

Professional translations: to do's, tips and critical questions





Have you come to the right place for an 'average' translation assignment?

You have indeed.

With almost 50 years in business behind us, a network of 1000 technical and commercial translators, as well as many satisfied clients including companies, financial institutions and authorities who trust in our expertise. We have the experience as well as the resources, even when it comes to complex technical documentation.

Quality management, terminology management, machine translation, post-editing, etc. Whatever translation solution you are looking for, you can count on Lexitech!

But where do translations fit into your overall content management strategy, communications, marketing, etc.? How can you critically engage with the many possibilities? How do you make right choices? That is what this brochure is all about. For every scenario, we provide you with tools to help you get started.

Specifically, we have listed some ideas and experiences in this brochure. All our information is practical, relevant and to the point.

In the first chapter, we look under the hood and explore what a translation agency can do for you. In the second chapter, we cover translating your Web content and what's involved.

Finally, we provide a glossary (well, we couldn't resist showing off).

Of course, we would be more than happy to discuss the details with you.

The Lexitech Team

Has it ever crossed your mind that a translation agency can make a difference in so many areas?



Have you ever needed a translation? It goes without saying, that translations are always needed. But how do you go about it? Will you do the translation yourself? Or will you use the services of a translation agency? What kind of agency will you use? And above all, what are the factors that help you make the best choice? We answer these and many more questions here.

Six ways to translate

Here are some trends that we are sure you recognize.

Many companies and institutions communicate in different languages: their customers, prospects and stakeholders are in different countries and prefer communicating in their own language. This must be a familiar situation for you as well.

At the same time, the volume of content is growing steadily: communication is no longer limited to just manuals and brochures; social media also requires an almost continuous flow of content to keep the connection with the target audience alive.

Moreover, translations are needed for very different types of documentation: annual reports, contracts, human resources communications, and more. Most of the time, you need this content to be translated simply because you have no other choice. A translation agency is the ideal partner to efficiently manage the flow of multi-lingual content, but there are indeed different options of tackling this. Below is an overview of the options available to you.

1. Translate the content yourself

Perhaps you speak one or two foreign languages and perhaps you are more than proficient in them. The question to ask is whether you can you achieve the quality of a native speaker, if translating without any help? And most importantly, can you do it without spending too much time? Translating from Dutch into French or translating from Dutch into English? Even for a short e-mail, you'll soon find that a few final tweaks by a native speaker are needed to strike the right tone. Even when

you draft a text yourself in a language that is not your mother tongue (and often this is English), we often find that it needs a native speaker to put the finishing touches on the text to make a good impression. That is why, there's no justification for doing the translation yourself. Although you have written a commendable document in your native language, if you do the translation yourself, you effectively undo all your good work. And that's such a shame.

2. DeepL translator or Google Translate

DeepL and Google Translate are tools that have been gaining a lot of momentum in recent years. These are so-called neural machine translation tools. Those tools operate on gigantic data sets. In many cases, DeepL and Google Translate are able to do the donkey work of translation. They can do this in double-quick time and, let's face it, at virtually next-to-nothing. Sometimes the results are fine, but sometimes the results leave much to be desired.

It is the unpredictability of these tools that poses the biggest problem, for the time being. In fact, with DeepL and Google Translate you have exactly the same problem as when you do the translation yourself: yes, you can make good headway, but you always need a professional translator for the finishing touches.

After all, you want a reliable translation, not a text that approximates the content and spirit of the source text, with possibly a few major errors popping up here and there, in the most unpredictable fashion. Finally, just think about this: any texts you

translate in DeepL or Google Translate instantly become public information from the time they are entered into the tool. Caution is advised when translating confidential information: it's best not to translate contracts or financial information online!

3. A friend-of-a-friend

Perhaps you are looking for someone to translate your document, and you find someone who is either a linguist or has an excellent command of their languages. For an ad-hoc translation, there might not be anything wrong with that. But you probably won't be lucky enough to work with a native speaker. Perhaps your friend translates into a language that they have mastered, but which is not necessarily their native language. That means that the quality of the translation may suffer. And for the purposes of quality control, your friend should consult



4. Translation by a freelancer

A freelance translator usually works in one or two language combinations and certainly delivers good quality in these combinations, translating into their native language, and only from those languages that the translator has specialised in. Translation from Dutch into French and English into French are typical examples. Incidentally, many translation agencies including Lexitech insist that their translators only translate into their native language. The quality of a freelancer's translation work should be excellent, due to the very fact that it is done by a professional; the only drawback is that a freelancer is limited with respect to the volume of work they can take on, and the language combinations that they specialise in.

5. Translation by a multilingual translation agency

A multilingual translation agency generally offers a full range of services.

The main service is high-quality translation in a wide range of languages: translations into familiar languages such as translation from French into Spanish, or translation from Hungarian into Dutch, but also more 'exotic' combinations such as translation from Dutch into Turkish or translation from French into Chinese are standard.

Alongside its multilingual services, a multilingual translation agency also offers a host of other professional services. Services such as desktop publishing, interpreting, international and multilingual SEO.



