Labels for Translation Output:

A Triple Win

Slide deck for the 2024 AMTA conference

Labels on Translation Output:

A Triple Win

by **Alan Melby**

Chair of FIT North America

FIT is the International Federation of Translators (www.fit-ift.org).

FIT North America is the North America regional center of FIT, covering Canada, Mexico, and the United States

Based on an ATA webinar delivered 2024 Aug 23

ATA is the American Translators Association (www.atanet.org)

ATA is a member of FIT.

A recording of the August 23rd webinar will be made available on the ATA website.

This Roadmap will give you an idea of what we will be discussing in this webinar.

In the age of Artificial Intelligence, translation output can be anything from the work of a professional translator to raw output from a GenAI or neural machine translation system. Sometimes, it is not obvious to the end user what kind of output they are reading. It can read well, that is, be fluent without fully corresponding to the source text. Correspondence errors can lead to various types of harm in high-stakes scenarios.

The basic premise of this presentation is that there should be a label on translation output to indicate whether correspondence has been verified by a qualified professional translation. The labels are presented as a form of consumer protection, where the end user is viewed as a "consumer" of translation output.

The notion of "consumer protection labels" (well-known in food labels) was first extended to translation output in a 2021 article by Alan Melby in the FIT (www.ift-ift.org) newsletter called *Translatio* (see the 2021 December issue

https://en.translatio.fit-ift.org/archive/)

ASTM F2575-2023

Consumer protection labels are most useful if they are standardized. The first set of labels on translation output appeared in the 2023 edition of an international standard for translation: ASTM F2575 (see https://www.astm.org/f2575-23e02.html). At the July 2024 meeting of the ASTM subcommittee that deals with translation-related standards, it was agreed that there was a need to fine tune the initial set of labels. The plan is to issue a ballot in September 2024 or soon thereafter regarding an adjustment to the labels.

F2575 is a comprehensive standard for both requesters and providers of translation services.

F2575 includes six areas of competence that determine whether a translator is a qualified professional. See https://www.tranquality.info/whats-a-qualified-translator/ for a list of the six areas.
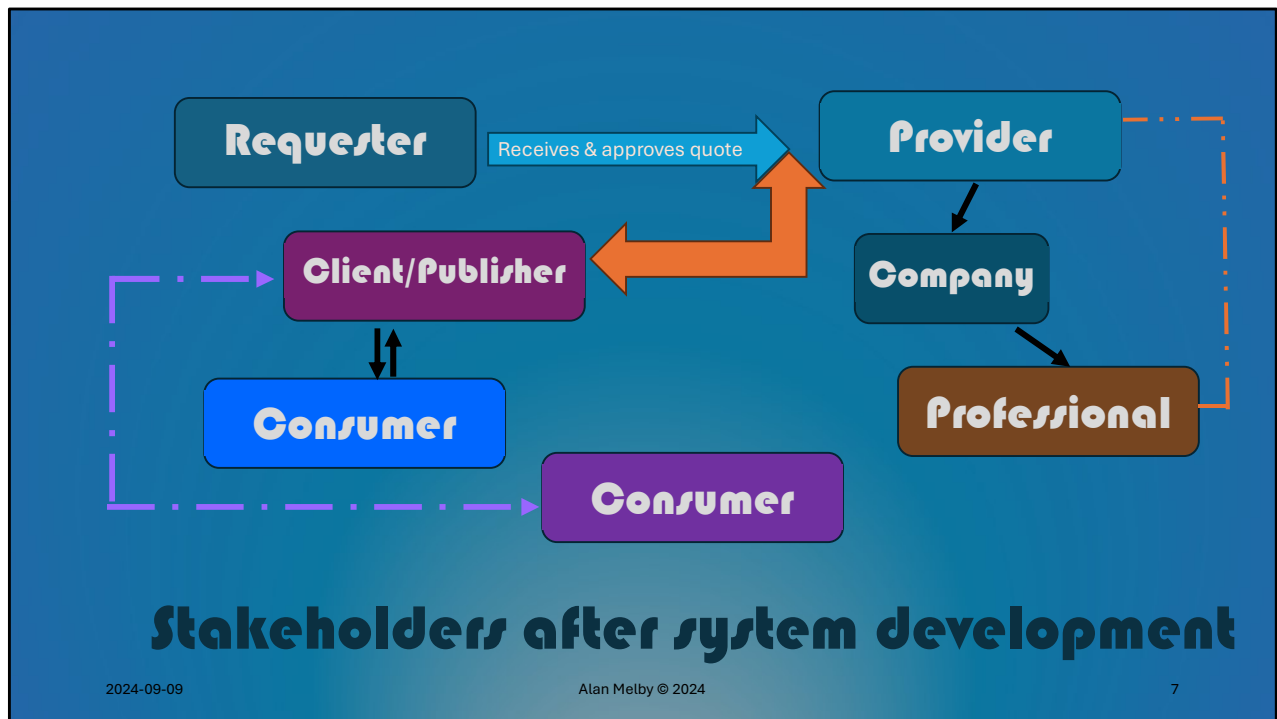
F2575 also standardizes a set of translation parameters. When these parameters are given values appropriate to a particular use case, the result is a set of translation specifications. Specifications are developed during the pre-production phase of a translation project.

