revista.tradumàtica
tecnologies de la traducció

539-544

Editorial

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ABSTRACT

Standards provide harmonization insofar as they are agreed means of doing something. They define requirements for offering a service, specifications for data exchange, compatibility conditions, security measures, or process qualifications. Standards deal, then, with numerous activities where organizations and customers are involved. The translation and localization industry is also guided by standards, set by experts representing sellers, buyers, customers, associations, users or regulators. This special issue of Tradumàtica, co-edited by Willem Stoeller and Celia Rico, gathers contributions from some of these experts, addressing standards in translation and localization both from an academic perspective and the industry point of view.

Keywords: Standards in translation, integration of CAT tools, data exchange, cost reduction, translation requirements, translation processes, translation quality and productivity, TBX, TMX, XLIFF, ASTM F2575, ISO 21500:2012, ISO/TS 11669.

RESUM

Els estàndards proporcionen harmonització en tant que mitjans consensuats per fer alguna cosa. Defineixen els aspectes que s'han de complir per oferir un servei, com les especificacions per a l'intercanvi de dades, les condicions de compatibilitat, les mesures de seguretat o la capacitació professional necessària per executar un procés. Per això, els estàndards estan relacionats amb nombroses actividadas que afecten tant a organitzacions com a clients. La indústria de la traducció i la localització també està guiada per estàndards fixats per experts que representen els agents venedors de traducció, els compradors, els clients, les associacions, els usuaris i els reguladors. Aquest número especial de Tradumàtica, coeditat per Willen Stoeller i Celia Rico, inclou contribucions d'alguns d'aquests experts i proposa un acostament als estàndards de traducció i de localització tant des de la perspectiva acadèmica com des del punt de vista de la indústria.

Paraules clau: Estàndards de traducció, integració d'eines TAO, intercanvi de dades, reducció de costos, requisits de traducció, processos de traducció, qualitat i productivitat en traducció, TBX, TMX, XLIFF, ASTM F2575, ISO 21500:2012, ISO/TS 11669.

RESUMEN

Los estándares proporcionan harmonización en tanto que medios consensuados para hacer algo. Definen los aspectos que deben cumplirse para ofrecer un servicio, como las

especificaciones para el intercambio de datos, las condiciones de compatibilidad, las medidas de seguridad o la capacitación profesional necesaria para ejecutar un proceso. Por eso, los estándares están relacionados con numerosas actividadas que afectan tanto a organizaciones como a clientes. La industria de la traducción y la localización también está guiada por estándares fijados por expertos que representan a los agentes vendedores de traducción, los compradores, los clientes, las asociaciones, los usuarios y los reguladores. Este número especial de Tradumática, coeditado por Willen Stoeller y Ceica Rico, incluye contribuciones de algunos de esos expertos y propone un acercamiento a los estándares de traducción y de localización tanto desde la perspectiva académica como desde el punto de vista de la industria.

Palabras clave: Estándares de traducción, integración de herramientas TAO, intercambio de datos, reducción de costes, requisitos de traducción, procesos de traducción, calidad y productividad en traducción, TBX, TMX, XLIFF, ASTM F2575, ISO 21500:2012, ISO/TS 11669.

Editorial

How can standards contribute to today's needs of buyers and providers of translation?

Translation Buyers

In order to answer this question, we first need to identify the needs of translation buyers and providers. Translation buyers are concerned with the age-old project management triangle of cost, time and quality. In addition, translation buyers want repeatable processes without surprises. For any global company, translation represents a necessary cost of doing business and they want to keep that cost as low as possible, especially for new, emerging markets.

Over the last ten years we have seen an accelerated move of content from offline to online. The combination of user expectations for online content and the need to handle frequent, small updates means that the time available to translate content is shrinking. Time to market of translated content went from weeks ten years ago to days or often hours in today's world.

