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with
QA software*

**TECH WRITERS
CORNER:**

*GUI Strings...
“sounds
yummy”*

LPM CORNER:

*Translation
Project Success
Guidelines*

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ClientSide News Magazine is produced exclusively by:

ClientSide Publications
PO Box 4182
Breckenridge, CO 80424-4182
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editor@clientsidenews.com

Send press releases to
news@clientsidenews.com

publication & membership

ClientSide News is published monthly by ClientSide Publications™, a division of ClientSide News LLC.

Annual subscriptions to ClientSide News Magazine are FREE to CSN Members. Contact CSN headquarters for membership information.

The mission of ClientSide News Magazine is to facilitate the exchange of information and the discovery of solutions among professionals on the client side of the globalization, internationalization, localization and translation industry, to serve as a forum for discussion of emerging trends and issues, and to deliver intelligence for global business.

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@issue

By Keith Becoski

"How did they know I was browsing their website from Yuma?"

CSN invites Executive Vice President of Digital Element, Rob Friedman to illustrate the seemingly clairvoyant powers of using IP Intelligence to communicate to global audiences within their local communities... automatically.

This is our first article on one of my favorite internet technologies outlining some of the clear benefits

of utilizing IP Intelligence. We plan to publish more exciting details as innovative cases become available on this subject.

globalization
internationalization
localization
translation

g i l t events

Spring 2008

comingevents

may

5.26 to 6.01

LREC 2008

The European Language Resource
Association

Marrakech, Morocco

E-mail: lrec@lrec-conf.org

5.31 to 6.02

21st CATS Congress

Canadian Association for Translation
Studies

Vancouver, British Columbia,
Canada

E-mail: marc.charron@uOttawa.ca

june

6.01 to 6.04

STC 55th Annual Conference and EXPO

Society for Technical Communication
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

E-mail: stc@stc.org

6.05 to 6.07

4th International Postgraduate Conference in Translation and Textual Studies

Centre for Translation and Textual
Studies and the School of Applied
Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin, Ireland

E-mail: textconference@dcu.ie

june

6.07

Babel Wiki Workshop Cross-Language Collaboration

Porto, Portugal

E-mail: babelwikiworkshop@gmail.com

<http://www.wiki-translation.com>

6.09 to 6.11

Localization World Berlin 2008

Berlin, Germany

E-mail: info@localizationworld.com

6.10 to 6.12

CustomerCentric Sales Workshop

Common Sense Advisory
Boston, Massachusetts

E-mail: info@commonsenseadvisory.com

http://www.commonsenseadvisory.com/training/customer_centric.php

6.11 to 6.13

TAUS Global Support Summit

Translation Automation User Society
Berlin, Germany

6.12

Internationalization Fundamentals: making your code world-ready

webinar by Lingoport & ENLASO

E-mail: webinar@lingoport.com

june

6.12

Is your software global-ready?

Common Sense Advisory

webinar by ENLASO and Lingoport

E-mail: craulf@translate.com

<https://www.enlasoevents.webex.com>

6.12 to 6.13

NLPCS 2008

Institute for Systems and
Technologies of Information,
Control and Communication
Barcelona, Spain

E-mail: workshops@iceis.org

6.15 to 6.20

ACL-08: HLT

Association for Computational
Linguistics

Columbus, Ohio

E-mail: acl08chair@ling.osu.edu

6.16 to 6.17

4th Annual Text Analytics Summit

Boston, Massachusetts

E-mail: josh@firstconf.com

<http://www.textanalyticsnews.com/4thannual08/agenda.shtml>

Spring 2008

comingevents

june

6.16 to 6.18

Localization Certification Program: North America
CSU, Chico Center for Regional and Continuing Education and Research Foundation, GALA, The Localization Institute
St. Louis, Missouri USA
E-mail: rce@csuchico.edu

6.16 to 6.20

UPA 2008
Usability Professionals' Association
Baltimore, Maryland
<http://www.usabilityprofessionals.org/conference/2008/index.htm>

6.17

2008 CM Pros US Spring Summit
Lighthouse Seminars and Gilbane Group
San Francisco, California USA
<http://www.summit.cmprofessionals.org>

6.17 to 6.18

Web Content 2008
Duo Consulting
Chicago, Illinois USA
E-mail: shari@duoconsulting.com
<http://www.webcontent2008.com>

june

6.18

Public Relations 101: How Your Company Can Raise Its Profile and Its Profits
Association of Language Companies Webinar
E-mail: bmclean@alcus.org
<http://www.alcus.org/News/ArticleDetails/?id=96>

6.18 to 6.20

Gilbane Conference San Francisco 2008
San Francisco, California USA
E-mail: info@lighthouseseminars.com
<http://www.gilbanesf.com>

6.19 to 6.20

Localization Certification Program: North America
CSU, Chico Center for Regional and Continuing Education and Research Foundation, GALA, The Localization Institute
St. Louis, Missouri USA
E-mail: rce@csuchico.edu

6.19 to 6.21

Audiovisual Translation: Multidisciplinary Approaches
University of Montpellier 3, France
Montpellier, France
E-mail: adriana.serban@univ-montp3.fr
http://www.recherche.univ-montp3.fr/traduction_audiovisuelle/

june

6.22 to 6.24

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<http://www.x-pubs.com>

6.23 to 6.26

Documentation & Training Life Sciences 2008
PUBSNET and The Content Wrangler
Indianapolis, Indiana USA
E-mail: info@doctrain.com
<http://www.doctrain.com/life>

6.23 to 6.26

ICITA 2008
International Conference on Information Technology and Applications
Cairns, Queensland, Australia
E-mail: icita@ieee.org
<http://www.icita.org>

6.23 to 6.26

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Cavtat/Dubrovnik, Croatia
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welocalize

Creating “Globally Local” Online Initiatives

By
Rob Friedman
Executive Vice President, Digital Element

-With IP Intelligence

The Internet has become one of the most significant business communications tools, enabling companies to reach out to today’s global audience in a more cost-effective manner. Even though this medium provides an opportunity to become instantly global, companies need to define themselves on the Internet just as they would differentiate themselves in the local marketplace.

Companies were initially caught up in the vast global opportunities afforded with the Internet - so much so that geographic boundaries seemed to disappear overnight. It sounded great on paper. However, in reality, geography plays a very important role in conducting business of-line:

1. What language you speak;
2. What currency you use to make purchases;
3. Whether or not you sell to someone (legal restrictions); and
4. What products you are likely to buy/how you should stock your shelves.