The notion of labels on translation output is introduced in the post-production section of F2575. The labels in the 2023 edition of F2575 were Bilingually Reviewed Translation (BRT) and Unedited Machine Translation (UMT). Extensive discussion of these labels during the first half of 2024 made it clear that they do not capture an important aspect of translation, namely, whether the bilingual review was conducted by a qualified language professional.

It was anticipated in the 2023 edition of F2575 that further discussion of translation "grades", which are part of a pre-production discussion between the requester and provider, and "labels", which are part post-production, would take place after publication. Thus, a link to the GLO (Grades and Labels Overview) page of the Tranquality.info website was includes at the end of F2575-23:

https://www.tranquality.info/GLO/

This page will be updated periodically as the discussion evolves.

Stakeholders after system development

The Labels project is relevant to all stakeholders. A project starts with a content that requires translation. Then we have a **Requester** and a **Provider.** When the Requester accepts a quote, we now have a CLIENT, that is typically a PUBLISHER. This client can also be the **Consumer** (as in a company manual, or research material) or it can have another public (as in marketing material or a novel). As for the PROVIDER, it can be a company that will hire freelance professionals or freelancers who work directly with a requester.

These are the translation stakeholders in translation production, after a machine translation system has been developed and deployed.

A Triple Win

1. **Consumers**, who are guided by the labels, especially in a high-stakes scenario
2. **Providers**, both individual translators and organizations**,** and **publishers** of translation output,
3. **System developers**, who can use the labels as metadata to select training data

That's the Triple Win:

Standardized labels are a win for consumers of translation output. The label PVT should inspire confidence. The label UVT (or a label indicating that the content as has been generated by AI) suggests that caution should be exercised before making a decision based on a translation.

Labels are a win for providers and publishers of translation because they allow for transparency. They justify pricing procedures. A professionally verified translation is more expensive, and it is worth it. Indicating that the translation has not been verified is a type of disclaimer. Overall, labels are a component of risk management.

Labels can also benefit developers of systems that translate automatically, based on training data. If the labels are part of the metadata associated with a translation, then professionally verified translation can be included when training a system and un-verified translations can be excluded. Obviously, that begs the question of what to do with un-labeled translations, but you have to start if you are ever going to get there.

Verified vs Unverified

What is at stake for consumers of translation output? It depends on the scenario. Does it matter if there are gross errors not visible to me because I can't read the source text? Can I trust the translation, or should I exercise caution?

As explained in previous slide notes, key distinction provided by the labels PVT and UVT is whether the output has been checked for correspondence by a qualified professional translator.

Quality management includes agreeing on and following specifications that are ideally based on the many parameters standardized in ASTM F2575. They are essentially the same translation parameters found in ISO 11669.

Labels are only one piece of the quality puzzle but an important one. Consumers need to know whether to trust translation output. Professionals deal with specifications. Qualified professional translators should insist on well-defined specifications and then make sure that the translation output they verify (create, revise, or edit) follows agreed-on specifications that meet the needs of the intended end users (consumers).

At the end of Phase One of our survey to identify replacements for the 2023 acronyms, BRT and UMT, we came up with updated acronyms PVT and UVT. based on the results gathered.

We will start with the icons that represent the labels.

