



SDLX 3.1.2

Let's get localised!

An In-depth review of the latest SDLX.

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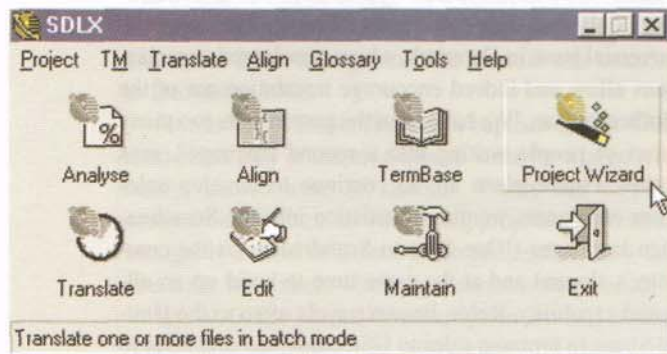
Another standard web-based multilingual content management solution?

With the Web becoming ever more multilingual and all digital information growing database driven, content management you know, the localisation business has to improve, yes indeed reinvent itself and its core business ever more. Answering the increasingly complex needs is one aim for the future, actually dealing with it another.

Even the computer-aided translation (CAT) industry with its *hausse* of the nineties will have to change its directions drastically. Translation memories and terminology databases require tackling ever more complex formats. On top of that, they need to be increasingly compatible with website driven formats and content. All CAT tools tend to grow towards an integrated web-related localisation environment. They also have to cope with the most exotic alphabets and add-ons. In short, a translation memory tool can no longer be supplemented by a terminology database and an alignment tool only.

Computer aided translation packages are becoming more like a whole suite of modules glued together by an intelligent and user-friendly interface, a direction SDL, an Internet product and globalisation service company and producer of the SDLX Translation Memory suite, most certainly understands. However, they still encounter minor difficulties in translating it into a useful environment.

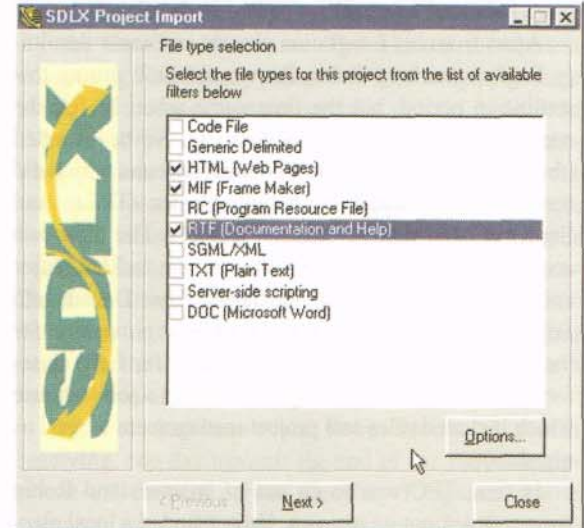
SDLX is a configuration of several modules glued together by a project wizard. This wizard driven technology takes care of automating text extraction for translation (on sentence level) and subsequent replacement in original format.



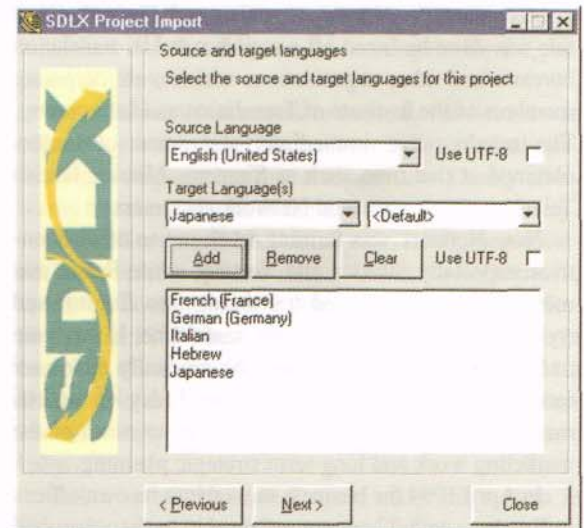
Emerging standards

SDLX supports the Translation Memory Exchange (TMX) format, making files portable

between other translation memories. SDLX also supports OpenTag, a single common mark-up format that can encode text extracted from documents with



different formats. The various formats supported by all modules are RTF, MIF, HTM/HTML and TXT. In HTML even validations and repairs can be made. Two core modules, SDL Edit and SDL Convert also support some extra formats like Generic Delimited files (CSV), XML/SGML, Code Files (CPP/H/FRM) and resource files (RC).



OpenTag is used as the operating desk for the SDLX suite, for all translatable strings are extracted from various formats into OpenTag. At the same time, a matching file (.skl) is created which stores the original text formatting information. With these two formats SDLX takes care of the original formatting information into the translation.

