# IP Translations
# Quality Management

When you, as an entrepreneur, decide to invest in foreign-language marketing, how can you be sure that…

- you will reach the objectives set for your company, even if you need to address your target audience in a foreign language?
- foreign-language users will be able to handle localised versions of your products with just as much confidence as users in your domestic market?
- your marketing efforts, ranging from your Internet presence via brochures to fair exhibits, will have the desired effect even in a foreign culture?
- your investments in the presence on a foreign market will really pay off?
- the appearance of your company on foreign-language markets will achieve the same high quality standards they have in your domestic market?

**Concisely: How can you make sure and check that the high quality level you try to achieve in localisation will effectively be reached?**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE** is the name of the game and it plays a key role in determining whether you will be successful in overcoming cultural and language barriers. Gains and losses - both in material and non-material aspects - depend on responsible handling of the localisation process.

**In this document we would like to inform you in a more detailed manner how we at IP Translations establish a high quality level and how we use efficient quality management to maintain those high standards.**

We have picked two essential components of successful localisation as examples:

- [Quality assurance - Your contribution is vital](#)

> The extensive exchange of information between IP Translations and its customers is one of the most important factors along the way to success.

- [Terminology maintenance - the key to high-quality localisation](#)

> The foundations for excellent results are laid long before the actual translation begins.

Follow us through this interesting discourse on mission-critical aspects of your localisation project and see for yourself

- how measures taken jointly by you, our business partner, and IP Translations lay the foundations for outstanding quality.
- how your contribution to the localisation process will lead to time and cost reductions.

## Optimising your marketing in foreign-language markets!

# QUALITY ASSURANCE -
# YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS VITAL
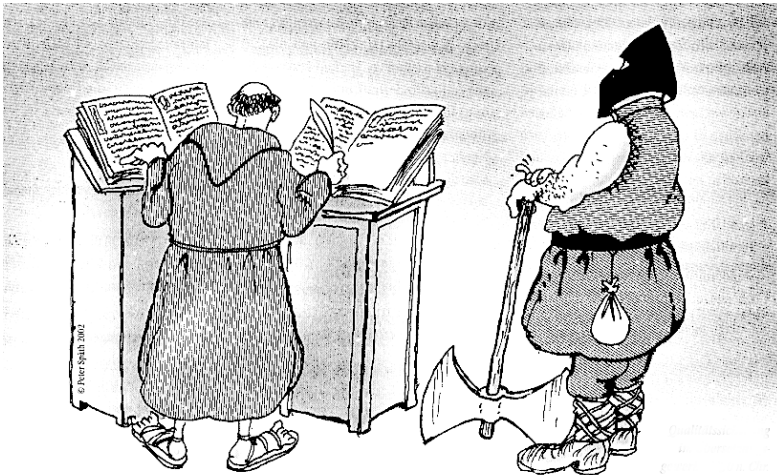


In the long history of translation many measures have been taken to ensure high-quality results. Not all of them comply to modern standards.

*Quality assurance in the translation profession a. d. 1230*

Source: MDÜ (Information Bulletin of the German Translators Association) 2/2002, p. 5

One of the basic requirements for a faultless translation is a correct understanding of the source text.

**YOU CAN ONLY TRANSLATE CORRECTLY WHAT YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD CORRECTLY**

Electronic media in general - and the Internet in particular - have given the translator access to an abundance of information and research possibilities. However, those methods are not always sufficient in making good a deficit in understanding, especially since every company speaks its own individual language. Accordingly, the most important information is provided by you, the customer.

**THE CUSTOMER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION SOURCE**

High-quality localisation results can never be achieved in isolation. Localisation is a process that demands very close co-operation between business partners.

Especially when localising software, help texts, and accompanying documentation, the translator must have grasped the underlying principles and functions, in order to be able to transfer the contents correctly and to give the target-language user flawless and trouble-free program usage.

## IP Translations therefore agrees with its business partners …

- that a qualified contact person be named on the customer's side who is in charge of answering questions concerning content, and of processing and efficiently escalating all kinds of information he/she may receive from IP Translations. The emerging flow of information in both directions will help overcome obstacles along the way to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter to be translated. This approach is an important prerequisite in guaranteeing correctness of content in the localisation process.

- that IP Translations will receive relevant reference material that helps us get a thorough understanding of the subject matter to be translated. This includes e. g.
    - demo and beta versions of programs
    - compiled help files
    - program documentation, either in the source language or, if available, previously localised older versions
    - functional or technical designs, material on related topics, meaningful marketing material

This way, the translator will be able to comprehend program features and to verify unclear terms in context.

