Articulate Storyline: XLIFF Export and Import

A Collection of Ten Useful Tips and Tricks.

INTRODUCTION

Articulate Storyline is an e-learning authoring software that allows you to create interactive courses. Thanks to its many features and user friendliness it has become one of the most popular e-learning tools today.

According to the Articulate developers: "Storyline lets you export all text in your course to Microsoft Word or an XML-based file (XLIFF). After you've translated the text, simply import it back in. Storyline preserves all of your formatting." This sounds great, and very simple. However, as with most software tools, Articulate Storyline is not perfect and there are a few glitches.

EzGlobe's team has spent quite some time working with Articulate Storyline XLIFF Export/Import functionality. While we were quite happy to see the export/import functionality, we must say that it took us some time to work around the bugs and restrictions. In this paper, we share our experience and present ten tips and tricks to make your Storyline localization project easier.

KEYWORDS: *Articulate Storyline, Articulate Storyline XLIFF, Articulate Storyline XLIFF export and import, e-learning localization, e-learning translation, e-learning globalization, content updates, translation memory*

The Useful Tips and Tricks

Number 1:

If you have the character **"<"** anywhere in your content, the generated XLIFF file will not be a valid XML because the above character will be written as **"<"** instead of **"<"**. This actually shows that Articulate is not using an XML engine to write the XML but write it as a text file.

Number 2:

The language tag of the generated XLIFF will always be "de-DE" but this attribute is ignored by Articulate, so no need to replace it by your language.

Number 3:

You must work on your local C drive. If you try to import from the network, it will give you the usual "Congratulations!" message but it won't do anything.

Number 4:

By default, the target element contains the following attribute **state="new"**. You must change it to **state="translated"** or again the import XLIFF feature will give you the usual "Congratulations!" message but won't do anything.

Number 5:

Make sure you select XLIFF in the format of the dropdown when importing! If you give a full path of an XLIFF file but don't change the default import format from Doc to XLIFF in the dropdown guess what happens? Yes! You will get the usual "Congratulations!" message but nothing will happen.

Number 6:

Articulate encapsulates the RTF code in the XLIFF. RTF encodes non-ASCII characters in the RTF unique format \'xx where xx is the hexadecimal value of the Unicode characters. So if your text contains the following text "*This famous Hungarian word újjáépítésérol*" your translator will see the following text **"This famous Hungarian word \'fajj\'e1\'e9p\'edt\'e9s\'e9rol"** which will be rather hard to translate!

If the translator him- or herself inserts accented characters in the XLIFF translation (*e.g. újjáépítésérol*) it works fine as long as it is within the ANSI range.

Number 7:

If you want to enter a non-ANSI character (e.g. the Chinese character 中) you will need to encode it as a Unicode character (e.g. **\u20013**)

Number 8:

Articulate encapsulates the non-RTF code in XML x elements. For example you will see ***<x id="0" ctype="x-{\rtf1\ansi\ansicpg1252\deff0\deflang1033{\fonttbl{\f0\fnil\fcharset0 Arial;}{\f1\fnil\fcharset0 Constantia;}}{\colortbl ;\red0\green0\blue0;}"/>*** in your XLIFF. This is useful to clearly separate the formatting from the text to translate. This is why XLIFF is better than Word; in Word you can easily corrupt the formatting as you are translating it.

Number 9:

You can remove or add x elements in the XLIFF since Articulate doesn't verify that the ones present in the target match the ones in the source.

Number 10:

You can actually enter some RTF code in your translation. For example **"\par "** will create a hard return.

However there is a bug in Articulate when it tries to protect some RTF tags, it sometimes grabs the following word. For example if you type the words "*This*" "*is*" "*a*" "*test*" and follow each word by a hard return you will end up with the following text in your XLIFF file: **"This<x id="1" ctype="x-\paris\para\parTest\par"/>"** which means that only "*This*" is accessible to the translation. However if you remove the x element and just keep the following text in the XLIFF **"This\paris\para\parTest\par"**, it will work fine providing that you keep the **\par** tags intact.

And here is one as a bonus...

This one is weird. Each time a text box contains a bullet list; it would export fine but truncate the text right before the first bullet during the import operation. We performed the following test:

- Export the text to XLIFF
- Copy all source text to the targets
- Import the file.

As a result, the text of all the text boxes containing a bullet list was truncated right before the first bullet.

CONCLUSION

We hope you found the above tips and tricks useful. If you are looking for more help with Articulate localization, if you want to share your own tips or tricks, or if you just want to know the meaning of the Hungarian word *újjáépítésérol* contact us at **sales@ezglobe.com** or any of the numbers below.