth from public IT cloud services through 2016, segmented by five functional categories within eight regions/countries. The forecast data, driven by IDC’s key assumptions for public IT cloud services development and adoption, lead to the document’s key conclusions regarding cloud offerings’ revenue and growth impacts on the IT industry, customer adoption shifts among the five IT cloud services categories, and shifting adoption patterns among the eight regions/countries.



Image: Buchachon Petthanya

www.idc.com

TAUS' Developing Talent Initiative

TAUS, the translation innovation think tank and platform for industry-shared services, has launched the Developing Talent Initiative, a collaborative project with universities around the world. The project allows students from all over the world to build MT engines using domain specific data from TAUS, supervised by the TAUS Labs team and an expert Advisory Committee. In the process, students gain a greater understanding of commercial requirements while the industry benefits from the experimentation undertaken by some of the brightest young computational linguists globally. The results are made publicly available on the TAUS site, helping to share learnings and inspire others.

The TAUS Data repository currently hosts over 50 billion words of trusted human translations in 2,200 plus language pairs.

At launch fourteen universities in Asia, Europe and the Americas are taking part in the TAUS Developing Talent Initiative. Post-graduate students from these universities will take part in the process of data preparation, engines training/optimization/testing and translation quality evaluation. The TAUS Dynamic Quality Framework, the industry benchmark, will be used for quality evaluation and benchmarking of the MT engines.

<http://tauslabs.com/open-source-mt/developingtalent>

NUANCE AND INTEL PARTNER

Nuance Communications, Inc., provider of voice and language solutions, has announced the availability of Nuance's Dragon Assistant Beta, a voice assistant application for the Intel-inspired Ultrabook™, the first offering resulting from the two companies' strategic collaboration announcement at CES 2012. The Dell® XPS13 Ultrabook will be among the first PCs to ship with Dragon Assistant Beta in Q4 2012. Dragon Assistant uses Nuance's core Dragon voice technology and innovative natural language understanding capabilities to provide people with an easy and intuitive way to engage and interact with their devices. Saying "Hello Dragon" awakens the Dragon Assistant. From there, users can speak to search the web for content, information and shopping; access, discover and play music; check and reply to email; and, listen to and update social media statuses. Saying "Go to sleep" closes the application.

www.nuance.com



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Building a business case for a content strategy



Transforming technical content into a business asset

By Sarah O'Keefe and Alan Pringle

It used to be so simple: A technical writer would meet with an engineer, gather information, write it up – in longhand – on a legal pad, and then send the information off to the typing pool. After some revisions, the typed manuscript and perhaps hand-drawn graphics would be delivered to the printer and, eventually, a book appeared. Over time, the legal pads were replaced with typewriters; then, the typewriters were replaced with computers. In addition to producing text, technical writers accepted responsibility for page layout and pre-press production tasks.

Today, technical writers are more often technical communicators: they produce text, images, photographs, charts, live video, screencasts, webcasts, comic books, simulations, and more. And technical communicators face a bewildering array of options: XML, help authoring tools, wikis, customer-generated content, desktop publishing tools, conversion tools, and so on. Instead of creating content in isolation, technical writers coexist with training, collaborate with technical support, and compete with user-generated content.

Other factors further increase the complexity:

- Global markets require global content. Technical writers must create information in their customers' languages or, as a fallback, simplify content so that readers with limited proficiency in the provided language can understand it.
- Product development cycles are shorter. Information needs to be updated more often. A document production process that takes a

week per iteration is perhaps acceptable for yearly product releases, but not for quarterly updates.

- Government regulations and compliance requirements have increased. Regulatory agencies mandate not just what information needs to be delivered but also the storage format of that information.
- Product variants or custom products are more common. Buyers expect customized content that reflects their unique configuration.

Due to these reasons, writers need a content strategy, which aligns their content-creation efforts with the organization's business goals.

Controlling costs

One of the most common business goals for technical communication is controlling technical communication costs. This means understanding not just the amount invested in technical content, but also the cost of producing inferior content. Here are some typical problems that can be caused by poor documentation (and typically, insufficient investment):

- The call volume to technical support is high because customers can't find information in the documentation.
- A high percentage of products is returned because customers can't figure out how to install or configure the product.

- A regulatory submission is delayed or rejected because it does not conform to agency requirements.
- The organization markets a product as a high-end product at a premium price. But the documentation looks terrible, which contradicts the marketing message.
- Huge globalization costs. The organization has identified opportunities in global markets, but delivering localized content from the existing workflow is unsustainable – the organization can't even keep up with the content in the primary language.
- Technical support and other internal organizations are creating content that duplicates documentation. Technical support, training, and other workgroups need content from the documentation, but are unable to find it. The manuals are delivered as monolithic Word or PDF files, and searching those files is tedious and time-consuming. Instead, the support group resorts to re-creating content in an unofficial knowledge base.

Efficient content development

A basic prerequisite for a good content strategy is that the content is of good quality – accurate, concise, and complete. An efficient workflow with professional technical communicators

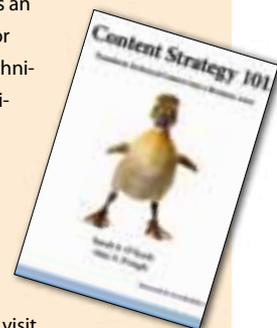
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Envisioning the future of content

By Scott Abel

Let's face it: No one would ever set out to deliver the wrong information to the wrong people at the wrong time in the wrong format and language. At least, not intentionally. In fact, no organization would ever fund such a project. Professional communicators – including technical, marketing, support, and other staff – are charged with preparing and delivering the right information to the right people at the right time in the right format and language. And yet, all too often, we are unable to create anything better than a mediocre assortment of potentially useful information. Additionally, we don't really bother with delivery. We just chuck our deliverables into an online help site (or worse yet, a collection of PDF files) and let our search engine handle the rest.

More often than not, we have no idea what it costs to create the content our customers need. We don't have a clear connection between the content we create and the goals of the organizations we serve. And, most importantly, we have no idea whether the information we create is actually valued by our customers. We don't know what is missing, whether or not our customers can find what they are looking for, nor whether they are able to access and use what they find, when and where they need it. But in a world driven by mobile technologies – smartphones, tablets and web-enabled portable electronic devices – our old-school approach isn't going to cut it for much longer. User expectations are changing faster than content creators. And therein, lies the big problem. Now more than ever, we need a content strategy.

What is a content strategy?

Content strategy specialist Rahel Baile says, "Content strategy is a repeatable system that governs the management of content throughout the entire content lifecycle."

That's certainly true. But it might even be more than that: Content strategy is about envisioning the future of content – its development, management and delivery – and creating a plan that helps us achieve our goals. It's about adapting to the challenges that will undoubtedly interfere with our well-intentioned plans for success. It's just as much about being flexible as it is about being rigid and rules-based.

Content strategy is really about the art of the possible. It calls for us to re-imagine the future. To declare what we're going to do to help us accomplish things tomorrow, things that are unknown – maybe even impossible – today. To do so, we need to get creative. We will have to become business consultants for content.

Content management at the tcworld conference 2012

At this year's tcworld conference and tekorn Trade Fair, I've invited the best and brightest content strategy experts from the field of technical communication to share their tips, tricks, best practices, and lessons learned from real-world projects with you. We've created a full day of content strategy sessions and two full days of hands-on, instructor-led workshops. Attend the content strategy track and you'll learn how to build a business case for content strategy, how to plan an intelligent content project, how adaptive content modeling can help you create content for mobile devices, and much, much more. We hope to see you there!

For more information on the Content Strategy Track at the tcworld conference 2012 please check your conference program or visit <http://conferences.tekorn.de/tcworld12>

contact:

Scott Abel, aka The Content Wrangler, is an internationally recognized content management strategist and social networking chronicler. He runs the popular business blog TheContentWrangler.com. Scott will be opening the Content Management Track at the tcworld conference 2012.



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creating high-value information is typically the least expensive option (better, faster, and cheaper). This correlation is explained by the following factors:

- Reuse versus copy and paste. Copying and pasting is quick and easy initially, but it is hard to maintain over time because of information duplication. Formal reuse, where a linked copy of information appears in multiple places, is easier to maintain. Given several thousand pages of content, the savings on content maintenance add up quickly.
- Formatting. "Quick-and-dirty" formatting is also unmaintainable. Investing in content standards, such as templates, means that content creators spend more time writing and less time formatting. Better tools also mean less time wrestling with pagination, tables of contents, and similar components.
- Production. Instead of converting content from one format to another manually, a professional workflow generates the proper outputs automatically. A one-time configuration effort replaces the repeated conversion task.
- Localization. Better-organized content and automated production result in much lower localization costs. The "cheap way" – slamming everything into a word processor and throwing it over the transom to the translation vendor – results in escalating translation costs because content must be reformatted in every language.

