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The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

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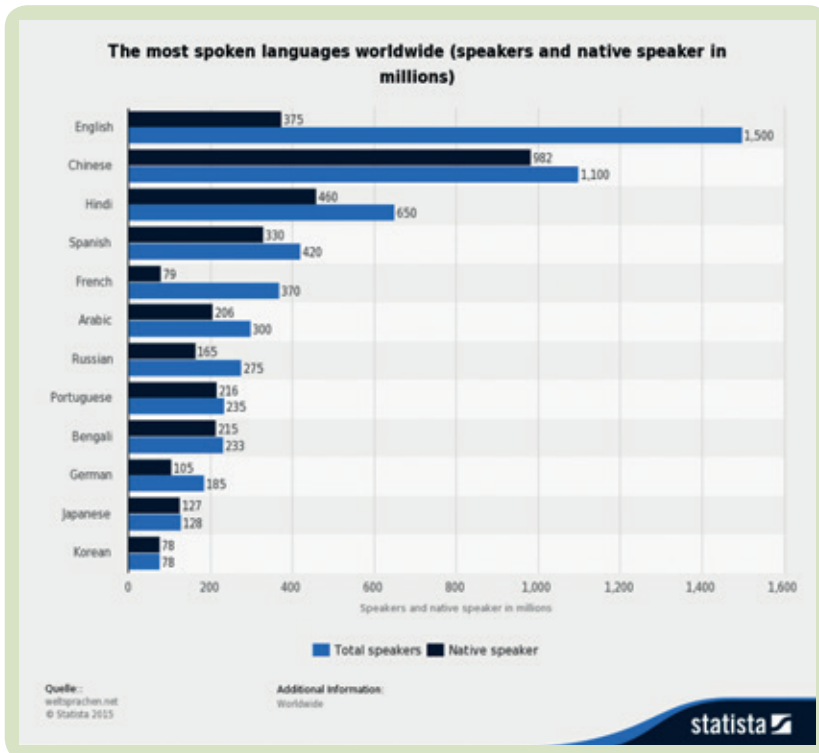Find out more.**

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Success with desktop publishing

Kavita Kovvali from translate plus takes a look into the role that DTP plays to help organisations maximise their international reach.

The most spoken languages worldwide (speakers and native speaker in millions)

It's not enough to send one message in one language across all markets; consumers expect the content to be tailored to them

9 out of 10 internet users said that when given a choice of languages, they always visited a website in their own language

An increasingly multilingual marketplace

As international trade booms and more organisations work with partners and consumers around the world, it's important that all communication is clear, effective and best suited to the target audience. While English has long been considered the primary language of business, this dominance is decreasing, especially for commerce with countries that have in the past been considered 'developing' or 'emerging'. Reports from the World Trade Organization (WTO) show that exports and imports from emerging markets have grown substantially over the last five years, demonstrating both their increasing demand for international products and developed nations' consumption of their products. The WTO states that in comparison, from 2010 to 2014, exports from developing markets have increased by nearly 30%, whereas developed markets have seen a less than 20% increase. Likewise, when it comes to imports, developing markets have exceeded a 30% increase, whereas developed markets have achieved just over 10%.[1]

To successfully meet and take advantage of these possibilities, whether launching new products or managing existing demands, it is imperative that brand content is properly communicated. It's not enough to send one message in one language across all markets; consumers expect the content to be tailored to

them, with negative implications for a brand if it's not. Common Sense Advisory's survey across three continents about online buying behaviour states that 52% of participants only make online purchases if a website presents information in their language, with many considering this more important than the price of the product.[2] Supporting this is an analytical report carried out by the European Commission across 27 EU member states regarding purchasing behaviour. Their survey shows that of their respondents, 9 out of 10 internet users[3] said that when given a choice of languages, they always visited a website in their own language, with only a small majority (53%) stating that they would accept using an English language site if their own language wasn't available. This shows the overwhelming need to communicate to audiences in their local languages. As you can see in this chart[4] compiled by Statista, although English has the highest number of total speakers due to its widespread learning across the word, other languages such as Chinese and Hindi have a higher number of native speakers. For an organisation to be truly successful in global markets, it's important that they take this into account.

Some countries have large multicultural populations with inhabitants from all over the world. Even though they speak the national language, for some, they prefer to use their native language and they too will consider whether a document or website is available in their preferred language in order to make an informed purchase. It's important to consider all aspects of the target market and the audience within.

Multilingual scripts in communications

When considering multilingual written communication, sometimes people think it's sufficient to quickly translate the content and hope that it's enough. However, the communications also needs to be in accordance with the relevant script or character set and style. European languages that are derived from Latin follow the left-to-right reading order, but this is not the case universally. Arabic scripts, for example, and their derivatives are written from right-to-left. This means that while information in a typically 'Western' document will be read from left to right and positioned on a document or package in such a way, the opposite is required for markets where languages such as Arabic are concerned. The following languages are examples of scripts that are right-to-left.
- **Arabic script**
- **Hebrew alphabet**

- **Syriac alphabet** – a writing system primarily used to write the Syriac language from the 1st century AD.
- **Samaritan alphabet** – an ethnoreligious group of the Levant, descended from ancient Semitic inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean region.
- **Mandaic alphabet** – is based on the Aramaic alphabet and is used for writing the Mandaic language. Speakers originate from Iran or Iraq.
- **Thaana** – the modern writing system of the Maldivian language spoken in the Maldives.
- **Mende Kikakui** – used for writing the Mende language of Sierra Leone.
- **N'Ko script** – a writing system for the Manding languages of West Africa.

