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Language | Technology | Business

June 2015



Focus: Games

Translation in Iceland



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MultiLingual

#152 Volume 26 Issue 4
June 2015

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on the web at www.multilingual.com



Events at a glance

Berlin, 3-5 June 2015



Making your conference plans for the new year? Visit our events page at www.multilingual.com/events to find conferences and workshops that cover language, internationalization, localization and global business. Use the search box to filter your findings. Have an event that you would like to list? Fill out the online form with your information and we will list it!

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Advancing science by overcoming language barriers



Abe Lederman, Darcy Katzman
MultiLingual 2015 April/May

Documenting endangered alphabet II: Art and activism



Tim Brookes
MultiLingual 2015 Mar

App localization: What developers should know



Matt Bramowicz
MultiLingual 2015 Jan/Feb

Evaluating quality in translation



Attila Görög
MultiLingual 2014 Dec

Language revitalization in the Pacific Northwest



Lori Thicke
MultiLingual 2014 Oct/Nov

xml.tm — a new approach to translating XML



Andrzej Zydor
MultiLingual 2014 Sept

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Internationalization & Unicode® Conference

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The Internationalization and Unicode® Conference (IUC) is the premier event covering the latest in industry standards and best practices for bringing software and Web applications to worldwide markets. This annual event focuses on software and Web globalization, bringing together internationalization experts, tools vendors, software implementers, and business and program managers from around the world. Expert practitioners and industry leaders present detailed recommendations for businesses looking to expand to new international markets and those seeking to improve time to market and cost-efficiency of supporting existing markets. Recent conferences have provided specific advice on designing software for European countries, Latin America, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and emerging markets.

This highly rated conference features excellent technical content, industry-tested recommendations and updates on the latest standards and technology. Subject areas include Web globalization, programming practices, endangered languages and un-encoded scripts, integrating with social networking software, and implementing mobile apps. This year's conference will also highlight new features in Unicode Version 7.0 and other relevant standards published this year.

Reasons to Attend Include:

- Tutorials and sessions for beginners, to train you and your staff on basic practices and implementation techniques for creating international software
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- Find help from tool and product vendors to get you to market quickly and cost-effectively

www.unicodeconference.org/ml

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For up-to-date information or to register:

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About the cover:

Painted hanging scroll of learned men playing a board game, Ming dynasty. From a series housed in the Shanghai Museum depicting 18 scholars, created by artist Du Jin (born 1456).

Katie Botkin



Inspiring the creative

The benefit of being an editor is that you're always reading something. With a bit of luck, it's something interesting or useful; if you're really lucky, it's both. The articles in this issue were both, from Kate Edwards' column on Gamergate to Mike Hedley's article on age ratings to Sarah Calek's overview of translation in Iceland. After reading these articles, I made actual changes to my own life, the most obvious of which was planning a trip to Iceland.

The second most obvious was spending my free time writing a satirical dating profile referencing gaming culture and age ratings as part of an ongoing social commentary project I started on relationships and reality. ("Hobbies: Trolling internet forums and YouTube videos... Describe your perfect first date: Lara Croft comes to life as a reward for me winning the game and thanks me for freeing her from her two-dimensional

prison. She shows her appreciation by doing Adult 18+ stuff to me... Then she asks me about my relationship with my father.")

Whenever anything work-related inspires me to greater creativity in my nonwork life, I take it as a good sign. So you can tell that I am extremely pleased with this particular collection of articles, to the point that I want to give copies of this issue to my nonlocalization friends as sort of an easy introduction to localization. Because, you know, most people have heard of video games, and it's easy to grasp the complexity of translating one to another language. We have a new column addressing this very thing, Scott Abel's "Content Matters," which in this case is an interview with localization voiceover expert Todd Resnick.

Within our industry there is always room for improvement, and Rolf Klischewski has written an explanation of how existing tools handle gaming texts, with suggestions for an ideal games localization tool. Chloe Swain addresses a topic we've never covered before: shutting down online communities, in this case international gaming communities. We have additional articles on machine translation and games, on games translation competitions, on how freelance translators can improve their relationships with translation agencies. There's more as well; as always, we crammed as much as we could into these pages to give you a wide range of learning opportunities and perspectives.

Learning about new things can be quite inspiring, at least for me. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I did. ✨

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Post Editing

Internet and opportunities in China discussed at LocWorld Shanghai

LocWorld27 took place in Shanghai, China, April 13-15, 2015. Focusing on "The Internet of Things," the conference was appropriately headlined by keynote speaker Kaiser Kuo, director of international communications at Chinese search engine Baidu.

Native to the United States with a background in journalism and music, Kuo has been in China since 1981. He spoke about Chinese attitudes toward technology and their "unapologetically bright futures." Kuo noted that "these days, in the US and in Europe, you don't see that kind of unalloyed optimism about the future." In the West, we don't have the same relationship

to progress we used to, said Kuo, and instead we tend to use scare quotes around "progress." A "sort of technological utopianism" is no longer native to the West, though it is in China. Kuo emphasized that bridging the gap between the tier 1 cities and more rural China can provide opportunities for innovation.

Kuo then looked at the failures many internet-based companies had experienced coming into China, putting much of the blame on localization gone wrong. He said he was "hard-pressed" to find an example of an American internet giant that succeed in China. Google was "fairly successful for awhile" in China, and had a brand "associated with some very attractive values" such as innovation and global connectedness. However, they lost ground to Baidu, even when they were allowed on the

Chinese internet by the Chinese government.

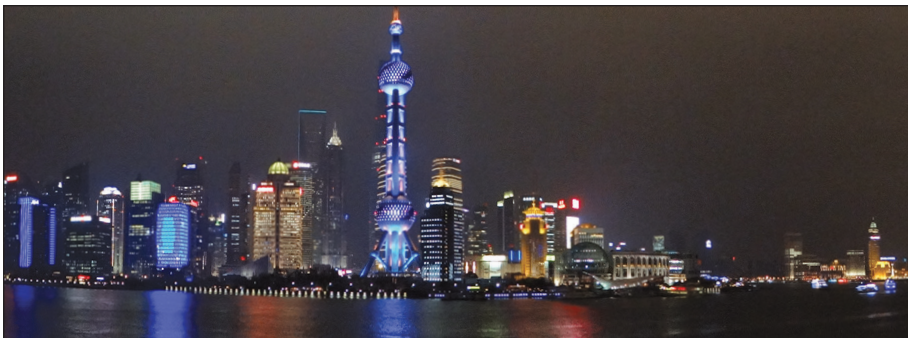
The Great Firewall of China may have been conceived as a way of protecting government interests, but the collateral was that it protected Chinese companies from international competition. However, this was not always the case. "Between the years 2002 and 2008, there was very little outside of China that was blocked by the Great Firewall," said Kuo. However, even so, international companies such as Twitter and Facebook lagged far behind local competitors. There were a few reasons for this – first, "US companies routinely underestimated their local competitors," and assigned managers to fight against "scrappy," well-funded entrepreneurs. They simultaneously "overestimated their market appeal" in China. They weren't so good at looking at their own organizations and seeing how crippling a long chain of command might be: the decision cycle was just too long.

A keynote panel on April 15 featured Ron Myers of microprocessing company AMD, Youyi Huang, the vice president of the Translators Association of China, and Bill Chen, the founder and director of Huawei Technologies. Huang pointed out that China is now the second largest economy in the world, and that by 2049, it may be twice as big as the US economy. Myers echoed Kuo's point about the opportunity for technological advancement in China, saying the internet cafes of tier 3 and tier 4 Chinese cities provided opportunities for gaming. He also mentioned the importance of good localization, saying AMD once had an ad campaign with the slogan "Never Settle," which was translated in various languages as "never get married," "don't sit down" and "get angry." So now AMD provides its localization partners with creative briefs to get the intent across through localization.

The conference included a variety of internet-themed presentations, including one by Anne-Marie Colliander Lind on making social media "rock." She emphasized that "for social media, you need to have a strategy. You can't just spray and pray." She stated that marketers need to know who they are targeting and for what purpose. "If you have three followers, and those are your three key prospects that you want to sell to, that's enough."



Clockwise from right: Attendees networking in the exhibit hall; sharing information; a preconference rountable; Shanghai by night; a 1920s-themed fashion show at the opening reception at the old-world Intercontinental Shanghai Ruijin; keynote speaker Kaiser Kuo.



TLC takes place in Warsaw

With a theme of "experts at work," the Translation and Localization Conference (TLC) took place in Warsaw March 27-28, 2015. The fourth conference in the series, TLC, together with the Polish conference held on March 29, attracted over 340 attendees from 35 countries and for the first time was held in the state-of-the-art ecofriendly Sound Garden Hotel.

This year, apart from presentations, workshops and debates, TLC included a range of networking sessions, from business group-work with dilemmas submitted beforehand by conference attendees, to TLC's first ever business drop-in, where a group of experts provided individual advice to conference participants. The networking dinner featured an acoustic guitar concert as well as a rich traditional Polish menu. With many attendees staying for the day after the conference, conference organizers also arranged a sightseeing tour around Warsaw.



A presentation at the fourth TLC.

Tetyana Struk, Linguistic Centre, owner/CEO.

Featured Reader Profile

How did you get started in this industry?

In 1997, I started the first private translation company in Western Ukraine. At that time the company consisted of two people who worked in a tiny office sharing one computer. I was 23, I had three small kids, I still had to finish my formal education and I had no idea how to run a translation business (or a business in general), but I believed that I could do it. I felt the delight of being a pioneer. Several years later this urge brought me to the localization industry. Armed at first with only a vague notion of localization, but with a strong desire to learn, my company was the first participant from Ukraine at many global industry events. I understood this was the industry for me — here I could do things for the first time on a regular basis!

How else do you participate in the industry?

I am proud to be part of the industry that makes Ukraine visible to the world. For ten years I have helped educate advocates of Ukrainian localization in academia, starting the first Localization and Translation Technologies programs, now scaling it up to the Vox Translatorium initiative,



Tetyana Struk

which makes transformational changes in academic training of translators. Strange as it may seem, this is such fun! I enjoy every moment, though it fills all the time I have left over from business and family.

Why do you read MultiLingual?

I understand the responsibility of shortening the learning curve and adopting only the best practices, because this knowledge also reshapes an educational landscape. *MultiLingual* has been a great support to me for many years. Information in every issue not only raises the level of my business, but directly influences the generation of new language professionals. Is there any other magazine in the world that can boast having such an effect?

Monterey Forum considers education

The fourth Monterey Forum was held March 28-29, 2015, at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California. The theme of the Monterey Forum 2015 was "Educating Translators, Interpreters and Localizers (TIL) in an Evolving World." Over 80 participants attended the forum from universities around the world. The 37 presentations at the forum focused on innovation in curriculum and syllabus design implemented in the physical or virtual classroom by educators around the world to address these new trends and challenges. The presenters also reflected on how advances in pedagogy and technology are shaping TIL education. Most of the presentations during the two-day forum were interpreted simultaneously into several languages taught at the Middlebury Institute, including English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Japanese, German, French and Russian.

The two keynote speakers at the forum presented new ideas for educating TIL professionals in the twenty-first century. Geoffrey S. Koby from Kent State University emphasized a need to relate translation process and product to translation pedagogy. He called for a balance between product-focused assessment and process-focused assessment.

Koby also discussed the various technical skills that can and must be taught in the translation curriculum, including file formats, computer-assisted translation tools, terminology management, subtitling and post-editing. Daniel Gile from Université Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle led the audience to rethink the traditional interpreter training approach and introduced new areas in interpreting research that might be of help in informing trainers. These include interpreting cognition, language use, quality expectations and perception, and the students' morale.

Other highlights of the Monterey Forum 2015 included a students' panel on navigating the path from the classroom to professional practice, a lunch panel on localizer education and continuing the industry-academia dialogue, and a directors' panel with five administrators of world-leading translation and interpretation programs sharing their ideas on meeting the challenges of educating TIL professionals.



Daniel Gile gives his keynote address at Monterey Forum 2015.



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Resources

Unicode CLDR 27

The Unicode Consortium has released CLDR Version 27. Updates include the cleanup of region locales and the addition of data for emoji annotations and an emoji collation.

The Unicode Consortium www.unicode.org

Financial

Gengo receives Series C funding

Gengo, Inc., a web-based human translation platform, has announced its \$5.4 million Series C round and a change of leadership. Matthew Romaine, previously CTO, is replacing fellow cofounder Robert Laing as CEO. The funding was led by Recruit, with participation from SBI Investments, MUFJ Capital and CrowdWorks.

Gengo, Inc. <http://gengo.com>

People

Recent industry hires

■ **Conversis**, a provider of language services, has hired Russell Goldsmith as director of Conversis corporate. Prior to joining the company, Goldsmith worked as an independent marketing consultant.
Conversis www.conversis.com

■ **Gemino GmbH**, a language services provider, has added Claudia Fricke to its customer service and consulting team. Fricke has more than 18 years of experience in customer relations.

Gemino GmbH www.gemino.de

■ **TOIN Corporation** has hired Terukazu Konishi as business development manager. Konishi has worked in the industry for almost two decades and will be based in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

TOIN Corporation www.to-in.com

■ **Paragon Language Services**, a translation provider focused on medical device and pharmaceutical companies, has promoted Maybelline Racca-Salazar to executive vice president.

Paragon Language Services
www.paragonls.com

■ **Localization Care**, a translation and localization agency specializing in the languages of the CEE and FIGS regions, has hired Natalia Grzywa as assistant project manager.

Localization Care <http://localizationcare.com>

■ **text&form GmbH**, a provider of language services, has hired Alfredo Spagna as senior business development manager. Spagna was head of the Finnish subsidiary of Arancho Doc.

text&form GmbH www.textform.com

■ **RoundTable Studio**, a provider of localization services for the Latin American market, has hired Craig Myers as

client engagement manager. Myers has more than 20 years of language industry experience.

RoundTable Studio, Inc.

www.roundtableinc.net

■ **SDL**, a provider of global customer experience management, has added several new staff. Kaarin Gordon is vice president of life sciences, Paul Barth is vice president of sales for language technology and Jessica Roland, Alison Toon and Peter Coleman are strategic account directors.

SDL www.sdl.com

Business

Oxford University Press acquires bab.la

Oxford University Press (OUP), home of Oxford Dictionaries, has announced its acquisition of the online language portal bab.la, a multilingual dictionary and translation website. OUP plans to maintain bab.la's offices in Hamburg, Germany.

bab.la GmbH <http://bab.la>

Automotive Translations

Automotive Translations is a new online translation service that employs specialist and trained automotive linguists to provide translation in over 50 languages.

Automotive Translation

www.automotivetranslation.eu

ForeignExchange now in Singapore

ForeignExchange Translations, Inc., specialized in medical translation, has opened a new office in Singapore. Anne Ertlé, in her thirteenth year with the company, has been appointed as managing director for Asia Pacific operations.

ForeignExchange Translations, Inc.

www.fxtrans.com

thebigword opens office in Italy

thebigword, a language services company, has opened an office in Modena, Italy. The new office will be led by Rocco Filomeno as sales director for Southern Europe, covering Italy, France and Spain.

thebigword www.thebigword.com

BeatBabel relocates headquarters

BeatBabel, a provider of translation, localization and training services, has moved to a new office location and redesigned its website.

BeatBabel www.beatbabel.com



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BTI Studios acquires Medi-Lan

BTI Studios, a provider of subtitling and dubbing services, has acquired Medi-Lan Ltd., a subtitling and dubbing company based in Hong Kong, with studios and subtitling units throughout Asia, including Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

BTI Studios www.btistudios.com

Medi-Lan Ltd. www.medi-lan.com

Products and Services

Plunet BusinessManager 6.1

Plunet GmbH, a provider of business management software for translation services and agencies, has released Plunet BusinessManager 6.1. The latest release features new functions in the areas of resource planning, order item management and the resource and customer portal.

Plunet GmbH www.plunet.com

Industry-specific language cloud platforms

SDL, a provider of global customer experience management, has introduced industry-specific language platforms, including language technology and services that are customized for the requirements of each of eight industries such as travel, life sciences and manufacturing.

SDL www.sdl.com

Memsource Cloud 4.10

Memsource, a developer of cloud translation software, has updated to Memsource Cloud 4.10. The new version features a completely redesigned project dashboard and the job metadata now includes information on the percentage of segments in which raw machine translation has been used.

Memsource www.memsource.com

TransTools 3.6

TransTools, a collection of tools for Microsoft platforms and AutoCAD, has introduced Correctomatic, a tool for correcting words and phrases in its release of version 3.6. The release also includes updates of several existing tools.

TransTools www.translatortools.net

KantanTemplates

KantanMT, a subscription-based machine translation service, has added KantanTemplates, a new feature for the creation of data-sets of bidirectional training data.

www.multilingual.com

When a template is changed, all engines based on that template will be modified and updated automatically.

KantanMT <http://kantanmt.com>

MateCat

MateCat, a web-based CAT tool designed to assist with the post-editing and outsourcing of translation projects, has officially launched. The tool is the result of a research project led by a consortium composed of the international research center FBK (Fondazione Bruno Kessler), Translated srl, the Université du Maine and the University of Edinburgh.

MateCat www.matecat.com

Net-Proxy

Net-Translators Ltd., a provider of translation and localization services, has created Net-Proxy, a cloud-based website translation management system that allows customers to continue managing and updating a source language website, while the management system manages all of the localized website content.

Net-Translators Ltd.

www.net-translators.com

Clients and Partners

Plunet partners with Human Touch Translations

Plunet GmbH, a provider of business management software for translation services and agencies, has partnered with Human Touch Translations (HTT), a provider of language services. HTT will use Plunet BusinessManager for the automation of its workflows.

Plunet GmbH www.plunet.com

Human Touch Translations, Ltd.

<https://humantouchtranslations.com>

Certifications

ADAPT Localization receives ISO/DIS 17100 certification

ADAPT Localization Services has been certified for ISO/DIS 17100:2013, a new international standard for translation companies.

ADAPT Localization Services

www.adapt-localization.com

MAart Agency ISO 17100 certified

MAart Agency Ltd., a language services provider, has been awarded ISO 17100 certification by Bureau Veritas.