A rough estimate is that writers spend around 20 percent of their time on formatting tasks in less-efficient content development environments (although we have even seen much higher numbers).

Developing a content strategy

Once the business requirements are understood, the next step is to develop a content strategy that addresses those requirements. If the problem is that call volume is high because customers can't find information in the documentation, the solution is to improve the search functionality (and perhaps the documentation content itself). To develop a content strategy, we recommend the following steps:

1. Assess the current situation. What information already exists? What is the information development process? What are the output requirements (existing and new requirements

needed to solve the business problem)? Are there opportunities for content reuse (helps improve quality and lowers cost of development)?

2. Architect a solution that supports the business goal. Consider your readers' characteristics, such as their level of literacy, language proficiency, motivation, technological expertise, technology access, culture, location, and other demographics.
3. Assess the risks. Most critically, understand the corporate culture, which affects what risks a company is willing to accept. A successful content strategy is compatible with the organization's risk culture.

Implementing the content strategy

Content strategy projects are no different from other large projects that involve process change. They are stressful, uncomfortable, and often difficult to implement. Throughout the process, a strong change management strategy is critical. To implement your project and improve your chances of success, we recommend following these steps:

1. Identify and interview stakeholders: To ensure that your content strategy succeeds in the organization, you need to build momentum and support for the project. One proven way to do this is to identify the stakeholders who have the most to gain (or lose) from the new process and ensure that they have a voice in the project.
2. Establish implementation goals and metrics: The business goals should logically lead to implementation goals and measurable success criteria.
3. Define roles and responsibilities: It's important to determine who will be responsible for education, review, approval, and implementation roles. The resources may be internal or external to the organization.
4. Establish a timeline and milestones: As in any project, establishing a schedule creates accountability. Without a schedule, the project will likely become a low priority and be delayed repeatedly.
5. Build the system: Select, license, configure, and deploy the content creation system.
6. Convert legacy content: It is usually possible to automate the conversion from an old file format to a new file format and the delivery

of new and different output formats. But reorganizing and rewriting content requires the dedicated attention of a content creator and cannot be automated.

7. Deliver content: you need to configure the system that extracts content from the content storage system and turns it into a deliverable format, such as paper, PDF, HTML, CHM, or EPUB. In some environments, this separation of authoring and publishing does not occur.
8. Capture project knowledge: The project documentation and training are critical to ensure a smooth implementation.
9. Ensure long-term success: Even in the best-planned, most-organized environment, you will be required to make small changes to the content model, add new output paths, and so on. You must have a plan to manage these changes, as in any software development project.

A modern approach to technical content

A content strategy for technical communication brings technical content efforts into alignment with the organization's business goals. This alignment, in turn, makes it easier to get executive support (and therefore funding) for the content efforts. It is time to transform technical communication from a necessary evil into a business asset.

contact

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Taking language to the next level:

From translation management to enterprise language processing

Several years ago translation and localization departments at large enterprises proudly affixed the term “enterprise translation management” to their department names. While elevating their function to a corporate role makes sense for many reasons, this promotion should not be limited to the change of label: Instead, these departments should be more ambitious and target the broader array of language issues – native and global – that their companies face. This article discusses the concept of enterprise language processing (ELP): the rationale behind and steps involved in centralizing translation, along with other language-related activities, to support business and technology initiatives.



Image: Teerawut Masawat

By Donald A. DePalma

Charting a voyage of discovery to centralized language operations

Large enterprises typically consolidate information technology (IT), human resources, and purchasing as they grow. They realize that certain operations differ little from division to division or even from country to country, and that the differences that do exist either don't matter or can be finessed with staffing or technology. Most importantly, they see the value of consolidating staff and spending to achieve economies of scale in these shared functions.

Common Sense Advisory's research and consulting projects have found that corporate planners reach the same conclusions when it comes to translation and localization. They see the same functions, technologies, and processes repeated in multiple business units and countries. Once they tally the numbers, they learn that duplications cost them dearly in spending on salaries and software. This realization about the value of a centralized operation signifies a tipping point for many companies as they become more mature in how they manage, plan for, and execute core globalization activities. As they analyze their findings, they find that the company spends far

more than it needs to on content creation and translation. More troubling, these inefficiencies often mean that products take longer to reach their global markets.

Understanding the benefits of enterprise language processing

From past experience with procurement and enterprise resource planning (ERP) activities, corporate planners know that the aggregated spending of an entire enterprise yields tangible benefits. For language functions, that means negotiating discounts for larger volumes of translation, buying cost-efficient site licenses for software such as translation management systems and authoring tools, and developing specialized centers of globalization competence instead of duplicating the same functions in multiple locations.

Common Sense Advisory calls this unified approach to providing language services “enterprise language processing” (ELP). The requirement for ELP is straightforward: increase the availability of content in the appropriate format and language for any corporate application while managing and monitoring operations, technology, and process. This model draws on corporate experience with ERP and its integration of information and process management across an entire organization through a technology backbone.

Properly executed, ELP groups can remove the linguistic barriers for any organization and provide a reliable service for foreign language content that they encounter while providing the framework for creating and translating content throughout the organization. Their output spans document and product development, whether for technical publications, marketing, customer care, or elsewhere.

Creating the central ELP organization

The first step towards enterprise language processing is to centralize translation and localization staff, operations, and technology resources. This initiative unifies process and infrastructure under a single functional group with broad, often enterprise-wide responsibility.

A huge plus in any such initiative is gaining executive sponsorship – the closer language gets to the corner office, the better the alignment with corporate objectives and stability of funding. The ultimate result of this move will be a center of excellence for all things dealing with international content, both at the source and in the final localized form for the company’s global markets.

- **Appoint a leader for the team.** Give the person you put in charge broad responsibility for how language functions are operated. This may sound very basic, but there are many organizations in which there is no clearly designated person in this role. This same person should also have some oversight or responsibility for the source content being created elsewhere in the company. Why? It’s this material that will get translated, so there’s benefit in giving the same person some authority over how the content gets created and adapted.
- **Gather the money to fund the effort.** Develop a budget with sufficient human and technical resources to provide reliable and timely language services across the enterprise. In most cases, harvesting the budgets of multiple internal teams and consolidating external translation spending will go a long way toward funding your ELP effort. Longer term, invest in improving the upstream quality of – and processes related to – source content. By aligning creation with translation, you ultimately improve the effectiveness of both.
- **Dedicate staff.** Put in place a core team of project managers and language quality reviewers to ingest, manage, and deliver content in multiple languages and formats. Establish ELP policies, procedures, and service level agreements and make sure that your internal staff is regularly certified in using them. Train them in the authoring, core language, content management, and localization engineering technology that will underpin their efforts. Some firms have set up specialist task forces that can be dropped into projects that have temporary or product-release-related needs for content creation, localization, or translation.
- **Centralize where transactions are processed.** Develop an intranet “storefront” to manage requests for translations and localization. Some companies choose to build one from scratch, others work with a favored language service provider (LSP) to integrate its portal into their intranet, while some others

buddy up with a cloud-based marketplace to provide this service. This storefront is where employees request language projects, monitor their progress, and arrange for internal payment.

- **Corral and vet your external providers.** Prior to centralizing their language processing efforts, most companies employ legions of language service providers (LSPs), sometimes duplicating functions and often ignoring the work of others. One of the first functions of an ELP group is to limit the number of such suppliers to a manageable number that can handle the company’s workload. As part of this process, ELP groups typically establish a set of criteria for the LSPs with which they partner, conduct requests for proposals to certify existing and new providers, and institute policies of systematic annual reviews within multi-year contracts.
- **Market your efforts.** Develop an internal marketing program to let everyone know what you’re doing. Use corporate bulletin boards, intranets, cafeteria signs, and other traditional office communication tools to demonstrate your ELP capability and its value as a shared resource over numerous internal efforts. Managers of such groups tell us that they’re regularly surprised to get inquiries for their services from far-flung and even nearby business units that they’ve never heard of and didn’t know needed translation. As visibility increases, the ELP group will receive more calls from internal buyers with emergency, accidental, or new needs for language services.