A full-service package does what it says: it provides you with every service to meet all your multilingual needs. You do not have to rely on a large number of companies and you can keep the number of business relationships to a minimum. Moreover, the service goes a step further in terms of specialisation. Do you want to translate your website? Do you need contracts translated? Do you need to translate text that is in an unusual format, or do you have legacy documents that are only available in PDF, for example? Is there a large volume of content such as forums or tweets that need a very quick turnaround time? Do you have manuals or instruction manuals where precision of terminology plays a major role? Do you need your documents to be translated urgently, or do you need sworn translations? Do you need legal, technical or medical translations?

For all these questions, your translation agency has a solution. Lexitech, for example, also has the appropriate infrastructure and a specialized and experienced team both internally and with partners to provide a solution for the most complex needs.

6. Your translation agency combined with machine translation

Machine translation is a good example of how a solid multilingual translation agency can provide value-added in practice. Machine translations, whether statistical or neural, function on the basis of a massive database of bilingual texts. That is their greatest strength, but also their greatest weakness. The moment your content is not recognized by the machine, the machine either translates incorrectly or not at all. Then you need the help of a translation agency to check the quality of the translated text, correct errors and improving the machine translation output.

In a sense, it's all about fine-tuning translation technology and combining it with professional services. By combining machine translation with professional translation, you receive a final product in the correct file format, of decent, high-quality, that is within budget and delivered on time. So Google Translate on its own is far from the whole answer!

It's also good to know that the ISO certificate 18587 indicates that your translation agency has the necessary expertise in terms of post-editing machine translation output and that it only uses professional translators who have been properly trained for this purpose. This gives you an added assurance that the texts you have entrusted to the translation agency for translation are in good hands.

Choosing your translation agency: what are the critical factors? Seven crucial questions.

1. Does your translation agency know its way around different file formats?

Good translation agencies are able to easily handle different types of files. Depending on the industry or type of content being translated, their clients provide content in different formats. This can be web content, documents in Word or InDesign, technical manuals in DITA or even videos requiring subtitles in different languages.

Your translation agency must be equipped to handle all of these formats efficiently. This is true both for when the source text is imported into the translation agency's databases and for when the translated text is exported for delivery to the client. This ensures that you can easily integrate the translated text into your content management system or, more generally, that the translation agency is able to deliver files to you that can be used immediately.

2. Is your translation agency skilled in terminology management?

Terminology management is another example of a service for which a translation agency is particularly well-suited. Translators know the methodology and how to extract terminology from a text. They master the tools and, if necessary, they have access to subject matter experts. That way, you can rest assured that even for highly specialised content, the terminology in the different languages is correct, both in your source text and in the translation.



3. What sector(s) does your translation agency specialise in?

It's important to carefully check at the start that your translation agency is versed in your industry.

Some translation agencies position themselves as legal translation agencies, others as technical or financial translation agencies, for example. Each of those sectors requires specialisation. It's important to note that claims by a professional translation agency that it offers technical translations must be backed up by the technology it uses and the skills of its team members, in order to deliver optimal results within a strict budget and within the agreed timeframe.

The term 'technical translation' covers a whole range of very different content, ranging from business communication, business information, technical information, marketing communication, to customer service, etc. The translation agency must be well versed in these content types and the technologies behind them. Your translation agency must have sufficient in-house capacity not only to translate content but also to integrate it across platforms.

4. How multilingual really is your translation agency?

It goes without saying that translation agencies can handle different languages. Translations into French, into Dutch, into English, etc. are very common in our region. Clearly, translation agencies are able to handle these common language combinations, but only good translation agencies have extensive networks for the more exotic language combinations.

Are you hoping to export to China? Do you have contacts or colleagues who are based in India or in Central Europe? About 6,500 different languages are currently spoken worldwide, and about a hundred have more than 10 million speakers. In reality, within the business world, about 50 languages suffice. **A solid translation agency makes sure it has the right network behind it:** existing relationships with freelancers who have been properly tested and who are readily available. That means you have the right solution, even for a translation into Chinese, Thai or Arabic! Your multilingualism is assured!

5. How do you objectively assess the quality of your translation agency?

The quality of a translation is often a moot point. How do you define translation quality and, as a client, how do you determine if your translation agency is the right one for your specific needs?

Ask about certification

An efficient translation agency has stringent procedures in place. Many agencies express this through ISO certifications, with ISO

9001 and ISO 17100 being the most common certifications for translation agencies. ISO 9001 addresses the overall process and the quality of the process. ISO 17100 addresses the requirements that a translator must meet in order to consistently deliver high-quality translations.

ISO certifications do not say everything, but are a good starting point to assess how highly a translation agency rates quality.

Important: a translation's quality depends not only on being 'error-free', but also on the timeliness of when it is delivered, how your translation agency handles your questions and comments, and how any additional questions and special requests you make are dealt with.

It is impossible not to come to the conclusion that the strength of the process accounts for the majority of a translation agency's strength.

Find out the ins-and-outs of the translation process

Let's say you entrust your source text to your translation agency. If your translation agency is an expert in the industry, it first and foremost analyses any texts that it receives thoroughly. What is the source language and what is the target language? Is the text technical or does it lean towards editorial? How educated is the target audience: are they specialists, or rather the man or woman on the street? Is there reference material available or is a lot of material already available in a translation memory?

