



Telesharing Translation Assets

Crossing the threshold into a new kind of
virtual translation community...
with T-Remote Memory

by Debbie Folaron

The 21st century translation community appears destined to take on an ever-expanding virtual personality. Many processes and procedures have already become a way of life online. Freelancers regularly consult online sources, retrieve files at designated Web sites, communicate and send projects through e-mail, and even translate and edit online. Translation and localization companies regularly respond to queries and quotations through the Web, and avail themselves of the Internet to communicate with clients, small agencies and independent freelancers across the globe. New translation Web portals provide direct access to translators and forums for bid-

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ding and project negotiation. Some translator training programs have even moved online into the virtual classrooms. As many analysts, researchers and practitioners in the industry have rightly noted, the Internet has in ten years transformed our traditional notions of boundaries, space, workspace and marketplace, and forever wedded language and translation to the world of constantly changing technologies.

Poised on the threshold of next generation Internet space and designed to reform the translation community yet again are exciting new technologies such as T-Remote Memory which seek to catapult many now familiar processes into the next virtual realm. Developed by Telelingua Software, this peer-to-peer technology à la Napster allows translators and project managers to have real-time remote access to any translation memory (TM), terminology database or translation engine (MT) that supports queries through an API (Application Program Interface). Currently adapted to TRADOS and Systran, T-Remote Memory capabilities have recently been enhanced by the addition of a new driver that will query and allow for fuzzy searches on SQL servers, and in so doing render the system independent of any one proprietary system for the storage of translation units. This means that translators will not be restricted to working with any one TM software or need to be

relocated elsewhere in order to participate in high-volume, quick turnaround projects.

What real effects will this technology for the virtual translation environment produce on the current daily projects and procedures of translators and project managers? Stepping back into time for a moment, we see that translators and translation service providers have already integrated a myriad of computer-assisted translation tools and technologies into their workflow, with the primary objective of automating specific phases of their projects and meeting more demanding client needs. The tools have matured along with the technologies and the expectations of users. For example, terminology database management tools, which allow translators and project managers to create bilingual and multilingual databases that contain terms, references, project and contextual information, address the need to systematically maintain terminology consistent and up-to-date. Translation memory (and alignment) tools, which allow us to create bilingual databases of translation units or segments that can be searched for full or fuzzy matches, address the need to leverage previously translated content in order to maintain consistency and uniformity, and avoid unnecessary re-translation. Basic localization tools, which allow us to translate software and online application file formats in a more user-friendly environment, address the need to manipulate content in a way that codes and tags aren't corrupted or deleted and appropriate information and formats are contextualized and local-



ized. All these tools have allowed the translation community to translate and localize software, Web sites, multi-media, and various desktop publishing files, as the marketplace has transitioned from print to Web.

As is the case now for any field so tightly linked to technology and the Internet, the translation industry is ready to benefit from the knowledge and experience it has accumulated in the domain of computer-assisted tools and interface with the advantages of 24/7 high-speed Internet access being offered in an increasing number of regions across the globe. Remote "telesharing" of online TMs and terminology databases among translators and translation companies or agencies already using these diverse computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools in their workflows is one way this will now happen. Typically over the past decade translators have purchased (or been asked to purchase!) the freelance version of a CAT tool, while translation companies or agencies purchase corporate versions that

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perform more complex project management tasks. On large-volume projects for translation companies or agencies not working with a sophisticated enterprise management solution, the project manager routinely processes and prepares files and packets of instructions for the translators working on the project. These instructions include information on how and when to deliver TMs, and if necessary, the procedures and times for submitting terminology queries. Translators create or work with previously created TMs on their own computers. Project managers update the TMs and terminology databases on a regular basis throughout the project. Coordinating large-scale multilingual, quick turnaround projects can be round-the-clock intense management for the project manager allocated to the job. Due to time-intensive overhead, many smaller projects are not deemed cost-effective for CAT tool use, even though they might indeed derive benefit from them.