INTERNET USERS SPORT A MORE GLOBAL COMPLEXION

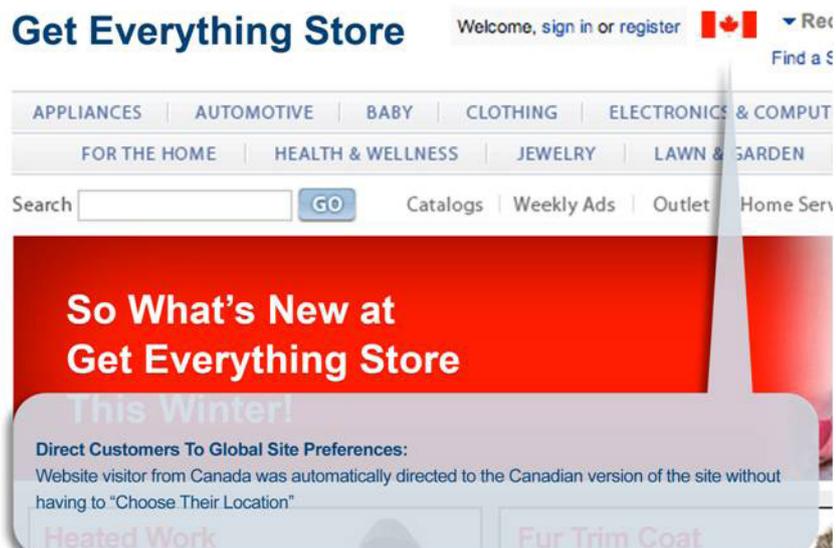
In March 2008, approximately 1.4 billion Internet users existed worldwide.¹ During the last eight years, however, the global complexion of the Internet has changed. Asia (38 percent) and Europe (28 percent) now capture essentially two-thirds of global Internet usage.² North America is now home to only 18 percent of all Internet users; whereas, in 2000, the United States alone claimed nearly 33 percent of Internet users worldwide.³

Because the online world has become an integral part of day-to-day business, appealing to a mass online universe is no longer adequate. Businesses must now find innovative ways to reach and communicate with “global” audiences, but within their “local” communities. Furthermore, in the once boundary-less Internet universe, new restrictions and regulations are making companies take a hard look at how they secure and distribute content.

When it comes to online content, a universal, all-things-to-all-people approach simply doesn’t work anymore. To succeed online, businesses must localize content, advertising and communications to increase the reach, relevance and response to their messages. Companies also need to secure online content distribution in order to comply with licensing and copyright agreements as well as to obey customs and cultural boundaries.

As global businesses take more holistic views of their online business initiatives, they are turning to IP Intelligence (anonymous data derived from analyzing an Internet user’s IP address, including city-level location and other information) to help them move closer to replicating real-time interaction in the offline world – most importantly, helping them remove the impediments of geographical distance.

Businesses now realize the importance of engaging the global customer in a way that has previously been difficult in cyberspace. IP Intelligence delivers an in-depth view of the Internet that allows for more tailored messaging and content by forging the relationship between geography and business.



ADDRESS GEOGRAPHIC REALITIES OF BUSINESS WITH IP INTELLIGENCE

Geographic realities of “doing business” won’t change just because companies are now conducting business online. Through its IP Intelligence technology, Digital Element helps companies deliver content localization, local search, targeted advertising, and digital rights management (DRM).

Digital Element’s NetAcuity® IP Intelligence technology allows businesses to perfect audience segmentation capabilities and targeting based on a comprehensive set of parameters such as geographic location (country, region, state, city and zip code); connection speed; area code; Internet Service Provider (ISP); North American Industry Classification System (NAICS); domain name; demographics; company name; proxies; Designated Market Area (DMA)/Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA); language; time zone; and longitude/latitude.

By deploying NetAcuity, companies can accurately and anonymously pinpoint a person’s location down to the city level worldwide without being invasive. NetAcuity utilizes more than 20 different patent-pending methods that make it the recognized industry-standard in accurate IP Intelligence technology.

Accuracy is the most important feature companies should look for when they evaluate IP Intelligence technology. This is the area where other similar technologies have previously fallen short in their drive to deliver the desired results.

Digital Element strives to continually improve its accuracy levels. Recent third-party tests conducted by Keynote Systems, the global leader in on-demand test and measurement solutions for continuously improving the online experience, demonstrated a 100-percent accuracy rate for NetAcuity at the country level, as well as an exact match at the state level for those IP addresses located in the United States. Additionally, the Keynote technology assessment graded results down to a city level, and NetAcuity delivered 97 percent accuracy.

Build a “Globally Local” Online Initiative

Below are four areas where companies can utilize NetAcuity to create “globally local” online initiatives:

- **Content Localization** - Websites can instantly route users to location-relevant content instead of asking visitors to “choose their country” or surf an entire site just to find products and services of interest. With IP Intelligence, companies can customize Website content, language, currency, products and promotions to create an instant connection with Website visitors, reduce abandon rates, and increase time evaluating products and services – resulting in increased sales and revenues.

- **Local Search** - Marketing dollars would have a larger return on investment if businesses optimized local search results by advertising to those potential customers in the geographic region where their business is located. IP Intelligence allows companies to automate the process of serving geographically targeted paid search results and content, allowing for better click-through rates and costs-per-conversion than national campaigns with local keywords.

- **Targeted Online Advertising** - Any business can play big in the online advertising world. Just knowing something as simple as a Website visitor’s location is a crucial factor for success. Geo-targeted ads, for example, get a 50 percent higher click-through rate. Utilizing IP Intelligence, companies can enhance targeting of their online campaigns in order to reduce wasted impressions, increase click-through rates, and enhance message reach by delivering relevant ads to local audiences.

- **Digital Rights Management** - By leveraging IP Intelligence, companies can effectively create the necessary control to manage the distribution of

The screenshot shows the top portion of the Get Everything Store website. At the top left is the logo "Get Everything Store" and a navigation menu with categories: APPLIANCES, AUTOMOTIVE, BABY, CLOTHING, ELECTRONICS & COMPUTERS, ENTERTAINMENT, FITNESS & SPORTS, FOR THE HOME, HEALTH & WELLNESS, JEWELRY, LAWN & GARDEN, SHOES, TOOLS, TOYS & GAMES. A search bar is located below the menu. To the right of the search bar are links for "Catalogs", "Weekly Ads", "Outlet", "Home Services", "Parts", "Gift Registry", and "Gift Cards". Below the search bar is a large banner with the text "So What's New at Get Everything Store This Winter" and a photo of a person in a pink jacket in the snow. A callout box titled "Geographic Region Based Products:" explains that products are tailored to the user's location. Below the banner are several product tiles: "Heated Work Jacket" for \$107.99, "Fur Trim Coat" for \$119.99, "25% Off" on summer clearance items, "20" Snow Shovel" for \$27.82, and a "Looking For Something Now!" section with contact information for the Boston store. At the bottom, a "Location Relevant Content:" callout box states that ads and coupons are targeted to the user's location.

and access to online content, relying heavily on geographic location to serve as the foundation. Geolocation capabilities allow for legal downloads where licensing and copyright agreements are in place and restricts downloads where it is illegal. Additionally, content containing what might be perceived as culturally offensive can be restricted on the front end.