A translation agency that is clued-up will first ask you a number of questions with the goal of handling the project as efficiently as possible.

To work efficiently, your translation agency should be employing the latest technologies in translation memory, terminology management, machine translation, project management, bookkeeping and financial management. The endeavour is always to remain as efficient as possible, in order to offer quality at the most competitive price. On that basis, the translation agency provides you with a quote. If it has a solid network of good translators and professionals, they can offer a competitive price and reassure you that the quality of the work delivered will be more than just average.

Find out whether within the translation agency it will be the same professional, project manager or account manager who will take care of your files at all times. This adds value to ensure that all of your questions and requests are followed-up in the best possible way.

An additional advantage of good translation agencies is that they have their own software that they make available to you, or a portal to their management system, so you can always follow the status of the different projects, consult the translation memories or terminology lists or get an overview of what invoices have been issued and what payments have been made.

As mentioned, a good translation agency has an extensive network of good translators. Managing this network of translators is



an art in itself. Translation agencies make sure they have contacts all over the world and that they test freelance translators regularly, across a whole host of subjects. This is only logical, because you should be able to count on your translation agency, even for translations of specialised subjects into exotic languages. The moment you make an enquiry with the translation agency is not the time when the agency picks up the phone for the first time to see if there is someone in China who can translate the user manual for your equipment! That means that knowing the language combinations and subject areas that your translation agency specialises in is only the first step. There is no substitute for a stable process and a network of specialized and tested translators! A translation agency's network is particularly useful when multilingual projects are requested, for example, translating learning software into the 22 most widely spoken languages in the European Union. Translating a user manual, translating official documents: a translation agency assumes a coordinating role and ensures that you get everything delivered in an orderly fashion.

A translated text is worthless if delivered late. Thus, the quality of translations must also be measured according to keeping to

agreed deadlines. Usually translations are part of a longer process in which content is produced, edited and approved, followed by content translation and distribution. Almost without exception, this is a process involving a lot of different partners. Nevertheless, the designated time remains the same for distributing the content. Translation agencies play a very important role in that process because their partners and freelancers usually operate in different countries and sometimes even on different continents.

In addition to translation, **a focus on the checking process** is also important. The first step is a read-through of the translation by the translator from beginning to end, once they have completed the translation. Afterwards, a host of other actions are required or designated to achieve the agreed level of quality. In some cases, source text and translation are double-checked by a second translator. This bilingual step is called post-editing or revision. Sometimes it is enough to simply carry out a monolingual check of the translated text. We call this monolingual step 'proofreading'. At the end of the process, there are many software packages on the market to carry out an automatic quality check. These applications don't deliver perfect results, but are nonetheless very useful tools to speed up the revision and/or proofreading process and ensure that the focus is on the major problems and not the more common ones.

This checking process is not only a 'must' for translations prepared by the translation agency itself. There are cases where texts originate from another agency or are texts that were previously translated. These should also be checked for linguistic aspects.

A good example is a past translation or a text (for example, an invitation to tender) that a subject-matter expert has drafted in a language that is not their native language.

Often, of course, the language that the text is drafted in is English.

By revising or proofreading these texts, your translation agency achieves maximum quality at the best price-to-quality ratio. This gives you peace of mind: you can rest assured that your text/proposal has the same linguistic quality as that of your competitor, even if your competitor has the not inconsiderable advantage of writing their proposal in their mother tongue.

Once your translation agency receives the text from the translator and/or proofreader, the agency puts everything into the correct format, possibly using desktop publishing. At that point, the translation is ready for delivery.

As a client, you might review everything yourself and provide feedback if necessary. Some translation agencies process that feedback without further comment. Other, more cautious translation agencies, revisit the feedback with the respective translator to ensure that translation memories always contain data that has been reviewed and/or approved by linguists.



6. How accessible is your translation agency?

A good translation agency is close to its clients. And being close can mean literally. Take Lexitech. As a translation agency, we chose Brussels as the location for our commercial and operational activities, and also have commercial operations in Paris. At Lexitech, we find that our clients appreciate this proximity. By nature, our activity is very international, so it is convenient to have a point of contact near our clients. Another reason for choosing a central location for our offices was to minimise the need for our colleagues to relocate. In these times of permanent busyness and work-life balance, this aspect also deserves attention.

7. How much does a translation cost? And what do you get for the price?

The translation market is quite large, amounting to about \$50 billion a year, albeit on a global scale. In that gigantic market, all translation agencies are trying to position themselves in their own way. Obviously, there are also some price breakers in the market, and some are quite aggressive in that regard.

The key question is always: at what point does pricing begin to nibble away at the quality of translation and the service that comes with it?

The skilful use of technology plays a major role in the efficiency of a translation agency. The most obvious technology is the translation technology offered by Google Translate or DeepL, for example, but a translation agency also uses a lot of other packages to perform tasks in the best possible way. Nevertheless,

the translation sector just like other sectors, relies for the delivery of quality work on professionals who, almost without exception, are university graduates and in many cases have several decades of experience. Their work is accurate and of high quality, and they can handle large volumes; in return of course, they expect to be properly paid.

