IBM Translation Tool

Report by
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IBM have developed and refined the Translator Support Facility, previously reported on in *Language International*, into a new practical system, the *Translation Tool*.

The *Translation Tool* is a complete system which enables the professional translator to translate documents, translate on-line information, manage translation material, manage dictionaries and manage Translation Memory data bases.

It creates an environment where the target file, source file, Translation Memory matches, and dictionary hits are available on the same screen simultaneously. Information may be pasted directly from the dictionary window of the Translation Memory window into the translation window.

A prototype copy of the *Translation Tool* was made available to the *Language International* office, where it was tested over a period of one month.

The editor used by the Translation Tool is the OS/2 Live Parsing Editor (LPEX) which allows the translator to overwrite the source text while protecting all formatting codes, thereby preventing inadvertent deletion of formatting tags.

The *Translation Tool* uses a "folder" concept which we found was a convenient way of grouping tasks and assigning to them the appropriate dictionaries. The procedures of creating a new folder, deleting or changing elements within it, and of working with it once it has been set up are clear and therefore easy to handle. There is no strict naming convention for the four parts of a folder, so that each individual can choose names according to his/her own preferences. The user can determine which attributes s/he would like to have displayed in listings of the four areas and, especially in the document list, this gives you a good overview over your work.

Prior to translation two processes must take place. The first is to create a project specific terminology database as well as a personal dictionary. The dictionary is one of the most important areas at the start of a new project. Initially, quite some time is spent making additional entries/creating one's own dictionary, but the time spent here is soon rewarded by increasing speed in the translation. We found, however, that there was a slight problem in that the dictionary lookup system does not seem to find compound entries if both parts of the entry exist as separate entries as well. It proved very useful to set up an additional dictionary with frequently appearing phrases etc. It this is done well (which undoubtedly comes with practice), it speeds up the process considerably.

The next stage is to carry out the analysis process whereby the system structures the source text into translation "segments". However, the translation does not have to adhere too closely to the segmentation and one can translate one sentence from the source text by two in the target language. The segments are then compared to previously translated segments stored in specific Translation Memory databases and any matches are retrieved into the project Translation Memory.

When the document has been analysed, the option exists to have all the segments for which exact matches have been found in the Translation Memory 'translated automatically' by the system, i.e. replaced with the exact matches in the target language. Although our text material was not adequate to test this option fully, we tested it on a small scale, where it was successful.

Robert Clark and Hanne Eriksen (IBM European language Services) with translation tool.

This option is very useful for updates to a previously translated text: the system will translate all the previously translated text automatically and just leave the actual updated sections to the translator. This does not only speed up the process of translation, but it also facilitates locating the new segments.

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In addition to automatic translation at this initial stage, the translator can choose this option from within a document. The system will then translate all the previously translated segments from the active segment onwards, until it comes to a segment which has not been translated before.

The main difference between the two uses of the option is that the second one (from within a document) will incorporate the text from this current document which has already been translated. Consequently, it is ideal for texts in which whole paragraphs (which have not been translated before in a different document) are repeated, or texts in which points are listed again as a summary.

In cases where more than one exact match exists, which may happen with short segments for stylistic reasons, automatic translation will always use the first one.

As for the translation process itself, it is quite simple and one of the most appealing qualities of the product is certainly the clarity of the concept.

As each segment of the source text in the translation window is selected, the translation of any words appearing in the selected dictionaries will appear in the Dictionary window. Any previous translation of a corresponding source segment which has been stored in the translation memory will appear in the translation memory window as a match.

If the current active source segment is not identical to one stored in the Translation Memory, but falls within allowable match parameters, it will appear in the Translation Memory window with the prefix "f" to identify it as fuzzy match. We found that these have a tendency to be so vague that they do not often help with the translation.

When the segment is fully translated, the translation of that segment will in turn be added to the project Translation Memory for future re-use. While translation of the segment is carried out, the following segment is being processed against the dictionaries and Translation Memory so that the process is complete by the time the next segment is selected. The personal dictionary may be updated at any time during translation. A message is displayed when all segments of the file have been translated.

Our conclusions on the *Translation Tool* are that: 1. The translated text is more consistent than those created without the *Translation Tool*: 2. The layout of the original is kept, which saves the time one would otherwise spend on formatting; 3. Once the personal dictionary has been built up, the speed of translation is much faster than usual. It has become obvious from this experiment that the *Translation Tool* facilitates rather than dictates the translator's work leaving leaving scope for styles and preferences.

We operated the Translation Tool on an IBM PS/2 model 90 with Mb RAM, 120 Mb hard Disk, running on OS/2 1.3.

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