WORLDWIDE CORPORATE SUCCESS WITH IP INTELLIGENCE

Companies such as CinemaNow, an innovator in digital entertainment technology delivering high-quality Hollywood movies and TV shows across multiple platforms, and ABCSearch, the largest privately held pay-per-click (PPC) ad network, are successfully using NetAcuity to harness online consumer information and apply it to the “the new way of doing business.”

CINEMA NOW

CinemaNow is the leading destination for the authorized distribution of feature films and video on the Internet. The company recently expanded into the business-to-business sector, working with several manufacturers to integrate its technology into consumer-electronic devices where it acts as the de-facto service for video-on-demand stores.

Looking for the most accurate and reliable technology on the market, CinemaNow chose NetAcuity to integrate as part of its PatchBay™ platform to allow for pay-per-view delivery of online content and the management of digital rights, as well as user profiling and report generation. By leveraging IP Intelligence, CinemaNow restricts distribution based on geographical parameters. Furthermore, with international fraud on the rise, CinemaNow has now established a front-line barrier, denying access to those geographical areas with the highest rate of this type of criminal activity.

With NetAcuity, CinemaNow ensures its distribution partners that it is using a major-studio approved and reliable solution and that their access rights are protected, which helps the company as it continues to build out its continually expanding licensing portfolio. The company sees NetAcuity as an absolute necessity for DRM. CinemaNow executives feel that their company cannot be in business without it – it is not a matter of increasing sales; the company can’t distribute films without it.

ABCSEARCH

ABCSearch has created a strong presence in the marketplace with more than 6 billion searches per month throughout its entire PPC network of targeted search en-

gines and niche-specific directories. The company needed to provide more accurate targeting for its global advertisers in order to continue delivering high conversion rates for its worldwide clients.

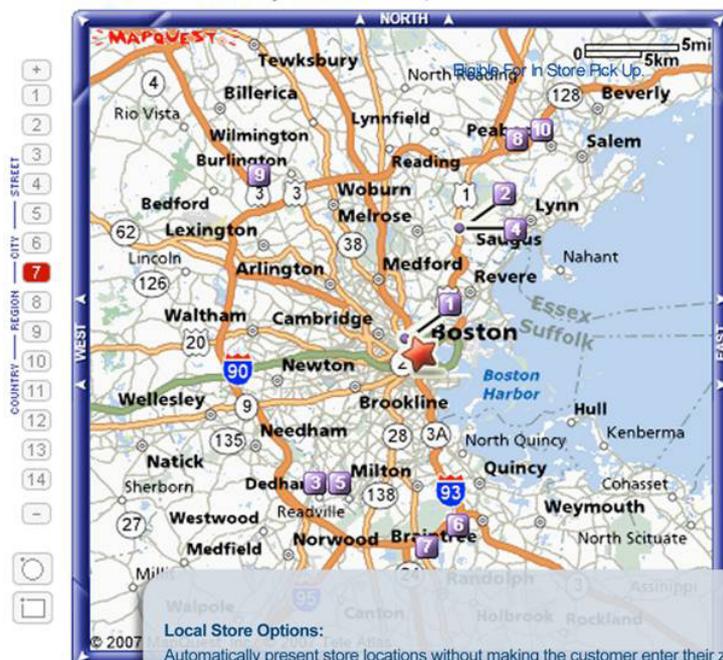
ABCSearch made the switch to NetAcuity in order to meet its goal of having ads targeted as efficiently and effectively as possible to its advertisers’ audiences. ABCSearch executives understood their advertisers relied on geotargeting to accurately bring their ads to specific locations around the world, and they expected the company to use the most accurate and reliable IP Intelligence available.

By incorporating NetAcuity, ABCSearch gives its clients the solution that will reduce costs and help them achieve their online advertising goals by delivering high conversion rates and ultimately a substantial return on their investment.

By automatically building IP Intelligence into any online strategy, companies can gain a competitive advantage as they begin to build solid, global relationships based on connecting with people in their local community - and within the parameters of when, where and how they want to be reached as well as providing relevant, personalized information that resonates with their culture and lifestyle.

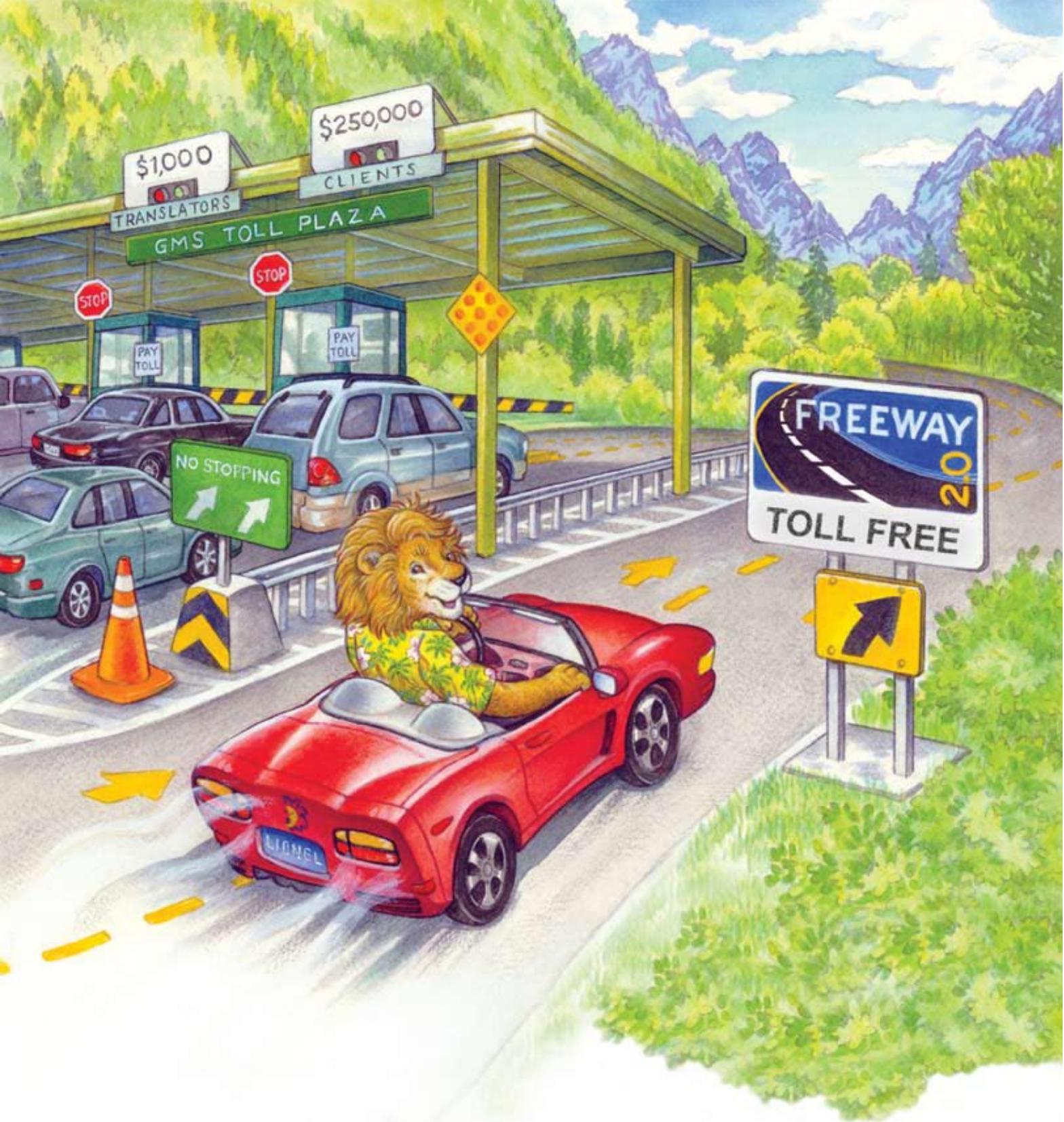
1. Internet World Stats, “World Internet Users and Population Stats,” March 2008, Accessed May 6, 2008, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>.
2. Internet World Stats, op. cit.
3. Computer Industry Almanac, Press Release, April 24, 2001, Accessed May 6, 2008, www.c-i-a.com/pr0401.htm.

