The Value of Localization Know-How

What We Know and How We Don't Let It Be Known

INTRODUCTION

Every day we face complex localization jobs and are baffled by how little it is visible to our clients. We realized that while we have a good "know-how" we are very poor at "letting it be known"! For the longest time we thought it was not a problem. Typically engineers do not see the value in demonstrating their abilities and think that a job well done will show their competency. Unfortunately, it is not true.

If we consistently deliver bug-free jobs as the result of a well-oiled process, excellent communication, creativity, and ability to execute on ideas, we risk that our job will just look simple and thus less valued. Our service will be viewed as a commodity and people will be convinced that they can buy localization wherever it looks cheaper.

*The reality is quite different. **The experience and knowledge of the team directly in charge of your localization project fundamentally impact its outcome!** The ripple effect of a wrong approach can be serious in terms of product launch delay and project cost increase.*

KEYWORDS: *Localization, localization methodology, localization engineering, localization value added activities.*

Let It Be Known...

Our team has more than twenty years of localization experience and a very respectable know-how. On a daily basis we implement creative solutions that benefit our clients, yet we fail to let it be known. Here are two cases in point.

Case in Point #1 – Dissecting Author-IT source files

One our clients asked if we supported Author-IT source files for translation. The answer was easy and was positive since SDL Trados (a popular computer-aided translation tool) has an Author-IT filter.

However, once we received the client's file we quickly found out that the file was simply too large for Trados to swallow. It took a couple of hours for our engineering team to analyze the XML structure of the document and write two useful tools.

1. The first tool split the original XML file to smaller, more manageable XML documents; and
2. The second tool merged the individual files back into the original large file.

Not only the project went smoothly but this approach had two other inherent benefits.

1. We could split the job between several translators and thus shorten the translation cycle.
2. We decreased the word count, thus the cost, during updates.

Our client was completely unaware of this necessary file manipulation

Case in Point #2 – Multi-Level Parsing

Another client sent us Drupal PO files. Standard filters to work with PO files exist but, just like in many cases, the client's PO files contained HTML code. To add to the complexity, the HTML code itself contained some JavaScript functions.

Even if the standard filter may already be smart enough to hide the HTML tags included in the text to translate, when it comes to the JavaScript sections, it will only protect the opening <script…> tags and closing tags leaving large blocks of JavaScript code accessible to translation. This carries a very high risk that these blocks of codes will be, if not translated, then at least corrupted!

To solve this issue, our engineers quickly tuned our proprietary parser to decode the various levels of embedded grammar leaving just the translatable content accessible to translation, which turned out to be just a few words.

The client benefited two-fold:

1. They paid only for few words as opposed to a block of text; and
2. The webmaster was happy because he did not need to deal with corrupted files, which is what he would have received if the blocks of code were inadvertently modified.

Unless customized, an advanced parser (or an automated Workflow) would have not correctly parsed the files and would have returned a higher word count and thus a higher price quote to the client.

As with most of our projects, our client was not aware of the added value of this engineering step.

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