

A glossary on your word processor

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A text-related glossary can be prepared with other data before a draft translation is produced. It can be updated or expanded while the draft is being entered, during proof-reading of the translation or later. The word processor can also be used to compile other special-purpose glossaries.

Perhaps a brief introduction about the way I work would be in order. I have two DFE System 50 word processors, each with twin 8-inch disk drives and printers. One of the machines is operated by a full-time secretary and the other is used for editing and administration. The majority of the work is dictated, though for convenience I type some small jobs on one of the machines. The disks have capacities of 286 and 580 kilobytes according to whether they are single or double density. They permit the storage of between 200 and 500 pages of text, depending on how the text is formatted.

Why use a word processor to produce your own glossary if there are perfectly good glossaries available in print?

Inevitably the glossaries which are commercially available contain a vast number of terms you already know - but, to your annoyance, they lack precisely the ones you can't find. Some, as you know, are not worth the money you spend on them - a situation you cannot always avoid when buying books from abroad without being able to see them first. This is where the compilation of your own glossaries and the word processor come into use. Another aspect is that particular companies have their own ideas on terminology. What is acceptable to one company may not be

acceptable to another even though both words may mean the same thing.

Don't be frightened of asking the client for any information. Unless he is dealing with the market concerned for the first time he is more than likely to have some background material which, though it might not say much to him, may provide some vital clues to you.

When you have all the material ready for a job then you can start with your initial glossary compilation.

The purpose of having a word processor is to cut down on work. If you work directly onto the word processor instead of dictating, the amount of typing time you can cut down on makes the machine even more useful. Long words or terms that occur time and time again throughout the work can be replaced temporarily with abbreviations. If you dictate, all you need to say is 'Insert "so and so"', or whatever the identification of the repeat item is.

In a long report on radiation protection, say, terms such as 'The National Swedish Institute of Radiation Protection's Code of Statutes or The Radiation Protection Act (1958:110)' may occur dozens of times. (Since I work primarily with Scandinavian languages, then the bias will naturally be towards such examples.) You will not want to dictate these lengthy expressions each time they occur. Neither will the person who is doing the typing be too happy to keep repeating them. Such items can be made into a temporary glossary in advance of producing the translation and can be accessed as and when required.

Using the DFE you can compose a glossary of terms in a number of ways depending on how you want to use and store the work. The machine has several methods of storage, both volatile and non-volatile.

First there are the terms that you want to store permanently as a glossary. I find it practical to have separate disks for main subject groups such as heat treatment, automobile engineering, corrosion, offshore engineering, software, tools, accounting terms or annual reports, and also for particular customers.

One way to store items is as modules. A module is an independent unit of text which can be integrated with other text or merged with other modules to form larger units of text. Take a car maintenance manual as an example. A 24,000 mile service will include all the 12,000 mile service items which, in turn, will include the 6,000 mile service items. Making up schedules from a basic set of modules is much better than having to type the same instructions over and over again. The size of the module is limited only by practical considerations and the only essential limitation is the length of the name that identifies the module. This is restricted to 16 alphanumeric characters but is usually quite

sufficient for normal identification. Modules are stored on a text disk, or working disk as it is sometimes called.

If you find you want to store format commands or short pieces of text then you can use what is called a multicode. A multicode is identified by a single character, either alpha or numeric, and its storage capacity is limited to 240 characters. An advantage of a multicode is that the machine will allow it to be stored on the software disk or program disk. This is useful since you can then have standard format commands on the software disk for use in conjunction with any text disk you care to insert in the machine. Multicodes are volatile, so they need to be stored before the system is either reset or switched off. However, for most purposes, the use of modules is most practical.

As I said, the item is identified by up to 16 alphanumeric characters which are enclosed by a format symbol at either end. If you enter too many characters, the system will tell you so when you ask it to format the work. It will display 'TOO MANY CHARACTERS' and the cursor will go to the 17th character. It will also remain silent unless you ignore the message for more than 10 seconds; it then gets annoyed and starts to bleep. This way you don't even have to be able to count to use a word processor. A single key stroke eliminates the excess characters and you can then continue.

You can use the machine's print facilities to highlight the keyword or term by emboldening, underlining or tabulating. The way in which you produce the final copy is entirely a matter of personal choice.

When you have entered all the information and terms you feel you need, the first draft of the glossary is ready for use. There may be terms which you are not quite sure about. Leave these for the time being. They may become apparent as you work through the text, or you may wish to consult a specialist. He may not come up with an answer immediately, and you may need to revise your glossary at a later date.

You don't have to worry about putting the words or terms in alphabetical order in the glossary since the DFE does this automatically. It also tells you if you try to enter the same thing twice, by displaying 'NAME ALREADY PRESENT'. In fact the machine is very logical and stops you doing lots of silly things.

You can then print your glossary out for later use when you are translating the main body of the text. Having a selective glossary which may be contained on one or two pages is far more convenient than having to leaf through pages in a dictionary. How many pages in a dictionary do you actually have to leaf through to find the word or expression you want? Or how many dictionaries, for that matter?

You can print out the list of module names (which are sorted alphanumerically) or the contents of the modules (in the same order). For the sake of convenience you can have the glossary on one disk and the translation on another. In this way you do not have to restrict the capacity of the text disk by loading the glossary on to it.

Individual terms can be accessed at random while producing the main body of text. How do you get the term you want? Simply press the key marked 'GET'. You will then be asked to identify the module you want. Once you have identified what you want you can press the 'next step' key which gets you back to the text again, and the module is automatically added to the text.