A translation agency that strives for quality not only ensures that the best translators are available at your service, they also ensure that they can provide you with a full range of services. Do you need an interpreter because you need to speak to a person in Poland who is not proficient in English? What's the position with desktop publishing? Or what if you usually send marketing content to your translation agency, but suddenly you need a contract



translated into Italian? In that case, can you count on your translation agency or do you have to find the solution yourself? What about the occasional questions about really exotic languages, from the Middle East or the Far East?

What type of translation do you want? Do you have a marketing text requiring copywriting skills as much as translation skills? Or do you have a legal document containing legal terminology that must be translated accurately? Perhaps you have a large volume of comments on social media in a wide variety of languages that need to be machine-translated, whilst at the same time respecting agreed-upon quality standards? Would you like your texts to be optimised for SEO even in foreign languages, so-called multilingual SEO?

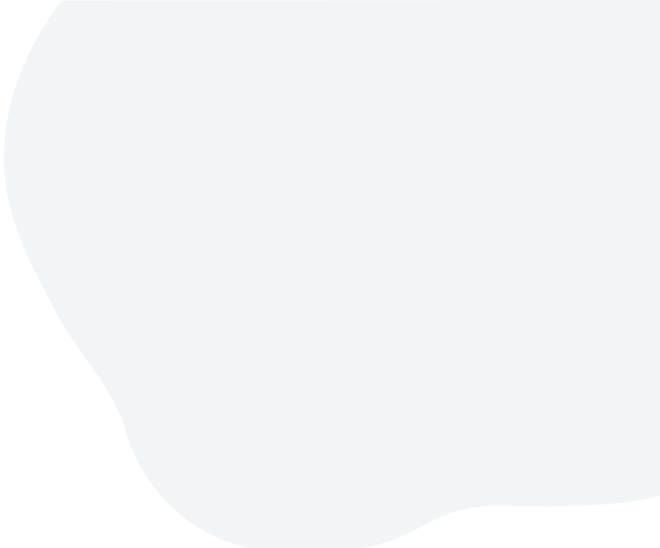
A reliable translation agency can propose a different set of services for each of these situations, in order to achieve optimal results within a set budget.

Another potential pricing problem is the word price that is the usually way of charging for translations today. Roughly speaking, that cost ranges between 10 and 20 cents per word. But since each translation is unique, it is necessary to analyse the job first before a specific quote can be given. Because translation agencies keep track of all of their translations, they can also apply a discount for sentences or phrases that have been previously translated. These previously translated items do not need verifying again. The discounts offered on the cost of a translation can be up to 30% or even more.



8. How sustainable is your translation agency?

Translations are an essential element in business. A good translation should be readily available and fast. You should be able to trust your professional translation agency. In short, you need a sustainable partner with whom you can build a valued long-term relationship. At Lexitech, we take the concept of sustainability even further. We emphasise respectful treatment towards our colleagues and our freelancers. We want to be able to count on each other, even when we have an urgent or more complex task to carry out. We pay attention to the use of energy and resources: we only have one planet. Above all, we want our company to contribute to everyone's success, from the success of our clients, as well as the success of our colleagues and our freelancers. This is who we can create value for everyone, today and in the future.



Armed with this information, you are now able to ask critical questions of your future translation partner.

Would you like to “spar” with us on this?
[Feel free to contact us!](#)

Translating your website:
Are these already on your check-
list?



Why translate your website content?

Translating your web content is an investment that can pay off handsomely. Not only does it improve your website's visibility in the major search engines, a professionally translated website also makes your business look more reliable and credible. Smart use of digital media and your website helps reach a global audience with very limited costs.

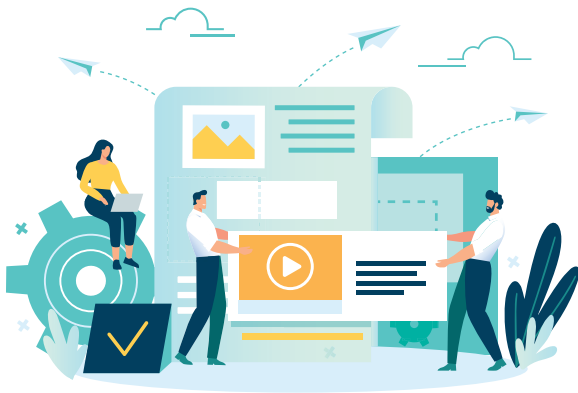
Speak the language of your audience literally and figuratively

Are you fully aware of how important it is to address your target audience in their own language? The firm Common Sense Advisory has published research showing that customers appreciate being approached in their own language. But remember: your audience is not just limited to your customers. Other stakeholders also appreciate engaging with you in their own language (Source: CSA research: Consumers-Prefer-Their-Own-Language).

While it is clear that the translation of your website and multi-lingual communication make most sense in the realm of e-commerce, it is also important to know that all major search engines can index and display the content of your website by language: potential consumers searching for your products or services in their preferred language will therefore miss out on your website if it is not available in their language. But you do want people to find you, don't you?

At the same time, to ensure that your company is one step ahead when recruiting new employees or searching for service providers, you must make sure you address all these potential stakeholders in their own language.

Even internal communication with your employees, such as online via your intranet or newsletters, is often better multilingual so that everyone can keep up in their own language.