Telelingua's T-Remote Memory, designed for high-speed permanent Internet access, has been envisioned and created with pre-

cisely these realities in mind. The basic infrastructure consists of a T-Remote Memory communication server, the installation of translation tools (TM & automatic translation) on remote computers, and installations of the T-Remote Memory client on the translators' computers, connected to the Internet. The technology supports as many computers and translators as needed. How might our routine daily procedures be transformed in this newly configured, virtual translation environment? Let us imagine a project manager who needs to coordinate a translation project into several languages. The teams of translators are geographically dispersed over several continents and time zones. The project manager has decided that for this project the translators will need to have access to: 1) translation memories (TMs) that contain similar content from previous projects generated in TRADOS and/or other CAT tools; 2) a machine translation tool to more effec-

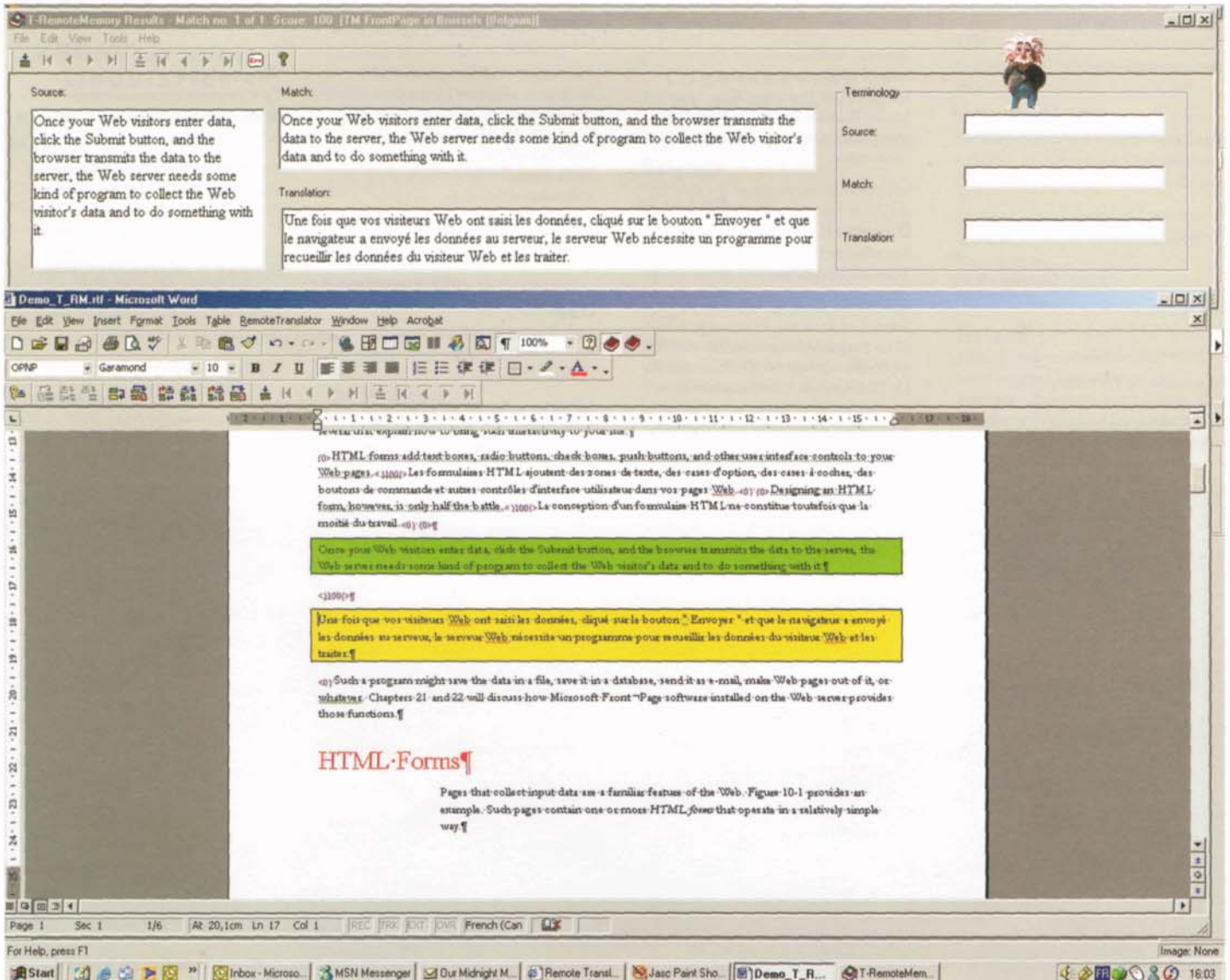
tively process files for the project written in controlled language; 3) a multilingual terminology database containing special