Several East Asian scripts, for example Chinese, Japanese and Korean, can be written horizontally or vertically, because they consist mainly of disconnected syllabic units.[5] Traditionally, Chinese characters are semantically arranged from top to bottom in a column, with columns so formed progressing from right to left on the writing surface. Nowadays, however, a layout of horizontal rows running from left to right and being read from top to bottom has become more popular.

In addition to the 'directionality' of text, it's also important to take into account the fact that many languages – such as Nepali and Bengali – use so-called 'complex' scripts in which individual characters combine into different forms depending on which other character they combine with.

From a more physical perspective, organisations need to consider that translated content rarely results in the same number of characters in the target language as the source language. It's very common for content translated from English to German, for example, to see a significant increase in the number of characters, and especially in the number of lines, due to many compound nouns in German representing the equivalent of several words in English, and thus affecting line endings unless careful hyphenation is attended to. An increase in text length will then affect page layouts as the translated content may need more pages or bigger text boxes or additional formatting amendments to make it fit and maintain a brand's style. Take for example, the simple English phrase 'The tailored solution': this can be translated into German as 'Die maßgeschneiderte Lösung', with the number of characters increasing by 31%. Now, if this increase is extrapolated over a whole document, the translated content would take up a significantly larger area than the original. This would have to factored into projects where space is an important consideration, such as on packaging materials or magazines, and sometimes difficult decisions must be faced around font sizes and line spacing.

What is DTP and how can it assist technical communication?

Said to have begun in the mid-1980s[6] with the introduction of the Apple LaserWriter and PageMaker for Mac, desktop publishing (DTP) is the design and production of publications through the use of specialised software involving typesetting and images.

The most important benefit of DTP applications is the complete control they provide over a document. Unlike simple word processing, DTP enables the user to specify professionally what they want regarding typographical characteristics, such as kerning, and also allows for full-colour outputs to print and electronic formats such as PDF. This means that regardless of the program availability or skill set of the writer, the DTP service can enable the final document to be exactly what they need to be in line with the organisation's styles or external requirements, such as regulatory procedures.

DTP can be used for many tasks, including letters, press releases, memoranda, magazines, packaging materials, books, instruction manuals or indeed any type of document that needs typesetting. More and more, as technological solutions and communications become ever more widespread, DTP software and closely related applications are also used for online content, such as videos and e-learning courses; the lines between 'traditional' DTP and other uses become blurred, as DTP software providers try to incorporate other functionality into their applications. Writers can use DTP services for an increasing number of their projects, ensuring that the high-quality results they have with more traditional communications is applied to their new methods too.

When considering content in other languages, DTP will allow content manipulation so that the displayed text and imagery fits the space available and can easily be managed for publication of offline and online material. If we go back to our German example, if the translated text is now 31% larger than the original but the size of the packaging hasn't changed, then DTP is the service that will effect formatting in such a way that the new text will still look professional in the same amount of space.

DTP is essential for strong brand communications, maintaining consistency throughout all markets and fields. These communications will affect how readers perceive the brand overall, enabling them to clearly identify and differentiate them from others. From a commercial perspective, they see the commitment to quality and this may increase loyal repeat purchases, for example.

Requests at translate plus show first-hand how seriously technical communicators and organisations view effective company communications. The demand for DTP services

In this example, translating from English to German can increases number of characters by 31%.

English 'The tailored solution':

German 'Die maßgeschneiderte Lösung'

over the past few years has continued to grow dramatically, with a 115% increase in the number of organisations requesting this between 2011 and 2014. In order to better inform and reach international markets, some of our clients place DTP requests for content that has been translated into over 40 languages per document, while there are others who require this service for over 2,000 separate files within one overall project. In doing so, they are ensuring that their communications are completely tailored to their markets and situation, fit the required style specifications and are increasing their brand consistency.

Programs and file formats for DTP and translation

Commonly used DTP software includes Adobe InDesign, QuarkXPress, Adobe FrameMaker and CorelDRAW, but there are many other current and legacy packages that cover a range of professional and semi-professional approaches, such as Adobe PageMaker, Adobe HomePublisher, Aldus Personal Press, Apple Pages, Banner Mania, Corel Ventura, iStudio Publisher, Microsoft Office Publisher, PageStream, Ready,Set,Go, Scribus and Serif PagePlus, and plenty more besides.

Files that are created in Adobe InDesign can be exported in two formats for translation, INX and IDML. InDesign CS4 and newer support both these versions of which IDML is the best option as it works well with translation software, such as Trados, which will speed up file processing and thereby reduce the turnaround times. QuarkXpress is slightly trickier, as unlike Adobe InDesign, files cannot be exported straight from this program for the translation programs and, therefore, plugins, such as CopyFlow Gold, have to be used. However, through the use of the plugin, the translated content is imported back into the publication and the source text is replaced with the corresponding target text. Adobe FrameMaker is a DTP tool designed for writing and editing large or complex documents including structured documents that many writers prefer to use and is compatible with translation software.