MAart Agency Ltd. www.maart.pl

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May

TAUS Quality Evaluation Summit 2015

May 28, 2015, Dublin, Ireland.
TAUS, <https://events.taus.net/events/conferences/taus-qe-summit-2015>

Dutch National Translation Conference

May 29, 2015, Amersfoort, The Netherlands.
Teamwork, www.teamwork-vertaalworkshops.nl/events/evenement.php?id=99

14th International Tamil Internet Conference

May 30–June 1, 2015, Singapore.
INFITT, *UniSIM Campus of Singapore*
<http://home.infitt.org>

June

TAUS Industry Leaders Forum

June 1–2, 2015, Berlin, Germany.
TAUS, <https://events.taus.net/events/forums/taus-industry-leaders-forum-2015>

LocWorld28 Berlin

June 3–5, 2015, Berlin, Germany.
Localization World, Ltd., www.locworld.com

UA Europe 2015

June 4–5, 2015, Southampton, UK.
UA Europe, www.uaconference.eu

Postgraduate Conference in Translation and Interpreting

June 4–5, 2015, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Queen's University Belfast
<http://territoriesofunderstanding.wordpress.com>

ABRATES VI

June 5–7, 2015, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
Brazilian Association of Translators
www.congressoabrates.com.br

5th InterpretAmerica Summit

June 12–13, 2015, Monterey, California USA.
InterpretAmerica, LLC
www.interpretamerica.com/interpretamerica-summit-5-welcome

ProZ.com International Conference

June 13–14, 2015, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
ProZ, www.proz.com/conference/623

Localization unconference

June 18–19, 2015, Munich, Germany.
Localization unconference Team
<https://sites.google.com/site/localizationunconference>

TAO-CAT-2015

June 18–20, 2015, Angers, France.
Société française des traducteurs, www.tao2015.org

IJET-26

June 20–21, 2015, York, UK.
Japan Association of Translators, <http://ijet.jat.org>

Course: Introduction to Localization

June 22–August 21, 2015, Seattle, Washington USA.
UW Professional & Continuing Education, www.summer.washington.edu/courses-programs/summer-certificate-programs#hide3

Technical Communication Summit 2015

June 21–24, 2015, Columbus, Ohio USA.
Society for Technical Communication <http://summit.stc.org>

Translation Forum Russia

June 26–28, 2015, Moscow, Russia.
Business Bureau of the Association of Interpreters
<http://tconf.com>

NZSTI 2015

June 27–28, 2015, Wellington, New Zealand.
New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters
<http://nzsti-conference.org>

Game QA & Localization Europe

June 29–July 1, 2015, Barcelona, Spain.
IQPC, www.gameqaloc.com/europe

July

5th IATIS Conference

July 7–10, 2015, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.
International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies
www.iatis.org/index.php/iatis-belo-horizonte-conference

Workshop on Adaptive NLP at IJCAI

July 25–27, 2015, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence
<https://sites.google.com/site/adaptivenlp2015>

August

Course: Website Translation and Localization

August 7–9, 2015, online/Monterey, California USA.
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
www.miiis.edu/academics/short/translation-interpretation/website-translation

Course: Computer-Assisted Translation Course

August 11–14, 2015, Monterey, California USA.
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
www.miiis.edu/academics/short/translation-interpretation/computer-assisted

Integrating Multimodality in the Study of Dialogue Interpreting

August 31–September 1, 2015, Surrey, UK.
Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Surrey
www.ias.surrey.ac.uk/workshops/interpreting/index.php

September

IAPTI 2015 International Conference

September 5-6, 2015, Bordeaux, France.
International Association of Professional
Translators and Interpreters, www.iapti.org

Interspeech 2015

September 6-10, 2015, Dresden, Germany.
International Speech Communication Association
<http://interspeech2015.org>

Content Marketing World

September 8-11, 2015, Cleveland, Ohio USA.
Content Marketing Institute
<http://contentmarketingworld.com>

Errare 2015

September 11-13, 2015, Sinaia, Romania.
Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence of the
Romanian Academy, <http://errare2015.racai.ro>

ATC Annual Conference

September 24-25, 2015, Manchester, UK.
Association of Translation Companies
<http://atc.org.uk/conference>

DRONGO Language Festival

September 25-26, 2015, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
DRONGO, www.drongofestival.nl/?lang=en

European Day of Languages

September 26, 2015, Worldwide.
Council of Europe, European Union,
<http://edl.ecml.at/Home/tabid/1455/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Brand2Global

September 29-October 1, 2015, London, UK.
The Localization Institute, <http://brand2global.com>

Technical Communication UK

September 29-October 1, 2015, Glasgow, Scotland.
Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
www.technicalcommunicationuk.com

Information Development World

September 30-October 2, 2015, San Jose, California USA.
The Content Wrangler, Content Rules
www.etches.com/ehome/113382October

October

Elia Networking Days Krakow

October 1-3, 2015, Krakow, Poland.
European Language Industry Association, www.elia-association.org/Networking_Days/Networking_Days_Krakow

Course: Introduction to Localization

October 5-December 7, 2015, Seattle, Washington USA.

UW Professional & Continuing Education, www.pce.uw.edu/courses/localization-intro/downtown-seattle-autumn-2015

LTLS2-IA

October 6-7, 2015, Mashhad, Iran.
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, <http://ltls2.um.ac.ir>

CIJITI 2015

October 8-9, 2015, Guadalajara, Spain.
Department of Modern Philology, FITISPos Research Group -
University of Alcalá, www3.uah.es/jovenesinvestigadores/home.html

TriKonf 2015

October 9-11, 2015, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.
The Alexandria Library, <http://trikonf.com>

TAUS Annual Conference

October 12-13, 2015, Santa Clara, California USA.
TAUS, <https://events.taus.net/events/conferences/taus-annual-conference-2015>

LocWorld29 Silicon Valley

October 14-16, 2015, Santa Clara, California USA.
Localization World, Ltd., www.locworld.com

LavaCon Conference on Content Strategy and TechComm Management

October 18-21, 2015, New Orleans, Louisiana USA.
LavaCon, <http://lavacon.org/2015>

39th Internationalization & Unicode Conference (IUC39)

October 26-28, 2015, Santa Clara, California USA.
Object Management Group, www.unicodeconference.org

Translating Europe Forum

October 29-30, 2015, Brussels, Belgium.
European Commission, DGT, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/translating_europe/index_en.htm

3rd International Translation Technology Terminology Conference

October 29-30, 2015, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
lolar, www.ttt-conference.com

METM15

October 29-31, 2015, Coimbra, Portugal.
Mediterranean Editors and Translators, www.metmeetings.org

MT Summit XV

October 30-November 3, 2015, Miami, Florida USA.
Association for Machine Translation in the Americas
www.amtaweb.org/mt-summit-xv

November

56th ATA Conference

November 4-7, 2015, Miami, Florida USA.
American Translators Association, www.atanet.org/conf/2015



The wages of translation

Raising the minimum wage could be America's ticket out of poverty, or that's what proponents of the politic are saying, while opponents claim minimum wage increases merely move the bar on what poverty means without improving conditions for those living in it. This is the debate the United States started having long before federal minimum wage requirements entered law with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA). Almost 100 years of debate, and still humanity can't agree on how much those who take the jobs the rest of us don't want deserve to be paid for them.

In his 2014 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama proposed raising the federal minimum wage from its current \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10. A year later, after the change hadn't happened, he told Congress, "If you truly believe you could work full-time and support a family on less than \$15,000 a year, try it."

Whether or not Congress can agree on the appropriate amount for the minimum wage today, I hope we all would agree the conditions that prompted the FLSA — Dust Bowl images of Ma and Pa Joad having to hand their full earnings straight back to the company store — needed change. The United States was coming off the Great Depression, and if

you've ever read John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, you know just how depressing working in America at the time could be. Since the birth of minimum wage, the idea of a living wage has now risen, with many government requests for proposals (RFPs) requiring respondents to sign affidavits affirming that they don't just pay the minimum wage, but that they pay at least a higher, living wage instead. Compared to the minimum wage, a living wage is based on what a person needs to, well, live. And while how we each define life may vary, what this means in a legal and economic construct is the ability to pay for basics — food, water, shelter. The fact that the minimum is lower than living is morally appalling to many. But as Steinbeck himself wrote, "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do."

And requiring a minimum wage is something governments do all around the world. There are 193 members of the United Nations, and while the way these wages are structured varies widely, 192 of those members do have federally-mandated minimum wage requirements in place.

We here in the United States should not be ones to complain about obnoxiously varying government structures. As I mentioned earlier, our federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. And that's exactly what you'll earn per hour at a minimum wage job in my home state of Kentucky. Come to the District of Columbia, though, where I now live, and minimum wage is \$9.50, the highest in the nation. In Wyoming and Georgia, though, it's only \$5.15. Don't ask me how this can be lower than the federal rate — even I, an American, don't understand. It just is.

Granted, while none of us like to think about the negative results of one job paying more than another, as a people we

Terena Bell recently sold her translation company, In Every Language.

consider the positive results a virtue. Why, of course the boss should make more than the bossed. She has more stress. Why, of course a salesperson should make more than a project manager. He brings in the revenue. Why, of course I should make more than you do. I'm smarter and work harder. All these "of courses" become a mighty slippery slope, which together come down to one thing: everyone wants their due. Find a story in the Bible full of angry people, and it's Christ's Parable of the Vineyard, where regardless of what time the farm laborers began, at the end of the day the vineyard owner paid them all the same amount. It's human nature to want more if you do more work.

Perhaps this is why we never think about minimum wage when it comes to translation — because you get paid for exactly what you do. Translation, after all, isn't billed by the hour, it's billed by the word. The construct allows translation purchasers and sellers to pretend time is analogous. In fact, the translator community advises precisely that: the new translators determining what to charge should continue the per word model and, as translator Corinne McKay blogs, "figure out how many hours [they] want to work... Then convert that into an hourly rate, figure out how fast [they] usually translate, and that will yield [their] target per-word rate." McKay isn't the only one with similar advice online, and at American Translators Association conferences you'll also hear the same from hundreds of other freelance translation leaders. We agree to work by the word, but at the end of the day, the reality is that translators still have to make so much an hour, just like everyone else.

But is this per hour above the minimum wage? According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 10% of translators and interpreters in the United States make under \$23,570 a year. Assuming a 40-hour workweek, that's \$11.33 an hour. This is above minimum wage (\$7.25), but it is below the living wage that translation companies pledge to abide by when

submitting bids to federal, state and municipal governments.

The trick about Bureau of Labor figures, though, is that it takes all sorts of translators and interpreters into account when developing its \$45,430 per year (or, \$21.84 per hour) average — in-house freelance; higher-priced languages, lower-priced languages; even those who translate for the government itself. But when we think about wages for the type of translators most *MultiLingual* readers work with, we're looking at a very specific subset of this data: The freelancer. What does she make?

An even better question — and the answer to the question I just asked — is what do clients pay for translation? Those of us on the language services provider (LSP) side have long felt the pressure declining rates has put on our industry. It's understandable. Client costs have gone up in other areas, tech disruption has lowered the cost of business in other industries, and translation must compete and compare to the realities of a modern business budget. As Steinbeck put it, companies "breathe profits; they eat the interest on money. If they don't get it, they die the way you die without air, without side-meat." Economics are real for our clients, especially those in medical devices who have more taxes and regulation costs levied against them than ever before. And when companies like One Hour Translation and Gengo sell translation to them at \$0.14 a word, what were perfectly reasonable average rates of \$0.24 a word suddenly look like a rip-off, even if they're not.

What you get for a bottom-base-price is an entirely different article, but the point I want to make is that what you don't get is a whole lot of money to pay people with. Take a cent or two away for marketing and sales costs. Pull another cent off of that for other overhead, like keeping the lights going and the server humming and the phone line turned on. Give two more cents to the government in taxes, and suddenly you're left with \$0.09 a word — before leverage discounting, mind you — that must be

used to pay four people or more: the translator, the proofreader, the project manager and the CEO. The percentages these four receive are certainly not equal, but just to make the math easy we'll divide \$0.09 by 4. That's \$0.0225 a word — again, all before leverage. With the average translator translating 2,000 to 3,000 words daily, that's \$5.63 to \$8.44 an hour. And suddenly you are below the minimum wage — and again, that's not even reducing yet for leverage discounts.

Of course, leverage discounts mean available translation memory, which translates into the ability to process more words an hour. But as the rate for these new words can be discounted by as much as 90%, the difference may just be a break even. Which is better for the wage earner: To translate 100 words at .10 a word or 1000 at .01?

Of course, part of how One Hour Translation, Gengo and other companies that charge lower rates do so is by automating project management. By cutting out the project manager, this is one less person needing to be paid from the pie. Whether that means more money for the actual translator in the end, though, is a question only they can answer. And also to these companies' credit, many also contract with translators in countries where a dollar goes a whole lot further. Minimum wage in the District of Columbia is higher than it is in Kentucky for a reason: it costs more to live in DC. But I can't shake the feeling that their translators could make more money, well, making shakes at the drive-thru. And ethically, I just have a problem with that.

I get that clients need to balance budgets, and I get that we as an industry need to find better ways of doing this in order to bring those prices down, but I don't get how certain clients and LSP owners can agree with Obama socially, saying the working man deserves more, then go into work the next morning and pay their translators so little. At some point you have to do the math and think. But the danger of that, as Steinbeck warned, is "You're bound to get ideas if you go thinkin' about stuff." **M**

Be positive and don't go broke



When businesses run out of cash, their relationships become tense. Buyers experience a decline in translation quality, less responsive project managers and more aggressive sales people. Here is how you can tell if a vendor is just experiencing performance issues or is in fact about to go out of business.

Take what happened to AlpNet, which was the second largest provider of translation services in the year 2000. At the time, the company was at the bleeding edge of localization practice and technology. Its vision of the future of localization was very close to the newest cloud applications that are available only today. In short, AlpNet was one of the hottest localization companies at the time.

Then money became scarce. AlpNet lost \$5 on every \$100 it earned in 2000. By the end of September 2001, it lost twice that number: \$10 per \$100 of revenue. AlpNet burned its cash at hand fast, going from \$3.37 million in cash down to \$563,000 a year later. Three and a half months later, AlpNet was acquired by SDL. Michael Eichner, then chairman of AlpNet, cited as the main reasons for the transaction: "financial condition and continuing cash shortage."

Interestingly, SDL also lost money in 2001, but only about \$2.1 million. And a year later it reduced the debt that it acquired from AlpNet from about \$11 million to \$3.1 million. By the end of year 2014, SDL had sold about \$403 million in technology and services, generated a profit of \$14.5 million and held \$23 million cash at hand.

The main lesson from this story is that money matters. SDL

did not grow only because of its services, technology or vision. AlpNet did not go broke because of its offerings. The difference between success and failure lies in how the companies managed their money. To be fair, the worldwide financial crisis at the beginning of the century made it easy for an innovative localization company to struggle. First the East Asian financial crisis hit in July 1997. The ruble crisis followed in August 1998. Then the stock markets in the Western world crashed in April 2000 and bottomed out only in October 2002. Many financial assumptions from the 1990 dot-com era simply stopped working. Localization professionals were still figuring out how to grow a translation business from a family business to a global organization.

Today, the dependency between financial management and success in localization is clear. For example, customers found it difficult to buy services and technologies from multiple disconnected SDL business units between 2010 and 2013. Employee ratings of the company on the anonymous review site Glassdoor were often negative during that time. The year 2013 was particularly difficult when SDL restructured its operations and lost about \$37.8 million.

Then, by the end of 2014, the company made a profit of about \$14.6 million and employees commenting on Glassdoor attested 83% approval of SDL CEO Mark Lancaster. Now 69% would refer the company to a friend. That's the magic of positive cash flow at its best.

Performance or financial trouble

Cash flow planning can be very cumbersome and difficult. It's not trivial, and the bigger the company you are assessing, the

Andrew Lawless is the president and founder of Rockant, which focuses on localization training and consulting. He is focused on inspiring and priming localization professionals for success.

more complex it becomes. It is also true that you do not need to be an accountant or financial controller to get a basic idea of where a company stands. Two numbers reveal the picture:

- *Cash coming in the next 90 days*
- *Cash going out in the next 90 days*

You want to make sure that more money is coming in than is going out, at all times. To calculate incoming cash, determine the average amount of money that comes into the company's bank account every day. From the balance sheet take the number in Accounts Receivable and divide it by your company's average collection period, explained in the April/May issue of *MultiLingual*. Now multiply the amount of cash in per day by calendar 90 days.

$$\text{Average direct cost per day} = \frac{\text{Accounts Receivable}}{\text{Average Collection Period}} \times 90$$

To calculate outgoing cash, determine how much money the company will spend in the next 90 days. Be as precise as you can be. Include payments to vendors, salaries, sales commissions, interest payments, taxes, operational cost and anything else that needs to get paid. If you do not have access to this data, summarize all cost items that you can find on the company's profit and loss statement for the last three months and make an educated guess. Understand that your analysis will only be as good as your guess.

To analyze cash flow, subtract the amount of cash that will be coming in over the next 90 days by the amount of cash that will be going out during the same period:

$$\text{Cash Flow} = \text{incoming cash in next 90 days} \\ - \text{outgoing cash in next 90 days}$$

If the number is positive, you are in good shape. If it is negative, the company will need to make adjustments fast. For example, they can pay vendors later than usual, so that less money leaves the bank. They can also take a loan, reduce employees' salaries, defer sales commission payments, lay off employees, chase late payments or call up customers and ask them to pay faster.

Larger companies often deal with more complexities, such as depreciation and amortization or the effect of exchange rates. Determining cash flow from the outside without detailed data can be hard.

In Alpnet's case, however, the situation was evident. A quick calculation based on their public financial report for the third quarter in 2001 revealed that the company was likely to run completely out of cash before the end of the year. Alpnet paid out about \$135,000 per day and expected only \$8.8 million in cash income during the last quarter. This left them with 65 days before cash would run out. On December 13, 2001 Alpnet and SDL announced their merger agreement. **M**



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The importance of the human voice in multilingual content



Todd Resnick is a Los Angeles native and his companies, Todd Resnick Interactive Group and The Voice Company, both provide voiceover and language conversion services across the globe in 70+ languages, leveraging the creativity of over 4,000 voice talents. Resnick has been involved in film, television and online production for over 20 years. Here, Scott Abel interviews Todd Resnick about the need for fidelity in voice across cultures in television, movies, video games and other media.



Todd Resnick,
Resnick Interactive
Group and The Voice
Company.

Abel: Todd, thanks for agreeing to help our readers understand the intricacies of working with human voices in modern communication channels such as audio, video, interactive content and games. How did you find your way to the voiceover industry?

Resnick: I've been in love with voice since I was a child. I could often be found glued to the radio listening to the colorful commentary of Vin Scully during Los Angeles Dodgers baseball games. I fell in love with the medium. And to this day, it is the most intimate and memorable format of knowledge transfer that I know of.

As I grew older, I found that I loved audio. I loved the mechanisms and the engineering in the intricacies of what goes into recreating something that we take for granted. Sound — and especially voice — is really our first sense. We're very attuned to it as human beings and when it is done wrong, it's glaringly obvious. I've spent my life driving myself nuts trying to make it sound perfect.

Abel: At its most basic, what is voiceover and why is it needed?

Resnick: Voiceover is the spoken word applied to media. It's Morgan Freeman narrating a nature show on television. It's Liam Neeson or Jonah Hill in *The Lego Movie*. However, it's also internal training and outside sales initiatives. It's video games and commercials.

It's needed because we as humans have not come up with a

better way to communicate. When you speak to someone in their native tongue, it is the most familiar way to hold their attention.

Abel: What types of projects require voiceover?

Resnick: Well, movies and TV are obvious projects that require voiceover. Hollywood — perhaps more than some other industry sectors — understands the importance of voice and its effectiveness in communication. But there are many voiceover projects in the commercial arena. Precise spoken-word brand messaging, regardless of the brand, is critical to effective market penetration. In fact, you might be surprised at how many innovative brands recognize the importance of voice in both external (customer facing) and internal (employee and partner facing) projects.

So while some people may see voiceover as limited to entertainment, it's much more than that today. Voice plays a critical role in regulatory compliance, human resources training, eLearning, sales and support, technical support, voicemail phone menus, you name it. If you think about how many times we use or repeat our own voice on a daily basis, you start to understand how effective it is. When it's done with precision and with professional quality, people absorb it. When it's done wrong, people repel from it.

Abel: Stories are great ways to help others understand complex topics. Can you share a story of a video voiceover project that is global in nature and would help our audience understand why a brand might want to control the voice of a character across geographic regions?

Resnick: Our engaged voice, the voice we use when we share a story with friends or coworkers, or the voice we use when we reluctantly play dolls with our little girls, is something that we have each developed a character for. We use it to share stories and to engage our audiences. We have to maintain that character's

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The voices for characters such as Barbie should be appropriate across languages.

voice fidelity or the audience isn't going to buy it.

For example, I broke character while I was playing the voice of a teddy bear in front of a six-year-old child. The look on her face said it all. As soon as I broke out of character, she looked at me with disappointment. It was like the first lie she ever heard. And the lie came from me as a result of me failing to maintain a consistent character and tone of voice.

I reference that because we do work for some major toy brands. One day I was coming out of a strategy meeting and I overheard the client discussing the German voice talent for Barbie, the world famous doll from Mattel. Her voiceover sounded way too old for her character. It just wasn't believable. Sure, the words were translated and read aloud accurately, but the voice just didn't sell. Fans of Barbie would detect the older, inappropriate voice. What was needed was a youthful and cheerful German voice. So that's what we did. Voice is about the customer and whether or not they'll believe and consume our content.

Abel: How do you cast voiceover talent?

Resnick: It is a complex process for a seemingly simple problem. The reason being is that once content creators are put in front of real quality sound and talent, they become as obsessed with it as we are. The steps are simple.

We engage talent agencies and announce the positions we have open across social media. Depending on the length, audience, media, character count, number of languages and delivery formats, we might need anywhere from six to 600 voices. We go through a detailed process and pare down the candidates to a select few, debate, moan and groan, make a decision, present for approval and repeat.