Last, but not least, SDLX is the CAT tool to largely support the supposedly standard for translation

memories, TMX, a format which makes it easy to import and export between several TM tools, from Trados Workbench into SDLX and vice versa. This surely is a solution to all conversion problems between the various products and a relief for all those project managers who work with one TM tool, but have to cooperate with a distant translator who works with another.

Converting and editing all the way

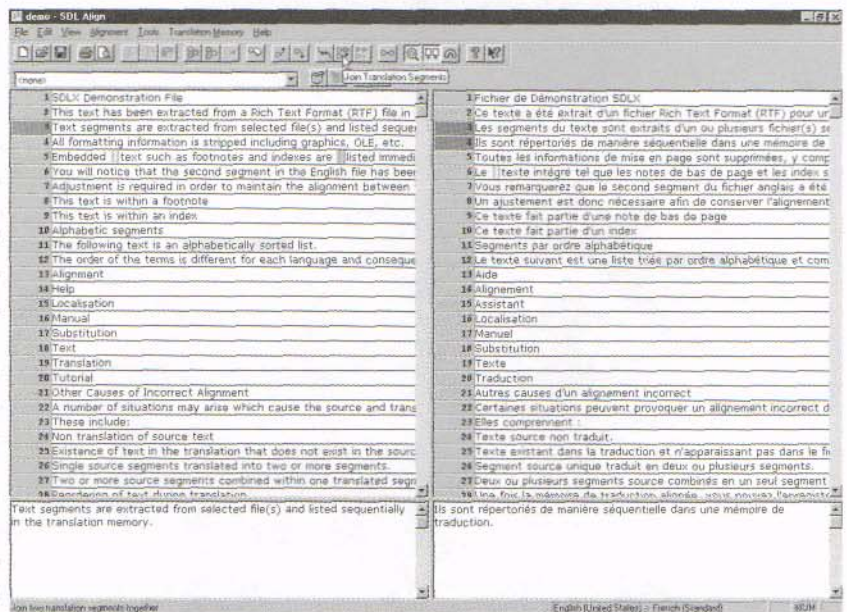
At the back of the program scheme lie ITD files, where the Intermediate Translation Documents can deliver their working power. Both SDL Edit and SDL Convert need the ITD drive.

The SDL Convert module is used to create ITD files from a variety of source file formats, mainly the OpenTag. Convert allows the source file type and the destination directory to be specified and the source and target languages to be translated.

SDL Edit might well be the core tool, the thing it is all about. The Edit module allows completing the translation of a document interactively with the help of an SDLX Translation Memory (TM), which in its turn may have been created with SDL Edit. It displays the existing source and new translation documents side-by-side and allows seeing the context of

with translation running in batch mode. The module is the actual return on investment key, since this process actually saves translators parts of their valuable time. Like most of its counterparts SDLX also works with colours to show the different matches.

The results of translation memory based operations are documented by SDL Analyse. It provides



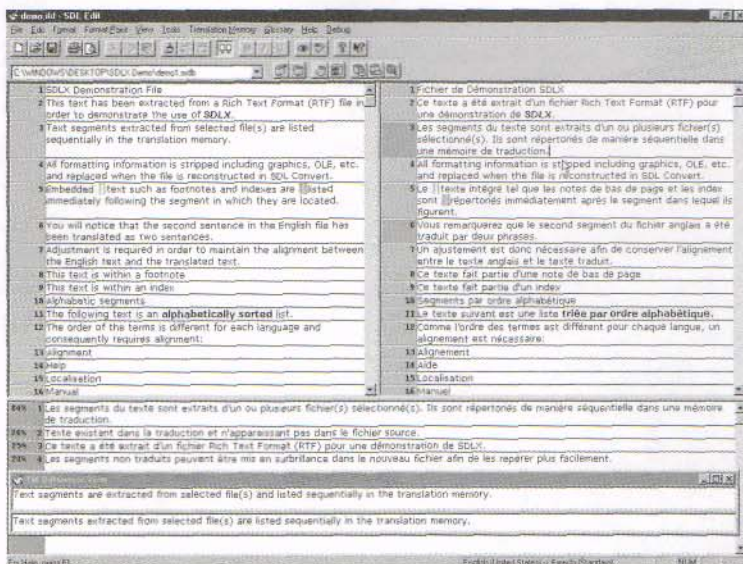
individual file or batch analysis in order to calculate the size of a translation project and the reusability of present translation memory information.