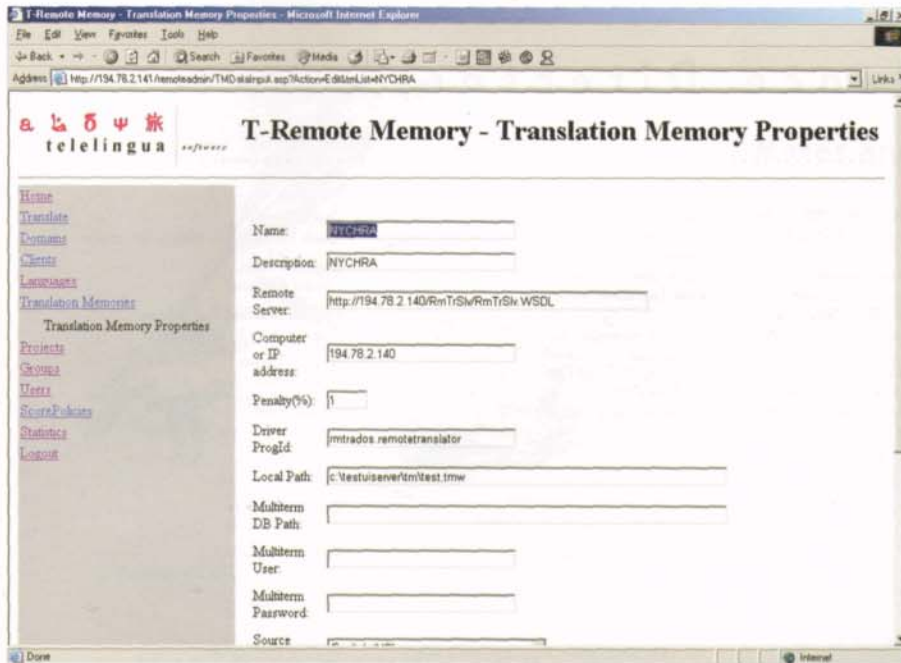
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ized terms relevant to the project; and 4) a Web-based database.

Through T-Remote Memory technology, the project manager can now set up the project so translators simultaneously access, via the Internet, all the TMs, MT tools and databases needed to carry the project out. Through the API, the T-Remote Memory communication server acts as a communication hub that channels queries rapidly to and from the various TMs and databases. Some simple, straightforward tasks are all that are required to define the source data resources and grant administrative rights and access to the TMs, MT tools and databases needed by all translators and managers assigned to the project. These include defining the administrative rights and permissions for the translators and managers who will be using the TMs and databases associated with the project and associating the TMs with the project.

Once this is completed, the translator—who has installed the T-Remote Memory





client interface (set up through an MS Word template)—can log in with a user name and password to access the system through MS Word. He or she now has access to the multiple TMs and databases associated with this particular project. The translation panel and T-Remote menu are called up, and the translator is ready to begin work in a familiar editing environment. As the translator works, the encrypted data are sent through the T-Remote Memory communication server as queries to the project TMs and databases. Project translators, working from any geographic location, share and benefit from their fellow translators' work at the same time, all via the Internet. The content

they translate, which can be feeding a separate project TM also, is recorded as they go, even though content in legacy TMs will not be changed before editing and validation. Throughout the course of the project, the TMs and terminology databases are updated for all translators at the same time. All these factors render the system powerful on many fronts, including the potential to radically change our routine workspace.

As the past ten years of steady development of information and Internet technologies has shown us, new dimensions have been added to our daily relationships because of work- and market-place environments connected to

the virtual world. This is no less the case for the translation community. Creating and sharing TMs and terminology databases as an online resource by freelance translators for translation service providers and direct clients will entail rethinking

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agreements and billing procedures, for it requires a precise definition of who retains intellectual property rights over translation segments and how those segments should be defined. Likewise, there continue to be problems of unreliable and expensive access to high-speed Internet service in various regions of the world, thus marginalizing some translators and smaller agencies from effectively using and taking advantage of all this technology is designed to offer. However, that said, T-Remote Memory technology seems destined to significantly streamline, even revolutionize, the operational and administrative procedures of translation projects for small, medium and large companies alike. For translators, it offers ease and a familiar type of user interface and workspace. For project managers, it significantly reduces preparation and technical tasks, while operating in a user-friendly workflow with all translators, editors and reviewers assigned to the project, all without compromising professional standards of quality. The automated and virtual processes and procedures that have already become a way of life for the translation community seem poised and ready to shape-shift into another powerful form... in the ever-changing space that is the World Wide Web.

Telelingua Software, in partnership with Louvain Catholic University, develops software and translation tools. It is located in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. It is a subsidiary of Telelingua, which has offices in Brussels, Paris, and Princeton, New Jersey. Visit www.telelingua.com for more information. Debbie Falaron is Language & Technology Manager at Eriksen Translations. She can be reached at debbie@erikseninc.com.