The beauty of using a glossary composed on a word processor is that individual terms need only be typed once and can be used any number of times. The method also ensures consistency and saves the bother of trying to remember how you translated a term the last time it appeared. Any repetitive term that you cannot immediately fathom can be identified by a unique code such as ZYX. You can then get the machine to exchange this code for the correct term when you have found out what it should be. It is particularly useful when trying to remember the official names of government or public bodies. I can never remember whether the official translation of Kungliga Arbetarskyddsstyrelsen is The National Swedish Board of Occupational Safety and Health or The National Swedish Board of Occupational Health and Safety.

The above procedure ensures permanent storage of the glossary. As you are working through the text you may decide that it might be a good idea to add this or that expression which may not have been obvious during the initial scan. The DFE has a volatile screen memory of about 1 kilobyte which corresponds to about one page of A4 text. This allows temporary storage without having to leave the text processing routine - useful for continuity. You can store the items as blocks of text and identify them with single alpha or numeric character codes; the screen memory will take 40 or more at a time. When the job is finished and before you switch the machine off, you can transfer the temporary storage to permanent storage by adding the contents of the screen memory to the permanently stored glossary compiled earlier.

When you start proofreading you may decide to add to or amend your glossary. You can expand your glossary by simply entering more items. Original entries can be amended at will, and the machine gives you the choice of retaining the previous definition or deleting it as required. The glossary is then sorted automatically. You can enter the terms in any order, so you don't have to worry about

whether terms are in the right place or not.

If you discover that you have translated a word or words incorrectly, or the expert you consulted has come up with the correct expression, you can get the word processor to carry out a global exchange operation. It will search through an entire text and amend each occurrence of the word or words as it goes along. It's quite fascinating to watch this on-screen. The same sequence can be adopted to replace the terms you didn't know earlier - you remember, the one you called ZYX. Incidentally, calling an unknown word ZYX or something similar reduces the risk of forgetting it when you are proofreading.

It is very useful to be able to compile glossaries for particular customers. Everybody has their own way of expressing what they want to say. Producing a glossary for your client is very helpful since it allows you both to agree on terminology from the outset. This is particularly useful if there are long gaps between jobs. How on earth do you remember what you said last time? It is possible to manage with a card system, but this means that you have to be meticulous in your record keeping and cards do get lost or damaged. (Isn't it nice just to press a button and get the right text?)

The DFE is not restricted to working in one direction. If you wish to compile a multilanguage glossary you can use the data retrieval program. This allows you to compose your own data masks. A mask is essentially a page format which you design for a particular application. In its simplest form it is like squared paper, and each time you access it you are presented with a blank form on which you can then enter the different language texts in the different fields and instruct the machine to sort on whichever field you wish.

Let us say, for example, that you wish to compile a glossary in French, German, English, Spanish, Italian and Danish. You can compose a mask and code each field according to language. You can then instruct the data retrieval system to sort on a particular field. Any one of the languages can be used as a source language with the remainder as target languages. You can get the system to produce a list with just two languages if you so wish. The way you format the glossary depends on your own personal choice and on the way in which the glossary is going to be used. Once you have constructed the basic glossary you can play around with it to your heart's content.

I have learnt from experience that the odd bit of paper you had with some notes on it tends to get lost all too easily. A permanent record on disk which can be updated as required is a convenience I find hard to manage without. A disk can store several hundred pages of text, and items can be accessed very simply. Just imagine trying to access

as rapidly from hard copy and then having to type it again.

Reference literature often proves useful but is difficult to store and access unless you have a pet librarian. How often do you know that somewhere you have some information on a particular subject but can't lay your hands on it? You can compile a glossary of all the leaflets and pamphlets you collect, which you can then add to as required. Such information is then always up to date and in alphabetical order. Once you have the information sorted alphabetically by the word processor, it is easy to file away all the paper-work in boxes in the correct order.

Frequently, too, you find that you need to look at a job you did several years ago, but have difficulty in finding it. It is possible to store copies of all work on paper. However, if your output as freelance translator is, say, 600,000 words a year, this can amount to 3,000 pages of text. Consider the cost of keeping hard copies in terms of space and what the actual paper costs. Depending on how you buy your paper, there is not a great deal of difference in the price of paper and the cost of disk space capable of storing the same volume of text. You can keep special disks for regular customers, and each disk will store about 200 to 500 pages of text depending on how it is formatted - just imagine what a difference in storage space this is. Letting the customer know that you take a particular interest in storing his work is a good selling point.

Other examples of useful data for retrieval are standard layouts, updating of annual reports, official documents and forms, education certificates and many others. All these can be stored as data for retrieval and re-use.

Sometimes you may come across difficult technical or legal expressions. It's not always possible to remember a neat way of translating these. Such items are ideal for storing as a glossary or list of terms.

You can if you wish store all your information on a single disk and have an online dictionary, but then you get back to having to search through a large volume of information to get what you want. Keep things small and easy to handle.

No two jobs are ever quite the same, and many are so individual that you feel that you will never be asked to do the same job again. Yet they turn up when you least expect them. Why waste all the effort you put into the original work when it can so easily be accessed and consulted?

Data storage and retrieval can save considerable time, and not only in text processing. With all the invoices you send out, think of the convenience of having a permanent record on disk. Each time you invoice a particular company all you need to do is to change the amount charged. The date is automatically inserted by the machine, and the rest

of the information such as address and rates tends to remain unchanged. Imagine the ease of being able to print out a copy of an invoice when faced with a seemingly surprised accountant who says 'Oh? We haven't received your invoice yet!'

Make the word processor work for you. After all it does precisely what you tell it to do. Without arguing, and at any time of the day or night.

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