Translation buyers have traditionally struggled with quality of translated content: what does good quality mean? In the past the determination of good quality was left to the translation providers or in-house bilingual staff typically resulting in a transcendent approach to quality[i]: "I know quality when I see it". Recently translation buyers have become more aware of the cost and time impact of quality, resulting in a more nuanced approach to quality. This is best described by the following broad definition of quality:

"A quality translation demonstrates accuracy and fluency required for the audience and purpose and complies with all other specifications negotiated between the requester and provider, taking into account end-user needs."[ii]

This approach to quality takes into account the needs of the end-user, who is typically neither a linguist nor the requester (buyer), the purpose of the content and the requirements negotiated between requester and provider.

Now that we have identified the translation buyer's needs, let's examine how standards can contribute to those needs. Buyers have both internal and external translation costs. The internal translation costs consist of human and capital resources. The human resource cost is controlled by making the internal staff as efficient as possible, which is achieved through automation and standardization of translation processes. The capital resource cost is controlled by the buyer's ability to mix and match best value translation tool components.

Control over internal costs is greatly improved by standards such as ISO 21500:2012 and ASTM F2575 14 or ISO/TS 11669 for standard processes and procurement. Technical standards such as TMX, XLIFF, TBX, ITS[iii] and SRX allow for easy integration of translation tool components and authoring environments.

The same process standards also help in controlling external costs although often the biggest cost impact is from machine translation. Reducing the turnaround time for translated content is made possible through the technical standards for easy integration of translation tool components and authoring environments and through the use of machine translation. The technical standards also make sharing of bilingual corpora possible, this impacts bot external cost and time to market.[iv]

Process standards such as ISO 21500:2012 and ASTM F2575 14 or ISO/TS 11669 provide a basis for quality management in translation. In particular, the focus on specifications as a means to define quality allows for a more objective approach to quality than the aforementioned transcendent approach.

But how do we measure quality? The initial industry answer was through the use of "objective" lists of error types, exemplified by the LISA QA Model—a quasi-standard released by the now defunct Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) based on the best practices of a group of prominent localization service providers—and SAE J2450[v]. However, this resulted in a one solution fits all content approach.

The Multidimensional Quality Metrics (MQM)[vi] system was developed in the European Union-funded QTLaunchPad[vii] project to address the shortcomings of the previous quality evaluations. At the same time the Dynamic Quality Framework project was launched by TAUS[viii] resulting in a set of online tools and Application Programming Interfaces to measure quality for different types of end-users, content and purpose. Recently the Dynamic Quality Framework aligned itself with MQM and is striving to set standards for translation productivity, efficiency and quality. These are standard efforts in progress and not yet formalized through ASTM or ISO. However, it seems quite possible that the TAUS efforts will result in a major shift in how translation buyers and providers define and measure quality.

Translation Providers

Process standards such as ISO 21500:2012 and ASTM F2575 14 or ISO/TS 11669 are also very helpful for translation providers. In addition, most large translation providers are certified for quality standards such as ISO9001-2008 and EN 15038. The latter has been

recently replaced by a similar ISO standard: ISO 17100:2015. Compliance with these formal standards is costly and does not by itself guarantee the delivery of quality translations, but it creates a sense of trust for potential translation buyers.

Translation providers rely heavily on translation tools and workflow automation in order to be efficient and to be able to meet the stringent turnaround requirements imposed by their translation buyers. Therefore, the technical standards mentioned under translation buyers, also provide the means to integrate the different translation tools and to integrate with their translation buyers.

There is one important need for standardization for both buyers and providers that is currently not being addressed: integration of the translation processes with other business processes, in particular finances. Translation buyers need integration with procurement, project management, account payables and financial management reporting. Many buyers are not even tracking their internal costs for translation! Translation providers also need integration with client management, project management, account payables, account receivables and financial management reporting with a focus on profit margins. This integration is currently achieved through custom programming using any available API's, but only for the larger buyers and providers.

Overview of articles

This present issue of *Tradumàtica* opens with the contribution from **Jeff Allen**, who addresses the dilemma of choosing among standards and advances reasons for adopting one or another. He writes from the perspective of an expert advisor in quality management, regularly receiving requests from various companies and providing advice on which standard is best for their situation and needs. By presenting a set of questions to help companies in the process of adopting a particular standard, Allen precisely warns us that "quality management is not a magic wand or a miracle pill but is rather a cycle of continuous improvement towards a goal". In this context, the best approach is to analyze the company's needs on three main instances: 1) from a sales perspective that sets it apart from the competition; 2) as part of internal continuous process improvement; and 3) as imposed by business compliance. These three arguments summarize the reasons why a company opts for a particular standard and explain "the underlying motivations for pursuing quality certification".

