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# The Ultimate Beginner's Guide to Website Translation

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Learn the terminology that is often used in conversations about website, secure portal and omnichannel localization.

## Introduction

Successfully serving multilingual and international markets demands a thoughtful approach to online and omnichannel content, ideally presented in those markets' preferred languages.

This often requires your organization to localize its website and other digital assets.

Within the translation industry, website localization is unique. It's far more complex than traditional document translation, and understanding its nuances often requires a familiarity with uncommon terms and technologies.

If you're new to website translation, here's an easy-to-follow primer that can jumpstart your knowledge of the topic.

Let's start by exploring the benefits and challenges of various technological solutions that are available for website translation.

## Types of Website Translation Solutions

### Multilingual Content Management Systems

Some CMSs have the native capability to create and manage localized versions of a



website—as well as their pages and content—on a continual basis.

### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ These robust systems don't require major development resources to create localized sites
- ✓ Makes it efficient to create translation work assignments
- ✓ Content creators can easily craft customized content for specific markets

### THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ They often require more time, effort and expense to manage than other website translation approaches
- ✗ Significant human capital is often required

- ✗ Employees can become overcommitted with management tasks
- ✗ Technical inefficiencies lead to unacceptably high ongoing operation and translation costs

## Multilingual CMS Connectors

CMSs store, organize and serve content, but don't often help with the *actual translation* of content. Connectors create a bridge between CMSs and translation providers.

### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Translation vendors provide connectors that are compatible with most CMSs
- ✓ Connectors offer companies direct access to the localized contents of their multilingual CMSs

### THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ Translation connectors are often expensive
- ✗ Heavy development may be required to integrate connectors with CMSs
- ✗ Connectors can't account for how translations appear on-page, leading to design errors and a compromised UX
- ✗ Ongoing technical upkeep of connectors may be required, depending on technology updates and other factors

## Proxy Technology

Proxy-based translation solutions leverage the code and content of a company's origin website, making it easy to translate, deploy and continuously operate multilingual versions.

**Proxy solutions instantly respond to users' online requests, presenting a properly localized customer experience in their preferred languages.**

Proxies operate independently of CMSs and other online technologies.

### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Proxy solutions can be used with any tool, handle any site and read any programming language
- ✓ Proxies present content dynamically, ensuring companies don't need to host and operate separate, localized websites
- ✓ Superior turn-key proxy solutions can translate third-party content, graphics, multimedia and applications
- ✓ Proxy solutions expand the effectiveness of your CMS; they doesn't replace it

- ✓ Proxy-powered localized sites replicate the security of their origin websites
- ✓ Superior turn-key proxy solutions offer seamless migration during redesigns and platform migrations
- ✓ Superior turn-key proxy solutions also assume all tasks required to implement and operate multilingual websites, including translation, configuration, hosting, ongoing maintenance, and more

## THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ Several website translation proxy offerings are on the market, and their quality can range from excellent to underwhelming and costly. Due diligence is required to ensure a proxy solution can deliver on its claims

## API

APIs enable organizations to provide translatable content that can be programmatically queued and accessed for localization by virtually any vendor, application or platform.

## THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Submitting and receiving translated content is often streamlined, or automated

- ✓ Depending on the capabilities of the vendor, content beyond website text—such as images, multimedia and mobile-app content—may also be queued, translated and retrieved
- ✓ APIs are secure, requiring authorization tokens for every translation request

## THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ APIs shift all development, configuration and customization tasks to in-house development teams
- ✗ The review, revision and publication of translated content may also fall to in-house resources



## Proxy-API Hybrid

In many cases, companies need translated content for all channels—including websites, payment platforms, PDFs, email campaigns and more. A proxy-API hybrid approach can handle these full-channel translation needs.

### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Handles any content for any channel
- ✓ No need to reconfigure when switching CMSs or making upgrades
- ✓ Can be fully turn-key or more hands-on, depending on your preference
- ✓ Works independently of your systems, freeing up your team to handle important daily tasks without interruption
- ✓ No need for labor-intensive work to launch new websites in new markets
- ✓ Changes in content are automatically identified, translated and deployed
- ✓ Swift translation deployment means users get an excellent localized UX

### THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ Much like finding a vendor that has true technical expertise with the proxy approach, identifying vendors with excellent proxy and API capabilities requires due diligence



## Content Parsing

A *web crawler*, sometimes called a spider, is a technology that systematically analyzes, identifies and classifies a website's content. Translation vendors use them to detect translatable content within a website.

Once the spider identifies this content, the vendor's parsing technology is used to splice pages of content into smaller, easy-to-translate components.

These components—called *segments*—are usually about the length of a phrase or sentence.

## THE BENEFITS

Only superior vendors use content parsers that recognize content in complex applications and databases. They seamlessly identify and localize hard-to-detect segments within:

- ✓ Legacy systems and disparate coding languages
- ✓ Single-page applications powered by Angular, React and other frameworks
- ✓ All dynamic content accessed via AJAX calls and fed through either JSON or XML

## Translation Memory

Once parsed, segments are processed through a special *translation memory* database. This technology compares incoming content segments against segments that have already been translated for an organization's website and other content.

Any segments that register as untranslated are flagged for translation. Once these segments are translated, they are stored in translation memory and leveraged for the localized website or omnichannel content.

## THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Translations are completed and deployed more quickly, saving valuable time and effort, and preventing duplicate work
- ✓ Scrupulous vendors won't charge you to reuse translated words and phrases, no matter how many times they appear on your website or secure portal
- ✓ This means a company's translation investment is minimized, while its impact is maximized (since translations can be used hundreds of times in any channel at no additional cost)
- ✓ Translation memory can be used to help localize omnichannel and mobile app content, too



## Translation Memory Sequence

Some vendors offer Translation Memory Sequence (TMS) technology, which re-uses translated content for new markets in ways that accelerate speed-to-market and reduce costs.

TMS easily repurposes translated content from online markets that a company is *already serving* for use in new markets that speak the same language. It can also accommodate the unique linguistic needs of those new markets.

### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ With some vendors, TMS can lower the cost of entering new markets that share a language by 40% or more.

## Types of Translation

### Conventional Translation

Conventional website translation is exactly what you think it is: taking content in its original language and rewriting it for target audiences in the languages they prefer.

## Localization

*Localization* uses unique phrases that resonate within specific markets, such as regionally preferred slang or cultural references. This often increases customer engagement.

## Transcreation

*Transcreation* is translation at its most artful, in which messaging is adapted from one language to another. While these aren't often word-for-word translations, they preserve the original content's intent, context and tone.

## Methods of Translation

### Human Translation

Great vendors provide professional linguists who are fluent in their customers' industries, brands and languages—and the cultures of international markets.

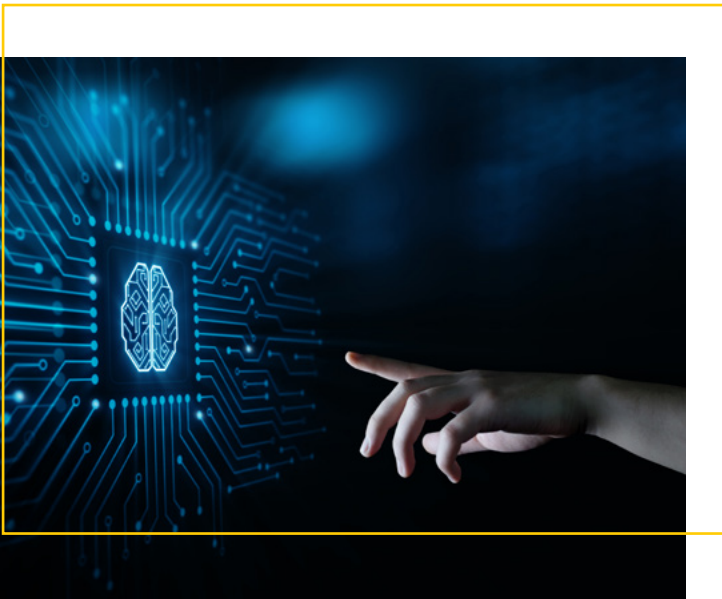
### THE BENEFITS

- ✓ Superior translation accuracy
- ✓ Content can be easily customized for regionally preferred dialects and lingo
- ✓ Delivers brand-aligned website translation that captures your company's messaging and voice

- ✓ Quality is assured through human editorial oversight and multi-step review processes

## THE CHALLENGES

- ✗ The required linguistic, creative and editorial expertise generates more costs than automated translation software, aka *machine translation*
- ✗ Requires more time to translate text (though great vendors use optimized workflows to reduce turnaround times to one business day)



## Machine Translation

Machine translation is a viable option for some online content, but often has linguistic limitations that may not make it the best option for high-profile sections of websites, including homepages, landing

pages, technical documentation or brand-sensitive content.

## BENEFITS

- ✓ More affordable than human translation
- ✓ Hundreds of webpages can be translated almost instantly
- ✓ Using newer AI-powered *Neural Machine Translation* solutions, translation quality can improve over time by “teaching” the software with additional content

## CHALLENGES

- ✗ Typically provides simplistic word choice and fluency
- ✗ Software often selects unsophisticated words, which can undermine the impact of brand messaging
- ✗ Software is often unable to account for regional or dialect variations
- ✗ No editorial oversight is typically provided before publication
- ✗ Usually generates hidden costs for reviewing and revising subpar translations
- ✗ Improving the accuracy of a Neural Machine Translation solution requires a time- and energy-consuming “teaching” process

## Hybrid Approach

Some vendors can combine human and machine translation approaches to mitigate localization costs. An ideal hybrid approach might use human translation for high-trafficked pages where nuance and messaging are crucial. Machine translation can then be used for less brand-sensitive content, where word choice is not as important.

### BENEFITS

- ✓ Human translators can localize high-visibility content
- ✓ Accurate, consistent brand messaging on highly trafficked pages by human translators
- ✓ An ideal cost-saving compromise over human translation alone

### CHALLENGES

- ✗ Translation quality may vary from human and machine sources, but provides higher accuracy than pure machine translation
- ✗ Human-translated sections are reviewed for accuracy, but machine translations may not be

## Per-Word Translation Pricing

Vendors often compete on price, usually leveraging low price-per-word translation rates. This sales strategy is intended to woo prospective customers, but those customers often wind up paying for hidden costs down the road. These hidden line items usually offset the losses the vendors incur with low price-per-word rates.

### RISKS

- ✗ Inflated costs for proofreading and editing, which appear as separate line items
- ✗ Paying to translate identical content more than once
- ✗ Poor translation quality from lack of oversight or use of translation software
- ✗ Slow translation turnaround times, which can't keep up with the pace of your business

### ALTERNATE PRICING APPROACHES

- ✓ Great vendors provide all-inclusive price-per-word rates, incorporating iterative editorial revisions, QA and publication into their costs. The price you see is the price you pay—there are no hidden fees.

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