Hach moves into global markets faster while reducing effort and costs

www.hach.com

Industry: Manufacturing

Headquarters:
Loveland, Colorado

Founded: 1947

Solution elements:

Tridion® Docs

RWS Translation Management

Antenna House Formatter

Hach Company manufactures and distributes analytical instruments used to test water quality and safety around the world. Hach's technical writing team is faced with the challenges of producing complex, high-quality documentation to suit thousands of products in dozens of global markets.

This case study demonstrates how Hach achieved rapid return on investment with end-to-end deployment of RWS's technologies.

Background

Since 1947, Hach Company has manufactured and distributed analytical instruments, test kits, and reagents for testing the quality of water and aqueous solutions, with products for lab, process and field. Their products are designed specifically for quality, accuracy and simplicity, and today are in use around the world.

Business challenge

Most people don't know that they benefit from products developed by Hach Company. Hach's products for water quality testing and analysis are used by experts globally to ensure the safety and quality of water for millions of people around the world. To support those products and the experts who use them, Hach must produce high-quality documentation that is technically accurate, up to date and can be read in 27 languages.

With the speed and number of product releases increasing and the number of supported global markets expanding, the small Hach team responsible for documentation and localization found itself on the critical path of the product release cycle and undergoing uncomfortable and unprecedented executive scrutiny.

> **"We reduced translation costs by 60% and translation time by 40%. And if that weren't enough, my team's 'happiness index' increased by 80%."**

Emily Mydlowski
Technical Publications
Manager Hach Company

Not only did the team have to deliver this documentation in 27 languages, but they had to support a "dual-brand" strategy that required multiple branded variations of their documentation. "We decided to meet the challenge head on and identify ourselves as an official bottleneck," explained Emily Mydlowski, Hach Company Technical Publications Manager. By doing so, the team received an executive mandate to tackle the growing challenge.

Finding a better process

The Hach team was using what have long been traditional methods of localization and documentation. Processes were so cumbersome that the team would attempt to avoid introducing any new business requirement that would weigh them down further, such as the dual-branding strategy and multilingual documents. "'There has to be a better way,' we said to ourselves. We simply didn't have the bandwidth to take on more than we were already doing and we weren't keeping up as it was," remarked Mydlowski. So the team set out to look at what it could do in the short and long term.

As the team explored emerging best practices in the market, they realized that they needed to tackle improvements in both localization and technical writing processes. An immediate solution was an improvement in the localization process with the deployment of a translation management system. The longer-term goal was to move into a structured content writing methodology with DITA and a component content management system.

Step one: Improving localization with RWS Translation Management

The Hach team realized that the tedious localization process was a significant part of the bottleneck in the company's go-to-market processes. In 2008, the team targeted one particular step in the localization process for improvement, Desktop Publishing (DTP). DTP is the last step in the localization process.

In this final step, the translated files must be inspected manually by a native speaker who ensures the layout is correct for that particular language. The DTP specialist checks for page breaks, text expansion and other forms of layout adjustments caused by translation.

Considerations

- Complex technical content
- Multiple brands
- Global markets
- Increased volume

"This last step in localization is both time consuming and expensive," explained Mydlowski. "It is a major part of the bottleneck we were trying to eliminate." Under Mydlowski's leadership, the team realized that if they could improve the desktop publishing process they could achieve two goals at once: realize faster time-to-market and reduce localization costs by a significant percentage.

The Hach team looked at a variety of language technologies and identified RWS Translation Management as the most compelling solution for the team. Mydlowski explained, "By enabling us to take control of our translation process, and by separating the content from the file formats during translation, we could drastically reduce the cost of DTP and labor costs in our own offshore facility. None of this was possible with the black box localization process we had previously been using."

Within the first year of deploying RWS Translation Management, the Hach team had achieved $260,000 savings and attained the projected ROI for their on-demand localization solution. In addition to the reduction of desktop publishing costs, Hach was able to eliminate the cost of reviewing already translated sentences with RWS Translation Management. This built-in intelligence eliminates costly duplication of effort in the translation process and further validates the economic benefits reaped by the Hach team.

Capitalizing on success with structured content

With one definitive success under its belt, the Hach team then turned to their next goal: moving to a structured content methodology with DITA, an XML standard for technical writing. After experimenting with storing DITA XML files on a file system, the team realized they could not possibly manage without a component content management system. The team outlined their requirements for a content management system that supported multilingual content, provided an easy-to-use environment, would be cost-effective to deploy and most importantly, offered strong DITA support.

"The success of the RWS Translation Management adoption won us credibility with management for the ROI we achieved. That set the stage for us to tell management where we wanted to go next."

