



Special Supplement: Translation and Localisation

Spring 2014

**Cloud-based
translation**

Export and growth

**Project
management**

Social media

Return on content

**Adobe
FrameMaker 12**

Built on air? Built on a rock!

James Valentine and Gerta Badde from Bedford Translations tell us how they've used cloud-based technology to deal with globalisation of the world's languages.



James Valentine



Gerta Badde

Our prediction...

That cloud-based translation memory (TM) will come to dominate the translation technology industry within a few years. Cloud-based TM is currently a niche product produced by a handful of companies and which accounts for less than 5% of the market. However, its increased power, flexibility and transparency will, we believe, result in it becoming the standard for corporate translation use, with desktop TM surviving as a secondary product mainly for freelance translators. To appreciate this we have first to understand what TM means.

So what is it all about?

The TM concept is simple and powerful and has not changed since it was introduced in the 1980s. The source text is segmented, normally into sentences. When a skilled linguist is satisfied with the translation of a sentence, it is stored into a memory; if that same source sentence comes up again then the target translation shows up as a match. Or if there is a slight change, it appears as a 'fuzzy' match. The linguist sees the previous target translation and is able to adjust the new target to suit the revised source text without rewriting it completely. In a nutshell, TM is a database of an organisation's previously translated words and phrases. It is valuable because if you have translated something once, you should never have to pay to have it translated again.

In terms of what the translation process means, TM does not replace the linguist's work. Translation is still a human process based on an understanding of two languages (source and target) and the meaning of the source text; that is, the

intended meaning, not merely the words themselves. What TM does do is to assist the translator's memory so that a previously translated segment is translated the same way, every time. Skilled linguists are responsible for producing accurate results in the first place; TM helps to ensure that the result is consistent. Therefore, where there is repetition within a document then TM is especially helpful. All technical writing includes repetitive elements to a greater or lesser extent and that is why TM is often the medium of choice for technical translation.

In addition, to understand TM it is necessary briefly to divert into machine translation (MT) and a consideration of how it is different. MT has a longer history. Its founders found ways of programming in the syntactic features of different languages together with standard or specialist vocabularies, to make translation an automatic process. It has improved significantly via 'statistical' MT, which, rather than trying to program in all the features of a language's syntax (which never works entirely) takes a different approach of storing a vast amount of data and producing a result based on statistical chance of a translation coming up correctly. The bigger the database, the greater the likelihood of achieving a correct translation. That is why statistical MT has made rapid strides and, in various guises has become the standard for MT. However, there is the overall caveat that unless specialist vocabularies are entered and unless there is a degree of human checking, then the results are still unreliable. Human involvement is essential if, as with technical publications, you must get it right. Which brings us back to TM.

The power of the cloud

So what are the distinctive features of cloud-based TM; what makes it more powerful than its desktop or server-based precursors? We can probably sum this up in two respects; better sharing and more transparency. With cloud-based TM, any number of linguists can share a single translation memory. Of course, sharing of TMs already takes place via server-based office networks and the products of TM can be imported, exported, and transmitted electronically. Via the cloud, the process goes further, because the geographical location of the linguists becomes irrelevant. Likewise, term bases and reference texts become a shared resource.

The greater transparency of cloud-based TM is an equally powerful benefit. Project managers work more effectively when they are able to directly keep track of in-country linguists' work. Specifically, the PM can measure what percentage of a translation or revision task has been carried out at any time, intervene if there is a delay, and provide assistance if necessary.

Choice of program

There are now several cloud-based TM packages. After evaluating the range, the new market entrant, MemSource, seemed to fit our needs best. Our client base, primarily technical authors and technical publication departments,



produce manuals and online help via various media and in different formats: typically, as XML output, or via the ever-popular InDesign or FrameMaker publishing packages. The key driver of our program choice was the ease and effectiveness of file conversion into a medium that linguists can easily use, and back into the native format for DTP tidy-up and final checking.

MemSource was attractive because the administrator controls the file-conversion process and individual linguists or revisers do not have any responsibility for conversion in either direction. The linguists' translation editor (see Figure 2) is a stripped-down tool whose interface is designed to be as simple as possible; the translation task takes place within a tagged format that is identical, regardless of the source format.

Hardly any of our pool of four hundred or so specialist linguists worldwide had any cloud TM experience and we were initially concerned that there would be resistance to operating a new system. However, we have actually found a very high degree of acceptance and our linguists have quickly come to appreciate the many benefits. These include zero job-setup time, instant access to TMs and term bases, and freedom from the need to 'package' unwieldy files for delivery back.

There continues to be a healthy competition with SDL Trados, the industry-standard TM product. We continue to run SDL Trados in parallel for specific situations and client demands. We also have a large and valuable TM legacy that we can import into the new format.

As with most subscription-based services, the annual cost is higher than with a desktop or server-based product. But administration time and effort to install program upgrades is

eliminated since they all take place over the cloud. Program improvements consist of genuine enhancements driven by users' needs (rather than sales 'features'). Furthermore, a key point is that the editor, which individual linguists or revisers use, is free of charge so there is no cost barrier to adopting it.

Quality assurance (QA)

Powerful QA tools, controllable by the administrator or project manager, enable the linguist to check for tag integrity and other QA functions before signing off each job as complete. Project managers can easily plan workflows in order to incorporate successive revision, editing and proofing stages.

Workflow hierarchies are set out logically, with revisers and terminologists given specific roles that are all under the project manager's control. Revision steps propagate upwards while previous versions are retained, resulting in a fully traceable process.

Client liaison

We have found that the cloud format is popular with clients because its transparency gives them better information and control over the whole process.