Being in Los Angeles, we have an enviable talent pool. We're spoiled with

people who take their careers with voice seriously, and it shows. We look and listen for so many things: tone, diction, speed, accuracy, experience, microphone time, personality, depth, warmth. In the end, they have to sell the character and engage the audience. You know it when you hear it. The great thing is that we can offer the same talents we use for film and TV and turn around and use them for a human resources training video for a Fortune 500 company. When it works, and it's done well, everything falls into place.

Abel: Nearly everyone has the ability to record audio, why do companies need professional voiceover recording services?

Resnick: When Jack Nicholson was asked why he was so good and why he was always getting awards for his performances, his answer, delivered with his magnanimous

tone, was that anybody could do what he does, but doing it well was the hard part. I find that to be the case with almost everything. You get what you pay for. It's so obvious when it is done right and it's even more obvious when it is done wrong.

Additionally, when thinking about voiceover, you have to develop a character and enforce consistency across every touchpoint. Once you realize how much needs to be voiced, you want the same fidelity across all of it. You can't get that quality sound with a USB mic, a laptop and a closet. Bedroom vendors are not capable of delivering the quality many brands require. Successful voiceover providers run their businesses with well-oiled processes, they have decades of recording expertise, and they have the infrastructure and expertise to get the job done right.

Abel: It's no secret. Video games are a hot commodity. By this time next year, PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates the global gaming entertainment market will generate just over two trillion dollars in sales. Trillions! That's big money. But it's also a global market, and global products require localization. Can you talk to us about the specific localization needs that video games might require that are different than other types of content?

Resnick: Video games are some of the most fun and arguably the most difficult products to localize. When you see the

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visual environments and understand the characters and storylines that the publishers are coming up with, it's just phenomenal. Matching those completely artificial elements, created from nothing but code, with the right sound and human voice is extremely challenging. Game developers are getting close to photorealism in the games they develop today, but we, as humans, can still easily find fault with the visual representations. When you attach the amazing sound design and the appropriate voice to the characters and their environment, it seals the deal. But, when the voiceover isn't of the same quality as the visuals or when it just doesn't sound right, our ears override our vision. Success in localizing video games involves being able to provide superior graphics, sound and voice. Without all three, you fail.

The actors who offer game localization voiceover are a different breed. They come out of the booth and they are exhausted. The intensity of most games is extremely high; it's designed to keep the player intimately involved and engaged. The efforts required of the actors go beyond voice. They have to work themselves into whichever frenzy is on the screen. They have to become the characters and feel the intensity.

Since games are moving closer to reality, game developers also have to be cognizant of the market territory they are

releasing the game into. The vernacular, the accents, the wording, the translation and the performance have to be surgically precise. We work very closely with the developers to ensure that the experience fidelity is kept intact.

Video games are fictional beasts, completely made up, invented and wrought into reality by code jockeys. Games must be appropriately localized from beginning to end for every target culture and locale. Developers have to think about this fact from the get-go. They have to design their products to be localized. Their efforts can oftentimes serve as a blueprint for how every company should be strategically thinking about any product they plan to sell around the globe.

Abel: Deepak Chopra once said, "You have to think of your brand as a kind of myth. A myth is a compelling story that is archetypal, if you know the teachings of Carl Jung. It has to have emotional content and all the themes of a great story: mystery, magic, adventure, intrigue, conflicts, contradiction, paradox." Although all of these characteristics aren't inherent in every video game, most successful video games have these characteristics. But video game developers don't often start with a story, instead, they start with visuals. How does this fact impact voiceover work?

Resnick: Wow, we are getting deep! I think we all come at art differently. Some

of us are visual. Some of us are tactile. We are all auditory. You know how I feel about voice. It is the one thing we cannot fool. We have to sell the story with voice. If the visuals are as compelling as the story or if the story is as engaging without the finished, rendered elements, then we have what we need. We have to have one or the other. Amazing things are created from paint, a brush and a medium. If you take the paint out of that scenario, you are just cleaning something.

Abel: So there are clearly differences in voiceover localization from medium to medium. Are there differences between similar mediums? If so, what are they?

Resnick: There are definitely differences in the similarities. The problems that come with production are voluminous. Deadlines, contracts, morality and what is "reasonable" across cultures to name a few. Sometimes, we are downstream from other vendors and we can't do our part until they finish theirs. The sooner they get to us, the better. However, once it gets to us, we shake everything out and get to work on whatever the problem is. Most if not all of the actual casting and recording fundamentals we use are valuable across the product spectrum. But, I believe our expertise in entertainment products plays a large role in our ability to drive value into other types of nonentertainment products.

Abel: Some companies looking for video localization might seek out translation companies for voiceover services. But most translation firms don't offer this service. Why do you think this is?

Resnick: It's tough enough to find competent translation resources. Trying to find people who can read, write and speak in the target language is difficult. Finding talents who can speak well, with or without an accent, or perform in full character is even more challenging.

Translation firms seldom have the expertise and back-of-the-house talent to record and process voice, nor do they normally have the appropriate facilities. That's why professional voiceover services companies usually partner with translation firms. It's a two-way relationship. We pass translation and localization jobs to them, and they pass voiceover work to us. It's a symbiotic relationship. At the end of the day, businesses need specialists. The downside of not using a specialist is failure.

Abel: I've heard you say that you always try to film the work you do for clients.


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What is the intent behind this effort?

Resnick: We're big fans of data. The more you have, the more you can process and use to make future business decisions. We use video recordings of our work for product fidelity, performance archive, and anthology. It is something that is frequently ordered for our theatrical "behind the scenes" work. It doesn't cost anything anymore with digital, so we use it for production post-mortem with our team. We can always improve our work and documenting it and reviewing it later helps us spot things we can improve upon in the future. Also, sometimes it's nice to give our clients some additional footage of their projects being created. Other times, we use video recordings of our projects for a sales effort or to demonstrate our processes. Proof of concept isn't really a challenge any longer, but we do find new ways to do what we do so videotaping helps to transmit that message through engaging videos.

Abel: You've got some amazing clients and have been able to work on some pretty cool projects. Can you talk to us a bit about your work with the Agatha Christie franchise?

Resnick: I remember very little about the stories on this project because I was mystified by David Suchet. He famously plays Detective Poirot from her novels, and what a masterful character he is. I don't believe I told David to do or say anything differently. He had been working on Agatha titles for 30 years before I met him, so how do you voice direct a guy like this? "Umm, Mr. Suchet. That was perfect. Can you do one more for safety?" He was a gentleman and taught me a lot about tempo with voice work. He also would not travel out of the UK because his son was in the armed services and if he came home without notice, David wanted to be there. I believe we have some cool videos on our site of his interviews at the studio we used in London.

Abel: You recently picked up a project from the folks at Amazon.com. It's one of my favorite internet television shows, *Transparent*. It won a Golden Globe for "Best TV Series, Musical or Comedy." What did Amazon ask you to do and why?

Resnick: We were asked to cast, direct, adapt and perform their incredible first season for distribution into Germany. We were chosen for our experience, but also our cast was amazing. We pulled out all the stops. We had the woman who does

Meryl Streep's voice for Germany cast. We had Emmy winners, both domestic and international. Our team had a lot of personal interest in seeing this transcreated properly, as there were many regional and religiously regional colloquialisms to work on. It was more or less the most challenging project I have ever worked on. Great, great show.

Abel: This project must have taught you an awful lot about transcreation (the process of translating and localizing content so it preserves the creative and emotional intent of creative content when it's presented in other languages and cultures). What did you learn about transcreation while working on *Transparent*?

Resnick: *Transparent* was a very Los Angeles based show, but it was so close to the edge that it crossed more current and relevant sexual boundaries than any other show we had worked on. We had to be aware of the familial humor that they were using and find a way to make it relevant without it destroying the creative approach. We had to adapt Southern Californian watered down Yiddish to make sense in Germany. There was playful familial banter and even Hebrew songs that were very challenging. We had to be aware of so many edges and maintain the fidelity of this groundbreaking product. It was a lot of fun.

Abel: From your experience, what are

the biggest mistakes made by companies when they first attempt to localize voice?

Resnick: They try to do it themselves. They don't take into account all the critical marks that are required to achieve success. We didn't choose the voice life, the voice life chose us. It takes a special kind of person with a special kind of mindset. Engage a company that does it for a living and sleep soundly. Another problem is when voice isn't thought of at the beginning of the project. It's far more time-consuming and expensive at the end of a project.

Abel: For those companies that have content that would benefit from voiceover, but have yet to develop a strategy for it, what is the right first step? How does one get started without making the common mistakes?

Resnick: Voiceover is rapidly becoming the most important medium for getting products remembered and noticed. The saturation of devices, channels and product differentiation is becoming more and more omnipresent and no matter what others may say, as I've stated, voice is the most effective. They need to build their content strategy with voice at the beginning, middle and end. This is especially true for the global markets. It can no longer be an afterthought or an "oh yeah... what about going into France?" We need global content strategy from the start. **M**



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Off the Map

Games, gamers
and culture wars

Kate Edwards



For nearly a decade, I've written for this magazine on topics related to geopolitics and culture and the need to be acutely aware of the sensitivities of such issues as they relate to content in our products. While I've touched upon the consumer side of the equation many times, at least in terms of how end-users will perceive the content we produce, I've rarely addressed the culture of the media the consumers are enjoying, as opposed to the local culture of the consumers themselves.

For example, we can talk about the impact of images used in books and how such images may affect the cultural expectations in one locale or another, but we rarely talk about the images in the context of how avid book readers may react. Usually the medium of delivery isn't as relevant to the key questions about content sensitivities and their effect on a specific culture.

One of the topics I've often discussed is the concept of cultural protectionism and how local entities such as a national government will take action to protect their local "narrative," meaning the way in which their culture, their territory, their history and so on are perceived by people outside their locale. This kind of protectionism has been the motive for everything from tourism marketing to persuasive propaganda to political upheaval and even to military conflict. Cultural protectionism isn't exclusive to countries either, it can happen among any group that maintains a certain identity, and when it feel this identity is being threatened in some way.

In 2014, this very kind of protectionism emerged in the form of consumer activism, and provided us with an example of what can happen when end-users identify so fervently with a medium they eagerly enjoy. The issue at hand, which continues as of this writing, is what's become known as "Gamergate," and it's been one of the most disruptive

actions in recent years and certainly one of the most significant in the game industry as far as its negative impact. It's an issue that interweaves many threads of discussion, from online harassment and misogyny to the culture wars around conservatism, feminism and the role of anonymity in virtual communities. It's also an issue that affected me personally, as I remain one of the key targets of this small but vocal crowd of online antagonists. But at its core, Gamergate is a tale of cultural protectionism, where a group that felt it had ownership over the label *gamer* found instead that it's just one part of a now global, multicultural and diverse demographic of game players.

This issue requires a certain amount of background before discussion, so I'll attempt to summarize as succinctly as possible what happened and how we've come to this point. The spark that ignited this whole issue was when a games journalist, Eron Gjoni, posted a derogatory piece in early August 2014 about his ex-girlfriend, independent game developer Zoe Quinn, after they broke up. Within days, Gjoni's post found support from the 4chan message boards, a community priding itself on its anonymity and its tendency to initiate harassment and other malicious behavior for any issue or individual they collectively deem worthy of their negative attention. Many of these people joined Gjoni's rant, including some notable YouTube broadcasters (such as one known as TotalBiscuit) and the harassment against Quinn quickly escalated. Around this time, game industry commentator Anita Sarkeesian released another video in her ongoing series about the negative portrayals of women in video games. Sarkeesian's criticism of existing tropes are meant to spur discussion and help the game industry take a critical look at its portrayal of women. Yet to this building crowd of harassers, Sarkeesian was attacking what they hold dear – their "classic" video games that they enjoy and to them

Kate Edwards is a geographer and the principal consultant of Geogrify, a Seattle-based consultancy for culturalization and content strategy. She is also the executive director of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA).

she represented a “social justice warrior” (SJW) and “radical feminist” who was aiming to change the industry and take away their cherished games. Sarkeesian had become a target in 2012 when she initiated her video series, but the mob renewed their attacks on her, complete with online harassment and death threats.

As happens with online mobs, this so-called “movement” quickly escalated and took on its own life, especially when actor Adam Baldwin (of the beloved geek TV series *Firefly*) added his conservative politics to the mix, railing against the perception of an out-of-control feminist agenda, and coined the Twitter hashtag #gamergate. This provided a more distinct identity to what was initially random groups of anonymous individuals in online communities that have long been associated with misogynistic behavior.

By the end of August 2014, the activity had started getting the notice of a wider range of people in the game industry, particularly among independent developers and journalists. Gamasutra.com columnist Leigh Alexander published a particularly pointed piece about how “gamers are over,” essentially denouncing the toxic online behavior and declaring that the gamer identity as typically defined – mostly young, white males – is no longer valid because virtually every-

one plays games now. The message and tone of this article set off a new wave of harassment and hatred among the Gamergate adherents and fueled a new level of reaction against other people who spoke out against them, particularly women. The practice of “doxing,” revealing someone’s private information online, such as an address or phone number, was regularly employed by Gamergate adherents against their targets. In some cases they also employed “swatting,” which is alerting local law enforcement to a fake “incident” at their target’s home address in the hope that a SWAT team on high alert would be sent in response.

With Gamasutra’s publishing of the inflammatory column, the Gamergate crowd protested by targeting the website’s advertisers in September, starting with the tech giant Intel. In a knee jerk reaction, Intel removed its advertising from Gamasutra, contributing to the perception of a major victory among the Gamergate supporters. Over the next few months, Intel would realize the tremendous mistake it had made and by early January 2015, Intel CEO Brian Krzanich announced in his keynote at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) that Intel was committing \$300 million in a broad initiative to not only fix the obvious diversity problems in the game industry but in the entire technology

sector, starting with full representation at all levels within Intel. This action has since inspired other companies to increase their diversity efforts, such as Apple’s public commitment of \$50 million in March 2015.

By October 2014, the overt misogyny of Gamergate began to get widely noticed. Major media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and other outlets correctly identified Gamergate for what it is: a convoluted mob without any single agenda or voice but with a clear misogynist streak. Even though the harassment campaign tried to change the focus of their vitriol to being an issue over ethics in games journalism, they were mostly unable to escape the perception that this was a group striving to exclude women from somehow interfering with their gamer culture. In other words, they supposedly weren’t ranting against Zoe Quinn, Anita Sarkeesian and others’ involvement in the industry as women, but rather the way that game journalists are too close to game developers and the perception of a lack of objectivity in game coverage and reviews. Unfortunately, this additional façade increased Gamergate’s appeal among new followers.

As for my part in all this, as the executive director of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA),

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I was proud that our board of directors issued a statement in late August 2014 to denounce the harassment and misogyny; at the time we were the only major industry organization to say anything about the issue. And because I was so outspoken in many media interviews on the topic, I quickly became another key target of Gamergate – seen as another key “SJW” and as “the gamers’ enemy” and yes I received death threats as well as constant harassment and derision on Twitter and on Gamergate blog posts. Never mind my 20+ year history in the game industry and the fact that I’ve likely worked on many of the games the Gamergate proponents enjoy, and never mind the fact that I’ve likely been a gamer longer than most of these harassers have been alive. The fact that I am an industry figure willing to stand up and vocally oppose their actions made me worthy of their hatred. I’ve been blamed and accused of some of the wildest, most ridiculous conspiracy theories; in other words, I’ve been a convenient enemy to hate and help fuel their conspiracies and internal cultural narrative.

This whole issue continues to rumble on in the virtual communities, and for better or worse, for people who don’t pay attention to Twitter or Reddit, Gamergate has been virtually invisible. Indeed, even at the annual Game Developers Conference in March 2015, I had some long-time developers ask me about the issue because they had no idea that it had been raging for months and had never heard the term “Gamergate.” The harassment continues, although not nearly as intensely as a few months ago, and at this time the echo chamber known as Gamergate mostly continues to regurgitate familiar statements and arguments, never offering any new insights or thoughtfulness about whatever they were supposedly raging against from the start. Unfortunately, women developers and their defenders are still being harassed and targeted, and while the US Federal Bureau of Investigation has been involved since even before August 2014, the agency hasn’t made much progress in apprehending the worst of the mob due to issues around ano-

nymity, free speech and many of the actions being performed by juveniles.

So to return to the cultural protectionism point I raised earlier, I’m prone to cast this episode in that light, particularly given my perspective as a geographer and culturalization strategist. Imagine that there’s a culture (mostly young males) high in the mountains that adopts a certain enjoyable pastime, a local cultural tradition (video games). For a long while, they’re mostly the

Gamergate has been an additional layer of angst added to the already-dynamic environment of an ever-changing industry.

only people enjoying this tradition and it becomes familiar and comfortable for them and their tribal name, *gamer*, represents their specific culture. Every once in a while, outsiders (such as women) will wander into their territory and might be accepted but are never really considered part of the culture and certainly aren’t really allowed to use the *gamer* label (or if they do, they’re often accused of being “fake gamer girls” or doing it only because their boyfriends play games). This isolated culture continues to grow and companies continue to make goods that this culture enjoys (including overly sexist depictions of women).

But something interesting happens. Eventually, this cultural tradition finds a place beyond the traditional gamer’s territory. Over time, more and more people outside their realm are also playing games, and many of these people don’t fit the tribal definition of gamer. One day, after years have passed, this isolated culture of gamers suddenly realizes that the world around them has changed – they’re no longer unique and special, and the companies making their games are also making games for the people outside their territory. Their cherished cultural tradition now belongs to everyone, and they really don’t like this idea. As they panic at this revelation, they lash out at what they perceive to be the most obvious cause of this change – people different from them who’ve invaded their space (mostly women). And while they also lash out at the ethics of games journal-

ism, this small, isolated realm decides to employ highly unethical methods of attack to those beyond their territory, such as constant harassment, public humiliation, doxing and swatting.

Indeed, the world has changed around them. In the United States, nearly 50% of gamers are women. Several years ago the global video game industry began generating more revenue than the film and music industries combined. Game playing is ubiquitous, with a very wide demographic. In the United States alone, the average age of a gamer is now 36 years old. That tribal perception of a gamer being a young male has utterly changed.

Just as other major art forms such as literature, music, radio, television and film are enjoyed by virtually everyone on some level, games have reached the point of being the latest entertainment medium to become part of the modern human experience.

Several times I’ve been asked by media outlets and others if anything good will result from all this. My response is a fervent yes, absolutely. There’s no question that this has been a time of turmoil for the game industry, and the disturbing (and illegal) harassment must come to a full stop. Gamergate has been an additional layer of angst added to the already-dynamic environment of an ever-changing industry. As the game industry is so technology dependent, it continues to evolve its platforms, delivery methods, content sources and so forth. In response, there has been much upheaval over the past few years, as evidenced in a variety of ways. For example, the IGDA’s own Developer Satisfaction Survey found in 2014 that over the past five years, game developers had an average of four jobs! Many in the industry were anecdotally aware of an underlying churn but the survey helped shine a hard light on the realities.

So add to the landscape this additional aspect of industry change, that of inclusion and diversity. We all knew that eventually it needed to be addressed, and I myself having attended and participated in countless talks about women in games and diversity panels and such discussions,

it's clear that there's been a strong frustration with the lack of progress, both in the game industry as well as the broader technology sector. That's one reason why the IGDA has adopted a "space program" goal of trying to double the number of women working in the game industry by 2025. It's why Intel has come out so boldly in favor of resolving their diversity problem in the IT sector once and for all. It's why we're seeing a plethora of STEM (science-technology-engineering-math) programs arise for young women and people of diversity.

The reaction against Gamergate's misogynist message has been so strong that in the end, the very thing their isolated culture was railing against is going to actually become a reality. Their cultural backlash has become a catalyst for galvanizing an entire industry to take a hard look at itself and then have the courage to take real, measurable steps to change. Granted, this effort is only getting started and it's a long-term proposition, yet I remain optimistic. The internet will always have its echo chambers and strong opinions, it will continue to rage on a wide variety of issues and I doubt Gamergate adherents will go away anytime soon. But hopefully social media companies such as Twitter will also realize some hard lessons about how to better manage their platforms, rather than being enablers. And those of us who engage in social media use on a frequent basis can learn to better filter the noise so we can concentrate on the signals that matter.