Stores found near your location: 10+
Estimated travel time from your location: <not specified>



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Language Quality-Assurance



by John R. Kohl,
SAS Institute

Optimizing Your Documentation for a Global Audience

Language quality-assurance (QA) software is a technology that helps technical communicators ensure the quality and consistency of communications. In recent years, this software has seen a surge in popularity and usage, and for good reason. The cost has come down, making return on investment fairly easy to quantify and achieve within a short time. The implementation process, while not trivial, is becoming easier. And because the software can be used to help authors communicate more effectively with a global audience, more and more companies view it as a business imperative.

Ironically, language QA software, which is intended partly to help companies standardize their terminology, is known by many names, including controlled-authoring software, controlled-language checker, and automated editing software. The term language QA software better reflects the way companies use this technology today and helps potential users avoid the common misperception that these tools are being used only to impose severe restrictions on language.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 1970s, companies such as Caterpillar, Kodak, and Xerox invested substantial resources in the development of their own proprietary controlled-language checkers. As the term controlled-language checker implies, the goal was to help authors conform to a controlled language—a subset of the English language.

In many early versions of controlled language, terminology and sentence structures were severely restricted. For example, Kodak International Service Language was limited to only the most basic sentence structures, tenses, and terminology. By simplifying the language in their service manuals and then giving their service technicians around the world a little bit of training in English, the

company eliminated the need to translate those manuals into 140 different languages.

Other companies developed controlled languages and controlled-language checkers in order to make machine translation (the use of translation software) feasible. Even in the 1970s and 1980s, machine-translation software could translate simple texts from one language to another without requiring a lot of post-editing (error corrections and stylistic improvements). As long as technical terms and other noun phrases are pretranslated and added to the software's dictionaries, machine translation was and is cost-effective.

Controlled-language checkers such as Boeing's Simplified English Checker have long been used to ensure compliance with ASD Simplified Technical English (ASD-STE100). The ASD-STE100 standard was developed for the aerospace industry and is now being used in other industries as well.

By the late 1990s, many individuals realized that the English language did not need to be so tightly controlled in order for the language-checking software to produce benefits. For a manufacturing company, even the need to ensure consistency in the names of parts and components might be enough of a business justification for implementing the software. The emphasis began to shift from controlling language to ensuring the quality and consistency of language.

Additional software vendors such as acrolinx, Smart Communications, and Tedopres have emerged, eliminating the need for companies to develop their own language QA software and thereby greatly reducing the cost and time required for implementation.

NOWADAYS, COMPANIES USE LANGUAGE QA SOFTWARE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- to make written information easier for non-native speakers of English to comprehend and for translators to translate
- to ensure a high degree of language quality and consistency in their printed and electronic communications
- to increase the productivity of content authors, editors, and translators
- to help non-native authors produce better-quality English source texts
- to ensure that their documents conform to plain-language guidelines that have been promoted by various agencies
- to make information—especially time-sensitive information and information for which “gist” translations are sufficient—suitable for machine translation
- to reduce translation and localization costs and time to market
- for a variety of other business reasons.

Companies that use this type of software include Bosch, Dräger Medical, Motorola, Philips, SAS Institute, Schneider Electric, Siemens, Symantec, and many others. The combined client lists of the three vendors mentioned above easily exceed 100 customers, and that number is growing rapidly.

BETTER THAN OFF-THE-SHELF

On the one hand, language QA software is little more than a combination of a grammar checker, style checker, and spelling checker. However, there are some important differences between language QA software and off-the-shelf products:

Flexibility. All of the language QA software products that I am familiar with can be used with multiple authoring tools.

Customization. Language QA products are highly customizable. Users choose which style issues and grammar rules they want the software to check for, and they typically work with the vendor to eliminate as many “false alarms” (often caused by idiosyncrasies in technical documentation) as possible. Vendors can also make the software flag certain grammatical language patterns as errors—patterns that are inherently ambiguous, or those that are not likely to be understood by non-native speakers, for example.