One of our clients described the process of commissioning work from their previous translation organisation, which uses conventional TM, as rather like sending the translations into a 'black hole'. They would send the material off and, as it were, keep fingers crossed that something usable would eventually emerge back. For this reason, we have now given certain clients, guest facilities so that they can see the progress of jobs on their TM 'dashboard' (see Figure 1). Now that they can more accurately anticipate completion of job stages, they are able to plan their own tech pubs resources more efficiently.

Our team is a probably a pioneer in this respect; there is, in our view, an almost infinite scope to expand it. By way of comparison, with a vast range of goods and services obtained via the Internet, it is normal to be able to trace the progress of your order. This facility is all the more valuable in the globalisation field where project management is frequently complex and involves many different parties.

The reviewers' choice

Publication review is another area in which we are exploring the cloud concept further. The majority of our clients have networks of global offices so the final part of QA in multiple languages is to have the publication checked or signed off in the relevant sales territory. It is a vital step in the publication process, but one that sometimes causes difficulties and delays (for example, because of different time zones). With one major multinational, we are trialling a new process by

#	Name	Progress	Created
25	22546 Higginson	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: red;"></div>	13 Nov 13:04
45	22564 psw32 Portuguese Project 1	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	16 Dec 17:15
53	22564 psw32 Danish project 1	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	17 Dec 12:19
59	22564 psw32 Korean	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	18 Dec 14:22
60	22564 psw32 Greek	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	18 Dec 14:51
62	22564 psw32 Finnish	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	19 Dec 15:05
63	22561 psw32 Russian	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	20 Dec 09:59
64	22564 psw32 Turkish	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	20 Dec 11:59
65	22564 psw32 Czech	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>	20 Dec 12:07

Figure 1. Project Manager dashboard

12	Advanced Triggering dialog	Okno dialogowe Wyzwalanie zaawansowane	✓	99
13	Location:	Lokalizacja:	✓	100
14	Triggering toolbar > Advanced Triggering button	Pasek narzędzi wyzwalania > przycisk Wyzwalanie zaawansowane	✓	MT
15			✓	MT
16	Purpose:	Cel:	✓	100
17	allows you to set up more complex trigger types than simple edge-triggering	ustawienie bardziej zaawansowanych typów wyzwalania niż proste wyzwalanie zboczem	✓	MT
18	Advanced trigger types list.	Lista typów wyzwalania zaawansowanego.	✓	MT
19	This control lists all the available advanced trigger types.	W tym elemencie konfiguracji wyświetlane są wszystkie dostępne typy wyzwalania zaawansowanego.	✓	MT
20	Click on the condition you require, and a diagram and description will appear on the right of the dialog.	Kliknij odpowiedni warunek, a po prawej stronie okna dialogowego zostanie wyświetlony schemat i opis.	✓	MT
21	If ETS triggering is enabled in the triggering toolbar, then selecting any trigger	Jeśli opcja Wyzwalanie ETS w pasku narzędzi wyzwalania jest włączona, to	✓	MT

Figure 2. Editor interface

which nominated individuals in overseas offices are allocated specific revision roles so that they too can be part of the same seamless process. They can also view (but not change) our TMs and term bases directly, which would be impossible using conventional TM technology.

Teamwork

Technical fixes are not of themselves what makes the technical translation process work. It is actually a team effort comprising project managers, linguists, revisers and most importantly, the clients or end users. Agreeing on ways of describing products, processes and terminology has to be a cooperative project based on the particular industry and speciality and informed as far as possible by official standards. It crucially depends on the relationship between multinationals' global entities, and how participants in the globalisation process handle this process. It is not always an easy task. This new technology, however, points the way to making the global cooperative project a reality.

And finally, a translator's tale:

"Working on a cloud makes working with language solutions a best kept secret.

If desktop translation memory programs did not put me already leagues ahead of the competition, this technology (not as new as it may seem to the uninitiated, but developed over the past few years) puts me abreast of most of my colleagues on the world market. And, hey, my clients can learn a thing or two from me too, about a new-found speed, but not at the cost of accuracy.

Programs like MemSource Cloud come as a free download to pen pushers like us; this in contrast to the more or less expensive desktop programs I have hitherto worked with. And yet, the outcome is the same, but, technically speaking, much simpler.

No more tantrums late at night because the visuals do not keep their place after converting the translated text back into the original medium, be it Word, InDesign, HTML or whatever. No more head scratching about legacy translation memories or termbases. No more frantic searches on the

Internet for solutions to technical problems, which then, if at all, are explained in an incomprehensible way. Cloud-based translation memories work like a dream – well, we are living in the clouds after all – or at least we are working there, and I do not mean cloud-cuckoo land.

The first steps with cloud TM are as simple as anything. Whether you translate or proofread, you register in your web browser and download your translation projects – there's a start!

You will find your term base or translation memory on your right – working alongside you like a crib sheet or a kind classmate. So no problems about consistency and since memory space is now infinite, even the most complicated files are translated at great speed... yes, life has become much easier with this wonderful tool and personally, I am on Cloud Nine!" 

References

MemSource and Studio 2001: a side-by-side comparison <http://signsandsymptomsoftranslation.com/2012/11/09/memsource>

James Valentine is a partner in Bedford Translations, a long-established firm supplying language solutions for technical publishers worldwide.

E: james.valentine@bedfordtrans.co.uk

W: www.bedfordtrans.co.uk

LI: www.linkedin.com/in/jamesemmanuelvalentine

Dr Gerta Badde is Translation Manager at Bedford Translations. As well as translating technical material into German, she handles literary translation and children's literature.

E: gerta.badde@bedfordtrans.co.uk

W: www.bedfordtrans.co.uk

LI: www.linkedin.com/in/gertabadde



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