Each element of the icons has an intended meaning.
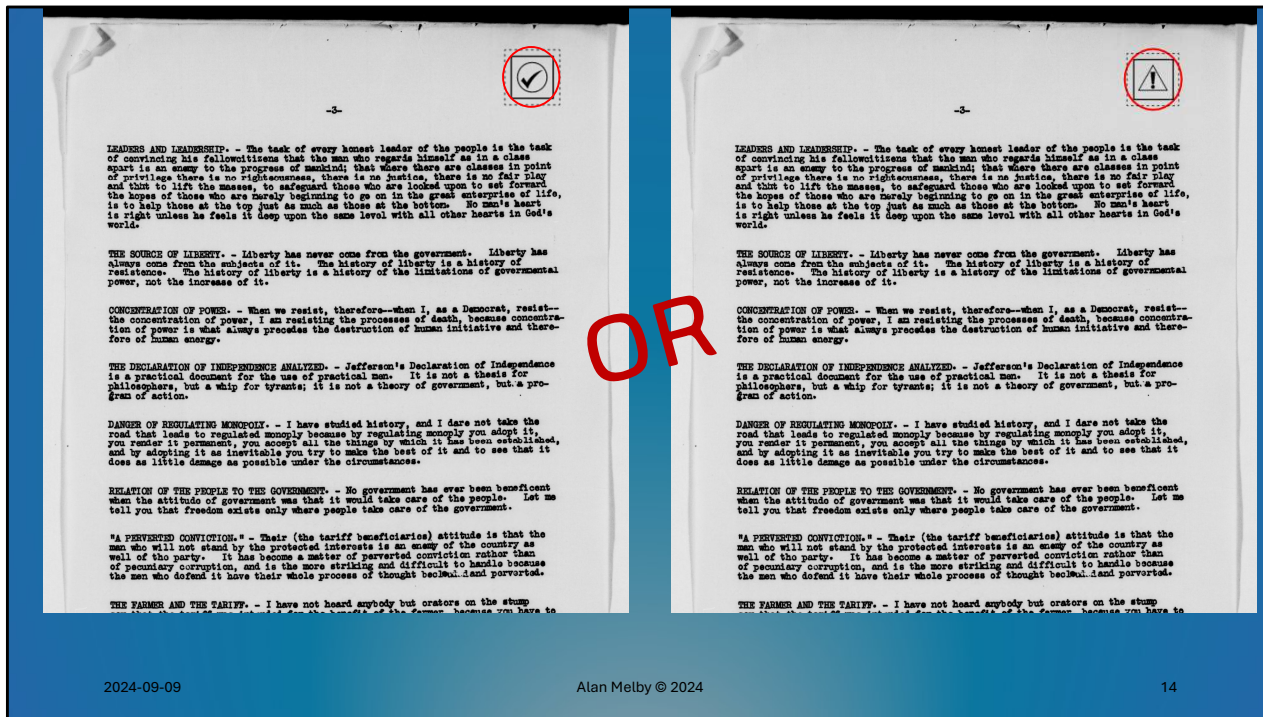
Further simplified, where only source language (dashed line) and target (solid line) are represented, with the check or exclamation marks inside to indicated verified or unverified output.

The labels would be visible, but not too conspicuous, and the link to a website explaining their meanings can be added as a footnote.

A label can also be linked to the source text and the person or organization taking responsibility for the translation output.

[Click] [Click]

Diving into
The Factors behind the Labels

There are three factors in an ASTM F2575 label.