Specifying and normalizing business processes

ELP groups will also find the need to define processes and re-engineer how they work so that they can reliably manage the increasing flow of content and requirements for multi-language documents and products. They will:

- **Define document processes.** In order to manage the enterprise-wide ingestion of translation and localization jobs, ELP groups define processes for every interaction with internal clients – and with the external LSPs. Depending on the industry, some of these processes may have to comply with international standards or adhere to industry specifications or regulatory requirements.

- **Develop service level agreements.** Internal clients accustomed to securing language services on their own are often wary about handing over control to another group – and new customers don't know what to expect. ELP groups should develop service level agreements (SLAs) that set expectations about deliverables, internal pricing, process duration, and performance. These SLAs will assure internal buyers that the ELP group can meet their needs.
- **Create options for service and quality.** Language services in the enterprise constantly balance variables such as linguistic quality, price, and delivery dates. Recognizing these trade-offs, savvy ELP groups will establish quality-of-service levels to categorize content by how it will be processed, based on need, budget, and other factors. The transactional portals that come with ELP will offer service levels that allow internal buyers to choose the type of translation they need. For example, the portal might serve up unedited machine translation (MT) that lets buyers get the sense or gist of a document or e-mail, post-edited MT for publication-quality output, high-quality human translation for very technical or marketing-oriented documents, or transcreation to adapt materials for other markets.

Automating the enterprise translation flow

The content volumes that most enterprises hope to manage grow on two major axes: volume and number of languages. The need to ingest, manage, and adapt content for a wide range of applications leads to the phenomenon characterized as the “transformational imperative” (see Figure). A broad array of content passes through a series of operational and platform conversions on its way to deployment, then undergoes a variety of marketing and linguistic transformations so that it is usable by information consumers. As they automate these transformations, ELP groups will:

- **Develop an open, federated repository for managing linguistic assets.** Many organizations have multiple strategic content management systems (CMS), each with the potential of dealing with multilingual input and output. Ideally, these CMSes should be able to federate and share translation memo-

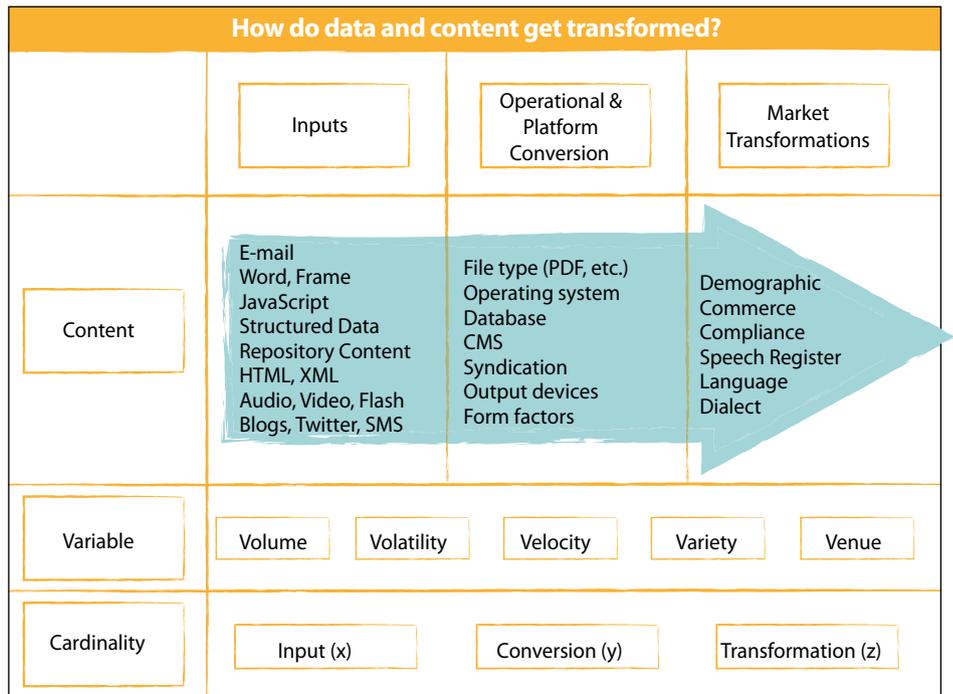


Figure: Enterprises push huge volumes of content through multiple transformations

Source: © Common Sense Advisory, Inc.

ries, terminology, and metadata – much like multiple applications share a DB2, Oracle, or SQL Server database. ELP groups should look for a translation management system (TMS) that can serve multiple CMSes. Some show promise with increasingly open application programming interfaces that could become the core of a federated solution.

- **Employ machine translation.** ELP groups and their partner LSPs are already using MT to chip away at the huge volumes of content flowing through their enterprises. These efforts result in rapid improvements in three areas: 1) the ability of buying organizations to configure and refine MT engines to their specific subject matter or domains; 2) an increasing focus on automatic measurement of quality and general improvements in quality; and 3) work to more easily integrate MT into everyday applications, other translation tools, and enterprise-class content and data systems.
- **Provide for crowd participation.** The need to involve the crowd – employees, partners, and end-user communities – in generating and translating content will drive new requirements for management tools to ensure that user-generated and user-translated content

is properly handled according to its value, distribution, and potential for increased leverage. These tools will provide “crowd control” of volunteers inside and outside your company.

Manage source content, multilingual content, and metadata

With the massive volumes of content being created and managed, ELP organizations must focus their energy and resources on managing high-value information, while expending low-value content. That will mean figuring out which content is worth leveraging, translating, or even keeping in long-term storage. How can organizations wrestle the growing content beast to the mat and maximize the value of their information assets?

- **Improve and categorize collected content.** ELP groups will manually and automatically tag and create taxonomies from known, “good” authors and applications. This will require more structured content authoring and capture technology for use with rapidly evolving DITA and other XML-based categorization schemes.

- **Adopt e-Discovery for harvesting multilingual flows.** ELP groups and their allies have been exploring discovery technologies to find value in the vast repositories of content they manage. They will enlist multilingual search technologies to harvest actionable information from any language in use across their enterprise without a side trip into English or some other inter-language.
- **Learn from the data.** The “post-privacy society” of social media encourages people to share lots of information about themselves. Similar user-generated content mechanisms at corporate sites allow companies to gather enormous amounts of data from customers that can be anonymized and applied to sentiment analysis and other forms of collective and business intelligence (BI). ELP groups can apply BI and data warehousing techniques and technology to harvest insights from the repositories of structured and unstructured corporate data, e-mails, other short messages, user-generated content in the form of reviews, and interactions with customer care. Of course, they must comply with privacy and data security regulations regarding the use of such information.
- **Fix noisy data.** ELP groups need to develop procedures to cleanse input data, thus improving their ability to process noisy but potentially valuable data from broadcast, newswire, forums, and other streams. Such content remediation will go a long way toward solving the “garbage in, garbage out” problem that hobbles many machine translation applications.

Thinking bigger – Scoping a global content strategy

All this activity speaks to a broader issue – the critical importance of content to the communication, collaboration, and commerce that underpins multinational enterprises. As they evolve, ELP groups will take on a bigger role in setting the direction and strategy for how content gets created, managed, translated, and – yes – budgeted for across the enterprise. However, our research has found that even mature ELP groups face challenges in getting a seat at the corporate strategy table. Less evolved translation management groups often

find themselves following rather than setting the agenda.

ELP managers who want to get a hearing and participate in strategy development need to do their homework. Take a stepwise journey to this ambitious goal: 1) Establish credentials for being involved in the discussion about global strategies; 2) assess the state of the company’s global content offerings; 3) determine which information is required to enter a market; 4) identify candidate countries or languages for inclusion; and 5) identify the best practices for source and translated information. With this information in hand, ELP groups can approach the executive marketing or customer experience teams setting the global strategy for content.

The value of a centralized model for language services

Enterprise language processing will help many companies turn domestic and global language content into a business asset rather than an inefficient and costly obstacle. They will benefit as:

- **Source content improves over time.** With the massive volumes of content being created by the second, the potential for generating more garbage in and more garbage out increases exponentially. Bettering the quality of information at the source means that downstream adaptations – for other devices such as mobile or into other languages – will become easier to develop and less costly.
- **Language services become more accessible.** Business units with little or no experience in creating source or processing multilingual content can access a range of services and language resources from the ELP group. These centralized teams insulate end-buyers from having to deal directly with external language service providers, thus eliminating management overhead from the end-buyer’s budget.
- **Information assets flow around the enterprise, where and when needed.** Among the biggest stumbling blocks to growing international business are the silos of monolingual content – it may be in a closed system, in the wrong format, or locked away in a single language. Bringing language services to the enterprise level, along with supporting process and technology, will allow broader service capability, increased deployment agility,

and the ability to leverage linguistic and other content investment across groups, languages, and properties in the enterprise.

