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Industry Focus

Moving toward multimedia content

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While traditional approaches to the translation of text to text are still widely used, new methods of communicating with users in their target languages (TLs) are being explored and used around the world. As graphics, sound, images and video clips become more and more prevalent, shifts in the approaches and processes used to translate such content are taking place. As bandwidth capabilities continue to increase, more video and other multimedia projects are placed online and not simply shipped to customers as DVDs. Seeking to cut costs of hiring training personnel and translating detailed instructor and student guides, rich with text, businesses are all but replacing these materials with visual learning modules intended to illustrate concepts and system features in graphic and video form.



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For example, in 2009, our company observed a significant content shift within its customer base, observing a three-fold increase in the amount of video and multimedia business than in previous years. One customer in particular had made the business decision to place all of its training in videos.

As with any rapid change in product delivery methods, customers can encounter obstacles or sometimes move forward too quickly without considering the consequences of significant media shifts. The explosive growth of video on YouTube may lull businesses into thinking that pure video will solve their communication needs. However, homegrown video clips and professional multimedia training that fulfills contractual needs for product information are clearly not the same thing.

Because of their extensive knowledge of other cultures, localization service providers (LSPs) can position themselves to help clients answer this question, offering guidance on when multimedia presentations are preferable to basic text by a given TL audience. LSPs can add significant value for their customers as they help guide them through the maze of cultural and technological considerations for the target audience when the desired result is a professional-quality multimedia product.

In 2010, the content most frequently moved to multimedia is by far user training, but some companies are also striving to reduce text and increase graphic and image content in their user manuals as well. For example, one of our customers is now using primarily graphics and images in its instruction manuals to illustrate rather than describe the steps involved in assembling products.

Making choices

Before creating a multimedia product for an international audience, businesses must consider the technology they will use to

Procedimiento para ingresar/salir de SAP

Esta sección del curso lo capacitará para acceder a SAP ERP 6.0. La información consta de tres etapas:

1. cómo hacerlo
2. a hacerlo
3. hacerlo

Sample navigation menu, animations, voice-over imports and Flash files.

deliver their project. Of all of the players in the content development and dissemination field, LSPs are exposed to and understand the widest range of technology. LSPs do well to understand the technologies currently in use in the target countries to ensure that potential customers can actually access the content. Familiarity with a range of delivery devices, from the BlackBerry to the Apple iPad, is essential if LSPs are to thrive in the new multimedia-rich business environment. The more the LSP can be involved at the outset in choosing the media development and delivery tools, the greater the likelihood that the customer can actually reduce translation costs – a primary driver for moving to multimedia – and still meet the information needs of the users.

With the move to multimedia delivery comes a huge shift from text-to-voice communication. Expert use of voice talent has long been a capability that most LSPs offer to their clients. As more and more content is being delivered in audio and video format, however, LSPs must be positioned to keep up with demand for voice talent and help businesses understand their options. For example, decisions must also be made on whether to attempt to lip-synch the translated script or to use voice-overs. LSPs should be fully versed in the advantages and disadvantages of both styles of dubbing in order to properly advise customers. Some cultures may have no issue with a woman's voice doing the audio; some cultures may prefer a male

voice for the audio. LSPs can also add value by making recommendations about the type of voice talent that would be most well received by the target audience.

Even though fewer words appear in the multimedia training, significant work on the part of the translation vendor may be required to achieve a truly international appeal. Take, for example, a multimedia training presentation consisting largely of images and screen captures. In most cases, only small portions of text must be translated for each slide, but if the graphical user interface still appears in English, the lack of consistency in languages becomes more obvious than with typical user documentation. Such projects can lead businesses to re-evaluate their decisions and decide to localize their software.

Other specific challenges are presented by the actual images. If businesses have little or no understanding of the cultural preferences of the target audience, the images may not be suitable when the project is translated into another language. Because a photo carries with it significant meaning, if a project includes photographs containing images that are not appropriate for the target culture, the photo will have a more unfavorable effect on the target audience. A qualified LSP should be chosen as a partner at the outset of the project to assist in choosing and designing graphic images.

