

USING MT IN A CORPORATE SETTING

Lou Cremers

Océ Technologies
ITC-Translation Services
St. Urbanusweg 43
5900MA Venlo
The Netherlands

E-mail: lcr@oce.nl
Tel:+3177 3593444

Abstract

Company introduction

Océ Technologies is a manufacturer of plotters, printers, design & engineering equipment and supplies. Océ has operating companies in 30 countries and is active in 80 countries. About 17,000 people are employed worldwide; 3000 are based at the head office in Venlo, The Netherlands.

Implementation of MT

After prototyping an MT system at Océ R&D to demonstrate its feasibility, a commercial MT-system (Logos) was introduced in 1995 for translation of documentation. The main reason was initially to reduce the increasing translation costs. Additional considerations were document quality and shorter release cycles of the product documentation.

The introduction of MT required the preparation of terminology, the adaptation of the use of the English language in the manuals and a modification of the workflow to incorporate MT. Océ decided that service documentation would only be translated in the four languages handled by the MT system. User documentation is being translated in an increasing number of languages (currently 14).

Soon after the MT system started 'production', it was combined with a Translation Memory system (XL8) which was replaced earlier this year by a TM-system more suited to our needs (Trados Workbench).

Problems encountered

A lot of effort had to be put in the integration of MT and TM as well as in the integration of MT in the documentation workflow. Although MT and TM come as end-user products, quite some tooling, at all levels, had to be developed in order for automated translation to work efficiently. Once the MT/TM combination started translating, numerous problems had to be solved: different document formats, sheer size and numbers of documents, lack of functionality in the MT or TM system and even network and disk space problems. Synchronised management and distribution of terminology for reference and MT appeared to be a problem as well.

The pre-translation of documentation required also changes in the interaction with translation agencies which had to shift their activity from translation to post-editing. We also had to find a way to monitor the efficiency of this new way of working.

Positive factors

On the other hand, MT/TM could be employed successfully because of factors such as an existing central documentation department which provided the possibility of adapting existing workflow and methods for the benefit of automated translation.

Result

After one and a half year of effective use of MT, Océ now has achieved effective reuse of translations, improved quality of both source and translated documentation and a distributable terminology database. In addition, the increasingly important release cycle has shortened, with the growing share of software in our digital machines. And last but not least: Océ managed to reduce the cost of external translations to about fifty percent on all documentation handled by MT/TM.

Conclusion

Automated translation by MT/TM can be successfully implemented in a corporate setting under certain conditions such as the possibility to prepare documentation for MT and to adapt the existing workflow to accommodate MT.