Advancing to this phase of localization maturity won’t be an easy journey for most companies. While the steps are very clear, ELP aspirants must overcome the usual impediments to centralized operations: organizational inertia, lack of standards, budgetary silos, in-country competition, too many suppliers, and technology that is evolving but not quite there yet. However, these are known problems, already faced and finessed for supply chain, ERP, finance, and procurement. Language is next.

Further reading:

Common Sense Advisory’s independent research platform focuses on the specific best practices, processes, technology needs, and solutions leveraged by corporations, governments, and non-governmental organizations operating internationally. For further information and reports on topics referenced in this article, visit Common Sense Advisory’s research page at www.common senseadvisory.com/Research.aspx.

In particular, please see the firm’s research on the localization maturity model, originally introduced in 2006, and reports on content source optimization, requests for proposals, vendor management, machine translation, and global content strategy.

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Strategies for reducing translation turnaround time

Faster translation, anyone?

Anyone who has worked long enough on the service provider side of the translation business knows that translation buyers typically only have two types of translation projects: the ones that are urgent and the ones that were due yesterday. As most commercial translation projects are closely linked to the effort of selling a product or service in international markets, the time required for translation can mean lost revenue due to the inability to generate sales in a given market. While many in our industry consider lengthy turnaround times for high-quality human translation a given, there are, in fact, many steps translation buyers can take to expedite the delivery of their most time-sensitive projects.



Image: perseomedusa

By Uwe Muegge

Plan for translation

Integrate translation into your marketing plan

It may sound trivial, but planning for translation from the outset of a project – and acting upon that plan – is the single most important factor for reducing turnaround time. Many of the steps discussed below (e.g. developing project-specific glossaries, style guides, document templates, etc.) are typically too complex, time-consuming and expensive to be performed from scratch on an ad-hoc basis for a single, high-priority translation project. However, if maintaining multilingual glossaries and style guides is part of a global communication strategy, updating these resources where necessary for a specific project is generally much more feasible.

Build a strong relationship with your service provider

Today, many (corporate) translation buyers treat translation as a commodity, and, consequently, use a transactional business model where individual translation projects are awarded via reverse auction to the lowest bidder. In an e-auction environment, depending on the size and duration of a project, it may be difficult to align

processes, schedules, and resources between the translation buyer and language service provider. If, on the other hand, the buyer and the provider of translation services form a strategic partnership, it is much easier for the service provider to establish and maintain client-specific resources and workflows. In this type of environment, a language service provider typically uses a team of professionals who, based on continuous exposure and, ideally, product training, knows the client's products and/or services inside out. It goes without saying that completing translation projects with a dedicated outsourced team involves little 'friction' (e.g. queries, review and correction cycles), which leads to faster turnaround times than typical for outsourced translations.

Involve your service providers early in the product cycle

For many projects, it's not uncommon for language service providers to learn about a new translation project the day it shows up in their respective mailbox. If that project has a tight deadline, the only option available to most translation service providers is to distribute the work to many linguists simultaneously, which might negatively impact the quality of the deliverables. However, if a translation buyer coordinates his or her efforts with the language service provider early in the project stage, additional options for early delivery become available. For instance, linguists may successively translate text as authors create it or revise translations in sync with changes in the source. In this scenario, even a

single translation professional may be able to not only complete a large project on his or her own but deliver the final translation only hours after the authors have finalized the source text.

Standardize terminology usage

Create project-specific glossaries

Few factors have a more detrimental effect on the timely completion of a translation project than the discussions about correct terminology usage that often occur if there is no comprehensive glossary. The translator uses 'USB stick', the editor prefers 'USB drive', and the reviewer insists on 'flash drive'. With a comprehensive, project-specific glossary, these unnecessary, expensive and, above all, time-consuming controversies are a thing of the past. While every translation project (in fact, every communication project) benefits from the availability of a glossary, the advantages are most apparent in translation rush jobs: with an available glossary, translators can focus on translating, thereby maximizing the translators' productivity instead of spending valuable time on terminology research.

Have glossaries reviewed by the client

Having a project-specific, multilingual glossary available in electronic form early in the project is good; having such a glossary with the client's

Definitions

language service provider (LSP)

type of business that offers linguistic services such as translation, localization, interpretation

glossary

collection of words that have special meaning in a project

term

word that has a special meaning in a given subject field

termbase

database that contains a collection of words that have special meaning in a given subject field

terminology

collection of words that have special meaning in a given subject field

terminology management

effort to control the usage of words that have special meaning in a given subject field

terminology management system

type of translation software that enables users to efficiently collect, process, and present terminology

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stamp of approval is even better. For terminology matters in particular, the old adage applies: the customer is always right! No matter how well-researched a glossary the service provider creates, if the client prefers other terms, changes will have to be made in the translation. To avoid these types of change requests, create and update the glossary early in the project, have the client sign-off on it, and make that glossary available to translators as soon as possible. Following this strategy ensures that translators not only use terminology consistently, but that they will use the 'right' term every time, which reduces time required to edit and review. For clients who have a recurring need for fast turnaround, high-quality translations, playing an active role in creating and continuously updating multilingual glossaries is a must.

Minimize the number of new words

Use boilerplate text where possible in the source document

One simple way of reducing the number of words that need translation – and maintain a quick translation turnaround – is by using boilerplate text, or standardized text modules that can easily be re-used. This means that every time writers use boilerplate text when composing new source documents for translation, they not only reduce the translation cost of these documents, they also accelerate the delivery of the translated documents. In other words, the more boilerplate text a document contains, the faster it can be translated!

Minimize the need for translation review

Re-use previous translations

Using a translation memory system (TM) for every translation project should be a no-brainer. But it is astonishing how many large, global organizations fail to profit from this technology. The most basic benefit that translation memory products offer is the fact that these systems help users leverage previous translations: if a previously translated sentence, or one similar, occurs in a new document, the TM automatically proposes the existing

translation to the translator. Using a TM for every commercial project offers many advantages, such as ensuring consistency within and across documents. In the context of urgent translation projects, the general rule is (and there are very few exceptions to it) if you are not using translation memory, you are wasting time – and money!

Provide a translation style guide

One of the overarching goals in every rush project is to eliminate repetitive work and the risk of corrections – in other words, enable team members to get it right the first time. So how do you make sure a translation meets the client's expectations? By using the client's approved translations (via a translation memory system), by using the client's approved terminology (via a terminology management system), and by following the client's translation style guide. But wait: most clients don't have a style guide for each language for which they buy translation services! That is typically not a problem, as, in the absence of a formalized set of rules, reviewers on the client side are usually happy to come up with one of their own. If speed is of essence, however, a language-specific style guide is an effective tool for avoiding post-translation changes concerning capitalization, representation of numbers, and the like. Who should write these style guides? Ideally, the person(s) who typically performs translation review on the client side. If that is not an option, creating client-specific translation style guides is a service many language service providers offer. And while the creation of a style guide does cost money, it is typically a minor investment that has a considerably higher pay-off, especially in terms of time-savings.

Eliminate desktop publishing work

Create document templates designed for translation

Many, if not most, commercial translation projects involve some sort of desktop publishing (DTP) effort. However, for urgent projects, it may be possible to eliminate most, if not all, DTP work. If the documents you typically have translated are not created in a content management system, it is helpful to have templates in place that were created with translation in mind. Generally speaking, a template is a standard that allows multiple

writers to create documents with a uniform look and does not require DTP work after the authoring process is complete.

From a translation perspective, it is important to leave plenty of blank space in the document template, as text expands by up to 30 percent when translated into certain languages (e.g. Finnish, German and Russian). Text expansion also needs to be considered when setting-up tables/nested tables, text boxes/frames, etc. to avoid truncated or cut-off translated text.

Finally, it really helps if documents for urgent translation do not contain images, graphics, or diagrams with embedded translatable text, as handling this type of text requires special DTP skills that many translators do not have.

The bottom line

Yes, improving the turnaround time for urgent translation projects is possible; in fact, most projects could be delivered much faster if buyers of translation services followed the small set of guidelines outlined above. Some of these recommendations are easier to implement than others, e.g. it is much easier to create document templates optimized for translation than to develop and implement a process for comprehensive terminology management. But if fast translation turnaround is the top priority, all of the measures outlined above are well within the reach even the smallest organization that buys translation services.

contact

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on both the vendor and buyer side. He has been with CSOFT International, a provider of language services based in Beijing, since 2008, and he currently serves as Senior Translation Tools Strategist for North America.

