



Machine translation helps NetApp translate 10x more content for customers

NetApp's data, application and storage solutions help organizations manage applications across hybrid multicloud environments.

Industry: Technology

Established: 1992

Headquarters:
San Jose, California, US

Operating in: 30+ countries

Solution elements

Language Weaver

How does a global business grow its capacity to localize content from around 10 million words translated per year to more than 100 million – in just five years and with a decreasing budget?

The short answer is: by translating 80-90% of its localized content using Language Weaver machine translation (MT) from RWS.

The longer answer is: through a ten-year journey learning the nuances of MT, accelerated by the recent advances of neural machine translation.

Where NetApp started

The journey began when one of NetApp's regions requested more local-language content, but didn't have the budget for translation. It was this request that spurred NetApp to begin exploring MT as a way to offer greater support to its global business.

This was before the advent of neural machine translation (NMT). NetApp evaluated several options and chose RWS, whose statistical MT solution met all their requirements, including security. NetApp already knew RWS as a trusted technology partner, because they were already using RWS content management and translation technologies.

NetApp's knowledge base articles were the first materials to be translated using MT, and the first target languages were Japanese and Simplified Chinese – two of the most challenging. As a result, it took significant time and effort to customize the solution to deliver the desired quality.

“We regard a partner like RWS as an extension of our team. We depend on each other – it’s a high-value relationship.”

Edith Bendermacher
Director, Globalization Strategy and Localization Operations, NetApp

“Our quality expectations were as high then as they are today,” says Edith Bendermacher, Director, Globalization Strategy and Localization Operations at NetApp. “Even though machine translation came with multiple challenges back then, we persevered because we saw the huge potential.”

Creating a foundation

Working with RWS to continually train and improve its custom MT engines, and with authors to create more MT-ready content, NetApp steadily began to realize the potential of this new way of translating. So much so, that the business began looking at its content strategy from an MT-first perspective, considering what content types could be translated using MT and what languages should be the next targets for custom training.

By the time NMT proliferated on the scene, NetApp was using MT to translate both knowledge base articles and product documentation with no post-editing at all, and had added English-German, English-Spanish and English-French to its two original custom language pairs. This experience put NetApp ahead of the curve, ready to start seeing the benefits of NMT as soon as they migrated to it.

Neural MT accelerates results

Continuing to partner with RWS, NetApp migrated to its cloud-based neural machine translation solution, Language Weaver – and quickly saw the difference.

“Because we want the translation to sound natural and human, custom training remains just as important to us, even with neural machine translation,” says Edith. “The difference is that it now takes a lot less resource to achieve good quality, so we’ve really been able to realize our MT-first vision.”

This vision has been realized to the extent that 80-90% of NetApp’s localized content is translated by MT, almost all of it with no post-editing. The team has such confidence in the quality that for many content types the only review is occasional spot-checks, with feedback loops in place in case issues are discovered by those using the content. There are very few content types that don’t go through MT at all. The company has also added five more target MT languages, bringing the total to ten custom language pairs built and maintained by the Language Weaver team.

To really drive the value home, NetApp is delivering all of this with a smaller translation budget relative to today’s volumes than they were using five years ago.

Key benefits for NetApp

- 10x more content translated with a smaller budget using Language Weaver
- High quality without post-editing
- Secure internal enterprise translations
- Translation at the click of a button through integrated business systems