Term harvesting. Language QA products typically include a term-harvesting component, or else the vendor offers term harvesting as an additional service. Term harvesting (identifying all the unique terms in a document) helps

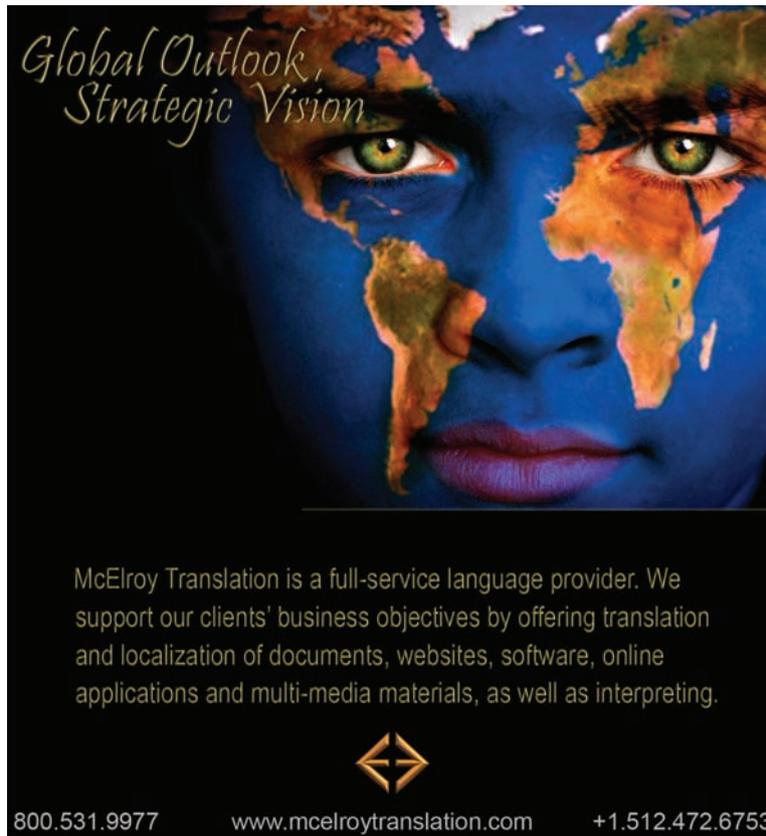
identify variant spellings and even variant phrases. The software then flags the deprecated variants as errors and suggests the approved forms, which users can substitute with a mouse-click. Term harvesting also makes it possible to identify approved technical terms that would otherwise be flagged as spelling errors. Adding approved terms to the software’s dictionary also makes the software’s style-checking and grammar-checking components more accurate.

GROUNDWORK FOR SUCCESS

If you believe that language QA software is right for your company or organization, start by

doing a few things that will help ensure your long-term success.

First, make sure that you and your management have a clear idea of the benefits that you hope to achieve. Also make sure your management is committed to requiring all authors and editors in your division or company to use the software. Invite your prospective vendor to educate your staff about how important the software is to attaining your objectives.



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The experiences of a few companies whose implementations of language QA software failed over the long term show that use of the software must not be allowed to become optional under any circumstances. Quality assurance is a misnomer when only a subset of your workforce is using QA tools or following QA processes. That statement is as true of language QA as of any other type of QA program.

Imposing too many stylistic or terminology restrictions on users at once is another possible reason for failure. However, unless you try to implement a highly restrictive controlled language, the too-much-too-fast syndrome is unlikely to occur. You will almost certainly choose to get the software into production with a starter set of rules and terminology restrictions. That approach enables you to get some immediate value from the software. There will be plenty of time for gradual enhancements later.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The following tasks are typical of any implementation of language QA software, regardless of which vendor you choose. Many of the tasks overlap, but this list will give you a general idea of what is involved.

Test the software. Assemble two collections of documents that are representative of what your company produces. You and the vendor need these in order to test the software's style rules, grammar rules, and spell checking against your documents. One collection should be quite large, for comprehensive testing. (Ask the vendor for more specifics.) The other collection should be smaller—perhaps 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 words—for preliminary testing, so that you won't have as much output to evaluate during your initial customization process.

Choose rules. Decide which of the vendor's standard set of style rules and grammar rules you want to implement. If business requirements mandate that you follow an already defined standard such as ASD-STE100, then of course you will be using the rules that support that standard. The vendor typically runs the selected rules in batch mode against your collection of documents. Then you review the output in order to identify the "false alarms" that the software reports. The vendor customizes the rules in order to eliminate as many of the false alarms as possible or practical.

Consider customization. Determine whether there are other style issues that you want the software to detect. Ask the vendor whether they can customize the software to detect those issues, and discuss the time frame and cost of doing so.

Plan pilot projects. Line up participants for some pilot projects.

Consolidate lists of terms. If you already have lists of terms that you want the software to flag as errors, assemble those terms into a single file. A spreadsheet application such as Microsoft Excel is suitable until you can get the terms into your language QA software's repository.



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Consider term harvesting. Ask the vendor what their policy and process are for term harvesting. Even if the vendor does the term harvesting for you, you will have to review the output and determine which terms and phrases to approve and which to deprecate.

Conduct pilot projects. Collect feedback after the pilot projects are over.

Finalize details with the vendor. Give the vendor a list of any requirements or further customizations that you want, and agree on an approximate timetable and cost.

Roll out the product. Plan and conduct your rollout, with initial training provided either by the vendor or by someone on your staff.

Three to six months is a typical amount of time for getting an initial set of rules and terminology restrictions in place and for putting the software into production. The process of refining existing rules and adding new rules and terminology restrictions can continue indefinitely. Vendors will certainly have some parameters for how much customization is included in your initial implementation and for how much further customizations or refinements will cost. Minor changes might be covered in a maintenance agreement.

SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

During the initial implementation, you will need at least one person to devote half time to project management. Of course, that person will require collaboration and input from many colleagues in order to progress through the implementation steps.

After the rollout, support requirements depend on how much you want to extend the functionality of the software and on how rapidly you want to make those extensions. During the initial implementation, you were probably anxious to get the software into production quickly so that you could begin to get some value from it. But in order to get the most value from the software, you will need to devote much more time and attention to term harvesting and perhaps to implementing additional style rules as well.

A few companies have full-time linguistic engineers and terminologists working to identify and implement new style rules and to classify terms that are collected during term harvesting. However, most companies have one or two people with aptitude and interest in those areas who support their users and who work to extend the capabilities of the software as time permits.

The non-linguistic tasks that a support person typically provides include but are not limited to the following:

- updating the Help topics for the style rules and grammar rules so that they use examples from your company's own documentation
- providing training and support to new users
- reviewing the release notes for new releases of the software, and determining whether changes or enhancements are significant enough to merit upgrading to the newer releases
- testing new releases before making them available to your users, partly as a QA measure and partly to become familiar with the new features
- scheduling upgrades and giving users basic training in the new or changed features.

AFTER THE ROLLOUT

Most writers recognize that language QA software helps them improve their writing skills, which makes them more competitive in the job market and less vulnerable to having their jobs outsourced. In the August 2007 issue of ClientSideNews Magazine, I explained how writers benefit from language QA software:

Because [the software] gives authors immediate feedback on their own writing, they quickly learn to follow guidelines that they never quite grasped before. After an initial productivity hit, this training effect leads to the opposite: a significant productivity increase. Writers fix grammar, spelling, style, and terminology issues early in the writing process, so there are fewer corrections to be made late in the documentation cycle, when the pressure to deliver is greatest. Because much of the copy editing work is now done during the writing process, our editors have more time to devote to more substantive issues.