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WYSIWYG, WYSIWYM or pure XML?

Why **formatting** matters

What You See Is What You Get: for a long time, this has been one of the most important acronyms in desktop publishing. If the authoring tool was not WYSIWYG, it was deemed hopelessly old-fashioned. Of course you wanted your editing environment to show an instant preview of what your content was going to look like on paper. How could anyone not want to have that instant preview?



Image: JJRD

By Jang Graat

Well, with the growing importance of single-sourcing (publishing the same content in various output formats) and reuse (reusing bits and pieces from one document in another one), WYSIWYG has lost a lot of its glamour. And while structured authoring is taking up an increasingly central role in the world of technical documentation, it is the turn of the WYSIWYG tools to appear old-fashioned.

The new kid in town is called XML and pure XML editing environments can count on more public interest than their SGML or HTML ancestors ever had. But is pure XML really better than WYSIWYG? Why are leading XML tools including sneak previews of possible outputs? Is there another paradigm that combines the virtues of true XML with the comfort of WYSIWYG?

In the beginning was the word (and not much else)

Before the era of desktop publishing, when most people were using word editors running on DOS or UNIX, formatting was called typesetting and done by specialists in printing companies. In those days, authors were true writers, producers of content, unburdened with the task of making their output look good in print. That was someone else's job and responsibility. The author was only responsible for correctness and completeness of the content.

With the absence of formats, authors had to annotate their plain text with instructions for the professional typesetters: make this heading larger, add bullet points to these sentences, etc. And in many cases,

the typesetter could more or less determine how large the headings would become and which particular bullet character to use. Authors created content, typesetters were in charge of formatting.

Even after Windows had conquered the workplace and digital printers allowed the job of physical typesetting to turn into computer-aided formatting, this formatting job was largely left to professionals with special page layout programs that often ran on Macs.

I still remember being the only employee with a Mac in a German high-tech computer company, gathering input from all departments and processing it overnight into a 150-page manual for a supercomputer that was never built in the end. The only way to get that job done before time ran out was to remove all formatting from whatever input I received and rigorously reapply format tags. If only I would have had XML input, an editor with XSLT capabilities and a decent publishing engine – I would have had at least a couple of hours of sleep that night. But I am jumping ahead of myself here, so let's take one step back.

The woes of WYSIWYG

With the introduction of cheaper, easier to use desktop publishing software, creating formatted content entered everyone's reach. Gradually, more and more sophisticated formatting capabilities were implemented in common editors such as Microsoft Word. With the claim that output on the screen would exactly match what your printer would eventually produce on paper, authors started to be more concerned with the output, trying to make the formatting match their personal preferences.

With formatting in everybody's hands and no formal training for

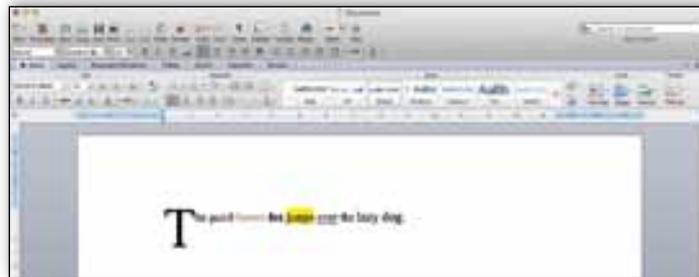


Figure 1: Formatting options take up all the toolbar space in Word.

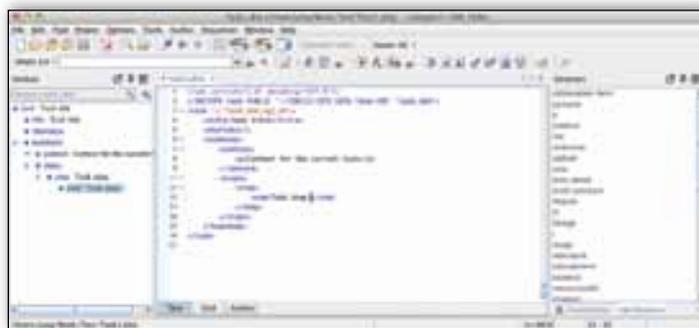


Figure 2: SyncRO Soft's oXygen editor showing a DITA task in XML view

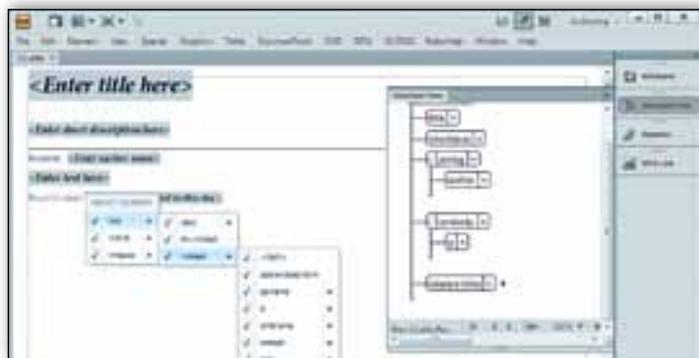


Figure 3: FrameMaker 11 showing a DITA document in the new Author View.

most of them, a plethora of personal styles emerged. Some were nicely structured, using named styles and no overrides, but most were simply entered ad hoc, using the formatting buttons that were easiest to reach: underline, bold, italic and font sizes. I have seen lengthy documents consisting entirely of "Normal" style with 1000s of overrides for individual paragraphs, sentences, words or even single characters. In such

documents, changing the house style – or even applying it for the first time – becomes a nightmare. WYSIWYG promised to bring the capabilities of true publishing to everyone's desktop, but it did not tell people about the hidden dragons and crouching tigers that came along with this paradigm. Content and formatting became completely mixed in one single authoring environment. And with increasing



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GALA is the largest global non-profit association within the language industry, providing resources, education, and research for companies working with translation services, language technology and content localization. Member companies are vendors and buyers of language services and technologies. They deploy sophisticated multilingual strategies and proven tools to take content and products to markets around the world.

numbers of formatting features that were added to each new version of every text editor came new levels of dependency between the pure content and the way in which it was being rendered.

The problem got worse when the exact same source started to be used for various output formats: not just print but also CHM, WebHelp and eventually a range of outputs for PDAs, mobile phones and tablet computers. By now, single-sourcing seemed a good idea, but not if you wanted to keep formatting under control in the way you were taught by WYSIWYG editors. With single-sourcing, the promise of WYSIWYG has been broken for most outputs. Yes, you can make your content look good for one output format, but if you want to reuse the same content for a totally different format, you might get completely useless results. And even if it looks good in your browser, a user might increase the font size in his browser and ruin your carefully crafted HTML screen design. Maybe the qualifier "In Print" should be added to the acronym, making it WYSIWYGP.

A new kid in technical authoring town

With the call for single-sourcing came the need for different output formats, and the single most important output format of the era was HTML. While some online Help authoring environments built on Word (keeping the customer base in their comfort zone as much as possible), which was then transformed into HTML, other products like RoboHelp turned HTML into the work environment of the author (from which content could be exported to Word if required). With this approach, applying different style sheets to the same content in different single-source layouts

allowed separating content from formatting to a certain extent. But still, the HTML tags were largely defined as formatting tags, much the same as the paragraph and character styles applied in a Word or FrameMaker document.

And then XML rode into town. Suddenly the separation between content and formatting became a lot more profound, as the tags were no longer connected to the formatting in an immediate manner. Semantic tags introduced an extra layer between the content and the formatting in which the content was going to be rendered. In the DITA 1.2 standard for instance, naming a topic a <task> or a <concept> might or might not cause differences in the format applied to the <title> child element. The differences in formatting might even depend on the output that is selected: Kindles do not offer as wide a variety of formatting options as PDF, but tablets offer much more.

Putting semantic labels into files to define the meaning of each content item and its position in the underlying structure of the document was the single most important change in technical documentation since the introduction of personal computers for this type of work. All of a sudden, intelligent software can retrieve information from XML documents based on meaningful semantic labels. You can tell a piece of software to get the <supplies> list from a <task> and send it to the <warehouse employee> who prepares the supplies packages for the <maintenance engineers>. If all of this information is available and marked up with semantic labels in the technical documentation, the software can find and process it. In a similar manner, the Bill Of Materials for a machine can be processed into a spare parts catalogue without any human intervention.