## As a result…

By

- maintaining an extensive exchange of information and
- benefiting from the business partner's active contribution to the localisation process

two aims can be achieved simultaneously:

1. Improved translation quality by replacing speculation with verified, first-hand information.

2. Speedier performance through less research work results in cost reductions.

**We therefore rely on close co-operation and communication with our business partners - to make the common cause a veritable success.**

*But what is also important …*

A source text of high quality is an indispensable basis for a localisation result of the same high quality. If the source text is unclear, ambiguous, or inconsistent; if it contains poor wording or mistakes, then all the more effort is needed to produce a translation which compensates for all deficiencies. As a consequence, additional corrections and therefore more time will be required. Faulty descriptions or inadequacies that cannot be recognised in time will result in the company losing credibility among its users. What's more, shortcomings in the documentation may lead to lawsuits if they are the cause of material or personal damage. In the following section we want to show you how consistent terminology handling helps produce source texts that form a reliable and solid basis for translation - and just why the creation and maintenance of such a terminology that starts in the source language is of mission-critical importance.

# TERMINOLOGY MAINTENANCE -

## THE KEY TO HIGH-QUALITY LOCALISATION

What good are all efforts to make yourself heard, when people do not understand you?

**THE COMMITMENT TO TERMINOLOGY MAINTENANCE STARTS IN THE SOURCE LANGUAGE**

We mentioned this in the previous section: every company speaks it own individual language and this language embraces all areas, from the software's user interfaces through accompanying documentation to marketing material; indeed to every piece of information that the company places in the public domain.

In order to ensure smooth communication without misunderstandings, it is key that the same items are always denoted with the same words <u>and</u> that everyone involved adheres to this terminology, once it has been established.

**WHY IS THIS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN LOCALISATION?**

The way the source language is handled can already mean the risk of a considerable error source. The more inconsistent the use of terminology in the target language is, the higher the risk of inconsistent terminology use in the source language. Any deviating use of terms leads to ambiguousness and misunderstandings, in the worst case to operating errors. It is more time-consuming and costly to repair inconsistent and faulty terminology during the localisation process than to watch out for consistency and maintenance of the established standards right from the outset. The risk of inconsistent or even wrong terminology spreading and multiplying increases with the number of source languages and with the duration of the ongoing project. This applies especially when release upgrades are covered, for the problem is aggravated the longer a mistake that has been made is "dragged along".

We would like to give you some more detailed information about this topic in the following sections:

- The benefits of a consistent and binding terminology

- The Style Guide: binding rules reaching beyond terminology

- Central administration in a consistent format

- Permanent contact - the communications hub

- Terminology maintenance in practice

- Worthwhile investments

- This is also a part of quality assurance...

- A special focus on detail - quality management in IP Translations's organisation

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THE BENEFITS OF A CONSISTENT AND BINDING TERMINOLOGY

| Cause | Effect |
|---|---|
| | |
| Eradication of considerable error sources that lead to ambiguousness and misunderstandings | Achievement of higher quality through consistency<br>Avoidance of all negative consequences resulting from ambiguousness and misunderstandings |
| Avoidance of additional error correction when a considerable part of the translation has already been finished | Time and cost savings |
| Clear and concise wording from the consistent and transparent usage of terms | Enhanced reputation as a result of professional, sophisticated appearance |
| Reduced number of queries and/or operation errors following the unambiguous use of terms | Time and cost savings<br>Enhanced reputation |
| Shortening of the localisation process through more transparency | Creation of a competitive edge because of quicker time-to-market |

These mechanisms are effective both in the source and the target languages, i. e. the naming conventions established within a company structure need to be adhered to and consistently applied in the translation as well. This necessitates the introduction of a binding and consistent terminology in each of the target languages. It should be self-evident that the terms generated for the standard terminology - as well as their source language counterparts - need to be applied in all areas of localisation (software, help texts, external documentation, marketing publications, etc.) to make sure that the consistency aimed for can be established throughout and reflect a high quality level.

### ➔ If there is no existing terminology …

… IP Translations will, in co-operation with the business partner, devise an official source language terminology and then transfer it to the desired target languages. This terminology will constitute the very backbone of all future translations. In the creation of such a terminology, the business partner's input is once more exceedingly important in order to make sure the terms generated are unambiguous, unmistakable and to the point. Insight into the underlying programs and concepts is once more decisive for IP Translations. Only in this way do we get a solid basis for linguistic decisions when transferring the terminology into the target languages.

### ➔ If there is existing terminology …

… it may first of all be necessary to check it for consistency, linguistic correctness and adequacy; again in co-operation with the business partner. Such a complete revision is especially advisable before tackling release upgrades in order to make sure that irregularities which may have been discovered in previous releases are eradicated from the outset.
If country-specific modifications in the case of some languages necessitate additional terminology that does not exist in the source language, the terms additionally generated will be integrated in the respective target language terminology.