Five steps to translating your website

As with any project, preparation is crucial, and this is especially true when you want to get your website translated and localised.

We have outlined five preparatory steps below:

1. **Plan in advance**

Split the planning process into three preliminary steps:

➤ **Carry out research: understand the culture of the markets you want to approach**

If you want to enter new markets, first try to understand the culture of those markets. Are your message, brand and image suitable for this? If not, adjust them. The style used in the original language for your home market may be very different from the style required for a new market. Make necessary changes as needed.

➤ **Build your team**

Like many companies, you are constantly creating content. Ensure that an unbroken chain exists for the creation, translation, localisation and publication of that content. This is a long-term activity in which all parties involved clearly understand their role in the process.

➤ **Define your objectives**

One more preliminary step before you start translating your website content: clearly define what you want to achieve with the translation. A few examples:

- attract more visitors to your website;
- increase your brand's visibility in one or more new markets;
- boost sales in a particular market.

Doing these steps in advance will ensure that everyone is committed to the same goal.

2. Create a translation-ready design

At the very outset when you are designing your website, keep in mind a number of features that make translation and especially localisation possible.

Some languages require more characters than others: German texts, for example, typically take up 25% more space than English ones.

Other languages have their own peculiarities:

- some Slavic and many Eastern languages have their own alphabet,
- whereas other languages, such as Arabic and Hebrew, are written right-to-left instead of left-to-right.

Certain information, such as measurements, dates and currencies, are often generated automatically, independent of the content; consider, for example, the creation date or the date when a document was most recently modified. Your website must be able to display those units in the local format of your target audience.

Another factor to take into account with your design is the

ability to handle localised metadata. These include:

- urls (Uniform Resource Locators) - the titles of Web pages that appear in your browser's title area,
- and the names and alternative texts of images.

These elements are often overlooked, both when analysing your design's conformity to current web design standards and during the translation itself. This has a negative impact on your website's ability to be found.

An example: on the Web, people often search for images. If your image has a meaningless name, such as IMG2349, no one will ever find it because no one ever types in the search term 'IMG2349'.



3. Define content workflow

Localising and translating your website is a continuous process: content is created, updates are made and announcements are distributed. It is therefore wise to decide right from the outset whether new or updated content is for all your markets or just a selection of them, and make sure you publish the same information at the same time for all relevant markets. This requires an efficient process, effectively minimising the time between creation and publication of your content.

Remember: the tasks of localising and translating your website are a marathon, not a sprint!

4. Capture your KPIs

When managing your Web content, it's best to ask yourself these questions as well.

What are your goals? What exactly do you want to achieve? And what KPIs do you want to measure (critical performance indicators or key performance indicators)? Determine what those KPIs are in order to monitor the effectiveness of your website's translation and localisation. Here are a few ideas:

- number of visitors, according to language or market;
- sales from your localised website;
- market share of each target market, linked to customer satisfaction.

The possibilities are endless, so it is important to focus exactly

on the points you want to measure over time. If you have accurate information, consider what works and what doesn't, and take corrective action if necessary.

5. Define the translation and localisation process

When defining the translation and localisation process for your website, consider the following points:

- Weighing up the pros and cons of Google Translate/DeepL against those of human translation
- Establish your company's tone in the foreign language
- Take into account Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Include meta content
- WEIGHING UP THE PROS AND CONS OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE/DEEPL AGAINST THOSE OF HUMAN TRANSLATION

The process for translating a website can go in two directions:

- one extreme is a labour-intensive, human translation carried out by a professional translator
- the other extreme is machine translation, without any revision, by a translation engine such as Google Translate or DeepL.

Between these extremes lie many combinations of solutions.

Choosing the most efficient method for translating and localising your website depends on the type of content, the target audience and the frequency of updates. Obviously, the translation of content that is visible for only a few hours does not need handling in the same way as, say, a landing page or other texts that remain unchanged for many years. You should consult your translation services partner for advice on this.

➤ ESTABLISH YOUR COMPANY'S TONE IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Make sure your translated Web content strikes the right tone. Often your translated website will be used in a market where you are not as strong as your home market. Therefore, consider whether the tone you use in your home market is appropriate for the new market you want to approach. Develop a style guide, defining the impression you wish to make and how you want to address these new markets in terms of culture and language.

➤ TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO)

It is not only the content for your home market that needs Search Engine Optimisation (SEO); investment in multilingual SEO is just as important. If you are attentive to the keywords that are regularly used in your home market, you should be just as attentive to the keywords used in your target market. Consumers in the Netherlands, for example, do not necessarily

have the same sensitivities as Dutch-speaking consumers in Belgium. In other words, take note of language variations.

Moreover, keywords are constantly evolving and need to be updated regularly. Keyword research is an ongoing process, not just a preliminary step.

➤ INCLUDE META CONTENT

In the translation and localisation process, also consider the analysis, translation and localisation of meta content. Meta content is information on your website that is not visible to visitors but is noticed by search engines; for example, it is the description of a web page or the structure of your website. It's easy to overlook these elements during the translation and localisation process, so it is important to take them into account right at the start.



Website localisation: important technical aspects

Alongside the linguistic aspects described above, there are a number of technical elements that come into play when developing a multilingual website.