For the sake of brevity, there are many details I've had to leave out of this discussion as it has many layers of complexity and I have no doubt that it's going to result in many master's theses and doctoral dissertations in the fields of sociology, communication, journalism, cultural anthropology and information sciences, to name a few. It's important for us to keep in mind that culture doesn't always have to be defined by country borders, languages or ethnicities. In today's increasingly virtual spaces of communication and social interaction, cultural identity associated with mediums, brands and content types are becoming ever more relevant and critical to consider in our work. **M**



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Can MT play the game?

Jie Jiang and Antonio Tejada

The European Union (EU) funded Online Service for Subtitling by Machine Translation (SUMAT) project, which came to a close at the end of 2014, explored the long-term feasibility of using machine translation (MT) for the purpose of translating subtitle files. Although originally not created specifically for games, there was clearly an opportunity to use these topic-specific engines to evaluate the possible impact of MT within the subtitling of games, as part of the process to streamline localization efforts.

As these technologies developed and became available for use and experimentation, their application in other areas came under discussion. Gaming is often seen as the poor relation to traditional mediums such as television and cinema, but the industry is quickly outgrowing its humble roots both financially and in terms of the sophisticated technology at its disposal. Facebook's acquisition of Oculus VR for \$2 billion last year is one example of how gaming technology is driving a new funding spree.

When samples were placed through the SUMAT system it became apparent that it might be worth applying the results of this project to the subtitling tasks that some game developers regularly face in the production of multilingual games. This would clearly be an ambitious undertaking, requiring a significant level of adaptation to a language style that tends to be full of slang and colloquial phrases – and a language style that can change from game to game.

Although there are significant doubts about the application of this type of technology outside of areas that have very structured content, where language is quite repetitive and predictable in its sentence structure and use, how we might move from the typical MT environment of written language to oral language applications such as subtitling holds some fascinating potential.

Customizing engines and corpus

If we take subtitling as a special case in oral languages, we do obtain significant benefits from MT. Generally speaking, subtitles are considerably easier to handle through machines. This is partly because there is more reliable information available on subtitle files, such as domains, text genre or even the producers of the subtitles, which can be used by machines for better modeling. In addition, the irregularity of subtitles is much less than other oral languages such as spontaneous speech (live commentary, for example), where being able to predict the ongoing text is extremely difficult.

The SUMAT project collected vast amounts of parallel (about seven million subtitles) and monolingual data (about 40 million subtitles) for modeling. More importantly, the quality of the data had been assured by professional subtitlers who guaranteed the quality of MT output and also differentiated SUMAT services from other “free” corpus options. In addition, the detailed information on subtitle sources, domains and text genres was organized specifically to take into account slang and colloquial languages.

Studies on the post-editing production rates showed that up to 30% improvement was achieved by simply deploying SUMAT MT engines in the subtitling workflow. The quality of MT output is undoubtedly good enough to be of benefit

to the subtitling translation companies. Therefore, if we accept that there are similarities between subtitles and gaming content such as dialogues, SUMAT technology can be tested for this type of new application.

Although subtitles follow a more specific structure and could be



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Antonio Tejada studied translation and interpreting at the University of Granada. After early involvement as a language specialist, he moved on to management in 1992.



described as written communication rather than oral, we can still foresee a significant level of difficulty when applying this idea to gaming dialogue. As we know, the purpose of subtitles is to deliver and convey the original information of the soundtrack to the audiences with its distinctive colloquial, time-and-space-limited and culture-specific features. It seems difficult to expect MT output to automatically identify these three key factors and then deliver a suitable translation.

Peter Newmark, a famous translation theorist, has introduced functional grammar and cross-cultural communicative theory into his studies of translation theories, and proposed that both are not contradictory. This means that the proper translation strategy of a specific text should be determined on the basis of text typology, purpose of translation, the intention of the author and the target readership.

Challenges

With machine translated text, there are many known issues that even state-of-the-art MT systems cannot cope with, but we are not relying solely on the MT output for quality. In the SUMAT project, the aim of MT is not to replace human translators, but to improve their productivity.

In production we don't particularly criticize MT output on very difficult input sentences that are meant to be looked at by post-editors who will use their expertise to produce more suitable translations. This scenario makes more sense with the deployment of an automatic quality estimation module, which behaves similar to fuzzy-match scores from translation memories, so that it helps post-editors to estimate the effort that they have to put into the post-editing process to produce a translated segment of publishable quality. Therefore they can make decisions on whether to discard poor MT output and start translating from scratch. In this case, taking MT as a useful pre-translate tool for post-editors means that a better productivity gain can be accomplished by reusing MT output in the post-editing stage. In return we can achieve lower costs and a shorter turnaround time. This could certainly be applied to game localization.

On the other hand, challenges in the translation industry do impact the MT research trend. Many research topics have emerged from the actual problems that were encountered in practice, and a lot of this research has been effective in improving our understanding. At the beginning of the SUMAT project, the consortium involved identified many problems that could arise from using MT for subtitling and set up specific work packages to deal with them, such as building different types of statistical MT systems to tackle the challenges. However, instead of looking at each MT output for detailed comparison from a translation theory point of view, we are more interested in productivity gain. Thus all of the built systems were compared statistically and the best ones were picked out to facilitate the translation workflow. Following the SUMAT research project we are quite certain that the quality of MT output has been well-tuned to achieve the best possible outcomes.

From a scientific point of view this is great, but what about possible return on investment? Game developers are looking at using new methods to achieve better efficiencies when translating in-game dialogues (not just as a "nice to have" feature, but also as an aid for those users with hearing problems). According to last year's SUMAT

report, up to 56% of the MT output was ranked as having very little or no post-editing requirements. Although very encouraging, this is arguably not sufficient enough to justify the risk of investment, and straight use of the MT content will require some level of post-editing. As a game publisher faces a decision on whether to use a similar tool for their subtitling, it is crucial to understand what investment is required to make MT output "game ready."

Post-editor feedback

The feedback study on MT output has always been interesting. It tends to be a mixture of both objective errors and subjective ideas. However, in most of the cases, comments like "this is useless" are not very constructive. Therefore, to provide more meaningful feedback on MT output, a specific evaluation work package was carefully designed as part of the SUMAT project, so that both MT developers and users could benefit from valuable findings. Specifically, nine types of errors were identified and collected in the evaluation stage, including semantic, syntactic and formatting errors, along with subtitle-specific issues such as "the contents are too long." The results showed that the main type of errors were mistranslations, followed

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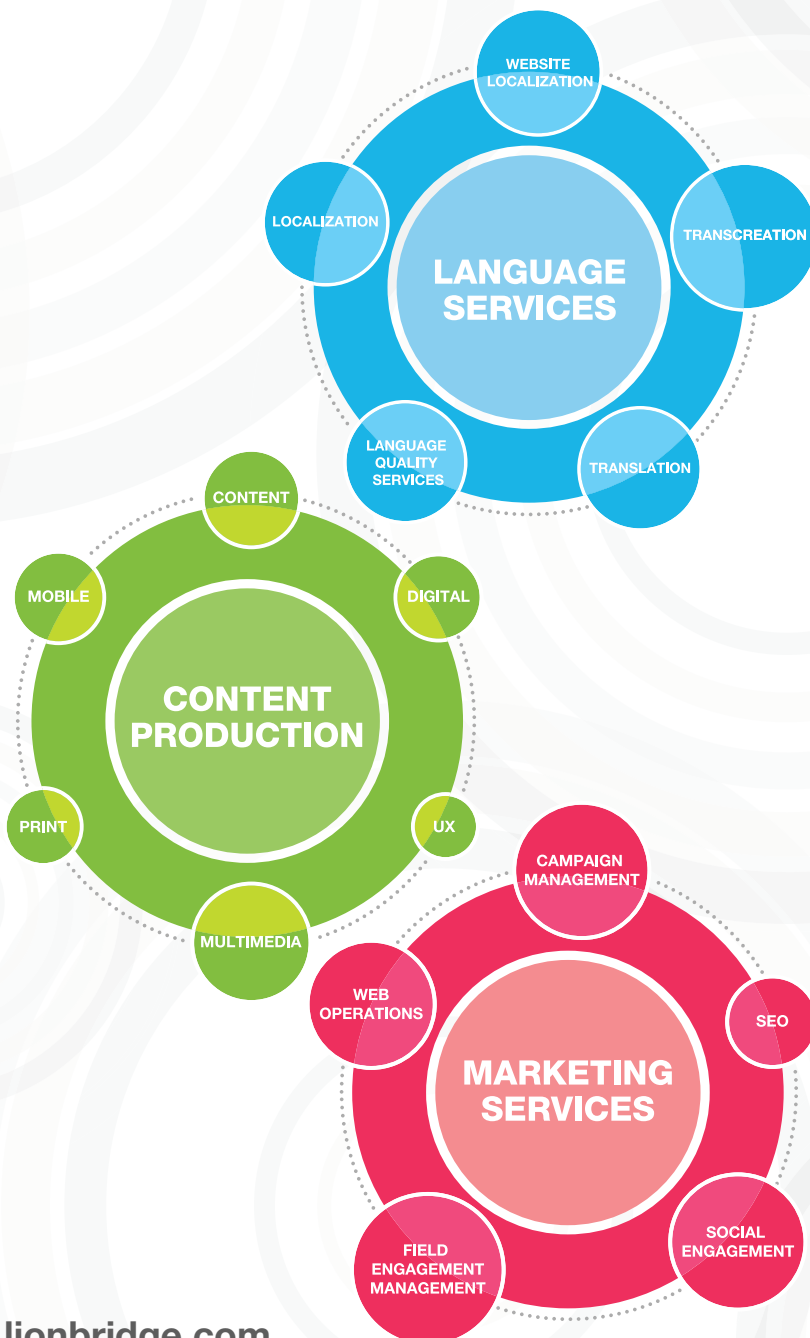
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by missing content and grammatical agreement inaccuracies.

These are typical errors that MT is generally blamed for, so in practice, reviewing processes is essential, even on an MT system that produces translations with a very high level of reusability. On a brighter note, there are also many subjective comments that favor the SUMAT system. The feedback from the translators is that the post-editing process is noticeably different from the translation process, but once you get used to it, it can be amazing!

The post-editor experience is generally a non-linear function to the MT engine quality. Once the engine quality drops under a certain level, post-editing MT output becomes a burden. Therefore, it is more of a priority to consider the best way to use the corpus resources that are available in the gaming industry to improve MT engine quality to a strong level, before looking at specific errors to clean the outputs. Once the MT quality reaches that point, the rest of the work will be much more straightforward to deal with and develop.

The future

We are faced with a market that is providing increasingly sophisticated gaming experiences for its users. As a result there is a continuous rise in available published content, and the rise of specific interactions with the player also adds additional challenges for game developers. We are now searching for a solution to how games can maintain and improve their international accessibility without having to rely on English being the lingua franca in the gaming experience.

It is easy to recognize the value of the work carried out by SUMAT. Although designed for the purpose of traditional film and television subtitling, the "topic-specific" engines can be adapted to provide a good platform for MT to help overcome language challenges in the gaming medium as well.

However, any application will require careful collaboration between the publisher and the technology owner. Engines can be trained to the language of a specific game in order to guarantee a level of output quality that could be beneficial to developers. **M**

Lessons learned from a game translation competition

Simone Crosignani & Alain Dellepiane

The success of mobile platforms and the casual game genre has radically transformed the game development scene in the last five years. Huge 200 or 300 employee studios have been joined (or, often, replaced) by an army of independent developers, teams of one or two people focusing on projects with reduced budgets and development times.

In a way it's back-to-the-origins, a new millennium version of the phenomenon that saw hundreds of programmers committed to creating, from their desks at home, an endless series of masterpieces for the 8-bit and 16-bit computers that invaded our homes nearly 30 years ago. But there is a sharp distinction between the developers of that era and the current generation, embodied by the greater collaborative spirit of the latter ones – a spirit largely fueled by technologies that have spread from the 1990s. It's the offline (or early online) generation versus the always-online one. It's in this environment that game jams were born, virtual or real-life gatherings where developers plan, design and create a video game in a reduced period of time, sometimes as short as 24 hours. The Global Game Jam, an annual event born under the IGDA (International Game Developers Association, a professional association that brings together more than 12,000 members of the gaming industry) involving hundreds of teams of developers from around the world, is probably the most famous game jam.

LocJAM, the first nonprofit competition for game translators, was born in the same spirit. Conceived by Alain Dellepiane, an experienced video game translator and tester and launched by the IGDA Localization SIG (the Special Interest Group of game localization

enthusiasts), LocJAM has a very simple *modus operandi*. During the ten days or so of competition, participants must visit the official competition website (www.locjam.org), where they find a game waiting to be localized and the English text of said game. Translators can choose whether to take part in the competition as professionals or amateurs, localizing the game into either French, German, Italian, Japanese, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian, European Spanish or Latin American Spanish. A jury of game localization companies then picks the best translation, pros and amateurs, for each language. Simple as that.

Launched without much fanfare in March 2014, the first LocJAM was a success on every front. Over 500 translators grappled with the localization of *The Repubblica Times*, a Flash puzzle game with political connotations (Figure 1). Participants particularly enjoyed a series of LocJAM-related workshops, seminars by industry professionals arranged to prepare amateur translators to better face the competition. The workshops did the lion's share in the second edition of LocJAM, which ended in March 2015. More than 300 people at LocJAM2 attended 17 workshops held on local university campuses and workspaces around the globe, from Montevideo to Tokyo, from Barcelona to San Diego. The workshops were an unquestionable success that allowed the competition, focused on adventure graphic *Grandpa* and based on the same formula of the previous year, to amass 623 entries, now spread across eight languages.

What conclusions have we collected from LocJAM? The most relevant one is that choosing a game for a competition



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Alain Dellepiane was senior localization editor at Rockstar Lincoln before becoming a freelancer and founding team GLOC, a group specialized in video game translation.



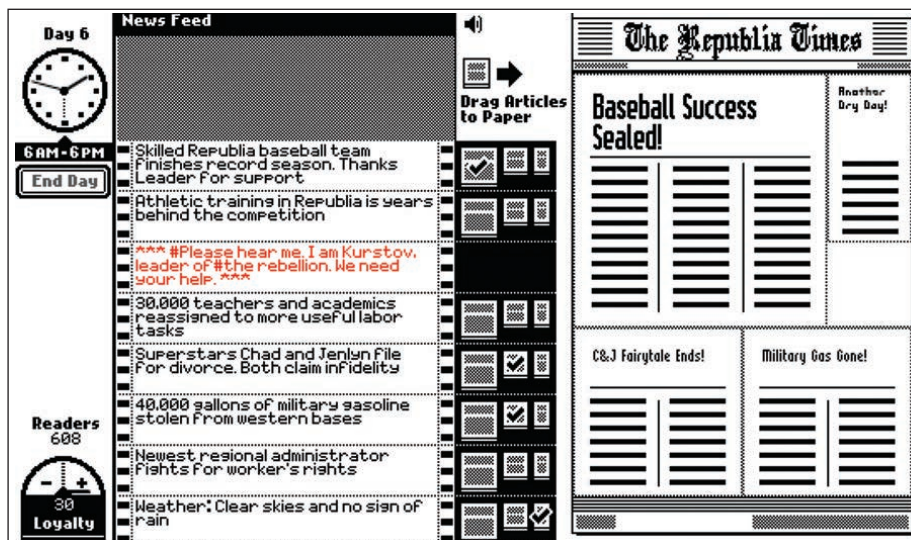


Figure 1: The first LocJAM was based on *The Republica Times*. The game puts the player into the shoes of the editor-in-chief of the national newspaper of Republica, a fictional country run by an Orwellian totalitarian government.

like this requires a lot of effort, more than we could probably imagine. For LocJAM2 we went for *Grandpa* (Figure 2) in part because the game is built on Twine, a free platform that allows everyone to create simple adventure games. The biggest limit of this choice is that contents are very linear and book-like, so important skills like juggling variables and space limits can't be tested. On the other hand, the main benefit is the

format: Twine games are plain HTML. To make *Republica Times* playable for the first LocJAM, we had to fight for months in order to add all the necessary elements to the code, whereas recruiting a programmer allowed us to make Twine games translatable fairly quickly and with full Unicode support. In order to make the HTML file translatable by everybody, we had to add a localization library into the file able to swap string

in real-time and create an external file in plain .txt with strings to be localized. This setup allowed translators to open the game in a browser in order to play it normally. Then, after editing the text file, they could refresh the page, select the translated version and see it right away. Once they were done, they could simply share their .txt file for others to play in their translation.

The second indication is that participants enjoyed the nonprofit nature of the event, but they wouldn't mind a more commercial event in the future. When starting the LocJAM our goal was to promote video game translation, a profession that is often invisible. And to do so we reached out to its different realities, which usually cannot communicate due to non disclosure agreements, putting the same text in front of everyone and asking them: "What is good localization for you?" There are no real prizes other than studio tours with recording sessions at the specialist agencies that act as jurors. The game at the center of the competition has no commercial value: it has never been sold and never will in any form. And candidates don't pay anything for the contest and for the workshops, which are usually held inside universities. Despite these factors, a survey we ran after the first LocJAM showed that about 60% of the participants would enjoy (or at least wouldn't be against) a more commercial event, in which all entries are made accessible online and more promotional spaces lead to richer prizes. It's an unlikely option, given the small amount of time and resources we have, but it definitely makes for an interesting "What if?" scenario.

The third point concerns the jurors. LocJAM was never intended as a best translator award; it's not the Oscars of video game translators, and it doesn't want to be. Making an award of that kind is a huge commitment the IGDA Localization SIG cannot really take on at this time. But the SIG's mission helped in choosing how to build the judging process. The SIG aims "to provide a focal point and nexus for the growing number of game localization professionals in order to build community, draw together best practices and processes, and emphasize the requisite international

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Figure 2: *Grandpa* was created in only 48 hours by three developers based in Saudi Arabia: Omar Enezi, Abdullah Hamed and Basma Mariki. Since the contents are almost entirely HTML-based, it made for a perfect title for LocJAM2.

dimension of game content development toward the goal of improving global game development processes and local end user experiences.” Inside the SIG we have all kinds of localization professionals: translators, of course, but also editors, project managers, audio engineers, programmers, language providers and so on. So, instead of having a single jury telling others what is right and what is wrong, we went for a jury made of multiple people simply choosing their favorite version and explaining their reasons, without any pretense of universality. Which people? A select few from translation agencies specialized in video games. Why? Because they manage a good 90% of the games we play daily on our consoles or smartphones. And while this doesn’t give them the right to dictate standards to everyone (something we already decided LocJAM doesn’t do), it does give weight to their word. Agencies also have the resources to review the high number of entries (a staggering 198 participants submitted their translation of *Grandpa* in Spanish).

The fourth observation: workshops are great. We built the LocJAM as an

online event because we wanted it to be as inclusive as possible. But we soon wondered how to include some local events too. There was no pretense of offering thorough coverage everywhere, but the existing workshops were a nice extra for those who were interested. We had seven workshops before the first LocJAM, from London, to Barcelona, to Tokyo, with over 180 attendees. Those numbers doubled for LocJAM2. This turned out to be one of the most heart-warming parts of the event; even though “workshop” ended up being a bit of a misnomer as most events were more like conferences, and ended up involving a chat about localization more than a hands-on localization lab. There’s nothing quite like seeing people having a great time to remind us why we were handling the competition in the first place. And it’s important to mention that, again, we were operating without a budget. The workshop had to be free: it was acceptable to have attendees pay a mandatory drink or another small fee to cover room costs, but that was it. The workshop also had to be non-promotional: the aim of the seminar was to discuss game localization in general, not promote any speaker or any company.

