

TMS: A Tough Choice for Smaller MLVs

Gabor Farago, Translation Technology Architect
espell group, Hungary

Purpose

- Introduce the TMS scenario
- Illustrate challenges for main TMS user types
- Discuss challenges for smaller MLVs
- Possibilities for TMS standardization
- How can smaller MLVs benefit from MemoQ



Background

- Translation Technology Architect: building man-machine process chains for long-term translation and localization projects
- Invent and implement complete software localization processes (starting with Oracle Financials in 1993; up to 20-40 languages during 2005-2009 for espell customers)
- 22 years of translation & language QA experience including the “underdog” side of localization (Intel, Symantec, HP, Microsoft, PeopleSoft)



Approach: TMS Dimensions (CSA)

- Business (Finance, Vendors, Customers)
- Projects (Workflow, Collaboration, Portal)
- Language (TM, Terminology, Authoring, MT)

Potential Users of TMS

- Large corporate/gov't buyers can afford standardization based on a single solution (Enterprise-class systems or adopt an LSP house solution); often LSP selection criteria
- Large MLVs can afford in-house support for the various systems used by their customers or build their own house system
- SLVs and freelancers must live with whatever their MLV or direct customers use; however, they only require Language functionality
- Smaller MLVs may need to support multiple TMSs, which is a real pain

Challenges: Large corporate/gov't buyers

- Find the best mix of Business, Project and Language functionality covered by several best-of-breed enterprise-class solutions
- Build appropriate interfaces (Authoring, CMS, Version Control, MT, In-house review, QA, Vendor mgmt, CRM, DW/ERP)
- Or to rely completely on a large MLV's with its house system
- **In both cases they only need one standard system for their typical translatable content types**



Challenges: Large MLVs

- They have to invest most heavily in developing an integrated system
- Consequently, they have a strong interest to sell their preferred or house TMS solution to corporate/gov't buyers (and thereby minimize the number of systems supported)
- **They often have sufficient leverage to “push” their solutions to their customers and downstream LSPs**



Challenges: SLVs, translator teams, and freelancers

- TMS solutions are rarely balanced: either Project or Language functionality prevails on the expense of the other
- A solution can be sold to corporate/gov't buyers or large MLVs based on strong Business and Project capabilities
- **Translators often complain about poor Language capabilities**
- **SLVs may find Project functionality “Procrustean” and have difficulty with integrating it into their own processes**

Technology level: SLVs, translator teams, and freelancers

- Projects come in “sealed packages” to be handled exactly as the customer prescribes
- Translators want maximum Language functionality or just retain productivity levels by using their favourite CAT tool
- **SLVs and translators may go a great length to find workarounds and avoid the traps of Procrustean solutions**
- E.g. extract/repack and work in Trados, Wordfast, MemoQ, Star Transit, whatever
- If they accept reduced Language functionality in the package, quality and productivity may suffer

Challenges: Smaller MLVs

- They have a mixed customer base including both direct corporate/gov't buyers and large MLVs
- In order to acquire clients, they should maximize the number of systems supported, e.g. via VMs on servers with remote terminal access
- In order to be efficient, they need to streamline, rationalize and optimize processes, e.g. by extracting/repacking and using a standard CAT system (Trados, MemoQ, ...)

Technology level: Smaller MLVs

- MLV customers requiring across, Idiom, Trados Synergy
- Legacy projects with Trados GXT, Star Transit, SDLX
- The “filter misery” with InDesign CS2/CS3, QuarkXpress, not to mention Quicksilver (ex-Interleaf) or PageMaker
- Constant DTD-workarounds for non-standard HTML, CMS, XML, property files with inline tags in values, etc.
- **Too many tools, too many versions: too much experience and strong in-house engineering capabilities required**

Technology challenges: Language The need for extract/repack

- Poor TM engine (e.g. some CAT tools)
- TM restrictions (only project TM included in package; e.g. translator still uses Trados TM as background)
- Poor, buggy, or non-ergonomic Translator Workbench functionality (Idiom, across)
- Best translators reluctant to give up productivity (learning a new CAT tool; hotkeys and macros; don't like Web access)

