

LinguaNet White Paper

Quality Assurance at LinguaNet

Guiding principles

- The key to a quality translation is the translator. LinguaNet believes that the required and agreed quality level is created at the source. It is very difficult if not impossible to "repair" or improve at a later stage a text translated with linguistic errors or written by a non-expert in the matter.
- The quality process is a constant improvement loop. That's why changes that are made by an editor to a translated text have to be communicated to the translator. A "quality dialog" has to be established.
- The quality level is defined by the end-user and the quality process has to be adapted to the required and agreed quality deliverables in order to be cost-effective.
- Different processes are applied to achieve [Linguistic Quality](#), [Format Quality](#) and [Process Quality](#).

LINGUISTIC QUALITY

1. Selection and relationship-building with translators

Quality "at the source" requires a well-developed selection process and constant efforts to retain the most experienced and skilled translators.

- a. Selection of new resources includes the active participation in academic curricula, tests of linguistic and technical skills for applicants, internships at LinguaNet offices and continuous training on tools.
- b. Relationship-building includes sharing of knowledge using tools like QueryStone, continuous improvement programs (tool training, quality improvement dialog) and creation of complete language teams with special knowledge and experience for large, ongoing projects.

2. Translation process

A translators' productivity is not boosted by accelerating the clock. State-of-the art translation environments include online research, database support, linguistic assistance, automation of work-flows, phrase translation, etc. The productivity of translators can only be enhanced if a number of sophisticated tools relieve them from repetitive tasks or time-consuming research. But this is not enough. The most important part is a complete understanding of the source, the environment, the context and the purpose of the text to be translated. This is one of the basic requirements by the EN 15038 standard and a well-designed translation process does not rely on tools only, but has to ensure that the right information is available when the process starts.

The requirements include:

- The source text must be complete and QA checked.
- Although it is possible to translate a draft text and to re-work the translation after a final copy is made available, experience shows that only little time or cost savings can be achieved by having a draft text translated and re-worked.
- Exception may be with software strings. Due to "simship" and "time to market" constraints, it may be advisable to translate multiple drops of the software.

3. Editing and proofreading

Editing and proofreading are different tasks. As an example, there is no editing for software translations: The translators are backed up by an engineer and a proofreader/tester. For help and documentation, a three-stage process is mandatory: Translation, editing (before DTP or help compilation), proofreading (after DTP or Help Compilation).

The editors/reviewers are in close contact with the translators and give them as much feedback as possible. In most cases, editors can concentrate on stylistic and technical issues. The terminology of the translated text is usually highly consistent even if a team of translators works on the same project: online dictionaries and translation memories are kept up-to-date on a regular basis or available directly in an online setup. Productivity tools such as KeyStone, QueryStone, translation memory software and Idiom WorldServer guarantee consistency in terminology and style, also if large volumes are handled by a team of translators, reviewers and proofreaders.

FORMAT QUALITY

State-of-the-art translation software is used to retain the formatting of the original documents (XML or HTML sources, FrameMaker, QuarkXPress, InDesign, MS Office files, etc.).

But this does not come in a box. Today's publication processes require constant attention to detail right from the beginning of a project. As an example, MS Excel or MS PowerPoint files may contain graphic enhancements, diagrams, flowcharts and other information, InDesign files may contain Linefeed characters in the middle of a sentence, and in many cases a source file is not available and the text needs to be extracted from a PDF file.

If the post-processing workload (compiling help texts, DTP, PDF for online or prepress, indexing etc.) is to be reduced, the process needs to include the following:

- Extraction of translatable text using a process or tool that preserves code, formatting information, hyperlinks, etc.
- Careful investigation of the impact of the process or tool on the word-count, loss of formatting, index sorting, etc. for Latin or non-Latin languages
- Provision of the necessary time and review cycle for compiled help, final PDFs and other deliverables

PROCESS QUALITY

1. Distributed teamwork

LinguaNet's principle of working only with native and highly specialized translators requires a sophisticated organization. Moreover, unlike other companies that operate on the basis of specialization (separate workflows / processes for SW technology, glossaries, QA, translation and testing), we focus on a holistic approach to the process of localization. Translators, editors, software engineers, terminologists, project managers and client service consultants continuously exchange ideas and experience in a network built on mutual support. This cross-cultural and cross-language teamwork requires perfectly designed processes that yield repeatable high-quality results.

2. Tools

We support our customers (software publishers, system manufacturers and high-tech multinationals) with innovative ideas from the practical world of translation for their internal cost optimization projects and develop proprietary tools to maximize our efficiency (e.g. LinguaNet QueryStone), secure the highest quality (e.g. LinguaNet QARater) and high-speed throughput (Idiom WorldServer). Whenever a process can be automated to increase quality, minimize delivery time or reduce workload and no

fitting shrink-wrapped utility is available on the market, the required tools are developed in-house by LinguaNet's Technical Center.

3. Delivery

If our customer needs a software version to be delivered at the end of a quarter to show initial revenues in their quarterly accounts, they can rely on us to meet all agreed deadlines. Aware that our reliability enables them to optimize their sales, we organize our logistics to ride out any unexpected obstacles smoothly and enable them to meet their schedule targets. Proactive planning and managing performance reserves is an essential part of a quality process for projects with direct financial impacts.

Process Quality means that quality is not a feature painfully grafted onto more advanced phases of a project. It is integrated right from the start and carried on until the delivery.

The Three Keywords for LinguaNet Quality

Starts at the source (translator is the key)

Maintained during the process (best practices and customized tools)

Defined by the required and agreed deliverables (Service Level Agreement)