After these preliminary considerations, the article from **Uwe Muegge** delves into three recently published standards: ASTM F2575, ISO 11669 and ISO 17100. It explores the guidance they provide in translation-oriented terminology management. **Muegge**, as director of solutions architecture at Z-Axis Tech Solutions, brings here his extensive experience in the field and addresses a sticky question in the translation industry: "how exactly do you manage terminology?" In fact, Muegge boldly confronts us with what he calls "an open secret": many organizations do not manage terminology well, if at all. From this stance, the author goes on to analyze in detail whether and how the three international standards encourage effective terminology management. For each of them, Muegge first gives a general overview, then explores what they say about terminology management and winds up with his own interpretation of the terminology component on each of the standards, identifying the missing pieces. While all three declare that using terminology helps translation service provides to deliver a high-quality product, "not a single one of these standards goes into any detail as to

what type of tools should be used to achieve this goal". In his contribution, Muegge specifically addresses this issue by bringing forward the concept of an integrated, tools-driven, end-to-end terminology management system, presented at an earlier time back in 1999, but still up-to-date.

Enrique Torrejón presents a comprehensive view on the translation tools ecosystem, one that integrates technologies, standards, workflows and processes. He writes from the perspective of an experienced consultant in translation technology and describes, in the manner of a case-study, what is the truth behind the integration of tools: A blessing? A curse? **Torrejón** acknowledges the benefits of automating clerical work in project management via translation management systems (TMS) but integrating them with other systems (translation memory, machine translation, quality assurance) might turn into a tremendous effort. Yes, APIs are there but interoperability levels among tools are variable. Sometimes translators need to move work to the cloud after integration has taken place, and they may find that their translation environment has completely changed. In this respect, **Torrejón** offers valuable advice by illustrating the ins and outs of integrating XTRF with memoQ server in the setting of a small-sized translation vendor. A word of warning here: look carefully into what you have already in place before engaging into any new implementation. Otherwise you might find that the struggle does not finally pay off.

As a wrap up to this issue on standards, three contributions address standard formats: TBX, XLIFF and TMX. **Amparo Alcina**, professor at Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, reviewing standards and formats in terminology and how they relate to the translation industry. Creating and managing terminology is an expensive process and not all LSPs are ready to cope with it. But terminologies are valuable resources that can serve multiple purposes once created. **Alcina** thoroughly examines how the use of standards responds to expectations from the different players in the industry. The next two contributions to the journal address two key standards:, XLIFF and TMX . The authors of the paper on XLIFF paper are **Jesús Torres del Rey** and **Lucía Morado Vázquez**, both from the Cod.eX Research Group. Their view represents a balanced approach between theoretical foundations on XLIFF and practical guidance on how translation processes and workflow are influenced by the standard. Addressing translators and translation students as their audience for the paper, the authors give a straightforward definition of XLIFF and explain the extraction-merging paradigm in XLIFF by creating a clear metaphor with changing the colour of your car: which parts of the car are to be painted? which tools are to be used? Similarly, XLIFF is a "container of translatable content that has been organized in a normative form so that it can be manipulated by the tools and agents involved in the localization process"; much like painting a car. Torres del Rey and Morado Vázquez write for non XML connoisseurs and, therefore, discuss with detail what is inside an XLIFF file, its use, how translators can benefit from adoption of the standard in different working scenarios and what they can do to influence its development. As a closing remark, the authors advance some paths for research, worth being explored. The article on TMX is written by **Antoni Oliver**, who supervises the Masters' degree in Specialized Translation from the *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*. This paper offers a detailed account of TMX. Opening with a review of the essentials in translation memories (segmentation, alignment, indexing, exact and fuzzy matches), **Oliver** goes on to argue for the need of this particular standard in the industry, describing its specifications,

implementation levels and different levels of adoption. The paper closes with some proposals for extending TMX functionalities in the future.

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