XML offered one more great advantage over other editing environ-

ments: as an author creating XML content, you were not dependent on one specific authoring tool anymore. Any text editor could be used, as the semantic labels are themselves expressed in the same text as the content, using angular brackets to distinguish them from that content. XML is not just Xtensible, it is also Xchangeable.

Pure XML and the author's performance

Of course, someone – the technical author – has to put the formatting information in the content in the first place. And using semantic labels to mark up content instead of applying the usual `<h1>`, ``, `<i>` and other formatting tags did change the requirements for editing tools. Tags had to become visible for the technical authors to see which semantics they were applying. In pure XML editors, tags are shown as tags and all text formatting is removed. It is possible to have the tags shown in red and attributes in blue, just to make the metadata stand out from the content. The fact that most XML editors include that option signals that there might be something wrong with the notion that pure XML editing is what makes authors most effective in creating good content. True, authors are no longer tempted to tweak their content so that it will fit on the page or match their personal formatting preferences. But how are authors supposed to see whether the structure in the content is really the structure

they mean to express? If you have a long file with steps and lists and nested lists, how do the tags help you in finding out that a particular item has been nested one level too deep? And if you are new to structured editing and XML, how are you going to survive this all-new paradigm in which you have to choose a tag out of a lengthy catalog of available ones and create previews of output to see if this is really what you meant to do?

WYSIWYM is the answer

In fact, while creating their content, authors are readers, too. When they are creating content with a certain structure, they have to check both the content and the structure for correctness. Leaving it up to them to read and interpret the tags and visualize the intended output in their minds puts a lot of burden on them and introduces a human error factor that is unnecessary. After all, the structure of a document must be expressed in some formatting, otherwise readers of the final output will not be able to figure out what that structure is. Not all details need to be visible, but at least some visible cues are required for the output to be readable at all. And some formatting, even though it is not strictly required, is so helpful that it would be a waste not to use it. A `<title>` element in a `<task>` topic may receive an icon of a hammer and screwdriver to indicate it is a task. The same `<title>` element in a `<concept>` may receive

an icon of a light bulb. Structure is expressed via formatting elements and if the formatting elements are defined effectively, readers quickly understand the structure of the content and immediately know where to find the information they are looking for.

The market for technical authoring environments has proven the point that authors need to see at least some formatting while creating content. Most or all of the leading XML editing environments have added this type of support. In several cases, this user interface is called Author View. In this type of view, the XML document does not look like XML at all. Rather, it looks like a Word or FrameMaker document with the page boundaries and all other page elements (headers, footers, page numbers) removed. These types of user interfaces are known as WYSIWYM: What You See Is What You Mean.

Often, the Author View is combined with some kind of structure overview in a separate window or panel of the user interface. SyncRO Soft's oXygen offers an outline view plus elements catalog and adds a breadcrumb trail in the menu bar to show you where you are in the structure of your document. But the toolbars, context menus and optional additional panels would still puzzle or even scare away a lot of XML-newbies.

In the new release of FrameMaker, the well-known WYSIWYG interface (for printed documents, of course) is now accompanied by both a pure XML view

and an Author View.

Here, the WYSIWYM author view is truly basic in offering only what the structured author really needs: a structure view for easy naviga-

tion plus an authoring window that shows placeholders, context menus and an elements catalog for inserting elements and only those toolbars that an author should ever need to create structured content. The instant preview in WYSIWYM comes without the false promise of WYSIWYG. It is intended as a rough preview, just good enough to check whether the structure is correct and allow you to concentrate on the content while creating it. It has the best of both worlds: the separation between content and formatting that pure XML offers plus the comfort and luxury of the editors that we are familiar with. It removes the nerd look and feel of true XML, as well as WYSIWYG's temptation to tweak the content so that it fits better on the page. There is no page, there are no formatting controls. There is just content, and visible – not visualizable – structure.

contact

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Adding value through glossaries

Many technical communicators consider glossaries an unnecessary relic left over from academic writing, and therefore assume that they are a waste of time and effort. Some companies even make a strategic decision not to include glossaries. In many cases, this decision is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose and value of product documentation. Let's take a look at the benefits of glossaries and how we can design them to add value to our documentation.



Image: temizurek

By Leah Guren

Do we need glossaries?

Recently, a client told me, “We don’t need to define any terms; users bought the product, so surely they understand all the concepts.”

Yet increasingly, users are abandoning the official product documentation in favor of online searches. They end up trying to understand the product from sources that may not be sanctioned by the manufacturer and may not even be accurate. A quick look at customer feedback reveals how dissatisfied users are with such official documentations.

There are many reasons for this customer dissatisfaction: poor navigation, missing topics, an improper level of writing, bad organization, lack of details, and more. A big contributing factor is assumed knowledge: writers assume that users can find information by searching, but that only works if users already know and understand the product terminology. In other words:

“Search is certainly an efficient way to get to content. We search on the Web all the time. But keyword searching is effective only if the item being sought is known in advance. It assumes that people will be able to accurately and completely express their information needs as a query. However, this may not always be the case.”

James Kalbach, Designing Web Navigation

It is time for companies to realize that a glossary containing useful definitions can add value in several ways:

- **It supports the needs of different users.** Users are never a completely homogeneous group; they may have different amounts of domain (subject or field area) knowledge; they may have different amounts of experience with the product; they may be new to their positions and need help understanding their workflow. A glossary can fill in knowledge gaps without getting in the way of advanced users.
- **It helps users learn.** It serves as a handy, centralized location for short, easy-to-consume pieces of information about the product and the domain. This allows users to explore and add to their knowledge at their convenience.

- **It showcases expertise.** Each well-written definition underlines your company’s expertise in the domain in a subtle yet effective way.
- **It helps keep users loyal to your documentation.** If users can understand product terms and concepts within the product documentation, they are less likely to go elsewhere to find answers.

What is the true function of a good definition?

Good glossaries contain good definitions. First, let’s be clear about what a technical definition is *not*:

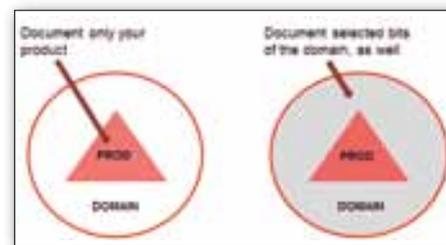
- **Part of the lexicon for localization.** In a localization project, CAT tools sometimes refer to *glossaries* and *definitions* in the context of translation databases. This has nothing to do with the end-user product documentation elements discussed in this article.
- **Dictionary definitions.** Dictionary definitions are generic; they include linguistic information, such as pronunciation guides and parts of speech. Technical definitions, however, do not have a linguistic focus and are not generic; they are only meaningful within the context of this certain product and domain.
- **Style guide definitions.** Style guides are in-house reference documents that show the technical communicators the rules for usage. A good style guide includes a list of terms (what to use, what to avoid, etc.), but this is not intended as a definition of these terms, nor is it in any way appropriate for users.
- **Technical descriptions.** A technical description includes a lot of detail and may span paragraphs or even pages. It is meant to describe every relevant aspect of a thing or a concept.

So what is the true function of a good technical definition? It is not meant to explain every detail; its real function is to give users enough of an understanding – a context – to be able to continue using the documentation. Think of it as a hook upon which users can then hang more information. If I’m reading a how-to article about home improvement, and it mentions

a *molly*, I don’t need to know ever little detail about the materials, manufacturing process, or history of this type of bolt fastener. I just need to know enough so that I can understand the sentence and continue reading.

What should you include in your glossary?

The next challenge is determining what you need to define. The experts offer different answers to this. Proponents of minimalist documentation say that technical communicators should focus strictly on the product (in fact, on that subset of product information that the users need to know to be able to perform the most common tasks safely and effectively). Other experts point to the power of value-added information, and encourage technical communicators to include information about the domain. Think of the first group as *excluders* and the second as *includers*. I’ve noticed that most of the excluders have a strong usability orientation, while the includers come from an instructional design or training background:



I tend to be an excluder when it comes to documentation in general. But when it comes to glossaries, I’m an includer. Consider including the following:

- **Product terms.** Think of product names, including different varieties of the product and related products.
- **Features.** When the marketing department comes up with a catchy name for a feature, you can be sure that many users won’t be able to automatically map that to the functionality. For unusual features, include feature concepts (what the feature actually does).
- **Interface elements.** Don’t just think of specific interface elements: most of those will be covered when you brainstorm features. Instead,



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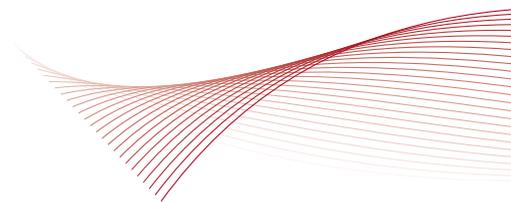


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think about terminology used to discuss types of interface elements. For example, do all of your users know what an *option button* is?