In any implementation, there are usually a few employees who must be convinced that attending to the details of language quality and consistency is part of their job. However, as one executive at SAS Institute pointed out, "Most people want to do a good job. If you make it easy for them to do a good job, they are usually happy to oblige." The employees who resist using language QA software are usually the ones who have not tried it yet. They need to be given a gentle nudge so that they can discover how easy it is and how much they learn by using it.

The SAS implementation is aimed in part at helping writers and editors conform to a detailed set of Global

English guidelines (Kohl 2008). Because some SAS documentation is not translated, SAS has long been interested in making that documentation easier for non-native speakers of English to read and comprehend. Language QA software puts that goal within reach.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

In the January 2008 Intercom, JoAnn Hackos writes, “[i]n a highly competitive global environment, we must look for ways to reduce costs, gain efficiencies, and prove that the work we do adds value for our employers.” Language QA software is one tool that helps many companies meet those objectives. It can be adapted to help companies meet different criteria for language quality and to support different business objectives, including communicating more effectively with a global audience.

More and more companies are recognizing that, in contrast to their preconceived notions, language QA software ultimately makes their writers and editors more productive. Even non-professional communicators can use the software to improve their writing skills and to communicate more effectively with colleagues and customers around the world.

As vendors of language QA software and their customers collaborate to exploit the software’s potential more fully, it seems likely that the software will become an important part of many technical communicators’ tool sets.

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MAKING MACHINE TRANSLATION EASIER

- USING LANGUAGE SOFTWARE TO IDENTIFY GUI STRINGS

by
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In the last three decades, major companies have attempted to improve the comprehensibility of their technical publications by implementing various types of Controlled Language (CL). A CL places particular restraints on lexicon, grammar, and style to improve the clarity, consistency, and translatability of texts. More recently, software technologies have helped businesses make sure that their publications comply with CL standards. The best technologies have significantly reduced costs and time to market for businesses that publish information in multiple languages.

One of our customers has been using acrolinx CL software since 2005 to maximize the effectiveness of a third-party, rule-based Machine Translation (MT) system within its translation workflow. The acrolinx tool was fine-tuned to meet specific requirements with regard to style and terminology. Writers check their new XML topics using the acrolinx plug-in for the XMetal editor to make sure their documents comply with approved terminology, grammatical and stylistic rules. Before translating these topics, the localization department can examine reports to determine whether specific issues will affect the overall MT quality.

In this article, we look at one aspect of controlled authoring: the treatment of User Interface (UI) strings, which abound in the procedural sections of IT technical documentation.

UI strings encompass both Graphical User Interface (GUI) strings - which appear in Dialog boxes, Mouseovers, and so on - and text strings in non-graphical interfaces such as databases and older mainframe systems. "Strings" is a key word here because we are not merely dealing with sentences, or even words. They may include names

of software, field names, or messages from a program or operating system.

Here, we consider several challenges that UI strings pose for CL checking, focusing on GUI strings in particular. We first provide a broad overview of the issue and then explore two more specific strategies that can be used to detect GUI strings.

The Challenges of GUI Strings

Why do companies care about GUI strings? From an authoring perspective, GUI strings should match the strings that are present in the software itself. However, software is updated by developers on a regular basis, so it becomes difficult for technical writers to reflect the changes in their documentation. Typical discrepancies between software and documentation include capitalization, hyphenation, and spelling. And if writers do not extract GUI strings from their documentation to conduct regular cross-references with software strings, the discrepancies are bound to go uncorrected. This ultimately affects the end user's experience and subsequent translation process. From the end-user perspective, GUI strings are key conduits for communication, and users have to recognize GUI elements as GUI elements. And finally, CL checking needs to recognize GUI strings in order to analyze sentences correctly.

When our customer deployed their acrolinx software, their technical writers reported that grammar and style checking generated so-called "false alarms" - it mistakenly flagged items that were correct. They also reported translation problems because of the presence of GUI strings in source content.

For example, our customer uses a sentence-length rule that flags sentences of more than 25 words, since these sentences impede translatability. GUI strings presented a problem for this rule because long strings were handled as words:

On the Protection Manager Servers page, select the Main group in the View Servers pane and click Edit Group Properties to display the Settings dialog box.

If the controlled language checker does not deal specifically with the GUI strings, this sentence contains 27 separate words, or 2 words more than the rule limit. And it would be difficult to correct this sentence because the writer cannot merely shorten the GUI strings into one-word elements. The sentence is not too long. Rather, the GUI strings should each count as one word - for a total of 21 words in the sentence.

GUI strings also cause problems with grammar, style, and terminology checking. Sometimes these problems involve very basic issues. For example, GUI strings pose difficulties for identifying part of speech (POS), which is fundamental to the proper functioning of grammar rules. The grammar rule governing subject-verb agreement incorrectly triggered because of POS issues with GUI strings. As shown in the previous example, GUI strings can include verbs used in unusual positions - such as "View" following the article "the", or "Edit" following a verb. In both cases, the software may mistakenly identify the verbs as nouns. Ideally, GUI strings should be given only one POS assignment.

The acrolinx software also extracts term candidates from data. Here, GUI strings decreased the precision of the software significantly. The tool often suggested GUI strings - in a truncated form or with the following GUI object as part of the candidate term. However, GUI strings should be completely excluded from the term extraction.

From the translation or localization perspective, GUI strings have to be translated according to the translation found in a software glossary, as the following example illustrates:

To start the program, click Start.

The capitalized word "Start" should be translated with the phonetic Katakana characters "スタート" in Japanese, which are used to render foreign or technical words. Instead, it receives the more complicated Kanji translation "開始". On the other hand, if the MT system is not fine-tuned to handle GUI strings, the resulting translation output might be unusable, as shown in the following example in which a GUI string receives a literal translation in French:

Enter information in the Connect to a Media Server dialog box.

Écrivez l'information dans le connecter dans une boîte de dialogue de serveur multimedia.

Bottom line: All of these problems occur because the software tool does not identify the GUI strings or treat them as single entities. However, GUI strings - like UI strings more broadly - need to be handled as single units, whatever their length is. This approach presupposes that checking technologies can identify them as such.

TREATING GUI STRINGS AS SINGLE ENTITIES

At a gut level, it may seem strange to treat a GUI string like "Connect to a Media Server" as a single unit, since it clearly contains multiple words. But as we have seen, if we treat such strings as multi-word entities we encounter serious problems in the authoring, checking, and translating processes.