Old translations re-used: the alignment tool

An alignment tool simplifies the creation or extension of a translation memory by matching existing translation material. It displays the existing source and translation in parallel context and allows validating the alignment proposal. In SDL Align it is possible to delete several lines at once, a feature lacked by Déjà Vu for instance. The same goes for the undo/redo button, for imagine all the copying and pasting when you deliberately deleted part of the alignment. Though SDLX is fully UNICODE compliant, there were, however, some minor difficulties in reading exotic alphabets (in fact, Polish texts in RTF did, only once, deliver some strange codes). SDL Align will align files that are in the OpenTag format. Also aligning directly from TXT or RTF files is an enormous surplus previous SDLX editions lacked.

Memories : the right term in the right place

Vital to the development of a client-oriented translation memory or website driven content is the consistent use of terminology, an aspect provided for by the terminology database, for SDLX the SDL Glossary tool. This database, based on an Access database, contains text attributes (definition, source, context, related words, grammar and remarks) and



each segment in the source document. In the Edit phase there is plenty of space for text to be cut, copied, pasted, searched and replaced. After altering, SDL Edit will load and save the source material to ITD files.

Contrary to the interactive translation of Edit, SDL Translate allows performing translation projects

pick-list attributes (subject, category, usage, regional, style, client, project code, ...), enabling to retrieve and store all client- or project based information that is needed.

SDLX supplies you with a dozen dictionaries (from Dutch to Danish, from French to Finnish and so on) on the basis of which a spellcheck can be performed on the target language. However, the spellcheck only works in co-relation with an open ITD file.

Webflow and localisation

The SDLX product suite is standalone but is also designed to work with the multilingual content management product, SDLWebFlow. Multilingual websites should be synchronised with the content of the host language website. Facing the future of multilinguality, SDLX is becoming a translation and localisation standard. Moreover, combined with the power of SDLWebFlow, SDLX becomes a suite that can assist multilingual needs, whether it is traditional translation, localisation of websites or e-commerce.

Short in coming

With lay out related information stalled in SKL files, a future feature might be to increase the DTP related tasks.

For client-based services, the importance of controlled languages and its terminological databases would improve drastically by term extraction and termlist building on a more automatic basis than the average cut and paste thing. Retrieving individual terms from a translation project is not only time-consuming, it also doesn't add up to the size of projects. In-depth feedback between the alignment tool and the terminology database should be desirable as well.

An heritage from previous versions SDLX still has some minor differences in file format supports, though the shortcoming is overcome by the now complete Edit tool. Feedback between the translation memory and the terminology database should be widened.

Splitting the whole of the CAT progress into several tools may have its merits when subprocesses are involved or large corpora, but the major disadvantage seems to be the fact that it becomes rather laborious to combine them. SDLX also requires fairly elaborate knowledge of the program schemes and shortcuts (the project wizard already brought vast relief to that to a large extent).

There is no doubt that when dealing with a business that wants to tear down the Babel Tower, harmonisation and standardisation must be prevalent, a future aim nicely met at by SDLX by using TMX and OpenTag.

A future reality aimed at

It is fairly easy to import not only from common formats (tab-delimited, comma-delimited, etc.), but also from Trados and other files. Yet another characteristic of enhancing the possibility of exchanging

information between translation memory and terminology management tools, which in its turn enhances the re-usability of information.

On July 27th, SDL announced version 3.2 of SDLX, with a promise to improve the whole suite with a new terminology management application and fuzzy matching enhancements. Perhaps the most important upgrade might be the translation memory maintenance function, not merely maintenance like Trados Workbench, but giving some opportunities towards extending and fine-tuning the present translation memory content.

In supporting HTML, XML and SGML, SDLX empowers a generation of web-aware translation personnel in a way other translation memory tools do not entirely. Moreover, the product integrates with the web-based multilingual content management solution SDLWebFlow, which provides a streamlined and structured method of developing and maintaining global e-commerce sites.

SDLX is already the translation suite used by a wide variety of companies including Autodesk, the BBC and EIDOS, publishers of Tomb Raider, FileNET, Information Builders and even Disney relied on SDLX for their Hercules feature film. Moreover, given its co-operation with Microsoft, their future might be bright and more than a road ahead.

Above all, let us not forget that translation memories only perform to the best of their abilities with text material of a mainly technical background, specialised language. The thing of the future, however, is to review a company's or person's personal website and its updates as technical in origin, and therefore with reusable content. Of all translation memory tools the SDLX suite might live up to the future the most, for the time being. ■

Installation: Once the inevitable dongle is in place, a standalone installation is just a matter of running the installation CD. A fully operational demo version can be downloaded from the SDL website, though only for 30 days. SDLX works fully independent, though a Word interface is possible.

Prices vary: depending on freelance (299\$) or other (up to 799\$), discounts are given from 10 pieces onwards

For further information: www.sdlintl.com

Ease of Use	☆☆☆☆☆
Aesthetic Appeal	☆☆☆☆☆
Speed	☆☆☆☆☆
Claims vs Reality	☆☆☆☆☆