## The Style Guide: binding rules reaching beyond terminology

In this context, another component contributes to the maintenance of uniform language usage: the maintenance of a list of frequently occurring standard phrases for the documentation in the source and target languages. The standards necessary for terminology databases (as described above) also apply to such a **Style Guide**.

Maintenance of and adherence to a style guide lead to a significant increase in matches when using translation tools, for example with regard to so-called "fuzzy matches" which the computer can offer as possible translations following fuzzy searches in the underlying databases. Again, cost savings and an acceleration of the localisation process are the rewarding results.

**Consistent, recurrent phrases also bring about these advantages:**

- The flow of reading is improved, e. g. if examples or instructions for the user are always introduced by and/or worded with the same phrases. The user need not pay attention to the sentence structure or the choice of words, but can fully concentrate on the contents.

- This enables the user to learn more quickly and efficiently, he/she can grasp contents more rapidly and find his/her way through the documentation more safely.

- Characteristic phrases and a uniform overall structure of the documentation or of the help texts are an important feature of corporate identity and enhance the end-users' perception of the company.

## CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION IN A CONSISTENT FORMAT

For several reasons, it is recommended to store and maintain the established terminology at a central location, so that both the customer (programmers, product developers, technical writers, etc.) and IP Translations (project manager, language consultant, translators, etc.) can access it.

A centrally-maintained terminology database has the following advantages over several isolated, locally-stored copies:

**- All persons involved always use the same terminology**
**- All persons involved always have access to the most up-to-date version of the terminology**
**- Changes do not have to be inserted into several separately-maintained databases**

If there are locally-stored and separately-maintained terminology databases, there is a high risk that changes applied to database A will either not be incorporated into the other copies in time, or even not be incorporated at all. As a result, there will be different versions of the same terminology at any given time, which is a significant error source. Later corrections and modifications are time-consuming and costly, just like a continual comparison of separate local databases.

**The same is true for the localised terminologies.**

In this respect, it is important that modifications applied to the target language terminology are adopted for the localised versions as well.

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# PERMANENT CONTACT - THE COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Localisation can never be a one-way street in respect of terminology. In this field, too, your input is crucial. So how can you, as our business partner, contribute efficiently to the success of the localisation project by adhering to just a few yet decisive rules?

**Open a permanent communications channel by naming a permanent contact person for queries and consultations about**

1.  **clarifying content issues** (cf. section 1)

2.  **enabling smooth communication with regard to terminology**

**Why is a permanent, lasting contact person so important?**

⇒   He/she will help remove knowledge deficits, thereby guaranteeing a translation that is faithful to the meaning and correct in contents.

⇒   He/she actively supports the creation of a crisp, meaningful terminology, because he/she can discuss and exchange ideas both with IP Translations (for linguistic correctness) and with the customer's consultants, programmers and product managers (for the correctness of contents).

⇒   He/she knows when new terms are generated and when existing ones are changed, can insert them into the target language database and inform

> a.) IP Translations so that we can adjust the source language terminologies accordingly and make sure that the new or modified terms will be used in the further course of the project.

> b.) his/her colleagues so that they adhere to the new or modified terms in the future.

⇒   He/she knows about the entire project, knows its history, the workflows, the targets, the people involved. The confidence both sides gain from that fact and the feeling that both parties can rely on each other is an important factor on the path to successful project conclusion.

Considering this, it is advisable that IP Translations, too, names a project manager as a permanent contact person. The two persons appointed act as a central hub for different lines of communication. They collect and bundle a choir of different voices into a dialogue of two well-informed interlocutors.

# TERMINOLOGY MAINTENANCE IN PRACTICE

- To reach as high a degree of consistency as possible, it is advisable that the terminology be maintained by only a small number of persons, i. e. only a limited circle of users is authorised to add, change or delete terms in the database. Again, the customer's and IP Translations' project managers are responsible for co-ordinating database access.

- In a "best-case scenario", the original terminology composition is carried out by one person per language or by one on the customer's and one on IP Translations' side; in close co-operation and consultation. During subsequent translations, it is advisable that as small a number of people as possible - and ideally always the same persons - supervise terminology tasks. These should be the same persons that were originally given the task of setting up the terminology.

- If required, IP Translations will always put the newly-devised terminology at the customer's disposal for verification and modification. During an ongoing project, the customer's answer when verifying new terms should not be procrastinated, in order to avoid delays in the translation process. Too frequent modifications of single terms once established after linguistic and topical verification also lead to delays, an increased workload and inevitably to increased costs, especially during ongoing projects.

- Should a centralised terminology maintenance not be possible, a high degree of discipline is indispensable. In such a case it is especially important …

  **… that all existing local database copies are updated at the same time.**

  > Otherwise modifications will be applied to database A but not to database B.