Two factors influence the ability of software to deal with GUI strings as single entities. First, **XML tagging** can help software identify GUI strings according to their contexts in XML documents. In the typical information development workflow described earlier, writers must ensure that their XML topics comply with a subset of the DocBook XML DTD. The full DocBook DTD contains various tags related to GUI strings: `guibutton`, `guiicon`, `guilabel`, `guimenu`, `guimenuitem`, and `guisubmenu`. Yet to date, the only tag in use has been `<guimenuitem>`, which sets off some of the GUI strings that end users interact with. The following example shows how a `guimenuitem` is rendered:

Click `<guimenuitem>` Yes `</guimenuitem>` to install the Enterprise edition.

■ Click Yes to install the Enterprise edition.

When this `<guimenuitem>` tag is present in the source text, both the acrolinx tool and an MT engine can be configured to handle it in a specific manner.

Second, **token classification** helps ensure that GUI strings are interpreted as single units. Linguistic software typically sorts text into so-called “tokens.” Usually tokens are words, but it can be useful to treat single units of meaning as single tokens, for example, in the case of “vice versa”, or for GUI strings. The software sorts tokens according to class, for example “Capital” belongs to the class “FirstCapitalWord” due to its initial capitalization, or “123” belongs to the token class “Number.” The software segments text into sentences and applies spelling, style, grammar, and terminology rules based on the token classes. It is therefore important to define GUI strings as one token so that they do not cause alarms for issues like sentence length or subject-verb agreement, which we discussed earlier.

GUI strings can be extracted from source documentation with a basic XPath expression (such as `//guimenuitem` or `//guilabel` if a DocBook DTD is used). However, untagged GUI items will not be extracted and, as a result, the CL checker will include them as sentence elements. A two-pronged strategy was pursued to deal with this issue.

A CUSTOMIZED SOLUTION BASED ON ACROLINX TECHNOLOGY

acrolinx software enables token classes to be defined based on what immediately precedes and follows a token. The goal was to create a special token class for GUI strings with an eye towards treating them as single units. This approach presupposed a relatively consistent use of GUI strings and a good knowledge of the syntactic context in which they might occur.

First, we decided to create a token class for GUI strings even where XML markup already existed, for the tag `<guimenuitem>` which discussed above. Doing so ensured that the tags received treatment at the core of the system. The tag `<guimenuitem>` is translated into the token “GuiMenuitem”, for example, which ensures that the GUI string is treated as a single entity.

The more significant challenge was to identify GUI strings where no markup existed. Here, an innovative approach was developed. To take one example: We created the token class name “GUIString” along with a rule that extracted GUI strings based on predictions about patterns in which they occur. In a first round of token classification, the sentence “Under Options, click OK” was given the following token classes:

```
Under      FirstCapitalWord
Options    FirstCapitalWord
,          Comma
click     LowerWord
OK        CapitalWord
```

But “Options” is actually a GUI string. The rule specified that “FirstCapitalWord” tokens preceded by “Under” and followed by a comma belong to the token class “GUIString.” As a result, “Options” is correctly categorized as a “GUIString” before CL checking and MT.

We have argued that companies, especially those operating on a global scale, need to deal with GUI strings because they profoundly affect the end-user experience. And, for a broad range of processes - authoring, CL checking, and translation - GUI strings present significant challenges. acrolinx centers its approach on a central insight: GUI strings need to be treated as single entities. Based on this insight, we developed two strategies for finding GUI strings and classifying them as units. The second strategy is particularly innovative because it attempts to deal with GUI strings that have no identifying markup. It offers the exciting possibility of enabling businesses to find their GUI strings even when working with less structured content.

ABOUT ACROLINX

acrolinx is market leader in quality assurance tools for professional information developers. These tools help companies worldwide to maintain their corporate image, address compliance issues, improve quality, and control document production and localization costs. Its flagship product, acrolinx IQ™, is used internationally by thousands of customers in a variety of industries, including software, automotive, life sciences, and aerospace. It has been deployed at global enterprises like SAP, Symantec, SAS, Philips, Adobe, Siemens, Motorola, and Bosch.

acrolinx maintains its headquarters in Berlin, Germany with a sales and support subsidiary in North America.

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Outlining a Translation Requirements Specification

by
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The success of a translation project depends on its preparation, and this includes the identification of service needs, and then a requirements specification.

A specification is defined by ASTM as an explicit set of requirements to be satisfied by a material, product, or service.

In a project, a (requirements) specification is a document providing an adequate and unambiguous description of the task load, together with a description of the desired results, the essential conditions to which the service must conform and the characteristics or features of each deliverable.

Its purpose is to present vendors with a clear, accurate and full description of the customer's needs, and so enable them to propose a solution to meet those needs, which subsequently become incorporated in the contract.

The specific goal of a good translation requirements specification (TRS) is to establish the basis for agreement between the customers and the vendors, to determine if the translation specified meets their needs, and help the vendor select the most appropriate resources and prepare a realistic schedule.

There is a lot of great stuff on the Web about writing

good specifications. The problem is not lack of knowledge about how to create a correctly formatted specification. The problem is what should go into the specification, especially a TRS.

If the request for proposal is the genesis of the client translation process, the TRS is the client tool to draw up the boundaries of the translation project, and establish a sound base for a positive working relationship to provide smooth operations allowing for cost effectiveness and respect of schedule.

TRS AND QUALITY

The ISO 9000 series of standards introduced the notion that quality is a relative concept, which makes sense only when compared to a set of specifications. Today, quality broadly corresponds to product suitability meaning that the product meets the user's requirements. To appraise quality in the sense of qualification to meet requirements, general criteria are necessary.

QA

To this end, a TRS should also include information for the vendor about the project assessment such as metrics and scorecards for quality assessment. The scorecard in particular is critical to track and justify the requirements, and should provide for

	Vendor 1			...			Vendor n		
Indicator	Score	Weight	Actual score	Score	Weight	Actual score	Score	Weight	Actual score
Total			Total actual score			Total actual score			Total actual score

- Criteria (key performance indicators)
- Weights (the mean used to resolve any differences in assessment)
- Measures (the scale unit for scoring, e.g. low/medium/high, 0-5)
- Scoring (ranking with respect to benchmarks)
- Comments

Criteria could cover the following:

- Specification adherence (e.g. none to full, 0-5)
- Meaning correspondence (rewriting required, e.g. none to full, 0-5)
- Naming conventions
- Terminology consistency
- Timing.

Quality expectations/thresholds should be specified together with the size and type of samples for inspections.

ELICITATION

Requirements are necessary also to determine what buyers and vendors find most important in the procurement process, and tailor requests and proposals respectively.

Gathering requirements is not always a straightforward task. On the other hand, if you can't collect requirements you don't know your client, and if you don't know your client you can hardly please him.