- **Workflow concepts.** Are there terms that apply to your users' workflow but aren't explicitly named in the interface? Does your company use a term that may not be universally recognized in the industry?
- **Actions (verbs with special use).** Do you use special terms to describe any user action?
- **User groups or classes.** Do you talk about *group leaders* or *trainees* or *associates* or *administrators*? Not everyone will interpret these roles in the same way.
- **Domain concepts.** Think of technical terms in the field, acronyms or initializations, and even concepts.
- **Any word that your company uses in a special way.** For example, one client of mine uses *upload* and *download* in a very strange, non-standard, and non-intuitive way. The terms were so deeply rooted in legacy documents and product interfaces that I was not able to convince them to change. All I could do was to make sure that these terms appeared in the glossary.

When brainstorming all possible terms and concepts, remember that users get very frustrated when they find the glossary but don't find the term that they are looking for. In other words, the glossary must be robust. Take the time to really think about all of these terms and concepts to avoid frustrating your users!

Learn the best practices for definitions

Before we discuss the best practices for good technical definitions, let's look at some examples of bad definitions:

chair: a thing you sit on.

canonicalization: In information technology, canonicalization is the process of making something canonical. To canonicalize is to ensure that data conforms to canonical rules. Canonicalization may sometimes mean generating canonical data from noncanonical data.

Most people would agree that these are useless definitions. The first is so vague and general that it doesn't tell you anything! The second is a circular, or self-referential, definition (that is, it only makes sense if you already understand the word).

So let's see what makes a good definition.

Classification

The classification is the first thing that points the reader's mind in the right direction. For example, a classification for *chair* might be *furniture*. Think of this as the context within which the rest of the definition sits.

Sometimes the greatest challenge is finding the correct classification. To avoid being overly general or overly specific, you must know your audience and pick the concept that is most appropriate for them.

The definition statement

This is the short (one or two sentence) actual definition. It cannot be too broad (for example, if I say that a chair is a type of furniture that you can sit on, I am accidentally including things that aren't chairs, such as sofas). It cannot be too narrow (for example, if I say that a chair has arms, I am accidentally excluding all the chairs that don't have arms). The trick is to find the elements that capture the essence of this object or concept. For example, chairs can be made out of almost any materials, can have four legs or a single pedestal, may or may not have arms, wheels, adjustable backs, padding, etc. All of these are nonessential and don't express the true nature of a chair.

The example

The example helps the reader understand the definition. I like to think of it as the "aha! factor." In some cases, an example may be a well-known instance of the concept (for example, if I was defining *DTP*, I might mention Microsoft Word as an example, because many people recognize it, even if they hadn't previously been familiar with the concept of DTP). It may be a picture (this works well for definitions of physical things). It may be a well-known use case. When choosing an example, ask yourself, "Will this make sense to my readers?"

Acronyms and initializations

When defining any shortened form, always include the spell-out. The best place for this is immediately after the term, in parentheses.

Never list the term by the long spell-out form, especially if you are using the shortened form throughout the document. For example:

DTP (desktop publishing):

a software application that...

So by following all of these rules, we can improve that first definition:

chair: a piece of furniture, with some form of back support, designed to accommodate one seated person.



We now have a much better classification, a definition statement that captures what is unique and essential about a chair, and an example in the form of a graphic.

A word about accessibility...

It doesn't matter how good a definition is if no one finds it. Deciding when and where to include a definition is a challenge in technical communication. When writing essays or articles, we can define a term the first time that it is used. But what is the "first time" in a user guide? Users don't read the documentation sequentially from front cover to back cover! Rather, they look up things, scan, skim, and browse. "First time" has no meaning in that context; placing the definition in the first chronological location almost guarantees that the user will miss it. In the online world, hypertext is an option. You can write a definition one time and link to it

many times, thus making sure that a user can get the definition from any occurrence. However, this can lead to two problems: First, your content becomes messy and distracting, as the links are visual noise on the page. We've all seen those Help topics that look like they suffer from blue chicken pox! Second, linking from inside a topic distracts readers and drags them off-topic. With low-literacy readers, this becomes an even greater problem, as it is more comfortable for them to click a link than actually read text. Within seconds, the user has become lost in a maze of online content.

The trick is to make the information accessible at all times while not disturbing the flow, creating visual noise, or getting in the way of users who don't require that information. The ideal solution is therefore to have a Glossary tab (for online Help) or a Glossary chapter (for print or PDF documents). Having all the definitions in one organized place makes the work easier for the technical communicator as well, with further savings passed on to the company.

Conclusion

A good definition can make all the difference for a user who lacks some background knowledge in your product or domain. Creating a glossary that contains such definitions for all the necessary terms and concepts makes your documentation far more useful for all levels of users. It is therefore a good investment for user satisfaction and loyalty.

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Technical communication in Korea:

The challenge of gaining industry awareness

With a rapidly developing economy that thrives on exports, Korea finds itself in need of high-quality technical documentation, but lacks experience and staff.



Image: narvikk

By Kim Yangsook
Translated by Danbi Kwak

Korea has a strong export-driven economy composed mainly of manufacturing industries for electric and electronic products, automobiles, ships and machinery. In fact, Korea joined the Trillion dollar club of world economies in 2004 and has since ranked among the world's 20 largest economies. In the past – mainly from the 1970's to the 1990's – the competitive advantage of Korean export items was price. The quality of user guides did not receive much attention. However, Korea has since restructured its export strategy and the market share of Korean products has risen tremendously on global markets, particularly with regards to high-tech products. As a result, the quality of user guides is being emphasized more than ever before. In order to enter global markets, Korean companies need to localize their products and provide user guides in the local languages. The source text for local user guides is generally written in English and improving the quality of this English source text is one of the greatest concerns that Korean technical communicators are facing.

Raising awareness for technical communication

Although the demand for professional technical communication is high, social awareness of the TC industry in Korea is quite low. Even corporations that seek to earn sales profit from overseas often overlook the importance of professional technical communication and make the mistake of simply hiring a translator to perform a technical writer's job. Instead of hiring a technical writer who can write an

English source text from the beginning of the process, corporations write a Korean text and pass it on to an English translator.

A serious problem arises from this kind of practice: Due to linguistic differences between the Korean and English languages, the text given to translators usually lacks critical information. For example, in the Korean language, a text without a clear subject and object is not only comprehensible to readers who know the context, but is also grammatically correct. Thus, a text that is clearly understood in the corporate Korean culture is sent to the translator, who does not have enough information to go by. The translator now has two options: He can either try to clarify meanings and contexts by asking or he can just make assumptions. The first option is not as feasible as one might think, because it is not easy to find the right person to ask in the corporation that placed the translation order, and quite often the time and cost constraints leave no room for questions. Thus, the translator might be left with no other choice but to figure it out on his own and take a guess. Imagine the accuracy and usability of a technical document that has been translated without sufficient information.

It seems that the best solution to this problem is to have a technical writer who understands what he is writing about and produces a quality source text in English. However, in Korea there are some problems with this approach as well.

The challenges of recruiting suitable candidates

As mentioned earlier, the TC industry in Korea is still in its childhood. There is no professional institution or organization that teaches writers about TC knowl-

edge and techniques. The lack of social and corporate awareness of TC explains why the number of TC industry insiders in Korea is low. One might suggest to simply hire a person with decent English skills. However, simply hiring graduates who studied English literature is of limited help because such graduates are only familiar with writing about literature and academic papers, but not with writing technical documents. Those who completed their undergrad degree overseas have excellent writing and speaking skills and would therefore make perfect candidates for a technical writing positions, however, they are usually not willing to enter an industry that is not yet very respected in the Korean society. Let's assume that Korean TC companies have been able to attract the desirable work force. Unfortunately the problems don't stop there. The more fluent these technical writers are in English, the more difficult they find it to fit into the industry. They want to take an active part

in creating English documents and utilizing their English skills as much as possible. However, the reality is that they can't demonstrate their ability as freely as they wish to, because almost everything – style, structure, operation system, etc. – is already standardized. Another problem is, that due to their experience overseas, they sometimes have a problem to accustom themselves to the Korean corporate culture. Familiar with Western cultures, some of these professionals have a hard time adapting to the Eastern work environment. In most Eastern cultures, including the Korean one, the organizational structure is very hierarchical and the relationship between service providers and customers is often vertical. Considering that a technical communicator must collaborate with many professionals at different levels, some Westernized English writers find it hard to get used to the Korean TC industry and, consequently, are unlikely to wait long enough to grow into TC



Image: ayzek

South Korea - fast facts

- Capital:** Seoul
- Official language:** Korean
- Population:** 50 million
- Land area:** 100,000 km²
- Currency:** South Korean won (₩)
- GDP, PPP (2011 estimate):** US\$1.556 trillion
- GDP, nominal (2011 estimate):** US\$1.163 trillion
- Total export trade volume (2010):** US\$ 884.2 billion
- Internet domain:** .kr und 한국

Source: Wikipedia

professionals. Let's not forget to mention that the staff turnover rate for the Korean TC workforce is also high on account of the above-stated reasons.