  **… that all existing local database copies are updated with the same elements and to the same extent.**

  > Otherwise database A will be updated with the terms 1, 2 and 3, but database B only with the terms 1 and 2.

  **… that the same terms are at no point in time listed in different databases with different translations.**

  > Otherwise term 1 will be listed in database A with translation 1a, but in database B with translation 1b.

  **… that there are no duplicates, i. e. that the same term is not listed in the same database with different translations.**

  > Otherwise database A contains term 1 with the translations 1a and 1b.

  > Such duplicates may, however, be necessary if the same term requires different translations in different contexts. In that case, the database entry must be accompanied by concise information as to the correct usage of the different translations.

Those numerous error sources show that the splitting of terminology into separate, locally-maintained database copies opens the door to an abundance of uncertainties as well as to an increase in costs and maintenance tasks.

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## WORTHWHILE INVESTMENTS

Here is another way of considerable simplification, of cutting costs and increasing quality:

> **The same tools should be used throughout all translation and terminology maintenance processes.**

This guarantees a standardised and a more streamlined workflow and prevents compatibility conflicts caused by different file formats.

## THIS IS ALSO A PART OF QUALITY ASSURANCE …

- The translators commissioned by IP Translations always have the target language as their mother tongue.

- After every translation, we carry out a complete review, checking language usage (grammar, spelling, style), correctness of content, maintenance of terminology guidelines, formal requirements, appropriateness of expressions according to the text function, etc.

  - In an ideal case the review is performed by someone who did not do the translation him/herself, but is informed about all the requirements and has sufficient knowledge of the subject matter. If technically possible, a text should be printed for review and be read on paper, not on screen.
  - The review of documentation and help texts also includes checks to see whether internal and external links and cross-references still work just as well as they do in the target language version.
  - Software testing is another component of quality control: Have all strings been covered for translation? Do translated expressions fit on buttons, into column headings, into menus? Do all function keys and hotkeys still work as planned?
  - The same goes for a compiled help system: is it as operational in the target language as it is in the source language?

- Products already localised are never the starting point for a new translation; the original version (in the target language) always forms the basis for localisation tasks.

- A company's corporate identity must be preserved by a uniform appearance of the documentation, independent of the respective language, i. e. in all cases structures, logos, formats, fonts, etc. should be identical. A standardised language usage with consistent, characteristic terms and recurrent phrases is also part of the CI, because the user is familiar with the company's typical elements. In this respect, recommendations by IP Translations or the customer (e. g. from the marketing departments in countries where the target language is spoken) must nevertheless be taken into consideration. This applies for example to possible peculiarities with regard to tastes and appropriateness of elements in the target culture and which therefore necessitate adaptation.

**A thought in passing: What about partial localisations?**

If for example a documentation (maybe a shortened version of it) about a non-localised software is to be translated, a binding convention for the naming of screens, buttons, menu options, etc. must be found in order to

   a.) enable the user to identify all elements easily and unambiguously and
   b.) enable the user to fully grasp the meaning despite the fact that the software itself is not translated.

A possible strategy consists of taking over the target language terms into the documentation or the help texts unchanged and to add an explanatory translation in brackets whenever appropriate or necessary.

It may generally be said that a partial localisation always causes additional difficulties for the user in handling the software or the technical product. The same is true, for example, if the software's user interface and the accompanying user guides are translated, whereas the online help (which can be called up while working in the program) is not.

It is advisable to clear beforehand which components might be exempted from being localised and to consider whether the supposedly reduced workload is really worthwhile, or whether it may result in more laborious efforts than if a complete localisation were performed right from the beginning. At the same time, it is hard to quantify the harm done to the overall reputation of the company and its products when they appear on foreign markets with only a half-finished solution.

## A special focus on detail - quality management in IP Translations' organisation

- Regular backup of all operating data (e. g. on an external hard drive, on another computer, on CD-ROMs, etc.). In this respect, all data processing media are checked for damage or virus infection.

- Regular checks to see whether all material used in our work (software, hardware, means of communication, library, etc.) is still up to date and sufficiently meets the requirements.

- We ask for your feedback: Were you satisfied with our job? Let us have your comments, positive and negative criticism, since that is the only way for us to improve continuously.

- We also document possible weak points we get to know about through your criticism; this way we make sure that we recognise problem areas and set about eradicating them for the future. With your help, we try to pinpoint possible deficits and to take appropriate measures for remedy. In the further course of our work we put a special focus on reducing recognised deficits and check whether we are successful in our endeavours. Accordingly, this is another area in which co-operation with you, our business partner, is of great importance.

# Well, that was it!

We have reached the end of our little tour through the aspects of quality assurance. We thank you for your interest and are happy that we were able to show you how we at IP Translations

- achieve quality
    - assure quality
        - control quality