The human touch still matters

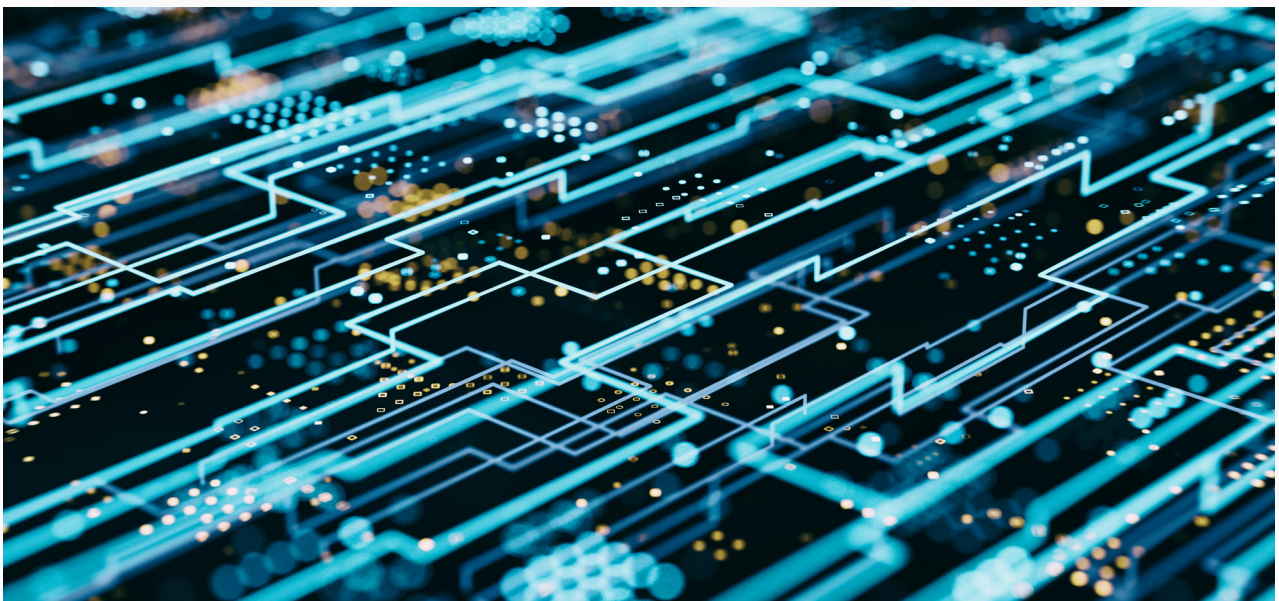
While MT has enabled NetApp to translate content they wouldn't have had the budget to translate before, the volume of content still being localized through human translators hasn't changed.

"We're always testing to see how far we can push machine translation," says Edith, "but from my experience you still need human translation as a quality touchstone, to show what good quality looks like and to deliver the data to continue to train and improve the MT output. Nothing we do stands still, and we need humans to tell the machines how we're evolving our products, language and style."

Making MT easy for everyone

A big part of NetApp's MT-first strategy is to integrate MT directly into its content systems, creating an automated localization workflow for content creators that doesn't require them to use any other system. Integrations already exist with the company's knowledge base system, with GitHub for software and documentation localization, and with a vendor's video localization workflow. Edith's team continually looks for new integrations to improve globalization for the business and ultimately deliver a better service and experience to NetApp's customers.

To maximize the benefits of secure machine translation for the business, anybody in NetApp who wants access to Language Weaver for internal use can ask for it. They can then translate what they need to without using one of the many free, publicly available MT services that could potentially expose sensitive information. Beyond the custom language pairs used by NetApp to localize from English into other languages, Language Weaver supports 3,000+ language combinations based on 150+ out-of-the-box language pairs.



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A journey well worth it

Edith is often asked for advice about implementing a globalization operation that includes MT.

"I encourage any business to go ahead because I really believe in the value," she says. "I tell them to find and evaluate vendors and identify a content type to start with. Technical or product content is usually a good candidate. Focus on your use case and determine your quality expectations and the workflows you need. Start small and build it out to more languages. Take it step by step; it's definitely worth it."

Learn more about Language Weaver

rws.com/language-weaver

About RWS

RWS Holdings plc is a unique, world-leading provider of technology-enabled language, content and intellectual property services. Through content transformation and multilingual data analysis, our unique combination of technology and cultural expertise helps our clients to grow by ensuring they are understood anywhere, in any language.

Our purpose is unlocking global understanding. By combining cultural understanding, client understanding and technical understanding, our services and technology assist our clients to acquire and retain customers, deliver engaging user experiences, maintain compliance and gain actionable insights into their data and content.

We work with over 80% of the world's top 100 brands, more than three-quarters of Fortune's 20 'Most Admired Companies' and almost all of the top pharmaceutical companies, investment banks, law firms and patent filers. Our client base spans Europe, Asia Pacific and North and South America. Our 65+ global locations across five continents service clients in the automotive, chemical, financial, legal, medical, pharmaceutical, technology and telecommunications sectors.

Founded in 1958, RWS is headquartered in the UK and publicly listed on AIM, the London Stock Exchange regulated market (RWS.L).

For further information, please visit: www.rws.com

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