Emily Mydlowski
Technical Publications
Manager Hach Company

"Tridion Docs met those criteria for us," explained Mydlowski. "And the fact that it was a sister technology to RWS Translation Management was quite advantageous. We had already established a good relationship with RWS and knew the rigorous testing its products go through." In addition, Tridion Docs was a compelling solution in its own right, particularly because it was so easy to use and deploy and because of its strong baselining capabilities.

"Writing with structured content seemed like a natural progression for us for several reasons," explained Mydlowski. "With DITA, we could write content and publish it rapidly in different variations. This would make it possible to produce our multi-branded, multilingual documentation at the push of a button. This was a significant advantage for us. Tridion Docs would also automate the publishing process and completely eliminate DTP during localization. Our RWS Translation Management implementation already drastically reduced that process - now we could do away with it entirely."

The Hach team took their new vision to management and maintained that they could deliver their projects 30 days faster if they could move to DITA. As it turned out, they were able to realize the projected ROI six months sooner than they anticipated, as soon as documentation for a single product set was moved into DITA. The translation savings alone paid for the capital expense.

Sample ROI for layout Desktop Publishing (DTP)

Before Tridion Docs *Method: manual DTP*		With Tridion Docs *Method: push-button publishing*	
EU	**ROW (Rest of World)**	**EU**	**ROW (Rest of World)**
23 languages * 10 minutes * 20 books = 4,600 minutes (9.5 days)	8 languages * 10 minutes * 20 books = 1,600 minutes (3.3 days)	10 minutes (all languages) * 20 books = 200 minutes (3.3 hours)	5 minutes (all languages) * 20 books = 100 minutes (1.7 hours)
TOTAL time spent 12.8 days		**TOTAL time spent 5.0 hours**	

Benefits

- Decreased translation cycles from three months to 15-30 days

- Reduced translation costs by 60%

- Cut translation time by 40%

- Decreased backlog from three months to two to three weeks

- Reduced publishing efforts from over 10 days to 15 minutes

- Implemented push-button publishing to multilingual manuals

- Increased employee happiness by 80%

Implementing structure and lessons learned

In 2009-2010, the Hach team deployed Tridion Docs for one of the company's high-profile new product development projects and the largest tech pubs initiative in the company's history. The team wanted to use a real project to accelerate the learning curve for the new methodology and technologies. According to Mydlowski, the biggest lesson learned is that you don't need complicated workflows - keep it as simple as possible, at least in the beginning. The team also learned that you can't fully plan out every detail because in the beginning, you simply don't know what will be important down the road. As an example, the team never would have anticipated that conventions around file naming would end up being such an intensive discussion. The team also found that the development of style sheets was probably the single most time consuming part of the process. Because printed documentation is so important to Hach customers, their style sheet development was critical to the success of their structured content implementation.

Business case for structured content and RWS technologies

With DITA and RWS technologies in place, the Hach team was able to reduce translation from 70 days to 15-30 days, while at the same time increase the throughput of documentation. Because Tridion Docs empowered content to be reused in English, there was significantly less content to translate and review. The new methodology and system enabled 10 documents to be translated for the cost of only four. In addition, Tridion Docs allowed "push-button" production of documents containing more than one language, a process that in the past had been a drastically prolonged step that could go on for days. With Tridion Docs, Mydlowski says, "We can start a project of multiple documents in multiple languages in the morning and all documents would be ready for distribution by noontime."

With all of these benefits combined, the Hach production processes decreased from three months to less than three weeks.

Additional unexpected benefits: the happiness factor

In addition to the incredible ROI, the Hach team found other unanticipated benefits. These included:

- Reducing the backlog so they are no longer a bottleneck

- Publishing multi-branded documentation at the push of a button

- Ensuring a consistent look and feel across brands and global markets

- Increasing documentation usability and accuracy

- Empowering collaborative and creative work environments for employees

- Initiating the start of translation earlier in the release process

Mydlowski summarized, "We could now provide quantifiable value that was necessary to increase headcount. We reduced translation costs by 60% and translation time by 40%. We implemented a solution that can easily achieve dual-branding. And if that weren't enough, my team's 'happiness index' increased by 80%."

With a suite of RWS solutions in place, the Hach team envisions streamlined, efficient processes that produce quality results and lead to even greater ROI for the company.

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About RWS

RWS Holdings plc is the world's leading provider of technology-enabled language, content management and intellectual property services. We help our customers to connect with and bring new ideas to people globally by communicating business critical content at scale and enabling the protection and realization of their innovations.

Our vision is to help organizations interact effectively with people anywhere in the world by solving their language, content and market access challenges through our collective global intelligence, deep expertise and smart technology.

Customers include 90 of the globe's top 100 brands, the top 10 pharmaceutical companies and approximately half of the top 20 patent filers worldwide. Our client base spans Europe, Asia Pacific, and North and South America across the technology, pharmaceutical, medical, legal, chemical, automotive, government and telecommunications sectors, which we serve from offices across five continents.

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

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