Take, for example, an image in an instruction manual showing the user how

to connect the power source for an appliance. Not all countries and consequently target audiences have the same power outlets in their regions. If an image illustrates a typical American alternating current, three-pronged outlet, but the manual is being distributed for a European audience, the image will not resonate with users in France or Germany and may even be confusing. Also, for example, some cultures may be fine with pink or feminine colors, while some cultures might find them offensive. The way men and women are dressed in the images could be as important or even more important than the nationality of the models.

Lines, shapes and other graphic elements may also need to be analyzed and modified to suit the target audience. In traditional documents, such page elements do not play nearly as significant a role as they do in multimedia. In other words, the more prominent the images (because there is less text), the more important it is to customize the images to a particular audience.

A typical multimedia project in 2010

A combination of typical multimedia projects, the following composite case study helps to illustrate the steps an LSP can take to render an English video training module suitable for a Latin American audience. This case study also points out some of the challenges and

the opportunities for LSPs in translating multimedia projects.

The project calls for recreating English video training material in Spanish. In this case, the LSP is asked by the customer, a global software firm, to translate the text of PowerPoint slides, heavy with images, into Spanish and to translate and record voice-overs of the English audio into Spanish. The result will be video training for users of the client's web-based software product.

The tools used to develop this particular e-learning project are Microsoft PowerPoint 2007, Articulate 2009 and Adobe Captivate 3. Articulate is an e-learning development program that enables the designer to create a larger work from a PowerPoint presentation. The designer can add navigation menus, animations and voice-overs and import Flash movies. The Captivate e-learning development tool enables designers to create screen shots and mimic navigation through and completion of screens. These video screen shots are then used within the e-learning module to illustrate steps the user takes to complete tasks using the client's software. Both the Articulate and Captivate output, when published, become Flash files.

For this case study, the LSP obtains the following items from the client:

- The original Articulate e-learning course with English voice-overs
- The individual Adobe Captivate files of the software navigation capture
- The original PowerPoint presentation in English
- A Microsoft Word file that contains the script of the English audio – note that

in some cases, transcription of an English audio to written text may be needed if the client cannot provide the original script. The LSP may also need to verify the written script against the English audio to determine if the script agrees with the recorded English version.

For this course, the software is not localized into Spanish. Hence, the e-learning module must even more effectively communicate to a Latin American audience the essentials of software use in the text and voice-overs that accompany the navigation screens. Where a significant amount of non-English course content consists of English screen captures and a minimal amount of translatable text is used to describe the software behavior, our company recommended that the client consider localizing the interface. The steps the LSP followed for this project were:

1. Extract the text strings from the Microsoft PowerPoint slides. Run the text, along with the text from the Microsoft Word script, through translation memory (TM) tools to leverage the customer's existing TM.
2. Translate the Microsoft Word script from English to Spanish for Latin America.
3. Conduct appropriate review and proofreading of the text using a defined process.
4. Create the Spanish version of the PowerPoint slides by inserting the translated text strings into an exact replica of the English PowerPoint slides. During this step, native-language speakers review the images and graphics to assess suitability for the target audience and

make recommendations to the client for changes to the images or elements of the presentation to render it suitable for a Latin American audience.

5. Record the Spanish voice-over of the translated script to produce .wav files.

6. With the Spanish version of the PowerPoint presentation, use Articulate to create the animations and navigation menu.

7. Import the .wav files that contain the Spanish voice-overs and synchronize the slides to the voice-over.

8. Publish the Captivate files that contain no text for translation as individual Flash files and import the files into Articulate for the software simulations.

9. For those Captivate files that contain text for translation, insert the Spanish translation of the English text, incorporate the changes and then publish the translated version of the Captivate file into Flash so that it can be imported into Articulate.

For a project such as the one described here, it is especially helpful if the e-learning designer is familiar with the TMs so that synchronization of the animations and simulations with the voice-over can be more easily achieved.

At a time when businesses are closely watching their budgets, companies are increasingly finding themselves in a position to make the call between "ideal" versus "good enough" in developing and delivering content to a global customer base. Each company will fall on a different point on the spectrum. LSPs can help businesses make those decisions by ensuring they are informed of the many considerations to take into account when delivering multimedia content to international audiences. **M**