Technology challenges: Business The need for extract/repack

- Small margins need to be compensated via internal optimization (pre-translation of repetitions and 100% matches, increased leveraging, better fuzzies, excluding non-translatables)
- Translator payment based on Trados analysis; Business tool does not support the customer's tool – leads to PM overhead
- Avoid translator overhead and save time, especially for multilingual projects

Technology challenges: Project The need for extract/repack

- Pre-processing and optimization most efficient with the preferred TMS
- Standard QA tools and processes work better with the preferred TMS
- Learning curve and technical support for translators for “alien” TMSs and CAT tools, especially with multilingual projects



Technology challenges: The dangers of extract/repack

- Minor or major incompatibilities on the customer's side
- Customer instructions not always followed exactly
- Question of trustworthiness: do we tell the customer or do we run the risk that they just find it out?













Business options for smaller MLVs in terms of technology

- Large MLVs and corporate/gov't buyers with a strong bargaining position: Accept their "Procrustean" TMS choices and put in minimum reasonable effort to optimize
- Local/regional corporate buyers with no legacy system and/or more flexibility: Negotiate mutually advantageous technology choices and potentially advise customer in choosing tools (espell example: CMS choices for Flare, DITA XML; Multilizer)
- Smaller direct customers: use your preferred TMS

Technology choice: Wearing two hats

- With milengo Inc., espell is “wearing two hats”: as an SLV, must follow milengo rules as the MLV; as a GPM and engineering center, can propose or choose custom processes
- Investment into investigating TMSs, developing interfaces/tools/workarounds pays off when you come to develop your own system or custom solutions
- E.g. interfacing analysis tool for multiple languages with]project-open[

The oldest, simplest, and most comprehensive TMS system

-  [0-Admin]
-  [1-Original]
-  [2-PreForm]
-  [3-Draft]
-  [4-Edit]
-  [5-Final BIF]
-  [6-Post Form]
-  [7-Sent]
-  [8-BGMat +GlossDev]
-  [9-RevNotes]

More technology challenges

- Use XML wherever possible for simple DTD manipulation (e.g. conditional translation)
- Use regexp for pre/post-processing (e.g. saving RegExpBuddy Libraries)
- Use terminology tagging and automatic/directed glossary lookup
- Conditional text, variable substitution
- TTX as current preferred standard?
- Future: XLIFF?

How can smaller MLVs benefit from MemoQ

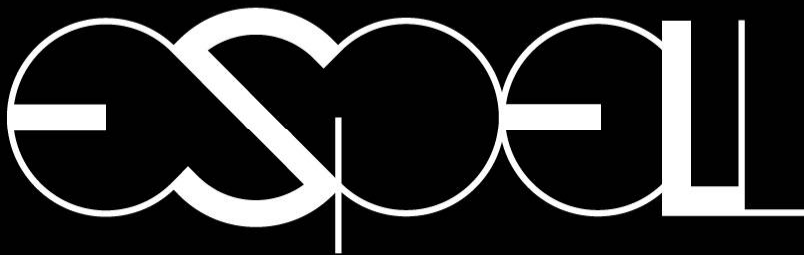
- MemoQ is an extremely “translator-friendly” environment
- Server project functionality is promising for LSPs
- Good acceptance among in-house linguists
- While Trados is still predominant, if MemoQ gains wider acceptance in the global translator community, it can be a great second preferred tool for SLVs, and for smaller MLVs relying on freelancers and translator teams



How can smaller MLVs benefit from MemoQ

- With more workflow functionality and Plunet /]p-o[integration, it can even become the primary internal choice
- Even better if adoption grows among large MLV's and corporate/gov't buyers
- MemoQ seems the only candidate to eliminate the need for extract/repack as it is translator-friendly and its TM engine (with concordance search improved) offers full versatility

THANK YOU!



gabor.farago@espell.com