Building a better future for the Korean TC industry

In conclusion, what the Korean TC industry needs to do is to train technical writers to satisfy the special needs of the Korean market. Trainings must deliver professional TC knowledge and experience to future technical writers. Skilled technical writers should be able to perform the following:

- Analyze information of a product and its users
- Author a user guide that is appropriate and accurate
- Understand pictures and designs and utilize them to deliver information effectively
- Be able to learn and use publishing tools
- Appreciate various and complex legal, cultural, and linguistic issues relating to user guides
- Have an understanding for localization
- Be sensitive to the needs and demands of users
- Communicate effectively with co-workers and collaborators
- Recommend ways to improve the current system/procedures and persuade the persons in charge

In other words, technical writers need more than just good writing skills; they must have sound TC knowledge. In order to learn TC skills and grow into a professional, one must have authoring experience as well. To raise social awareness for the Korean TC industry, technical writers in Korea must first build up their expertise. To ensure better quality and accuracy of user guides, Korean TC companies might need to build a collaborative

system with professional technical communicators who are English-natives. After all, collaborating with native technical communicators will lead to an improved quality of English user manuals, which will consequently raise not only the quality of local user manuals but also the awareness for product, brand and country.

To train English technical writers in a non-English speaking country such as Korea, both manufacturing companies as well as TC service providers need to do their homework. In the manufacturing environment, excellent human resources should be attracted and trained in professional TC techniques and counseled for their careers as technical writers. On the service provider level, the Korean TC industry should work hard to raise and promote awareness and expertise of TC in Korea.

contact

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Certification – a pathway to professionalism

To be truly professional, technical communication needs formalized training, certification of competency, and ongoing professional development opportunities. TCTrainNet, tekcom's international training and certification program for technical communication, has been created to provide such a pathway to professionalism.

By **Tony Self**

In theory, to become a technical communicator, all you need to do is visit your local quick print shop, and order 100 business cards with "Technical Writer" printed under your name. This is not illegal, as far as I know, in any jurisdiction in the world. You don't have to be a member of a professional association or a union, you don't have to do any study, you don't need any government authorization, and you don't have to pass any exams. My dictionary describes a *profession* as "a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification", but there are other meanings, many of which have a cultural basis. A *professional* engages mainly in administrative and intellectual labor, while by contrast a *tradesperson* engages in manual labor. Sometimes, professional may refer to a *white collar worker*, while tradesperson indicates a *blue collar worker*. The distinction is to do with social class.

For many professions and trades there are government regulations that help define the occupation. A medical doctor has to be qualified and registered. An electrician has to be qualified and registered. A builder has to be certified. A police officer has to be trained, tested and sworn in. If there are no government rules defining an occupation, employers apply their own standards. Some universities require their lecturers to have higher degrees. Some accounting companies require their accountants to be certified and have their skills updated annually. It tends to be unskilled occupations, such as cleaning, data entry, bar tending, and fruit picking, for which certification is not the norm.



Image: stylephotographs

In some countries with established and entrenched university education for technical communicators, such as Finland, the occupation is very professional in most senses of the word. In other countries, the lack of education and training has seen technical communication being treated more like an unskilled occupation than a highly skilled profession.

Interestingly, practicing technical communicators around the world would all like to see themselves as professionals – as members of a recognized profession. Many technical communicators do seek out education and training courses, earn themselves recognized qualifications, and join professional associations. But many do not have access to training, qualification, and certification. For the professionalism of technical communication to be raised, we need greater access to training, and certification standards. This would not only help individual communicators, but also help employers to hire competent and qualified communicators (and to avoid those who have just visited the quick print shop).

In her book *The Rise of Professionalism: a Sociological Analysis*, Magali Sarfatti Larson lists the defining characteristics of a profession as having:

a professional association, cognitive base, institutionalized training, licensing, work autonomy, colleague control... (and) code of ethics... and high standards of professional and intellectual excellence.

Larson also suggested that professions have a more extensive group allegiance than other occupational groups.

Applying this to ourselves, to be truly professional, technical communication needs to have:

- professional associations such as tekcom, STC, ISTD, TWIN, FTI, etc.
- standards and agreed best practices
- formalized training through universities, training providers, and professional associations
- certification of competency
- clear definitions of what technical communicators do
- a code of ethics
- ongoing professional development pathways
- professional pride

To its credit, tekcom, the German professional association for technical communicators, has made great progress in working towards greater professionalism. In the English-language domain in particular, there is still much to do. Under the tcworld banner, tekcom has developed two extremely important services: formalized training, and certification. These services are being promoted as TCTrainNet.

TCTrainNet offers three levels of certification: first level, advanced level, and trainer level. Training for the first level is all online, with students guided by an experienced online trainer. Training for advanced and trainer level certification is more like coaching, with a trainer helping the student develop skills through self-study, learning activities, tasks, and group work. The tekcom certification exams are conducted separately from the training, to assure the integrity of the certification process. A pilot group of students has already completed the training programs of TCTrainNet, and there are now tekcom-certified technical communica-

tors working in many countries, from Poland and Britain to Japan and India. The next development by tcworld will be further low-cost pathways for ongoing professional development that will also help develop the group allegiance and professional excellence identified by Magali Sarfatti Larson.

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Oct 4 – 6, 2012	ELIA Networking Days Budapest www.elia-association.org/index.php?id=ndbudapest	Budapest, Hungary
Oct 15 – 16, 2012	TAUS User Conference www.translationautomation.com/conferences/taus-user-conference-2012.html	Seattle, WA, USA
Oct 17 – 19, 2012	Localization World Conference www.localizationworld.com/	Seattle, WA, USA
Oct 23 – 25, 2012	tcworld conference 2012 www.tekom.de/conference	Wiesbaden, Germany
Nov 9, 2012	GALA Workshop: "The Right Message. The Right Language." www.gala-global.org	Buenos Aires, Argentina
Nov 21 – 23, 2012	Languages & The Media www.languages-media.com/	Berlin, Germany
Nov 27 – 29, 2012	Gilbane Boston http://gilbaneboston.com/	Boston, MA, USA
Feb 18 – 20, 2013	Outsourcing World Summit www.iaop.org	Phoenix, AZ, USA
Feb 21 – 22, 2013	tcworld India conference http://conferences.tekom.de/tcworldin13/	Bangalore, India
Mar 17 – 20, 2013	GALA 2013 www.gala-global.org/conference/	Miami, FL, USA

①

The Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) is hosting a one-day event for business leaders and marketing professionals at Espacio Pilar in Buenos Aires. **"The Right Message. The Right Language:"** will offer a program on reaching multilingual customers and developing effective localization programs to support international business, exporting, and globalization efforts. The workshop is designed for company leaders, marketing executives, and professionals managing content within their companies. It is intended for companies with varying levels of "export-readiness," including those considering exporting for the first time.

"The Right Message. The Right Language." will address how the right multilingual content strategy drives international commerce, opens new revenue streams, and increases market share for companies leveraging language as a competitive advantage. Participants will learn about the tools and strategies necessary to bridge the language gap and communicate effectively with customers around the world.

②

The third **tcworld India conference** is expected to draw over 500 technical writers from multinational corporations from all over India as well as many experts in the field of technical communication from all over the world.

Presenters will share new information on important topics such as cloud computing, mobile documentation, translation and localization, documentation standards, project management, authoring tools and many more. Technical aspects that will be covered include HTML5 and DITA.

Technical communication is an evolving field in India. As co-organizers of the tcworld India conference, tekomp and TWIN encourage all technical writers, translators, information architects, copy editors, software specialists, project managers and content developers to join this highly-regarded event.

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