

A beginner's guide to localization best practices



Getting your content professionally translated so you can reach new audiences around the world and grow globally can be daunting if you've not done it before or are new to it.

This guide provides key best practice recommendations to help ensure you enjoy a simpler and smoother localization experience.

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01

Set realistic project timelines

Quality translations take time and shouldn't be rushed. It's important to set adequate timelines for the translation process and required internal reviews.

If you have a specific timeline or deadline that you need to adhere to it's important to raise this in your initial correspondence and quotation request. By making your deadlines and priorities clear from the start, such as whether some languages take priority over others, your language service provider (LSP) can manage your project accordingly.

All project lifecycle stages and requirements should be factored into your timelines. Your LSP should help ensure all elements are considered to develop realistic timelines.

On average, linguists can translate approximately 1,800 words per day, or about six pages of text

Save time and money

Inefficient processes and unnecessary delays cost you time and money. If you want an accurate estimate from your LSP it's critical that you send original and well-organized source files. Providing files in their original format makes it easier, more cost effective, and quicker to extract, translate and rebuild content.

Try to avoid providing PDF files since they lack flexibility and make it challenging to efficiently extract text and images and can significantly increase costs. If you send unneeded or disorganized files, or don't supply source files, the translation estimates and timelines you receive may vary widely.

When it comes to website content, it's especially difficult for an LSP to make an accurate assessment of project turnaround times and costs by solely viewing your website link. Providing source .html or .xml files ensures all relevant content is considered, helps avoid tedious manual copy and pasting, and reduces the risk of errors when importing localized content back into the site.

**Source file
formats
can include .doc,
.xls, .ppt, .indd,
.html, .xml
formats**



Providing a link to your website instead of the source .html or .xml files makes it impossible for an LSP to provide you with an informed and accurate estimate for the work.

Risks of using a link for estimation include:

- Limiting visibility of all web content, such as gated content, which is critical for the LSP to evaluate and propose the best translation solution
- Capturing content that isn't in scope, which inflates word counts and costs
- Limiting visibility of translation memory that can be leveraged
- Only allows the LSP to provide a ballpark cost and time estimate, which can be far from accurate
- Inability to make an apples-to-apples comparison of proposals from different LSPs

Internal content owners can be found in various organizational departments



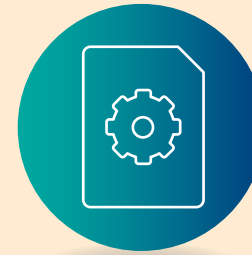
Marketing



Web



Product development



Technical documentation



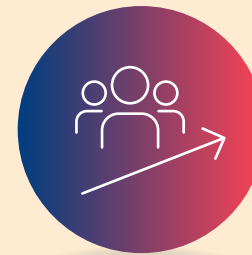
Customer support



Legal and regulatory



HR



Training

Providing original source files is especially important when you're translating graphic files with text. Your LSP should be able to re-create the graphics without an editable graphics file, but this will take longer, resulting in increased time and costs.

Understanding common localization terms

You may encounter some of these common localization terms and acronyms when discussing your project.

Ballpark estimate	A ballpark estimate helps you to budget by providing an indicative idea of what the project will cost and how long it will take.
CAT	Computer-assisted Translation. Often used in reference to CAT tools, which are used by linguists to translate content faster, ensure quality and reduce cost.
DTP	Desktop Publishing. File formatting that reproduces the look and feel of the source document in the translated version.
Glossary	A list of terms and definitions for the project – can also include general information on what the term means or contextual details.
LSP	Language Service Provider. The vendor providing translation and language services.



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LQA	Linguistic Quality Assurance. The process of checking localized content or products prior to release and resolving any issues that are discovered.
MT	Machine Translation. The use of software to automate and instantly translate text.
Post-editing	Where text is first translated by machine, then reviewed by a human linguist.
Quote	A firm estimate based on actual files with a fixed cost and timeline.
Source content	Also known as source materials, this is the original content for translation.
Source language	The original language the content was created in.
Target language	The language the content will be translated into.
TMS	Translation Management System. A workflow tool that controls, routes and reports on translation projects and allows for online quotation and tracking.
Transcreation	The process of adapting text, style and design to convey a specific cultural and linguistic experience. This can be particularly valuable for nuanced messages that require an emotional connection with an audience, as with marketing or advertising.



04

Translation memory

Translation memory (TM) is an essential element of the localization process. It's a type of multilingual database that stores segments of text that have been previously translated so they can be reused.

TM is applied to files both at the beginning of the translation process and at the end. At the beginning of a project your source content is analyzed against the text already stored in the TM to identify repetitions, 100% matches and fuzzy matches. At the end of a project, the final translations are uploaded into the database for storage and future reuse.

What are the **benefits** of using TM?

Cost savings

The more you translate, the more you can save. Also, you will receive a discounted per word rate for 100% matches, fuzzy matches and repetitions.

Faster turnaround times

The more content that is translated, the larger the translation memory database becomes. As the TM grows, the more likely it is that a match will be found in the future, reducing the time needed to translate future projects.

Consistency

By updating only new text, the style, tone and terminology will be consistent with previously translated material. Reviewer amendments or preferential changes are also stored in the TM, reducing the amount of time required by your reviewers.

Previous translations are stored in the translation memory and available to be reused so the same text never has to be translated or charged for twice. As your TM grows, linguists can work faster, which accelerates project timelines and reduces cost.

100% Match

A complete translation match has been found in the TM. This translation will be reused and reviewed to ensure the new translation is accurate. Also known as an exact match.

Fuzzy match

A translation match that is similar to a new translation. For example:

New text for translation:
"The cat sat on the mat"

Previous translation:
"The dog sat on the mat"

The previous translation can be reused and only 'dog' needs translation. Since only one word needs translating, the cost is reduced significantly.

Repetition

A translation match for any term or phrase that is repeated throughout a document or set of documents. Repeated text is translated once, charged for once, and reused many times, which saves on time and budget.

Design graphics with localization in mind

Visuals are a key part of your content, but complex graphics with embedded text can slow down the localization process.

For a smoother experience, separate text from images and plan for culturally diverse imagery from the outset. If unsure, ask your language service provider (LSP) for guidance.



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06

Share your language style, translation preferences and terminology

Translation can be very subjective, so it's essential that you help your LSP understand the style, tone and register you require for your translation.

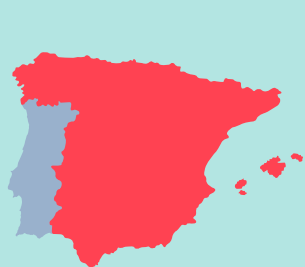
Providing guidance with style guides and terminology lists is useful, as are explanations about the intended use for the translation. This information will assist the translator to customize the translation for your audience.

Register refers to the way a speaker uses a language in different circumstances, for example formal vs. informal

Choose the **correct language dialect** for your target market

It's essential that your LSP understands the target market for your translated project to make sure that the correct flavour of the language is used. For example, Spanish has many language flavours such as European Spanish, Latin American Spanish and Mexican Spanish.

Language is always changing and evolving, so it's important that in-country native translators with expert subject knowledge are used for your localization projects. If you are unsure which language flavour you require, your LSP will be able to advise you.



European Spanish



Latin American Spanish



Mexican Spanish



07

Start your localization journey with RWS

We're here to help you reach new audiences around the world with your content.

Our passion and end-to-end expertise in localization, coupled with industry-leading technology, enables us to help you grow globally and sustainably.

Get started with RWS today

It couldn't be easier.

Just head to our translation portal, HAI, to experience fast, quality translation combining human and AI intelligence.

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