**The Process
The Qualifications
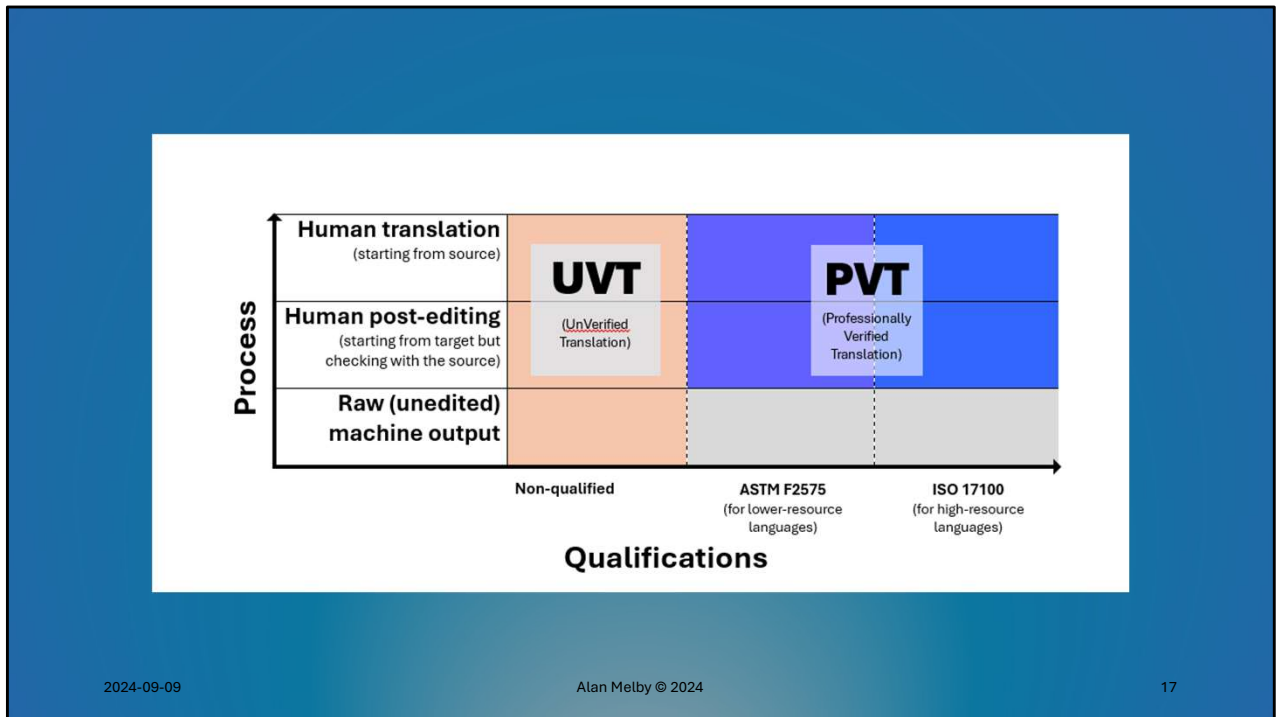Accountability**

Two of them are presented visually in the following chart originally created by Arle Lommel.

The chart shows how seven potential labels (two of the nine boxes, the gray ones, are not logically possible since no human is involved at all and thus the output cannot be PVT.

The third factor, **accountability** ensures that the publisher, whether an individual or an entity, has taken ownership of the work and its correspondence with the source language content. Correspondence focuses on how well the solutions found by the translator reflect the intended message within the situation for which the content will be used, i.e., the use case.

In the case of AI, GenAI, raw machine translation, and translations performed by non-qualified individuals, who takes ownership of any issues that may arise?

What can YOU do?

The use of these labels benefits multiple stakeholder groups, including consumers, providers & publishers, and developers.

The stakeholder group that has not yet been sufficiently consulted is consumers of translation output.

Survey

- ✓ Confirm PVT and UVT (where UVT is a superset of AIGC)
- ✓ Submit scenarios where UVT is low risk
- ✓ Submit scenarios where PVT is needed because correspondence errors could result in harm

2024-09-09   Alan Melby © 2024   20

Let's collaborate so we begin to see PVT and UVT on translation output! Raw machine output can be labeled AIGC (AI Generated Content: see presentation by my colleague Michel Simard). The label AIGC implies UVT. However, UVT applies to both AIGC and non-qualified human produced or edited content.

This is your invitation to participate in Phase III of our survey, which is specific to the AMTA community.

Your group

Please reveal your stakeholder group

1) requester/publisher

2) Provider of translation services

3) System developer (NMT or GenAI)

2024-09-09

Alan Melby © 2024

21

With which stakeholder group do you most closely identify?

You are welcome to send comments directly to the presenter:

Alan.Melby@fit-ift.org

Especially if you are willing to get involved in the Labels project. It will take many dedicated people to get the labels PVT and UVT implemented, so that they start to appear on translation output.

The effort to get PVT and UVT implemented is compatible with an effort to get raw machine output labeled as AIGC (AI generated content), since the label AIGC is a special case of the UVT. Thus, if the label AIGC appears on a translation, the label UVT is implied.

The label UVT is not completely equivalent to the label AIGC, since human translation by a non-qualified person is UVT but not AIGC.

The focus of the Labels project is getting PVT used. There is even some discussion of making PVT into a certification mark, so that it can only be used appropriately.

It is not accidental that the presentation by Michel Simard is scheduled to be in the

same session at AMTA 2024 as this presentation. The two presenters have interacted and consider their efforts as complementary.

To take the survey, please visit **www.tranquality.info** and click the AMTA menu item

not tranquality.**com**, which is a UK-based mental wellness company

Alan Melby © 2024

Please, please take the survey!