What to look for in a DTP service provider

Organisations that focus heavily on print products such as magazines will find it effective to purchase DTP software; however, due to the often high cost of the licences, they may not be able to provide all employees with access. Others for whom the business objectives are focused elsewhere will find it cost and time effective to use a strong service provider that can quickly turn content around for time-sensitive projects, enabling the writers to focus on what they do best, such as content generation.

When choosing a DTP provider, it's important to consider how technologically advanced and flexible they are. There are regular software

updates – especially as companies like Adobe move to subscription payment models – and often new files aren't compatible with old software, so you need a provider who can handle both the new and old systems based on your requirements.

Skilled teams will be able to work with software to manage page layouts, ensure graphics that may be converted from RGB (Red-Green-Blue) to CMYK (Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Key) appear as intended when printed, and work with the right fonts for all languages and preferences. For organisations wanting to publish in international markets, the best approach is often to find a provider who can incorporate the translation and DTP services, so that they only have to send over each source file once and a fully translated and print-ready document will be returned. However, using separate service providers for translation and for DTP can lead to issues with file conversions, slower turnaround times and increased costs.

When creating a document that will need DTP, it is important to consider the following:

- Is there any flexibility regarding moving the images and text around the page to best suit the final layout?
- Will this layout have to suit several languages?
- Should the different languages be inserted as layers within the same document or should there be separate files?
- Does the final document need to be exported or imported in another file format?
- Have the images and font links been supplied to the DTP provider?
- How will the final document be published? For example, print, web page, video.

Hybrid solutions available in the market

While a traditional DTP service may be the best approach for some, others may need a 'hybrid' solution. translate plus recently conducted client research regarding what new services would be most beneficial and found that as organisations are growing rapidly and addressing international audiences, sometimes they have only some of the skills they need in-house; this could be for DTP or for translation, but not necessarily both. Furthermore, with the increase of digital agencies taking on several tasks for clients, the software they have may not be the same as what their end clients are working with.

For example, having created a document in Adobe InDesign, the file and text copy may need to be signed off by a colleague or customer. If the colleague or customer doesn't have InDesign (or doesn't know how to use it, or has an older version), then the approach traditionally taken would be to export as a PDF and ask for annotations and sticky notes. This is an ineffective solution as it can take a lot of time and multiple rounds of corrections, because the changes may not all be clear, or they may

be missed out. On the other hand, if the reviewer does have InDesign but not necessarily DTP knowledge, then there is a risk that they 'break' the formatting during review, by accidentally deleting or moving images or text frames, or by inadvertently changing formatting such as line spacing or font weights. There was a strong need for a new flexible answer to such challenges.

The marketplace is seeing an increasing number of these hybrid solutions appearing, with service providers realising that a one-service-fits-all approach is no longer enough. design plus, for example, is the solution from translate plus, which is focused on the text editing within Adobe InDesign documents. It is a secure cloud-based system that requires no prior experience with InDesign or any client-side software installations. Following on from the traditional DTP benefits, such tools enable users to have a 100% accurate view of what the text will look like alongside the images, and crucially with full formatting, as well as allowing the export of typeset content to numerous other file formats including PDF, SWF, XFL and XML.

There is a range of providers with online InDesign text editing solutions, such as VivaDesigner Server and one2edit, in addition to design plus. These tools focus on easy project management, reviewing and versioning controls, with some also facilitating an easy connection to a translation function, while others offer just a standalone service. While a standalone approach is a good solution for some organisations, others may find a seamless link to a translation management system necessary for their international projects. Others may need more flexibility with file types, as while the content may start in an INDD (InDesign) file, the desired final output might be something different to an INDD or PDF document; repeated file conversions and involvement by different teams can introduce errors to the document. Furthermore, for some clients, the most important aspect will be speed. Usually, the teams that are working with InDesign files will be marketers or product managers who need to respond quickly to situations and competition, so slow file uploads, processing times and downloads can make a significant difference to their brand image. It's always important to enquire about how a provider manages this time element and what they can do to reduce the time taken for large files, including the graphics, which are very often much bigger than the main DTP file itself and can often be several gigabytes in size.

Conclusion

We can easily see that DTP plays a crucial part in effective brand communications and consistency. With translated content, care needs to be given to the text itself as well as to the formatting, which is essential to convey the right message. With

international competition increasing and many businesses deciding to take the step to operate globally, it's imperative that they approach these new markets with the same high-quality products as they would do domestically. This increasing need for DTP will not slow down for the foreseeable future as more organisations find ways of increasing their market share through the use of accessible technologies and demand generated from changing international economies. For organisation that want to streamline their workflows to reduce costs and errors, the best method is to find an experienced service provider who can not only deliver to specified timescales and requirements but also can help clients understand what needs to be considered when venturing out into new markets, and provide them with a technological edge. **C**

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