The fifth and last conclusion is the overwhelming (and partially sur-

prising) interest toward game localization, especially in the under-25 demographics. The nonexistent budget forced us to promote the event simply through word of mouth and social media. We created a simple promo video, a press release that got picked up by a fair amount of media (including *Famitsu*, one of the biggest gaming publications in the world, and the *ATA Chronicle*, published by the American Translator Association) and there was a development blog to update everybody on the progress of the competition. And that’s it. Yet despite a zero-dollar campaign, the locjam.org website amassed over 14,000 visits during LocJAM2. Some workshops had more than 80 attendees, all willing to learn the tricks of the trade from professionals such as Richard Mark Honeywood, who led the Tokyo seminar and has worked in the localization department of powerhouses like Square Enix and Blizzard. We definitely have room for improvement. A more extensive promotion, for example, could help us generate interest in territories that didn’t embrace the LocJAM like we hoped (Germany, for example). But with such a positive feedback from the community and with people already asking for LocJAM3, maybe we’d better start looking for a suitable game for next year. **M**

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Global age ratings for game localization

Mike Hedley

Video game localization presents a number of unique challenges for today's game developer and publisher. These often include the extensive work of adapting graphics and sound effects to international markets and the complexity of testing unpredictable and dynamic game play.

There is also some difficulty in translating language elements that frequently appear in video games compared to other forms of software. Because games often feature many characters, these elements include idioms, colloquialisms and game jargon, but also encompass the social relation, age, gender and number of characters being addressed, not to mention the linguistic trickiness of directly addressing the player.

Something that isn't discussed much in localization is age rating systems. Games contain varied types of content ranging from child-appropriate materials to those meant for an adult-only audience. Due to these challenges and the need to provide standardized information for parents and other global consumers, several countries and regions around the world created content rating systems. Game publishers must submit games to the rating authorities that govern these systems, as official ratings are sometimes required by the authority or by the major console manufacturers before a game may be sold in certain markets. Complying with these systems and with the authorities that implement them is critically important for game publishers, and achieving a high level of compliance requires time and resources.

Many of you are probably familiar with the age rating systems used for movies; for example, the ratings of PG-13, R and so on applied to movies by the Motion Picture Association of America. The ratings assigned to video games are similar.



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In fact, some countries manage both movie and game ratings through the same rating authority. Age ratings provide valuable information for parents, to help them understand the types of games their children are playing and to guide their purchasing decisions. In order to comply with local laws and regulations, as well as rules imposed by console manufacturers, game publishers must respect and adhere to guidelines provided by the ratings authority in each market to which their game will release.

Rating authorities around the globe

There are more than a dozen age rating authorities around the world, and this means that game publishers must first do a bit of research to determine which ratings are required for their game. The most obvious factor to consider is the market in which the game will be sold. If the target market requires an age rating, publishers must complete the submission process and receive an age rating before they can make their game available online or in traditional retail outlets. This also applies to games that have not been localized into the local language. Other factors that influence rating requirements include whether or not the game is available on physical media (rather than being digital-download only), which platform(s) the game is available for (PC, console, mobile and so on), and sometimes even the expected rating. A few rating boards review only those games that have been assigned a rating of 18 or higher by another rating board. If the game is available on multiple platforms, such as both PC and game console, some rating authorities require that publishers submit for both platforms, while others offer a "cloning" option by which a rating can apply to both (or multiple) platforms.

Two of the most widely used age rating authorities are the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) and the Pan European Game Information board (PEGI). The ESRB is a nonprofit, self-regulatory organization formed in 1994 to assign ratings to games sold in the United States and Canada. The six rating icons in Figure 1 represent each of the age rating categories assigned by the ESRB, which appear on the front of game packages or prior to downloading a game. Please refer to the ESRB website (<http://www.esrb.org>) for specific definitions of each rating.

PEGI was formed in 2003, replacing several national age rating systems in use in Europe at that time. PEGI is the



Figure 1: ESRB age rating logos.



Figure 2: PEGI age rating logos.

legal, official or *de facto* market standard used for rating game titles in 38 countries across Europe. The five logos in Figure 2 represent the available PEGI age ratings. For more details on expectations and criteria for each rating level, please refer to the PEGI website (<http://www.pegi.info>).

Cultures, and sensitivities

Before exploring the age rating submission process, let's pause to consider the relationship between age ratings and culture. As a *MultiLingual* reader, you're likely familiar with many of the geopolitical risks manifested in various cultures around the world, and so it is not surprising that different cultures are sensitive to different types of content. For example, some regions are more restrictive of sexual content and give less focus to violence, while others concentrate on violence and are less concerned with sexual content. In addition, some markets may not allow games that depict or feature gambling. This variation across language and culture contributes to the complexity of getting a new game rated for global sales. In fact, it is not uncommon for a new game's age ratings to vary considerably from market to market. A game may be rated for age 16 in one market, age 18 or Mature in another, and may be banned altogether in another. Obviously different ratings, especially those such as 18 or Mature, can have a direct impact on sales and limit how publishers can distribute and sell their game in retail outlets. For this reason, game developers need to be aware of the rules

and sensitivities in their target markets and be mindful of these points as they design and develop the game so that it ultimately receives the desired rating for the market. Developers generally find it difficult, expensive and often impossible to make significant changes to a game late in the production cycle in response to an unexpected rating. Therefore, it is prudent for developers and their publishing partner to have game rating experts on staff to provide documentation, training, content reviews and other guidance throughout the development cycle to help ensure the game ultimately receives a rating that fits its target audience and global marketing plan.

Alcohol Reference	Animated Blood
Blood	Blood and Gore
Cartoon Violence	Comic Mischief
Crude Humor	Drug Reference
Fantasy Violence	Intense Violence
Language	Lyrics
Mature Humor	Nudity
Partial Nudity	Real Gambling
Sexual Content	Sexual Themes
Sexual Violence	Simulated Gambling
Strong Language	Strong Lyrics
Strong Sexual Content	Suggestive Themes
Tobacco Reference	Use of Alcohol
Use of Drugs	Use of Tobacco
Violence	Violent References

Figure 3: ESRB content descriptors

To help consumers identify game content that might be sensitive in their culture or region, some age ratings boards provide content descriptors in addition to the game's age rating. Figure 3 shows the ESRB content descriptors, which in addition to the age ratings are assigned for many game titles distributed in the United States and Canada. Content descriptors appear on the back of game packages next to the assigned rating indicating content that may have triggered a particular rating or may be of interest or concern.

Similar to the ESRB, PEGI also provides content descriptors, in the form of logos, for games sold in Europe. Figure 4 shows these logos, which appear on the back of packaging and help consumers understand why PEGI assigned a particular age rating to the game.

In addition to these logos, online descriptions of a game may also contain Extended Consumer Advice that provides additional information about the nature of the content. For example, "Contains: strong language, extreme violence, glamorisation of crime."

One additional note about ratings and content descriptors is worth mentioning here. While the factors I've outlined above may seem somewhat intuitive with respect to determining age ratings, other less obvious factors come into play in certain situations. For example, the intensity of cinematics (due to the high-resolution graphics of today's game consoles), the speed or complexity of game play, and the high fidelity and volume of sound effects can sometimes influence a rating. Many of the age rating authorities have conducted research with child psychologists, experts in early childhood development, academics or parents to develop age rating guidelines and policies that are effective and useful. Consumers, especially young gamers, can benefit highly from this valuable research.

Submission processes

So far I've only provided details for two of the largest age rating authorities, and the submission guidelines for any rating authority will require further research. Because there are numerous rating authorities that process age rating submissions, it's not surprising that their approaches and requirements vary widely. A few authorities require

a prerelease, stable, content-complete game build, in which all features are available so that they can play the game and review its content thoroughly before assigning a rating.

Most rating authorities require the publisher to complete a submission form introducing the overall game (genre, platforms, distribution methods, modes and so on), describing gameplay and listing any pertinent content such as violence, suggestive themes, humor and other notable material. Authorities also often require a game-play video that shows the pertinent content listed in the submission form. Together, these submission materials help the rating authority determine the game's final rating.

Publishers often submit game builds in their original source language (for example, in English if the game is being developed in the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom) because fully localized builds may not yet be available. However, some authorities do require the localized game text (delivered in Word, Excel or PDF format) to review in order to grant a rating covering the local market language. Publishers may also be required to ship final, released game discs to the rating board so authorities can confirm the proper placement of artwork on packaging and add the game to their archive.

In some cases, rating authorities offer a short-form submission if the game is being released as digital-download only (DDO), but often full packaged products (FPPs) require a longer, generally more expensive, submission and review process.

Some authorities are government bodies, while others are nonprofits or trade organizations charged with age ratings for a specific market. A few rating authorities use citizens, often teachers or members of the social or educational community, and even professionals with expertise in child development, to review games and assign the final rating.

Age rating challenges

As noted previously, age ratings are important and essential to global game sales, but as with any additional requirements, they introduce new challenges. Some of these challenges include:

- *Allocating time in your schedule.* Some submissions can be expedited (for a fee) in as little as 24 hours, while oth-



Figure 4: PEGI content descriptor logos.

ers can take up to eight weeks. You'll therefore find it helpful to include the various submission deadlines in your production schedule and adhere to them.

- *Providing correct documentation and video footage.* If the rating board requires video footage as well as documentation, it is important to make sure these materials accurately depict the most representative and egregious pertinent content in the game. If your submission materials are incomplete or inaccurate, your submission may be put on hold until you make corrections, and the publisher may be subject to violations, fines or outright bans for misrepresenting the game during the submission process or other sanctions, such as restocking boxes that have already been shipped to retailers. Non-disclosure of content may also result in the revocation of a rating with retailers returning the incorrectly rated product to the publisher.

- *Providing content-complete and stable builds.* One of the most challenging aspects of submission is providing content-complete and stable builds to the rating authorities that require them. Because game development is dynamic and creative, it's not uncommon for changes to code, features and functionality to happen late in the production cycle. Localization experts appreciate that this is challenging for translation and voiceover recording, but it is also a big challenge for age ratings as well. In some cases, it's necessary to negotiate with the game's development team for a build that meets submission requirements earlier than they might wish to provide it.

- *Cost and payment terms.* Both cost and payment terms vary widely across age rating boards. Some ratings are free while others can cost more than \$10,000. It is recommended that publishers understand the payment terms and processes that are required by each rating authority well in advance of submitting their title to rating agencies.

- *Local presence and registration.* In some markets, authorities require companies to work through local registered businesses to submit games for age ratings. Publishers may also need to work with an in-market representative, who speaks the local language, to efficiently and successfully attain age ratings. This can be a real challenge when the publisher does not have employees in that country, but it is often possible to partner with a local vendor to meet these needs.

- *Multiple platforms and availability of new hardware or firmware.* Games available on multiple platforms require extra effort, and often console manufacturers must provide development kits to those rating authorities that require game builds as part of the age rating process. When new console hardware is released, the process becomes even more complicated. For example, the introduction of Xbox One in 2013 presented many challenges in shipping hardware to rating authorities in time to support launch titles. Issues such as availability of hardware, confidentiality restrictions around its distribution and local import laws required extra resources and time. Additionally, it is important that publishers make sure the hardware provided has the correct software and firmware to support game submissions.

Tips for rating submissions

Despite all the challenges I mention above, successful submissions are possible and even common in the video game industry. Publishers achieve efficiency through education, planning, scheduling, organization and communication. Another crucial success factor is the support provided by the worldwide age rating boards themselves. In my experience, the people working at the rating authorities are friendly, flexible and, in some cases, fun to work with. These game-loving professionals understand the challenges that developers and publishers face and

are often willing to work around small issues in order to help game companies hit their deadlines. Some tips for successful submissions are:

- **Document and train.** Publishers need to have clear documentation on age rating requirements and should train development partners on what constitutes “pertinent content” for the game’s target age rating to avoid issues in the submission process. In addition, some age rating boards (like PEGI) offer training to help game teams map pertinent content to age rating levels and content descriptors. Other agencies (such as ESRB) also provide informal prereviews of content during game development so that there are no surprises when it comes time to submit.

- **Plan early.** Since some ratings can take up to two months, planning early is critical.

- **Plan ahead for advertising, marketing and packaging.** Some rating authorities have specific guidelines related to advertising, marketing and packaging of products. Game publishers must review and understand these guidelines in order to ensure that age ratings are used properly. For example, see <http://www.esrb.org/ratings/enforcement.jsp> for more details on ESRB guidelines in these areas.

- **Practice clear and consistent communication.** Clear and frequent communication with age rating boards helps ensure that the process runs smoothly. Appointing one or two key contacts on the publisher side helps reduce the communication burden on rating authority contacts and builds knowledge on the development side, which depends, to be honest, on accumulating ship cycles on multiple games. The longer a person works with age rating authorities, the more knowledge they gain in edge-case scenarios that pop up and require research and negotiation.

- **Create internal checklists.** It may be useful to provide simple, step-by-step checklists for team members for each rating authority in order to simplify the process. This is especially helpful for new team members.

- **Clear installation instructions.** If a rating authority requires a prerelease build, be sure to provide consistent and clear installation instructions, which have been verified and tested

by the developer, to minimize the time required by rating authority staff and alleviate frustration with broken builds.

- **Build and maintain good relationships with rating authorities.** As noted above, rating authority contacts are generally good partners. It is therefore important to make the necessary effort to ensure that the working relationships remain healthy with these critical business partners.

Future directions for age ratings

Today’s increasing proliferation of games on mobile devices, consoles, tablets, PCs and emerging platforms, both in traditional markets and new and developing regions, increases the complexity and time required to obtain proper age ratings for the release of new games. While some authorities do currently provide convenient options for online submissions, these online systems differ from country to country and may be limited to specific platforms or media types (often only for digital-download games). Additionally, as noted previously, the cost and payment terms can vary greatly across rating authorities. In order to unify and streamline this process, many of the leading global age rating authorities came together in 2013 to form the non-profit International Age Rating Coal-

ition (IARC). The IARC rating system provides an online submission process that requires the game developer to simply answer a series of questions about a game’s content while on-boarding its game or app. Please note, however, that packaged games will always require a prerelease check, which is a different process from IARC.

After the online questionnaire is completed, the tool will simultaneously generate ratings for all rating authorities participating in IARC based on the cultural standards and policies for each market. This new process not only saves time for both game publishers and ratings authorities, but it also eliminates submission costs for game developers while promoting more accurate and consistent ratings for the gaming public. Microsoft plans to implement IARC’s rating system across its gaming ecosystem in the future. For more information about IARC and the participating rating authorities, please refer to www.globalratings.com.

The next time you are shopping for a video game, be sure to take time to examine its age rating and content descriptors to determine if the title is appropriate. Keep in mind the work done by the developer, publisher and age rating authorities to provide this important information for you. **M**




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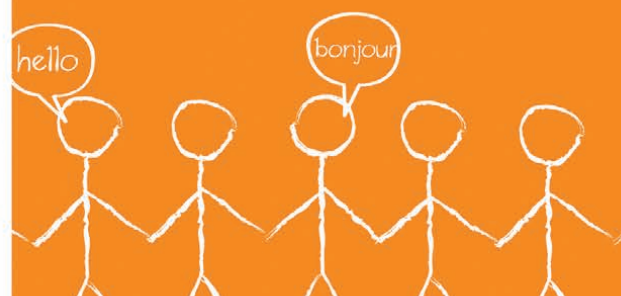
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How to break up with your international game community

Chloe Swain

Making a game is a risky venture; the failure rate is high. And even some of the most “successful” games (however that’s measured) have a finite lifespan. There are myriad factors influencing the decision to close down a game, mostly financial. If more money is going out than in for too long, if the intellectual property is aging or if it no longer fits with the overall strategy and direction of your brand, it’s time to call it quits.

However, the international community that you’ve worked hard to build up around your game will not necessarily be in lockstep with your decision to close the game. For your players, the game is about fun, accomplishment and connections they’ve forged with fellow fans in their home country and around the world. The decision to pull the plug is going to hit them hard. But with the right plan in place, you’ll be able to shape the conversation and minimize the negative fallout. You’ll be able to convince your community that it’s better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all.

Relationship respect

Just as building a community is about building a relationship, shutting down a game is like a breakup. If you’ve run a solid, strategic community effort, the relationship between the game and its users is a personal one. You’ve implemented a strategy that brought people closer to your game and to each other. You’ve connected people across cultures and languages and created a tight-knit yet welcoming group of fans.

Your players have invested time and possibly money into your game. You need to treat them with the respect they deserve, not only because it’s the right thing to do but also because your brand is likely bigger than this one game. Full-out abandonment will result in a long-term bad taste in your community’s mouth. You still want to be friends after it’s over.

There may well have already been rumors about the game closing if your game has been in decline for a while. Perhaps you’ve had to combine servers for under-performing interna-

tional communities or updates have started coming out at a noticeably lower cadence. But up until this point, you’ve put on a brave face and reassured your community that there are no plans to shut down the game. You’ve been all in but there’s just no way to make this work anymore.

Your community has come to love and support your game regardless of the fact that you’ve decided it’s time to say goodbye. You will receive negative feedback when you announce that you’re going to end it. Frustration is a natural and inevitable reaction to the feeling of loss that your community is experiencing. Be prepared for this reaction and implement a strategy that recognizes the pain yet actively moves the conversation away from anger and toward nostalgia. Provide avenues to celebrate what was rather than sitting idly by as the conversation devolves into a muddled pit of rants about the void that will remain.

As John Steinbeck warned, the best laid plans oft times go awry. That said, the more thoughtful prep you do, the better your chances are of achieving the desired outcome. Also, the more you tailor your plan to the individual needs of regional fan subsets of your community, the better served they will feel. Perhaps a better way to frame things is to say: prepare as much as you can but be poised to adapt.

Closure minus six months

Six months out is an ideal lead time to give your community a heads-up that the game will be closing. You may need to fast-track this process depending on your company’s and brand’s demands outside of this particular game, the in-real-life (IRL) events that need to be taken into consideration. A lead time of longer than six months is generally too much time for your community to sit and stew in their disappointment. You want

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Figure 1: Excerpts from well-done game closure FAQs.

to give players enough time to go out with a bang rather than a desperate cry (too little time) or a slow, festering whimper (too much time).

Specific company concerns you need to make sure you have covered include checking with your legal department. Do your terms and conditions include language that will be contradicted by actions in your timeline? Do any of these terms and conditions vary by country? Also, depending on the economy set up in your game, are you leaving reasonable time for players to use up the money they've already pumped

into the game on in-game purchases? Ideally you want players to use up all of this including any saved credits or gift cards within the timeframe left to play the game. Do you have developer support for the entire length of time you are planning to keep the game alive? You don't want bugs and missing features in the final months to become your game's legacy.

Once you've weighed all of these factors, it's time to craft your message about the closure itself. Be straight but sympathetic. Breaking up is hard to do, but when you offer your community

some tenderness along with your honesty, it will help to soften the blow.

Your messaging should take place in a synchronized fashion across all of your community channels, both English and international, and all customer-facing stakeholders within your company need a heads-up about what is happening before you message publicly. Prior to releasing your message, the text itself should be fully vetted by your legal team. Representatives from public relations, marketing and customer service should be made fully aware of your complete plan. Don't forget to loop in your international subsidiaries to make sure they are fully aware of the plan as well. Working inside a company it's easy to forget that, often, the customer sees no difference between your departments. All of these entities are "you" and when you are saying one thing over here in response to customer service queries, and another over there on your community forums, you quickly lose credibility. The same goes if one answer is being given within the German community forums that completely contradicts information in the main English channels. Everyone must be on board and informed before the storm erupts post-announcement.

Once you've got your timing and communication plan in place, write the content of the announcement itself and plan strategically where you'll be posting which tailored version of the message.

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Mon	Zoo Corner	discussion		X	X		Suggestion for new pets to add to game
Tue	Animal Creations	image/video	X	X		X	Best fan art of the week promoted
Thu	Where, oh Where	image	X	X	X	X	Drawings submitted with new map ideas. Best idea featured

Figure 2: Example of community campaigns for an active community.

