

How to get the best from your translation vendor

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“DITA will save me money”

- We often hear that writing your documentation in DITA can reduce translation costs.
- But what does this actually mean?
- How do we achieve financial savings?

Where do cost savings come from?

- Separating form and content
- Only translating new material

Separate form and content

- If the layout side of things is fully automated, you save the layout cost in each target language.
- If you are translating into multiple languages, that can be a considerable saving.
- DITA is good at this - once the transforms are properly configured, you can automatically generate formatted output as a help system, or as a PDF document, or both.
- The emphasis here is on "automatically"

Only translate new material

- This is where a good content management system (CMS) comes into play.
- If you only send the translation company new material that actually needs translating, there is an obvious cost saving

What translation companies look for from DITA

- Simple, straightforward processes.
- Scalable processes.
- Processes that allow them to focus on translating the materials into the various foreign languages, and to translating to a high standard (accuracy, style, consistency).
- If data conversion is involved (for example, converting DITA to XLIFF and back), the conversion tools and routines must be robust and dependable.
- Translation companies will ideally look for methods that enable them to continue using existing translation memory tools. Translation companies will have considerable investment in these, both in the actual tools themselves and in staff expertise in using the tools.

Business benefits of translating DITA via XLIFF

- Processes that involve translating 768 small files as part of a help system are not always attractive to translation companies, and will result in high management overheads - which means less cost savings for the client.
- Aggregating a large number of small files into a single file can offer cost-effective processing, reducing management overheads. There are ways of converting multiple DITA files to a single XLIFF file before translation, for example.

So.....

- If you are rolling out documentation in DITA, with an eye to translating it into different languages, what should you do?

Good things to do

- Talk to your translation vendor at an early stage. They won't bite. Engage them in dialog.
- Discuss and agree workflows that will work effectively for you, and effectively for your translation vendor.

File formats and engineering issues

- Would your translation vendor prefer to receive multiple DITA files from you, or to receive a single XLIFF file from you?
- Each translation company may have a different answer to that question.
- Who will be responsible for the engineering conversion from DITA to XLIFF - you, or the translation company?

Agree the deliverables

- Agree on the deliverables once the translation is completed:
- Will the translation company hand you a single translated XLIFF file for each language?
- Or will they give a set of individual DITA files in each language?

Questions?

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