Gathering requirements involves interaction with the so-called information sources, individuals, organizations or documents, in most cases in the form of eliciting. Eliciting is active questioning to negotiate priorities, and define expectations. The focus should be on defining the customer's goals, and agreeing on ways to test whether the project meets those goals.

The LSP is the translation expert and should guide the buyer through the process by asking questions that are part of a checklist.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The TRS should be part of a translation kit and serve as a basis for the statement of work detailing "what is to be done."

Project requirements must be concise and straightforward to be read and followed. It is not bizarre that an experienced translator, typically willing to follow the instructions as close as pos-

sible, is annoyed by pages and pages of guidelines requiring a long time to read and possibly many readings during the job.

Be sure that the translators read and sign the TRS in the translation kit for approval, and fill all relevant items in the query sheet carefully after translation with the commonly used or fixed vocabularies/expressions. Have the query sheet sent back. This will help to refine the TRS for future use.

Refer to style guide for conventions in handling place names, person names and proper nouns, capitalization, and punctuation. Ask for translation to be spell-checked before delivery.

TRANSLATION PARAMETERS

Translation parameters come with the answers to the questions that should be asked, and form the actual set of specifications.

The basic issues that shall be addressed are the following:

- Languages and regional variations of the source text
- Languages and regional variations of the target text
- Subject matter
- Type of source text
- Purpose of the source text
- Purpose of the target text
- Intended audience of the source text
- Intended audience of the target text
- Culture-binding
- Adherence to target-language conventions
- Spatial and temporal correspondence
- Terminology and terminology management
- Use of controlled language
- Style and editorial guides
- Rewriting
- Format
- Encoding
- Reference materials
- Number of graphics
- Amount of text in graphics
- Translation technology
- Naming conventions

FURTHER (SUPPORT) INFORMATION

When available, further information should be passed over to the translators to allow them better fulfill their job:

- Origin of source text
- Author(s) of source text, with contact information
- Creation date of source text

SPECIFIED APART IN CONTRACT

If necessary, the following information can be detailed separately in contract:

- Importance (priority for the customer, e.g. low, medium and high)
- Data control and confidentiality
- Volume
- Method of computing volume
- Deliverables and deadlines
- Communication methods and procedures

- Medium and method of delivery
- Change management procedures
- Billing procedures
- Legal, ethical, and financial considerations
- General dispute-resolution procedures (e.g. storage, handling, and ownership of TM's, delays, quality of deliverables, etc.)

CONCLUSION

Just like the translation kit it belongs to, a TRS is never really done: it is an iterative document that reflects the plans and intentions of an organization as to translation. As those change, so must the TRS change. A (possibly Web-based) form could be arranged to store all details in a database for job tickets and facilitate periodic reviews to help shape the TRS.

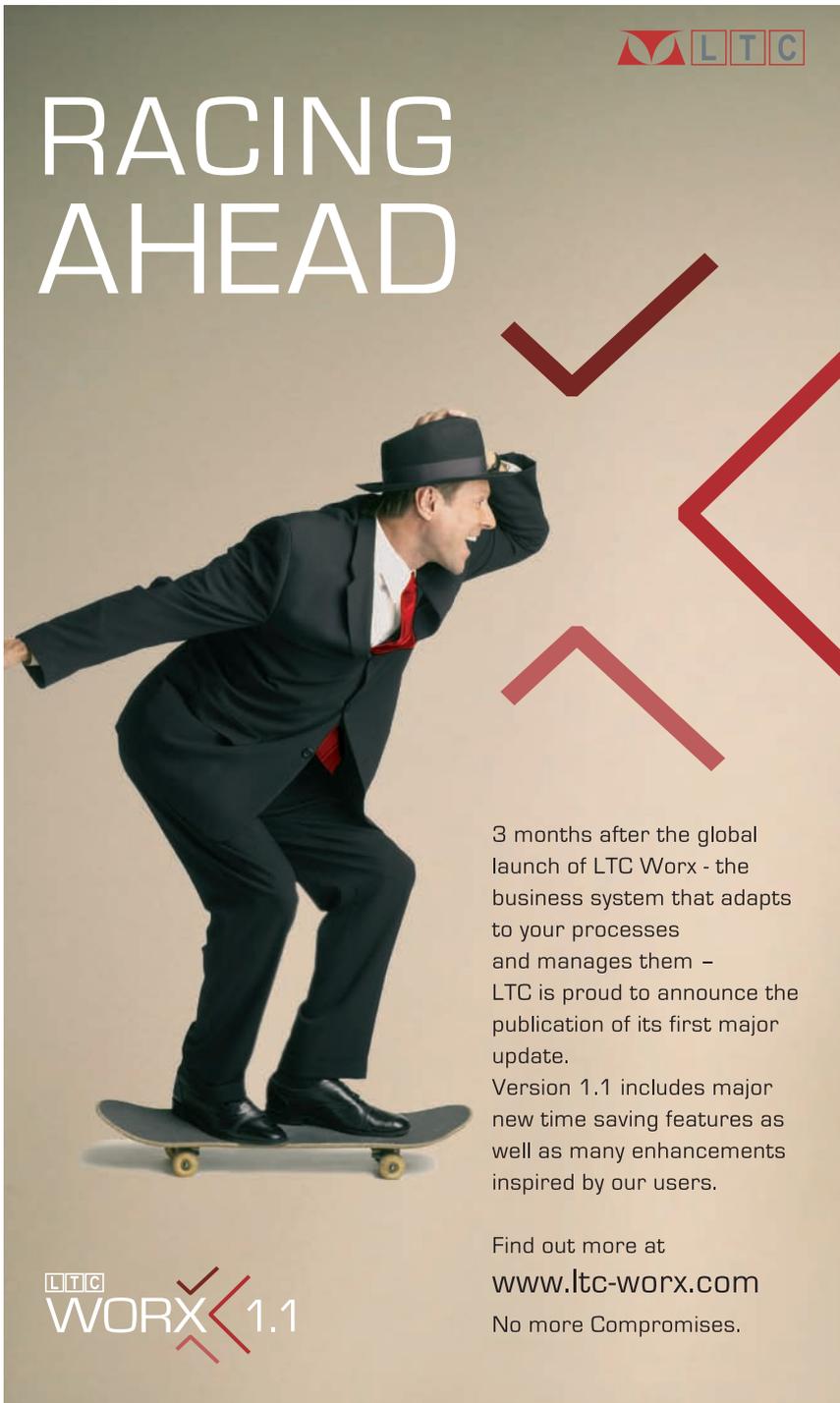
Thanks to Fiorenza Mileto for her invaluable comments.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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