Date	Title	Content	FB	Twitter	Forums	Twitch	Description
Mon	Zoo Corner	discussion		✗	✗		Suggestion for new pets to add to game
Tue	Animal Creations Tribute	image/video	X	X			Call for active submissions for tribute videos that highlight great memories from the game.
Thu	Where, oh Where	image	X	X	X	X	Feature best submissions since game launched

Figure 3: How you might adapt after announcing closure.

Modern community programs don't just encompass one official forum. Your community exists across social channels, forums, blogs, news sites, IRL meet-up groups – official as well as unofficial and across languages and cultures. Your message must be tailored for each of these channels, even if they will be only a short blurb with a link to the main message.

You've been respectful and clear with your players throughout your relationship with them. When you let them know about the game closing, you've got to talk to them in a way that is honest and shows respect for their feelings, but doesn't give them any false hope. This break-up is final. Of course, no matter how clear you are, there will be the online petitions and the pleading. Be gentle; let them know it's not them, it's you. And that no amount of attempts to persuade you will change your mind.

Empathy should be the basis of your philosophy. Most of us have been huge fans of one product or another and know that feeling of absolute devotion. I have a dear friend in Seattle who still posts birthday wishes to the individual members of the Supersonics team on his Facebook page – a team that left Seattle in 2006. Some people never give up.

The closure FAQ

The key thing to keep in mind when you craft your messaging is this: what would you reasonably want to know

and how would you want to be talked to if in their shoes? I say “reasonably” because of course you can't comply with all of their wishes (disclose financials, layout roadmap for future products and so on). But there are many reasonable pieces of information that a community member will expect, and these should be laid out in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page. Remember to keep the community voice as it always was. Tone down the playfulness, but if you've consistently delivered messaging in alignment with themes of war in the game, use this same style here. If your game is for children, write the messaging using the same simplified language and references to the game that you used throughout the life of the community program. See Figure 1 for some examples.

Another decision to make is whether or not to actively push players to your other games, if they exist. This subject must be approached with much care and can vary depending on the regional communities you will be messaging. Get input from your regional moderators on this subject as they'll have the best information on the sensibilities of the particular communities they are supporting. As is always the case with community programs regardless of region, any communication that smacks directly of marketing can come across very poorly and compromise the community team's



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credibility among players. Particularly at a time when you're dealing with the bad news of a game closure, you need to pay very special attention in regard to directing players toward other games of yours. You need to ensure it isn't coming across as a version of, "Hey! We can't get money out of you with this game anymore, so how about you come over and play our other game so we can keep getting your money!?" You may decide to forgo this kind of redirection to be safe.

It's important to disable the comments on the FAQ topic. Disabling comments is key to keeping the conversation controlled. You're not stifling conversation by doing this. There will be several outlets for users to vent and discuss, such as other forum topics they create and social media. But the FAQ will be the last piece of information standing once you completely shut down the program. It will be the place you link to in every communication about the game closure and will be a static message controlled 100% by you.

The key points to hit with an FAQ:

■ *Why?* This often can't be answered directly but you need to have a response in place.

■ *When will the game end?* Provide the exact time and time zone if it's possible for you to share this.

■ *Will refunds of any kind be offered?* What conditions qualify a user for a

refund, and by what means will it be refunded (gift card, original credit card)?

■ *What's next?* Is there a new game in the pipeline? A different version of this one? Again, this can't always be answered directly but at the very least some sort of response indicating that this can't be confirmed at the moment.

■ *Who can I contact if I don't understand how this works?* During the time after the announcement and before the closure, most questions can be answered by the community team. However, once the game ends you'll need to update this messaging with contact info for the customer service team.

You should already have an editorial calendar containing your ongoing community campaigns and messaging. Update this calendar to contain the exact messaging you'll be putting out via the various channels, including the localized versions of the messaging. Make sure that the content is appropriate to the subset of your community. If you have a particularly active group of Russian players involved in an IRL meet-up group, your communication should not only be in Russian but also demonstrate that you are paying attention to that group. Do they meet up at a local bar? Can you reference the bar in the messaging? The more you show your community that you've been listening to them and care about their feelings related to the closure, the better the outcome will be.

Just because your game is closing doesn't mean that every campaign and contest you've been conducting up to this point needs (Figure 2) to come to a screeching halt. But they should be adapted to work within the current reality for your players. Do you have a contest for people to submit new maps they'd like to see? Adapt it to something related to sharing memories about their favorite maps. Is there a writing contest for new storylines? Do a "best of" series. The aim is to move the conversation away from rage and sadness and toward nostalgia (Figure 3).

All messaging related to the closure should include a link back to the FAQ. This way you can update the information as you go along and have it all contained in a centralized location. Eventually you'll edit the FAQ from "The Game Will Close" to "The Game Has Closed" and it will all be in one place. This will save you from headaches down the line.

As I mentioned previously, everyone at your company needs to be aware of what's going on in order to make the post-announce experience go smoothly. As soon as the closure is announced, your company must be prepared to ensure that it is no longer technically possible to register for the game.

You likely have emails, newsletters, in-game messaging and other automated systems in place to get content out to your players. This must be stopped and updated to reflect what is going on with the game. Some of this messaging might come from other parts of your company or regional offices that the community team doesn't control. Make sure you are aware of all current contacts with your players so that no confusing messages end up going out.

Closure minus two weeks

Two weeks prior to the game closing, post additional public messaging reiterating closure plans as well as direct messaging to players using whatever means are available to you. In-game messaging works very well for this in addition to email, of course. Repeat this one week and one day prior to the actual closure.

At the exact time you announce the closure and for some days after, ramp up on your moderation staff hours, as hell hath no fury like a gamer scorned. You are about to receive a flood of



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comments across all channels. The reactions will range from rage to grief. People who are experiencing rage and grief say things they will regret and you need to have an abundantly staffed team of moderators on hand to delete offensive comments as well as provide a counseling of sorts to the stricken members of your community. Your moderation team will need guidance on best practices for dealing with fallout and also frequent check-ins by your community manager (CM). Moderators must have very thick skin to survive in the profession, but even the most seasoned veterans will be challenged by this experience. They will need some pep talks from their CM.

A good tactic to employ is to engage directly in private messages with positive users who you notice are providing constructive comments and taking on a role of spreading information and responding with kind words to upset players. Contacting these players directly with a simple “thank you” for their actions will encourage them to continue along this path and, consequently, help to foster positivity in the community.

Your CM will need to keep close tabs on the comments coming in and potentially adapt messaging, the editorial calendar or the FAQ topic. If a notably large number of people are confused about something, the FAQ should be updated and messaging sent out to address the confusing issue. Your moderators will deal with the minutiae and report to the CM about what is going on, but your CM needs to figure out what these details mean for the big picture health of the process, much as it functions during an active community program.

The closure itself

After the closure itself takes place, neatly button up everything relating to your online presence and finances. Implement whatever conditions have been set for refunds or credits. Questions will continue no matter how well things have been explained. This can be due to language comprehension issues or simply because some people would rather contact customer service than search through written explanations. This is why it's so important to have customer service info in your FAQ. Clear explanations and multiple communications about technical issues and refunds

will help to minimize, but certainly not eliminate, tickets coming into the customer service arm of your company.

The day is here and you've shut down the game. It's time to close down all community channels except the space where your FAQ topic is live. Depending on the size and scope of your company's brand, you'll be able to host that FAQ for as long as you'd like. If you have access to analytics on page views, you can even monitor how often the FAQ is viewed and determine when it's time to pull that down. If your brand consisted of the game, consider the financial burden of continuing to host that site versus the benefit to your former community members. In any case, at least two weeks post-closure is a good rule of thumb for keeping up the FAQ topic.

There is much to consider when taking on the important task of closing down a game community, not to mention your own internal team's feelings

on the matter. Those involved worked hard on this game and on creating a thriving community. Having to end that is no small task and not just a rote, business decision. But the amount of care and planning put into the process will directly affect the legacy of the game and your overall brand's standing in the industry. By treating your community with respect and giving them the best goodbye you can, you'll be doing right by them and they won't forget that. Your international community members won't forget that you gave them the same respect during the end-phase of your game as you did while building up the community during good times, by speaking their language and paying attention to their culture. Breaking up is hard to do, but there are better (and worse) ways of doing it. Lay the groundwork so that you and your community can part ways on good terms. That way, when you run into each other again, you can both feel good about it. **M**



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Localization checklist for mobile games developers

Rebecca Ray

As games developers spend more time creating apps for mobile phones, tablets and the proliferating number of other devices connected to the internet, localizers sometimes struggle to train less experienced colleagues on internationalization requirements. Here are five guidelines for localization teams to share with mobile games developers, be they internal groups or third-party studios. Following these guidelines will lead to smoother collaboration for producing mobile games that are world-ready.

Resist the temptation to create your own widgets for internationalization

Mobile games platforms provide language- and locale-sensitive application programming interfaces for parsing, searching and sorting properly in local languages. Use locale settings to present numerical and time information properly, including calendars, by language and country (see Figure 1). There are also ways to handle different formats for currencies, personal names, phone numbers, mailing addresses and punctuation (see Figure 2).



Rebecca Ray is a senior analyst at the market research firm Common Sense Advisory. Her primary research focus includes enterprise globalization, social media, multilingual SEO and global product development.

Language	Dates	Times	Numbers
English (US)	Sunday, January 5, 2014 1/5/14	7:08:09 AM PST 7:08 AM	1,234.56 \$4,567.89
English (Germany)	Sunday 5 January 2014 05/01/14	7:08:09 PST 7:08	1.234,56 €4.567,89

Figure 1: Example of date, time and number formats

Test during development to enable simultaneous language releases

Reserve time early in your development schedule to test robustness for internationalization with globalization compliance checkers or pseudo-localization techniques that generate strings with the characteristics of the target language. These environments generate pseudo-Chinese or -Arabic that previews how your code will handle issues such as string corruption, text expansion, and language direction. Resolving these problems during initial app development reduces the amount of time required for localization, and also reduces requests for bug fixes or workarounds. All of this leads to reduced localization testing, which means that you can release your app to all markets at the same time.

Region	quotedString= "@%@iPhone%@"
China	iPhone
France	«iPhone»
Japan	「iPhone」

Figure 2: Punctuation varies by language and country.

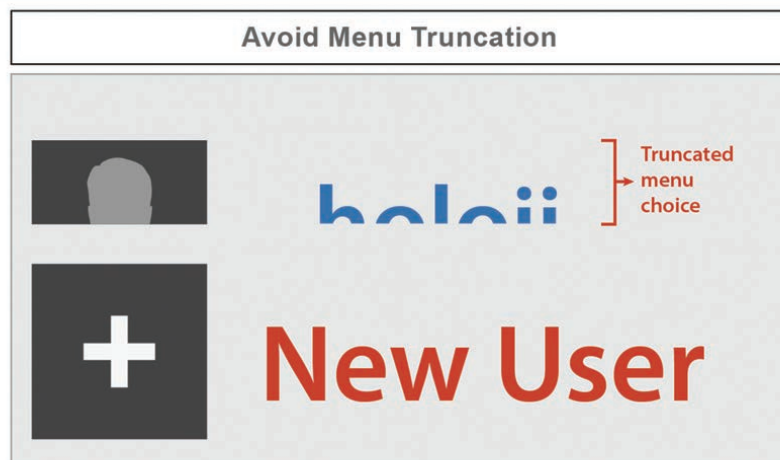


Figure 3: Example of a truncated menu choice.
Source: Common Sense Advisory, Inc. and Calories LLC.

Avoid truncation and resizing problems

Make life easier for localization managers, quality assurance staff and translators – not to mention yourself – by taking advantage of platform capabilities that reposition and resize text appropriately, regardless of the user's language or locale preferences. Remove fixed-width constraints so text fields and labels can accept more characters to display properly. Avoid setting minimum or maximum sizes for windows so that content can automatically adjust itself, depending on local language requirements. By doing so, you avoid inadvertently cutting off menu items (see Figure 3) and creating screens that appear as the wrong size.

Use variables wisely

Implementing placeholder text to save time and space is one of the first things that every developer learns, whether in school or on the job. For example: "I met with {a woman | women | a man | men | people}," where the code calls on the variable required, according to context. The problem is that languages have different grammatical rules, so the way in which a translator renders this sentence will depend on the target language. For this specific case, some languages must take gender into account, while others change the verb. Your challenge as a developer is to balance the work of creating a separate string for every possibility versus the compromise of accepting a few grammatical errors. Consult your localization team for guidance.

Pay attention to fonts in Asian languages.

As long as you adhere to the internationalization guidelines provided by the platform you're coding for, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other Asian language versions should perform as designed, even when text is required to render vertically instead of horizontally. However, fonts can cause problems. Characters that appear beautifully on the desktop or tablet in European languages may not be available for mobile devices in some Asian languages, or they may require tweaking or substitution for readability. When localization managers or producers request work-arounds for this issue, inform them politely that it's a design issue for them to resolve.

One of the best ways to avoid internationalization-related bugs and rework on your part is to accept input and questions from localizers. There are many ways to accomplish this: a) host a webinar early in the development process to present UI designs and the newest, coolest features to translators, localization service providers, and your own internal localization and testing staff; b) set up a query system for translators and reviewers; or c) participate in a weekly call with the localization team.

By integrating localization guidelines provided by mobile development platforms and collaborating closely with the people responsible for localizing what you create, you will be well on your way to achieving success in local markets. **M**



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A case for dedicated games localization tools

Rolf Klischewski

As opposed to other narrative media such as films or books, many games do not have a single fixed ending. In fact, they do not have a singular plot or story in the classic sense. Instead their focus is on creating total immersion, the illusion of each individual player having a unique gameplay experience. And while that does not boil down to each and every reader of, say, a novel, having a story tailor-made for themselves, it's still not all that far-fetched a comparison.

Any current role-playing game (RPG) will feature a more or less predefined story set in a more or less predefined world. We have a setting (Mordor, for instance) and a set of rules (Elves live in woods, Hobbits in caves with round doors). Within those boundaries, players may experience various storylines and make their own decisions. There'll be some do-gooders and some psychos. There will be repercussions and consequences, even dead ends and permanent death.

Now, to create that enormous and complex illusion of total freedom of choice and infinite variety, the game has to cover many eventualities, take care of a vast number of possibilities. You want to pickpocket Gandalf? Sure. Feel like swearing fealty to Sauron? Done. Have a craving for



Rolf Klischewski is a freelance games translator and games consultant. He teaches games localization at Thomas More University in Antwerp, Belgium and sits on the editorial board of the Journal of Internationalisation and Localisation (JIAL) and the IGDA.

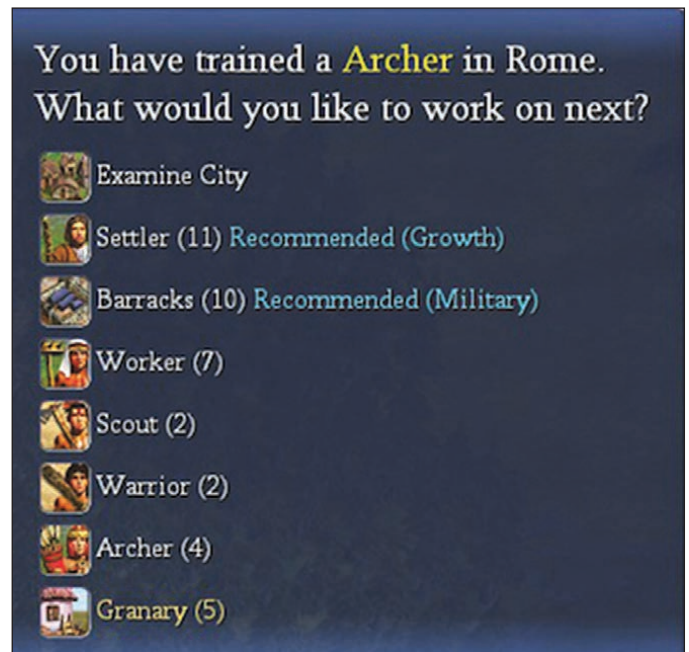


Figure 1: Sid Meier's *Civilization IV*, 2005.

setting Sauramon's beard on fire? Why not? All of those choices and decisions will become unique elements of an individual player's gameplay experience. So they have to be in the game's code. Imagine a book that keeps changing depending on what you want to happen next. It's interactive storytelling, and there's nothing quite like it outside of games.

On a technical level, the only way to make this work is the use of variables or placeholders. This often starts with a player entering his or her name right at the beginning of their journey, but it certainly doesn't stop there. Many games are all about items and so-called quests, which in

turn are all about getting items, doing errands and odd jobs and solving puzzles. Most game programmers will try to tackle the problem of all that diversity with variables. It's hard to blame them, really, because coding something in the vein of "You find a %ITEM" and filling a database with entries such as sword, bow and armadillo is much easier than actually writing out several thousand instances of the same sentence with the item being the only difference.

This is where the problems start for most languages. Actually, it doesn't even work in English, to be perfectly honest, as seen in Figure 1. The text engine (the part of the game's pro-



Figure 2: From Sid Meier's *Civilization IV*, 2005.

gramming code dealing with text) usually has no way of knowing exactly what it shows on the screen. Enabling a game to tell the difference between nouns starting with a vowel or consonant (and drawing

the right conclusions from that in each and every context) is something most programmers would consider to be beyond their call of duty in their own language, let alone in foreign languages.

As if working with a complex narrative text with a lot of embedded code weren't enough of a challenge, the price we have to pay for a (seemingly) infinite variety of choices and stories is a huge number of words. 300,000 words for an RPG are not all that uncommon, and due to a number of factors, translation needs to be done by several translators working simultaneously on different parts or chapters.

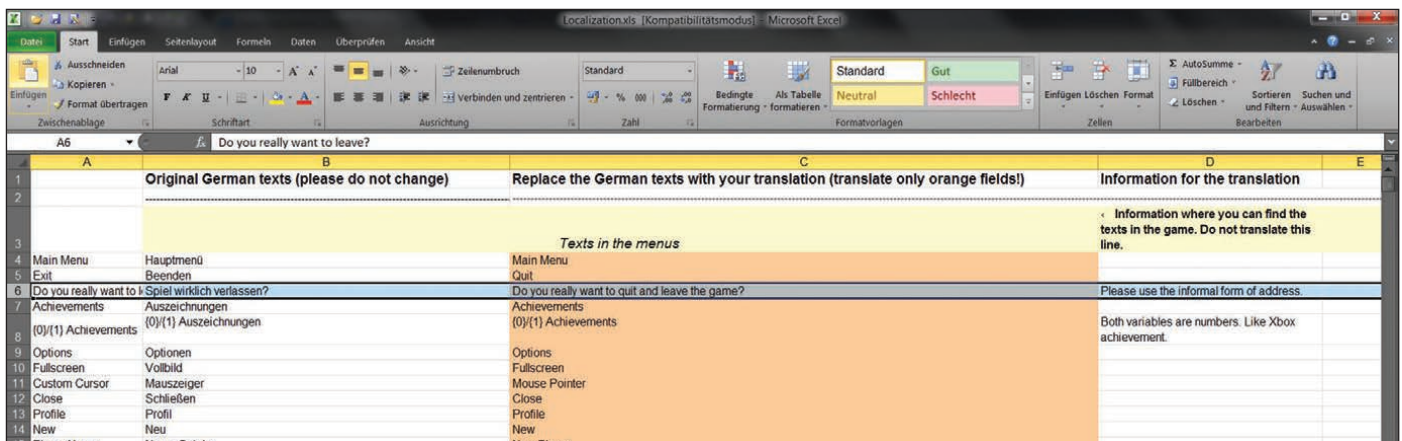


Figure 3: Game text opened in Microsoft Excel.