The first and most important point is to use a Web content management system (WCMS) that supports multilingualism! Avoid using separate dedicated or virtual web hosting facilities for each target market; this not only leads to higher hosting costs, but also complicates the management of your web content. Fortunately, a lot of popular WCMS like WordPress or Drupal offer support for multiple languages in one place, either by default or by adding a plug-in.

After choosing your preferred WCMS and adding content in the language of your home market, you face the next problem: how do you deliver the web content from your WCMS's backend to your localisation service provider? And how do you re-enter the translation into the backend of your WCMS? We discuss some methods below.

SEEMS LIKE A GOOD IDEA:



the cut and paste method

At first glance, this seems like the simplest solution: paste the content from your WCMS backend into a Word document and then have that document translated. After the translation, copy the content again from the Word document and paste the copied content into the appropriate location in the backend of your WCMS.

While this seems like a simple solution, it is not the most efficient, for several reasons:

1. **It is very time-consuming**

While content in the frontend often looks like full, long pages, in the backend it can be broken down into hundreds of small pieces. It sometimes takes hours or even days if you have to navigate through all this content twice: once to extract the content and then again to enter the translation.

2. **There is a risk of forgetting bits of content**

If your content is fragmented into hundreds of pieces, it is easy to forget something when retrieving the content or entering the translation.

3. **Formatting may be lost**

Usually, content in the backend of your WCMS will contain formatted characters or paragraphs: words in bold or italics, numbered lists or bulleted lists, as well as styles for headings. Such features are sometimes lost when cutting and pasting. Restoring these features again in a translation requires a lot of work.

4. The risk of damaging the translated text increases

Certain special characters in Central European languages may look good in a Word document but after cutting and pasting, they may be corrupted in the backend of your WCMS.

SLIGHTLY BETTER:

using a WCMS with export and import functionality

A better solution is to automate the process as much as possible to ensure that manual interventions are kept to an absolute minimum, for example, by using a WCMS with an export and import function. Typically, a WCMS can export content in a structured format such as .csv or .xlsx.

These formats can be easily handled by the standard translation tools of the translation agency you work with. This way you receive your translations in the same format you sent them; once they are received, you can easily import them back into your WCMS. In this way, you immediately solve the first two problems: you don't waste time, and the risk of forgetting pieces of text is greatly reduced.

EVEN BETTER:

use a plug-in

Why not go one step further? There are plug-ins that extend the functions of the backend in your WCMS to include a translation management system. For example, the TMGMT module (<https://www.drupal.org/project/tmgmt>) extends Drupal with such a feature, and the WPML plug-in (<https://wpml.org/>) does the same for WordPress.

These solutions also help you eliminate the last two problems:

- you will be able to see the translation status of your content, either in a view next to the items to be translated themselves or in a dashboard with an overview of all elements and their translation status.
- you will also be able to see when content has been updated, with the system then telling you that the translation has been updated.

These systems usually allow an export in .xliff format (= XML localisation interchange file format), which you can send to your translation partner. This format ensures that you retain all the formatting of your content and that characters do not become unreadable.

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION:

choosing a translation partner with a system that connects to yours

The most complete solution is to connect the translation management system of your WCMS with the business management system of your translation partner, via the APIs of both systems.

This integration will allow you to send content to your translation partner with one simple click, without having to export and attach that content to an email. Your translation request is then immediately created in your translation partner's system, and the status of your translation in their system can be synchronised with the status in the translation management component in your WCMS.

This system is la crème de la crème for website translation and localisation: this way you can create content, manage translations and communicate with your translation partner in a single system (your WCMS).



Translation of websites using a translation proxy

Despite all the benefits, there may still be reasons why you do not want to include – or cannot – include the translation of your Web content in your WCMS.

- It might be that your WCMS does not support multilingualism or does not have an export and import function, and you don't want to waste time cutting and pasting.
- You want to test a new market's initial response to your translated content before investing in fully integrating these translations into your WCMS.
- You don't want to expose your main website to traffic from a new market because of security or performance risks.

A translation proxy searches for content to be translated

Fortunately, there is a solution: ask your translation agency to set up a translation proxy. Specialised software then searches all the pages of your website and locates any content to be translated. Content can either be translated in advance by a human translator, and then stored in a database, called a translation memory; or the content can be machine translated by a translation engine such as Google Translate or DeepL.

When a visitor to your website makes a request to view the content of your main website in another language, their request is sent to a translation proxy, which then displays the requested page to the visitor. In this process, the source language is com-

pletely replaced by the corresponding translation: the translation originates either from a translation database that has been populated with human translations or from a translation engine that provides machine translations.

The specialised translation proxy software also regularly searches the pages of your website to detect new content and send it to your translation partner for translation. This means that as a result, the translation memory is always up-to-date with all your translated content. To bridge the short time gap between detecting the presence of new content and entering the corresponding human translation, your translation partner can provide you with translations from the translation memory of old content and machine translation for new content.

In any case, choose your translation agency carefully. Most translation agencies offer professional translation services, performed by a professional translator or by a generic translation engine such as Google Translate; however, the more experienced agencies can go one step further and develop a translation engine based on your content.

