

Updating Your Multilingual Website

It does not need to be painful.

INTRODUCTION

According to Internet World Stats there are more than 80% Internet users who are non-English speakers. As companies rush to translate their websites to reach these potential customers they often don't realize the implications a poor architecture and design can have on future website updates. In this paper, we introduce, in broad strokes, three scenarios and three possible solutions how to make website updates painless.

KEYWORDS: *Website globalization, website localization, website translation, content updates, translation memory, content management system, CMS, connectors, website translation workflow*

The Pain Points

Website localization starts with designing an efficient web architecture that can easily hold and manage the website's content in multiple languages.

Whether you have a content management system (CMS) in the background or simply an organized file tree, you need to be able to efficiently update the website in all languages. If you don't have a system for updating the translated versions of the website, you may soon find yourself feeling the following pains:

1. You are not able to recognize what has changed and what needs to be updated in the translated versions.
2. You update all language versions manually.
3. Potentially, you have the language versions out of synch.

The Pain Killers

Modern translation methodologies are based on the use of translation memory, a computer-aided translation (CAT) technology that allows for an efficient and consistent reuse of translated content.

CAT tools are powerful optimized translation environments for the translators. They work in conjunction with electronic dictionaries and store translated content in databases for a reuse.

When translating content updates, the tools will recuperate and automatically apply the previously translated content; thus only the delta is left to be translated by the translator.

The above description is a bit simplified but it gives the gist of how the CAT technology works. The process requires additional steps related to file management, file pre- and post-processing, quality assurance etc.

Depending on a client's needs and requirements, a professional localization vendor includes all of these steps in a workflow that is largely supported by automation. What does this mean to you?

Pain points eliminated

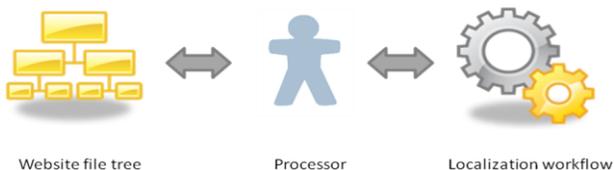
1. You don't need to monitor what has changed, the technology will do it.
2. You don't need to worry about the translated versions. The technology will reuse what was translated previously and only the delta will need to be translated anew.
3. All languages will be in synch.

Mode of Administration

The system is in place; now you need to push your files to the workflow and retrieve them after they have been fully translated and tested. This "push" and "pull" can be done manually or automatically and choosing the right method largely depends on the size of your website, its complexity, and frequency of the updates. The following describes three possible scenarios:

Scenario 1:

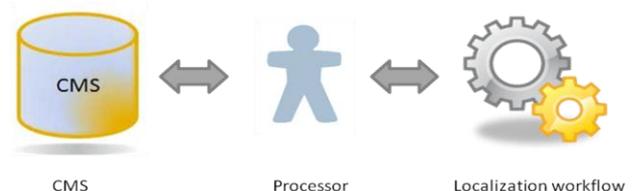
- Your website is relatively small
- The background is an organized file tree
- The updates are infrequent (2 - 3 times per year or less)



If your website is small and the changes are infrequent then it probably really does not warrant investing into deploying an elaborate system to move the files to and from the workflow automatically. You probably have a webmaster who knows the website in and out and for her it is quite simple to send the files to the translation workflow manually and upon receipt simply publish the translated files on the website.

Scenario 2:

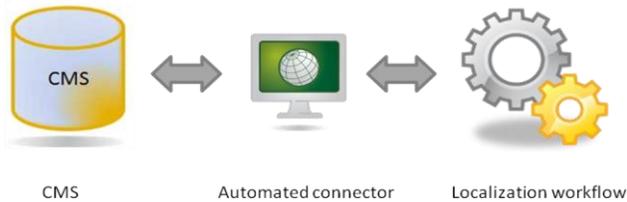
- Your website is of an average size
- The background is supported by a CMS
- The updates are fairly frequent (once a month)



In the event that the background is managed by a CMS, the job of the webmaster becomes even simpler. She can, based on her own preset routines, retrieve the files that have changed and exchange them between the website and the translation workflow as in the previous scenario.

Scenario 3:

- Your website is large and contains rich content
- The background is supported by a CMS
- The updates are very frequent (weekly or more frequent)



If your website is large and contains rich content that changes frequently, you will soon find a need for a connector. A connector is a piece of code that automates the exchange of content between the content repository (CMS) and the translation

workflow. It is typically designed to facilitate the following tasks:

1. It extracts the content in a structured and systematic manner (using generated IDs) while it preserves the source formatting.
2. It pushes the content through the translation workflow.
3. It reintegrates the translated content and makes it ready for publishing.

CONCLUSION

While we advocate painlessness, sometimes it makes sense to feel a bit of pain in order to design best-fitting systems. If you are planning localization website updates, we don't recommend deploying elaborate systems right from the start before fully understanding your needs and discovering potential constraints of your particular setup. It is our job to help you find the optimal solution and implement it.

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