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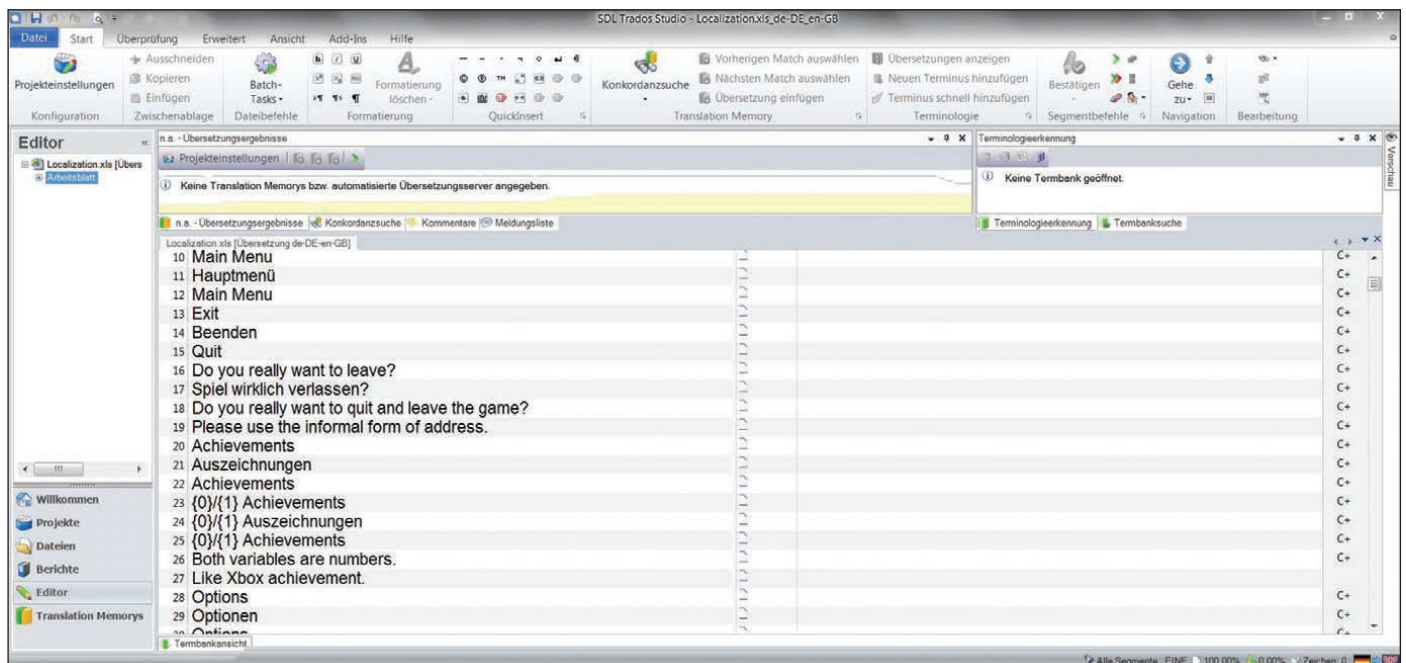


Figure 4: The same file in Trados Studio 2014.

Sticking with those 300,000 words, let's say we have five translators taking care of 60,000 words (about 200 pages) each. Apart from some menu texts and messages (errors, status, feedback and so on) most of their work will consist of narrative texts such as dialogues, background stories and quest texts. Since all of them have to start translating at the same time and face the same deadline, only one of them is going to have a chance to get into the game's story right from the start. Everybody else is going to deal with events that take place in the middle and at the end of the game. They won't know how certain characters developed, who betrayed whom, what happened when and so forth. Granted, they might have access to the game's design document or even the game itself, but even so, most of the time there's going to be a lack of context.

Let's take another look at Sid Meier's *Civilization IV*.

Luckily, we can ignore the fact that the German text on the right is too long and cut off. Much more interesting is the fact that *Power* (in the sense of "political power") was translated as *Elektrizität* ("electricity" or "electric power"), probably because the translator in question simply had no chance of knowing about this particu-

lar context. Of course, why and how this mistake made it through quality control and into the release version of the game is another question.

Even if you have a design document or a version of the game, your deadline often won't leave you enough time to actually play the game or immerse yourself in its story and structure. Most likely you'll be dealing with a single column of cells filled with various kinds of texts. Frequently you won't know what Siegbert did to Ethel on Woodberry Pines, why King Grisbald invaded the Northern Plains or whether Castle Shiverdomb is a *Burg* or *Schloss* in German (it's complicated). You won't know whether Princess Clarigold and Brom the Bold shared a kiss by that pond, which, in German, would mean you'd have to change the form of address they're using (it's even more complicated). And, of course, we'll end up with five different styles of writing.

Let's take a look at how we're currently dealing with these challenges of translating what you may call technical prose.

Current localization tools

What are we working with? Ironically, Microsoft Excel still seems to be something like the gold standard of games localization tools (Figure 3). Many developers design their game's text engine to

export files as Comma Separated Values (CSV), which in turn many localization vendors tend to open and edit in Excel.

Usually we have one language per column, often many different languages on a single sheet. Sometimes we even have context information in a separate column, but that depends entirely on the developers' text production workflow. On their side, texts may be created and edited and annotated in an entirely different format, Excel being nothing more and nothing less than a file exchange tool. Some developers will enter a wealth of information in their context columns; others won't even have anything to add to their plain source texts. In the above example, the source text is in column B, the translation in column C and some comments in column D.

Now let's take a look at how Trados Studio 2014 handles this rather basic file (Figure 4). First of all, we have to hide all columns except for B.

As you can see, the context information is gone. We'd have to refer to the original Excel file, open it and Alt-Tab whenever we'd like to have more context. So even if context information is technically available, it stays outside of Trados Studio.

Before we can open our file in memoQ 2014, we have to copy the source text into the target column. As

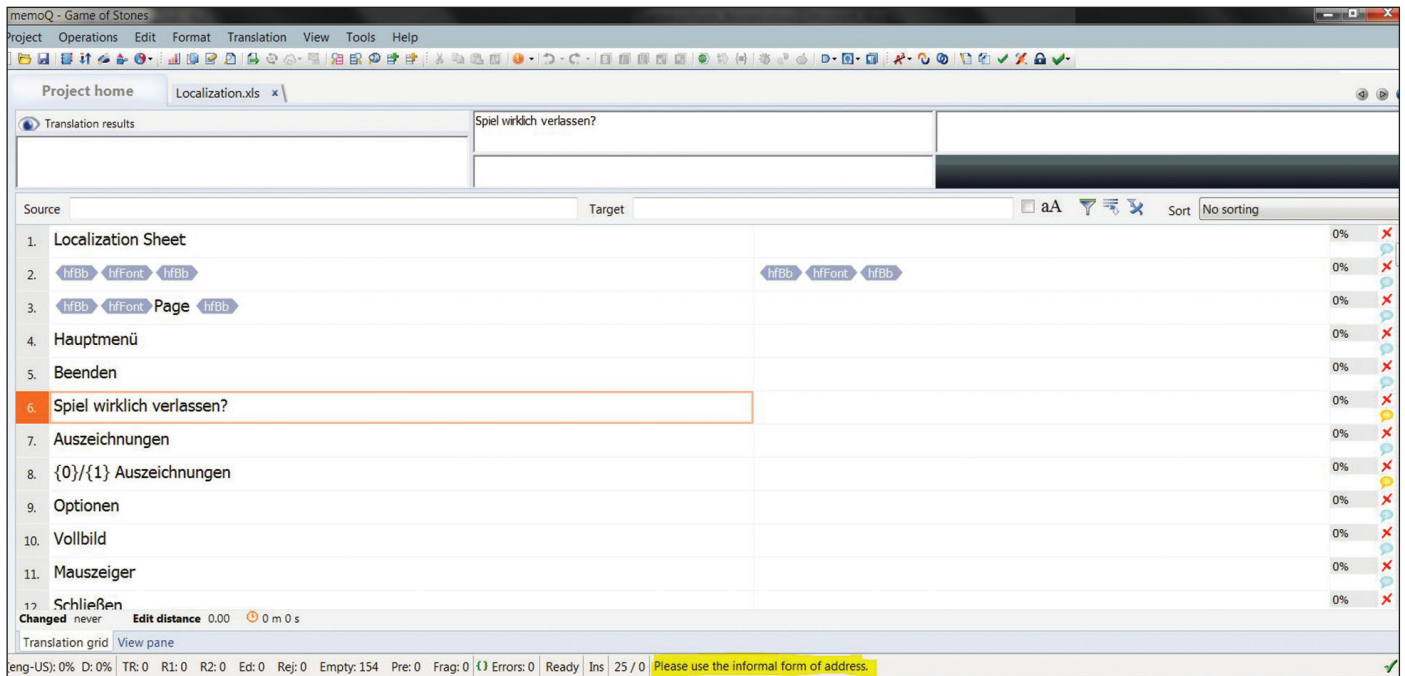


Figure 5: The sample file in memoQ 2014.

opposed to Trados Studio, memoQ lets you choose the Excel cells you want to translate. The translation then overwrites the source text.

As you can see, it is possible to include context information in memoQ 2014, which is a huge step forward into

the right direction. The feature itself is still quite rudimentary and not nearly as flexible as it should be for games localization. For instance, the context information needs to be stored within the same Excel sheet and it has to be in the same line.

Trados Studio and memoQ make our work a lot easier by adding the benefits of translation memories and glossaries (or TermBases), and while memoQ offers a simple option for adding context information, the use of external data sources is still not supported.

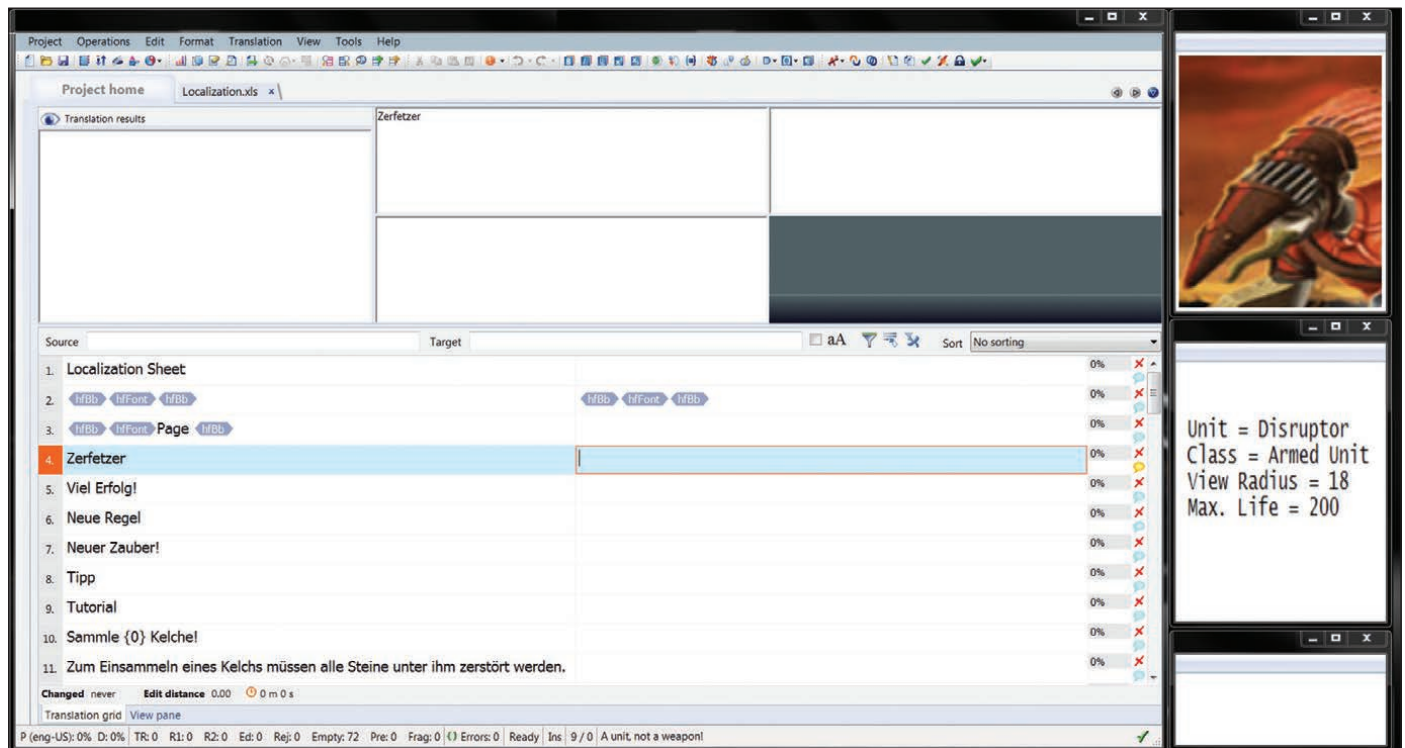


Figure 6: Games Localization System with a unit's in-game parameters.

To make things worse, neither Trados Studio nor memoQ have an option to actually define variables within a project. So, for example, we can't tell either tool to handle {0} as a placeholder for numbers or characters. We can't just simulate how the game at hand would replace those variables with, say, item names, even though those very item's names are usually part of the same translation project. And as we've seen in Figures 1 and 2, having more context information and the proper values for our variables might very well make all the difference between a good or a bad localization.

The ideal tool

So, what might a translation tool look like that's better suited to the needs of our trade? As our previous examples have shown, any dedicated games localization software will have to feature both context information and support for variables.

Introducing the as-yet fictitious Games Localization System, as seen in Figure 6.

Granted, this particular system uses a more WordFast-like approach, but for our purposes that doesn't make much of a difference. What does make a difference is a number of little helpful windows on the right. The GLS (as I'll call it from now on) uses a translation memory and a glossary, just like its real-world cousins. But on top of that we now have some handy context information.

So, when we ask ourselves what a "Disruptor" looks like in this particular context, we have a small illustration answering that question, and we're a lot less likely to translate it as a Klingon gun, for example. Now, where does that information come from? Well, during the development of a game dozens and dozens of illustrations and character models are made, both for the game itself but also for promotional purposes. We tap

into that existing resource and make it available to translators. All it takes, apart from having access to those images in any standard format, is linking those graphics to texts. When we're talking about in-game items, those are quite often stored in separate arrays or databases. So linking them with images shouldn't be much of a problem, and it's something tech-savvy games linguists could do themselves.

Alternatively we could have other kinds of context information on the screen — for example the in-game characteristics of units such as our little Disruptor.

As for variables, we could use a similar approach.

Imagine that we've defined the variable {1} to have three possible values: Bronze Medal, Silver Medal and Gold Medal. As a bonus, we have a little preview of what such a medal might look like. Again, this is just another case of linking existing databases and using existing assets to assist translators within one and the same localization environment.

Prerequisites for such a system to come into existence and work are data in an accessible format, cooperative developers, linguistic expertise and, of course, development funding. Any localization-aware developer will have realized by now that the old mantra of "localization doesn't sell (more) copies" has been disproved by too many games to count. Consequently, they'll have a vested interest in turning localization from a cost to a profit center, and they're much more likely to create their data and text assets with localization in mind.

Ultimately, everybody wins. Developers will stop seeing localization as a necessary evil and a nuisance. They will find out that creating localization-ready games will save them valuable time (and money) and help them generate revenue in foreign-language markets. Translators will have a much easier time making sense of what they have to work with, which will translate into, well, better translations. And gamers will be able to enjoy games independently of the language they choose to play in. **M**



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Translation in Iceland

Sarah Calek

Iceland, a country with a little over 325,000 inhabitants, has in recent years primarily been known for that unpronounceable volcano that caused so many air traffic disruptions in 2010. News readers worldwide struggled with *Eyjafjallajökull* ['ɛɪjaˌfjatˌlaˌjœkʏtʃ].

But the Icelandic language itself has much more to offer than some tongue-twisting phonemes. It is a North Germanic language that still is quite close to Old Norse, the language that later developed into Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish. Many of the first settlers in Iceland came from the western region of the Scandinavian Peninsula, which now belongs to Norway. While the languages in Scandinavia changed substantially over time, Icelandic remained largely unchanged.

In contrast to Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, Icelandic still uses four grammatical cases and three grammatical genders. In Norwegian, the three genders can be reduced to two (animate/inanimate), but there still are three grammatical genders available. The actual use depends on the speaker's dialect and language variant. There are only remnants of the old system of inflection still present in modern Norwegian.

Because of the comparatively few changes in the language, modern Icelanders are usually able to read the Old Norse texts like the Edda texts and sagas. The term *Edda* usually refers both to the so-called Prose and Poetic Edda. Both compilations contain the oldest recordings of Old Norse mythology. Most of these texts were written down roughly around the thirteenth century after being passed on orally. The actual age of those oral sources is uncertain.

Modern Icelandic is a very puristic language: internationalisms and word borrowings are rarely to be found. This linguistic policy has led to some very creative new Icelandic

terms such as *tölva* ['tʰœlva] for computer. The word is a combination of the words *tala* (number) and *völva* (a female seer from old Norse mythology). Thus, a computer is referred to as a number seer in Icelandic. Many scientific terms have been altered accordingly: the Icelandic for biology is *líf-fræði* ['lifˌfraiːðɪ] (the science of life) and math has been adapted into Icelandic as *stærðfræði* ['stairðˌfraiːðɪ], the science of size. Danish, Norwegian and Swedish are influenced more by other languages, which can at least partially be explained by the fact that Iceland is much more remote than the Scandinavian Peninsula. Using Norwegian as an example again, the word computer may be translated as PC [pɛːsɛ] or *datamaskin* ['dɑːtamaʃiːn], data machine. The word computer may also be found in the online dictionary by the Norwegian Language Council and Oslo University (www.nob-ordbok.uio.no). Biology (*biology* [bruluˈgiː]) and math (*matematikk* [matəmaˈtik] or colloquially *matte* ['matə]) are certainly much easier for foreigners to recognize than the Icelandic translations above.

Translation in the Nordic countries

When it comes to translation and localization, the three more common Nordic languages, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, are often treated as if they were one language. Most of the text is often written in Danish, with a few words written in several variants to include any different vocabulary and to avoid misunderstandings due to false friends. This is often the case in user manuals or for product

Sarah Calek just finished her master's degree in software localization at Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in Germany. She now works as a freelance translator from English and Norwegian into German.





A glacier tongue close to the Katla volcano. The Icelandic landscape is a major reason that tourism has become more and more important to the Icelandic economy. *Photo by Sarah Calek.*

packaging. The three languages are very similar to each other and each individual market is often regarded as being too small for individually localized products. Iceland is an even smaller market and inter-Scandinavian communication does not include Iceland (or the Faroe Islands, for that matter), even though the three main Scandinavian languages, Faroese and Icelandic all share the same origins.

It is therefore very common to see imported goods for sale that have not been adapted to the Icelandic market. Icelanders cannot rely on every product or service to be available in their own mother tongue. Foreign books, computer or board games and movies as well as many groceries are often sold without any adaptation – instead, Icelanders fall back on English or a Scandinavian language (often Danish) source or another foreign

language. The quite popular DVD/Blu-ray boxes of the TV series *Game of Thrones* (partially shot in Iceland) are, for example, only available in English. Some versions feature subtitles in English, French, German, Danish, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian. The frequent lack of Icelandic versions of a certain product is one reason for the very good language skills of so many Icelanders.

The same is true for video games. I could not find any localized video games in Icelandic and even the game companies based in Iceland usually produce their games in English. Some of the better known games and companies from Iceland are *Aaru's Awakening* by Lumenox Games (lumenox.is), *EVE Online* by CCP Games (ccpgames.com) and *QuizUp* by Plain Vanilla Games (quizup.com). There are also a few game apps that are published in

Icelandic, most of them from a single family company producing Icelandic educational game apps for children (gebokano.com/um). Another app company based in Reykjavik develops database programs and service apps especially for diverse Icelandic companies. They started out with an English gaming app for iPhone (Ringo was released in 2009: ymir.is/apps.jsp). Skema, established in 2011, is another noteworthy company in this context. It promotes coding as a subject in primary and secondary schools in Iceland (skema.is/english).

In spite of the lack of the Icelandic language in games, video games seem to be quite popular in Iceland. There is an association called the Icelandic Gaming Industry (igi.is), which currently consists of eight companies working in the field of programming and gaming. This association also

organizes regular game development contests. The video contents available on the latest game development contest are completely in English, the “gaming language” in Iceland. This can be considered a typical phenomenon among less common languages and may lead to the quite misleading assumption that translation and localization are unimportant in Iceland.

So what kind of translation needs could possibly arise on an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean? There may not be a lot of translation into Icelandic, although there are of course some exceptions, but there has been a certain degree of globalized business taking place in Iceland in recent years.