A translation proxy is a fast and cost-effective way of making your content available to a new market without having to worry about performance or security issues on the main server you use for your established markets.



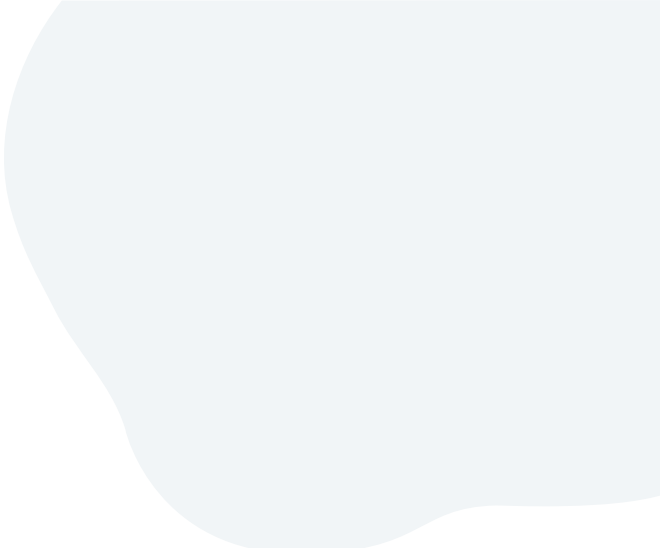
Website localisation: three additional tips

We have talked about linguistic and technical workflow in this article. We would like to end with three more tips that, although important, are often forgotten.

1. A whole debate rages about what is the best way to display the target language in the url of the localised website: is it best to add a subsection to your website (e.g., www.domain.com/fr/) or create a subdomain (fr.domain.com)? Both ways have their advantages and disadvantages, but the best option is to **give each target location its own unique domain**: so for example, www.domain.com for your global website, and www.domein.fr for your website for the French market.

- 2. Check your entire website!** It goes without saying that you should check your website before it is translated: you should check that all internal and external links work, that forms and buttons do what they are supposed to do, and that your content is error-free. These steps also need to be taken after the translation process as well. Then check that the translated pages are fully functional and look for the last little bits of content that have not been translated. Even the best WCMS are limited by designers who were unable to do anything other than put a strand of text into a hard-code, rather than making this accessible through the backend of your WCMS.
- 3. A website is a living being: new content is constantly being added.** While your translation partner will work with you to organise a workflow that will get new elements translated as quickly as possible, you must not make the mistake of presenting content that has not yet been translated to your foreign-language target markets. A web page that appears in different languages not only creates a sloppy impression with your visitors, it also leads to a lower ranking in most search engines.





Are you ready to discuss a website translation project with Lexitech?



Feel free to contact us and discover our range of website translation services.

| Glossary of terms

Align When we receive a document for translation, some clients provide bilingual texts as reference. This is particularly useful when source text and translation are neatly juxtaposed. If this is not the case, we must align: put each source text sentence (segment) and each translated text sentence (segment) side-by-side, so that we can put them into a translation memory. Sometimes we can automate that process, but unfortunately it's not always possible.

Analysis Before starting a translation job, one of the things we look at is the amount of text to translate. Sometimes similar text was translated previously and which can still be found in a previous translation memory; we can then check the translation memory to calculate the number of repetitions and "fuzzies". In effect, we compare your new text with a text we have previously translated for you, thereby

1. saving time, for you as well as us
2. reflecting your style and preferences more accurately
3. providing you with cost-savings

API Application programming interface. This is a somewhat nerdy term to describe a program that controls another program. That way you don't have to get lost in buttons and clicks.

CAT Computer assisted translation. Not to be confused with machine translation. CAT involves the software(s) that translators use to work as efficiently as possible, for example, to easily consult the translation memory or to have terminology or dictionaries always at hand.

CMS

Content management system. This is simply software to easily manage, organise and publish content, mostly on the Web. For us, this is very important, because a lot of texts we receive originate from CMS. A good understanding of those systems and easy interaction with them is important to work quickly and efficiently.

Processing time

A translation is almost always a part of a larger project, so it is important to deliver our work within the allotted timeframe, whilst still complying with the quality level demanded by the client. An efficient organisation is paramount: a team of well-trained and motivated professionals all pulling together, and working with the best technologies.

DTP

Desktop publishing. Layout with tools such as Frame-maker or InDesign to prepare professional documents for publication. A translation agency is not usually a specialist in DTP, but still ensures it can offer this service, so the client is assured of a one-stop shop. The layout of the translated text is formatted to achieve the same visual effect as the original text.

Fuzzy

Some segments are repeated. Sometimes we find that only one or two words have changed in a particular segment. So a fuzzy is neither a repetition nor new text, but still useful to the translator: the translator has at their disposal previous translations of ideas and concepts, providing consistency and saving time.

Localisation 'Localisation' is more than just a fancy term for 'translation'. Localisation is ensuring that the target text puts everything in the correct format, such as dates, currencies, units of measurement (metric or imperial): everything should be adapted to the culture of the local market to ensure that any text, instructions, software, apps, websites, etc. appear as if they were created in the local market. Translation is a starting point but not the whole story.