Even though Iceland may seem remote at first glance, its international economy and the increasing role of tourism for the country are just two aspects that should be taken into consideration. This kind of globalization means mainly that a lot of Icelandic businesses have started to operate internationally, or to cooperate more and more with international business partners. Of course, there have always been a few branches that are internationally active by definition. I work as a freelance translator for an online gaming company in Reykjavik and they never even tried developing any of their content in Icelandic first. Their product is globally available and involves a lot of programming and software development, so English is the first choice here. Not even this Iceland-based company can afford to spend any resources on Icelandic localization – the user interface is currently available in English, German and Russian and the official website offers a French version in addition to the three languages mentioned before.

Although Icelandic is rarely translated outside of Iceland and only a few documents are translated into Icelandic, translation and localization needs arise when doing business on an international level.

Tourism

Tourism has become more and more important to Iceland's economy. The increasing number of tourists has also created a demand for more information to be available in different languages. The most com-

monly available language is English, but there are more and more guided tours and websites available in other languages as well. The website www.visiticeland.com, as an example, is available in English, German, Danish, Icelandic, Spanish, French, Norwegian, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Chinese and Russian. The languages offered on that website also give a little insight into the languages that visitors to Iceland speak. According to Promote Iceland, the tourism branch is directly supported by the Icelandic Department of Tourism and Creative Industries. Depending on the initial circumstances, tourism related texts are either translated from Icelandic or English originals. Most foreigners working in Iceland live in and around Reykjavik and most tourists start their trip to Iceland in the capital. Reykjavik is therefore comparatively well prepared to accommodate the needs of foreigners who have no knowledge of Icelandic. Restaurant menus have

at least been translated into English and often are available in additional languages; employees in banks, at the post office and in stores of any kind usually speak very good English; and ATM services are available in several languages. In order to provide professional information materials in several languages, professional translation is needed. Companies such as Reykjavik Excursions (a bus company that offers sightseeing tours), Loftið Bar and Kopar Restaurant, as well as hotels, banks and public service providers, use professional language services to cover their localization and translation needs, even for the language pair Icelandic-English. Language service providers in Iceland do therefore often translate from Icelandic into other languages if the project in question is related to the tourism industry.

Promote Iceland also offers an incentive for foreign film producers to film in Iceland. Of all the money spent during a film's production in

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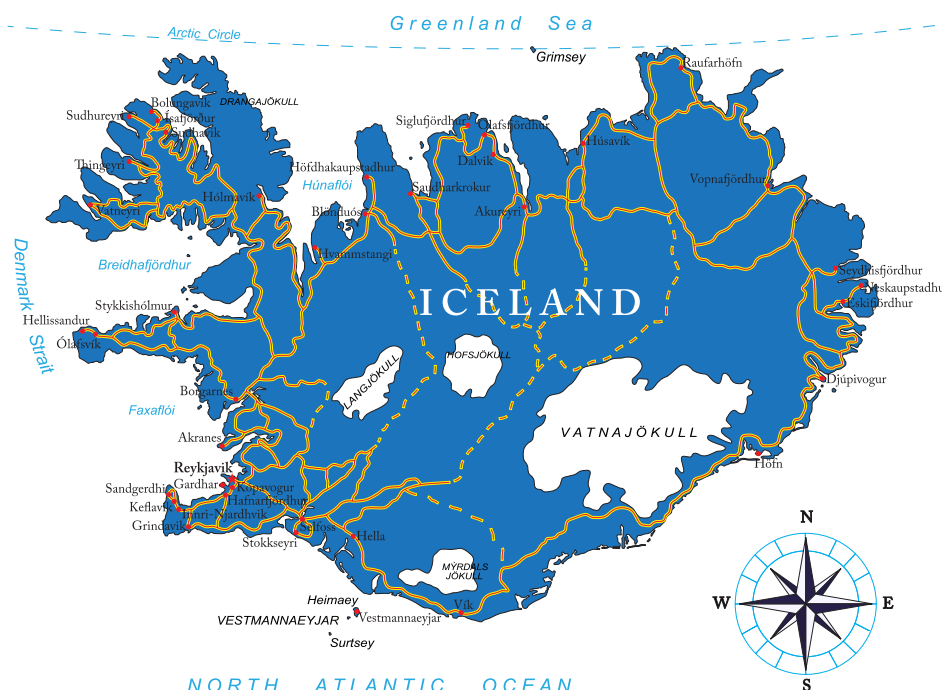


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Map of Iceland. National parks are shown in white.

Iceland, 20% of these production costs are reimbursed by the state. Some of the latest movies partially produced in Iceland are *Interstellar*, *Halo: Nightfall* and *Noah*.

International business

There are quite a few initiatives by the government that aim to attract foreign businesses to Iceland and to help the country's own economy grow through international business. Promote Iceland (Íslandsstofa) is a cooperation of public and private members that is very active in this area. Its main goals "are promoting Iceland as a tourism destination, assisting in the promotion of Icelandic culture abroad, and introducing Iceland as an attractive option for foreign direct investment."

One effect of the increasing international connections is a growing percentage of foreigners living in Iceland. According to the population data available from Statistics Iceland, the overall percentage of foreign citizens living in Iceland increased from just about 2.6% in 2000 to 7% in 2014. Furthermore, the Multicultural and Information Centre (www.mcc.is/english) published a paper in 2013

that gives a few more insights into immigration numbers. According to this paper, most immigrants (21,466 individuals in 2013) were from Poland (by far the biggest group), followed by Lithuania, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Philippines, Thailand and Portugal. The website of the Multicultural and Information Centre is available in Icelandic, English, Polish, Hungarian, Thai, Spanish, Russian and Lithuanian to meet the needs of those immigrant groups. Thus, translation and interpretation services for foreigners living in Iceland are important in order to provide help for medical issues, the completion of immigration forms and the translation of non-Icelandic documents into Icelandic, the sole official language in Iceland. In this context, Polish-Icelandic and Lithuanian-Icelandic are probably some of the most popular language combinations, judging from the statistics quoted above.

Apart from the Icelandic fishing industry, which has traditionally been an important export factor, and the previously mentioned expansion of the tourism sector, energy intensive industries – the aluminum industry

and IT-related services such as data centers – have gained relevance as sources of revenue. In today's globalized world, Iceland's rich sources of geothermal and water power can be made available both for national and international businesses.

Icelandic literature

There is, however, one area in which translation is subsidized directly to promote Iceland abroad. The Icelandic Literature Center supports translators who wish to translate Icelandic literature into other languages. The Center was established in 2013 and its goals are "to support the publication of Icelandic works of literature and the publication of literary works translated into Icelandic... to raise awareness of Icelandic literature, both within Iceland and abroad, and promote its distribution – as well as nurture literary culture in Iceland." Literature is important in this country – the BBC reported in October 2013 that Iceland has more writers, more books published and more books read, per capita, than anywhere else in the world.

The grants offered for translations of Icelandic literature into other languages usually cover a portion of the translation fee charged by the designated translator. There is also an impressively long list of translators to be found for Icelandic as source language. The list includes 24 different target languages, most of them European. Some of the more unusual combinations to be found on that list are Icelandic-Greenlandic, Icelandic-Japanese and Icelandic-Serbian.

Thus, regarding the state of translation in Iceland, literary translation and tourism are two especially important driving forces for the translation industry. Thanks to the internet and today's global networks, Iceland's formerly remote position in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean has become less of a hindrance to its position in the global market. Although the Icelandic language itself is not one of the more influential ones in today's globalized world, it certainly is an important part of the Icelandic culture. It is very probably due to the lack of choice in the matter that nonlocalized products are accepted by Icelandic customers. **M**

Basic terminology

This section offers terminology, abbreviations, acronyms and other resources, especially as related to the content of this issue. For more definitions, see the Glossary section of MultiLingual's annual Resource Directory and Index (www.multilingual.com/resourceDirectory).

A/B testing. In the context of marketing and business intelligence, a randomized experiment with two variants, A and B, which are the control and treatment in the controlled experiment. It is a form of statistical hypothesis testing with two variants.

application programming interface (API). A software interface that enables applications to communicate with each other. An API is the set of programming language constructs or statements that can be coded in an application program to obtain the specific functions and services provided by an underlying operating system or service program.

computer-aided translation (CAT). Computer technology applications that assist in the act of translating text from one language to another.

consecutive interpreting. The interpreter begins his or her interpretation of a complete message after the speaker has stopped producing the source utterance. At the time that the interpretation is rendered, the interpreter is the only person in the communication environment who is producing a message. Normally, in consecutive interpreting, the interpreter is alongside the speaker, listening and taking notes as the speech progresses. When the speaker has finished or comes to a pause, the interpreter reproduces the message in the target language, in its entirety and as though he or she were making the original speech.

content management system (CMS). A system used to store and subsequently find and retrieve large amounts of data. CMSs were not originally designed to synchronize translation and localization of content, so most have been partnered with globalization management systems.

crowdsourcing. The act of taking a task traditionally performed by an employee or contractor and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people, in the form of an open call. For example, the public may be invited to develop a new technology, carry out a design task, refine an algorithm, or help capture, systematize or analyze large amounts of data.

The Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA). A topic-oriented XML-based document architecture managed

by the DITA Technical Committee at the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS).

eXtensible Markup Language (XML). A programming language/specification pared down from SGML, an international standard for the publication and delivery of electronic information, designed especially for web documents.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO). A network of national standards institutes from 145 countries working in partnership with international organizations, governments, industry, business and consumer representatives. ISO acts as a bridge between public and private sectors.

internationalization (i18n). Especially in a computing context, the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions (currency, number separators, dates) without the need for redesign.

Internationalization Tag Set (ITS). A set of attributes and elements designed to provide internationalization and localization support in XML. ITS 2.0 is the current version of the standard.

localization (l10n). In this context, the process of adapting a product or software to a specific international language or culture so that it seems natural to that particular region. True localization considers language, culture, customs and the characteristics of the target locale.

machine translation (MT). A technology that translates text from one human language to another, using terminology glossaries and advanced grammatical, syntactic and semantic analysis techniques.

natural language processing (NLP). A main focus of computational linguistics, the aim of NLP is to devise techniques to automatically analyze large quantities of spoken (transcribed) or written text in ways that parallel what happens when humans perform this task.

OASIS Open Architecture for XML Authoring and Localization (OAXAL). A technical committee encouraging

the development of an open standards approach to XML authoring and localization.

Organization for Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS). Formerly called SGML Open. An IT standardization consortium based in the state of Massachusetts. Its foundational sponsors include IBM and Microsoft. Localization buy-side, toolmakers and service providers are also well represented.

OSCAR. LISA's technical committee (special interest group) for actual standardization work. Explanation of the acronym is somewhat strained, meaning Open Standards for Container/Content Allowing Reuse. OSCAR was dissolved along with LISA in February 2011.

project management (PM). The systematic planning, organizing and controlling of allocated resources to accomplish project cost, time and performance objectives. PM is normally reserved for focused, nonrepetitive, time-limited activities with some degree of risk.

return on investment (ROI). In finance, the ratio of money gained or lost on an investment relative to the amount of money invested. The amount of money gained or lost may be referred to as interest, profit/loss, gain/loss or net income/loss.

rule-based machine translation (RBMT). The application of sets of linguistic rules that are defined as correspondences between the structure of the source language and that of the target language. The first stage involves analyzing the input text for morphology and syntax — and sometimes semantics — to create an internal representation. The translation is then generated from this representation using extensive lexicons with morphological, syntactic and semantic information, and large sets of rules.

simship. Simultaneous shipment of a product to different markets worldwide, as opposed to releasing in the home market first and in other locales later.

simultaneous interpreting. The interpreter reformulates the message into the target language as quickly as possible while the source speaker is speaking. Normally, in simultaneous interpreting between spoken languages, the interpreter sits at a microphone in a soundproof booth, usually with a clear view of the speaker, listening through headphones to the incoming message in the source language. The interpreter then relays the message in the target language into the microphone to whoever is listening.

social games. In this context, a social network game, a type of online game distributed primarily through social networks such as Facebook. Social games are usually characterized by community, often built around the existing social network, and the ability to drop in and out of the game without ever winning or losing.

source language (SL). A language that is to be translated into another language.

statistical machine translation (SMT). A machine translation paradigm where translations are generated on the basis of statistical models whose parameters are derived from the analysis of bilingual text corpora. SMT is the translation of text from one human language to another by a computer that learned how to translate from vast amounts of translated text.

TMX (Translation Memory eXchange). An open XML standard for the exchange of translation memory data created by computer-aided translation and localization tools.

translation management system (TMS). Sometimes also known as a globalization management system, a TMS automates localization workflow to reduce the time and money employed by manpower. It typically includes process management technology to automate the flow of work and linguistic technology to aid the translator.

translation memory (TM). A special database that stores previously translated sentences which can then be reused on a sentence-by-sentence basis. The database matches source to target language pairs.

Unicode. The Unicode Worldwide Character Standard (Unicode) is a character encoding standard used to represent text for computer processing. Originally designed to support 65,000 characters, it now has encoding forms to support more than one million characters.

Web Ontology Language (OWL). A family of knowledge representation languages or ontology languages for authoring ontologies or knowledge bases. The languages are characterized by formal semantics and RDF/XML-based serializations for the Semantic Web. OWL is endorsed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and has attracted academic, medical and commercial interest.

whispering interpreting. Also called *chuchotage*, the interpreter sits or stands next to the intended audience and interprets simultaneously in a whisper. This mode does not require any equipment. Whispered interpretation is often used in situations when the majority of a group speaks one language, and a limited number of people do not speak the source language.

XML Localization Interchange File Format (XLIFF). An XML-based format for exchanging localization data. Standardized by OASIS in April 2002 and aimed at the localization industry, XLIFF specifies elements and attributes to aid in localization. XLIFF could be used to exchange data between companies, such as a software publisher and a localization vendor, or between localization tools, such as translation memory systems and machine translation systems.

xml:tm (XML-based Text Memory). A standard for XML to allow ease of translation of XML documents.

ASSOCIATIONS



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Elia, the European Language Industry Association, brings together translation, localization and interpreting companies that do business in Europe. The association provides its members with tools and opportunities to improve their businesses such as training and networking events, resources for business development and joint marketing efforts. Above all, Elia is a community of peers. It is a place for language companies to learn, grow, socialize and share. Join us. Discover Elia. Share the enthusiasm.

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Oleg Semerikov



Three ways to guarantee translator/agency happiness

Finding a reliable and trustworthy agency to work with as a freelance translator can sometimes feel like a tall order. Particularly as more of us start working online and new translation agencies proliferate, it can be hard to tell a terrible translation services company from the genuine article. But it is possible to find an employer who pays on time, offers a steady stream of interesting work and is professional and friendly. Here are three ways to ensure your new potential employer turns out to be a keeper.

It's good to talk

Topping the list of qualities you want in an agency is communication. Right from the start you should have a designated contact person within the agency who handles the on-boarding process, from contracts and nondisclosure agreements to explaining billing and dispute resolution processes. If the company seems disorganized or unclear about who's in charge of what, proceed with caution. Whenever they approach you with a new job, they should specify their expectations regarding price and deadline in writing, ideally together with the project order number. If you're having a hard time finishing a translation for whatever reason, be it technical snags, terminological problems or anything else, they should be keen to resolve the situation. Any professional agency will also be happy to communicate with you in the event of payment problems. Sometimes even the best agencies might pay late, often owing to circumstances outside of their control, but if they aren't communicating clearly about when you can expect your money, it's fair to give them a wide berth in the future.

Money, money, money

One topic that always has the potential to cause friction in any relationship is money, and the translator/agency relationship is no different. A good-quality agency should be willing to pay you a fair price for your hard work, and shouldn't haggle with you endlessly to beat you down. Hold your ground here, and be very clear that there is a difference

between offering discounts and being a doormat. Agencies can get away with paying such shockingly low rates because translators accept them, so do everybody a favor and demand market rates for your experience level, skill set and specialism.

That said, don't expect an agency to pay as much as direct clients. For a start, direct clients are a lot more work, requiring more self-promotion to get them in the first place and much more communication about the work process to keep them happy. Agencies keep this off your plate, so you just communicate with the project manager, who should already have a clear understanding of the translation process. They also have to pay for their own staff. But the slightly lower rates that agencies offer are more than compensated for by the fact that they can provide a steady stream of income, which can become your most reliable monthly check.

Valuing you and everything you do

Finally, great agencies know that they are no more than the sum of their parts, just like any company. They should be involved and interested in their translators' professional development, offering useful feedback, helping you out with technical problems, perhaps providing online training or resources or even incentivising translators with financial rewards. They should be willing to write you testimonials and even recommend you to other companies.

These tips should make it easy for you to weed out nightmare agencies, but if you end up with one anyway, don't feel bad. Every translator has a horror story about a nonpaying agency, and it's part of the job description that sometimes you'll get your fingers burnt. Nevertheless, there are still a lot of great agencies out there for the finding, so good luck! **M**

Oleg Semerikov is an English to Russian and Ukrainian translator. Eight years ago he founded Translators Family Sp zo.o., a team of translators, and still cooperates with many of his old clients.

To offer your own Takeaway on a language-industry issue, send a contribution to editor@multilingual.com.



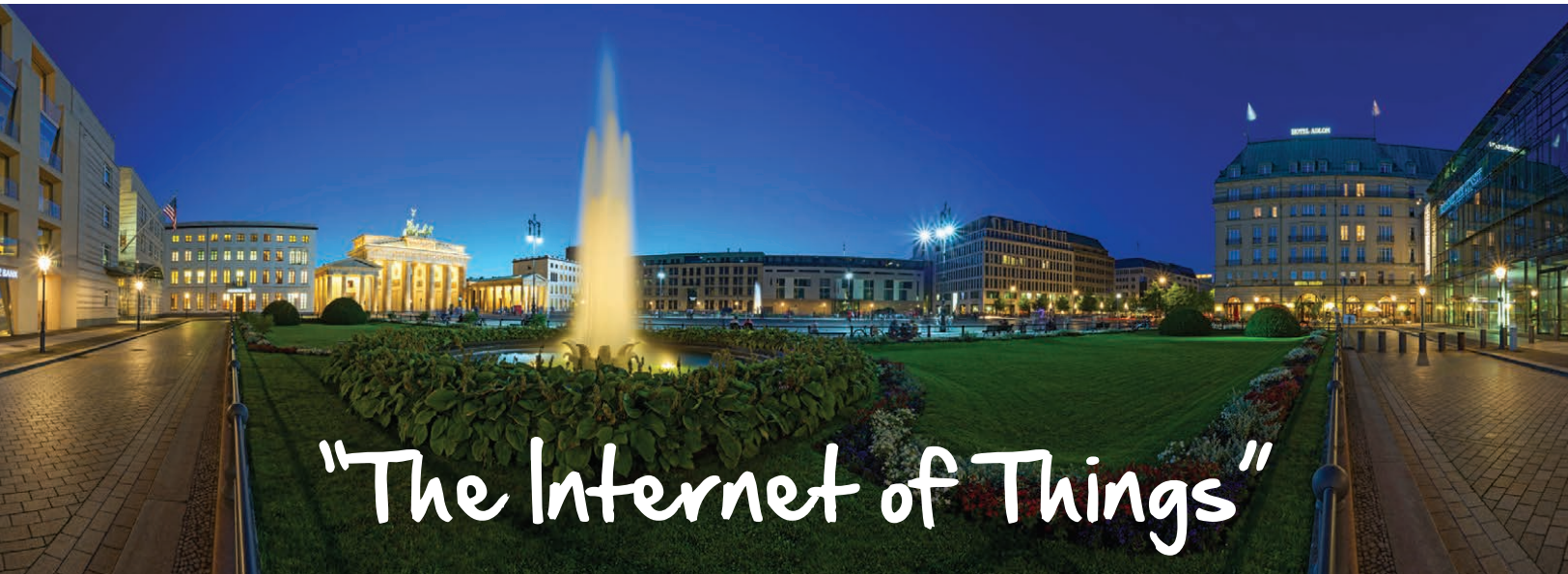
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