Metadata Metadata is data that describes other data, for the purpose of filtering, organising and better managing information and data. Examples of metadata include the name of who drafted the text, the date of when it was drafted, corrected, reviewed and approved, the designation of the target audience, etc.

Native speaker Your translation is prepared by a linguist. But to achieve the right quality, it is essential that linguist translates only into her or his native language. No matter how well one masters a foreign language, the intuitive knowledge of a mother tongue speaker has never been matched to date. For this reason, translation companies such as Lexitech only use native speakers for your translations.

MT Machine translation. Without a doubt, machine translation has been the holy grail in the translation industry for the last 15 to 20 years. In short, machine translation compares your text to a large data set of previously (human) translated texts to extract the greatest common denominator and suggest a translation.

The technology originated about 50 years ago but has accelerated in the last 10 years: computing power and computer memory have become much cheaper. Today machine translation relies not only on statistical models; the emergence of so-called neural machine translation represents a major advance. Some tools such as Google Translate are generic, but other tools can be trained on specific data sets or on specific terminology, greatly improving the reliability of translations. Post-processing is almost always necessary; the confidentiality of some of these tools must also be carefully examined.

Multimedia

This includes post-production services such as voice-over, subtitling or dubbing to make audio and video materials such as corporate videos and e-learning modules available in other languages.

Post-editing of machine-translation

The post-editing of machine translation by a human to remove major errors and improve fluency. No matter how many advances have been made in technology, machine translations must always be reviewed to ensure quality is in line with customer expectations. These expectations may vary according to, for example, the target audience of the translation.

NMT

Neural machine translation. Machine translation that functions on the basis of so-called neural networks, in order to imitate as closely as possible the functioning of the human brain.

More than in statistical models, NMT thereby takes many factors (and therefore context) into account, thus improving the quality of machine translation. Those tools look particularly attractive at first glance. Nevertheless, we should always use them with caution, as errors and misinterpretations remain unpredictable.

Output

Unless otherwise specified, your translation agency will retain the layout of the original documents for translation (i.e., tables, lists, etc.), provided they have been delivered in a standard and editable format.

Proofreading

Checking the translated text to ensure that it meets the quality criteria.

QA

Quality Assurance. A set of tools to correct precisely those mistakes sometimes missed by a professional translator, such as double spaces, punctuation, etc.

Revision

An accurate comparison of the original source text and translated text by a professional linguist other than the translator.

Segment

A text for translation is first of all divided into sentences, or phrases, to most efficiently match your text with a pre-existing translation memory. Sometimes a glossary has to be translated, which entails a list of words with their corresponding translations. All these units are called 'segments'.

SEO translations

Translation with special attention to optimisation for search engines (Search Engine Optimisation): .

first, the list of SEO keywords is translated, taking into account the target area and audience. Then the translated SEO keywords are strategically incorporated into the translation

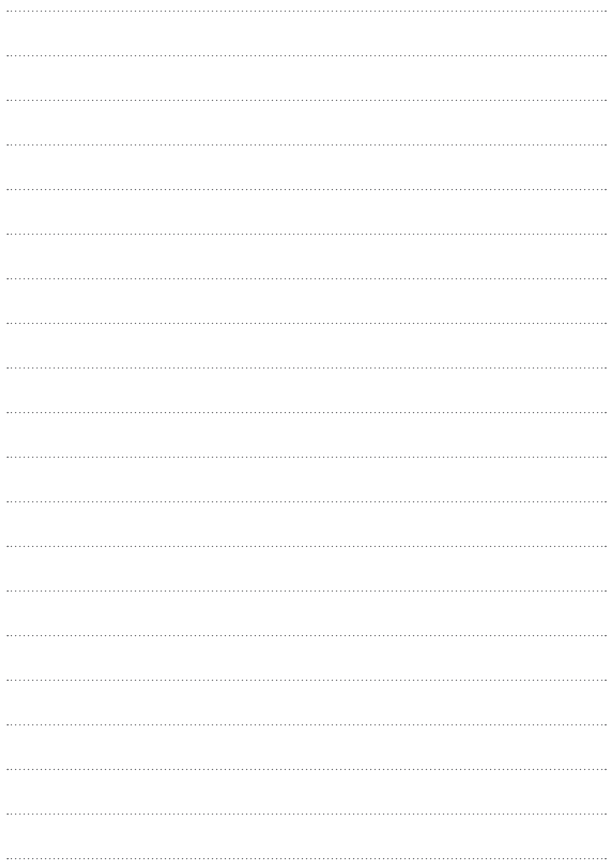
Terminology: Very often, the quality of a translation is determined by the use of the correct technical terms, or terms that the client themselves prefer for their products or services. By terminology we mean the working methods and technologies that enable a translator to create, approve, find, translate, manage, etc. the correct terms.

Transcreation Translation of words and underlying concepts or messages. Also called ‘marketing’, ‘cultural adaptation’ or ‘multilingual copywriting’.

Transcription Multilingual transcription services cover the conversion of audio or video recordings into written text and translation into other languages.

Translation memory Why translate the same thing twice? Your translation agency keeps an orderly record of all your translations in a translation memory so that they can be easily reused at a later date.

Translation All translators translate into their native language and have a master’s degree or equivalent experience in both the specialist field as well as linguistic expertise.





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