# Collaborative Terminology in the Age of Social Web 2.0

Or: How to get your Terminology Life Cycle managed and motivate your company to "live and breathe" terminology

Terminology is vital for global business and communication. Brands and product information have to be precise, consistent, readily available and quality-assured in all languages and markets you do business in. These requirements demand terminology to be standardized, managed, tracked and maintained across the involved decision-making groups and, most of the time, in numerous languages and throughout the world.

On the other hand, it is quite challenging to motivate employees to participate, if possible actively, in this vital terminology work. We often see one-time efforts that fail because the driving force (typically one person) stops pushing the project, or because terminology is seen as a one-way street in which some department tries to force a standard on other departments who have no way of influencing the content. These efforts are not collaborative and do not lead to acceptance or a sustainable and lasting terminology process.

But how can a company with branches scattered throughout the world make terminological resources available via multiple channels for different target user scenarios? How can it introduce an overall life-cycle process and get people to readily participate? How can both acceptance and collaboration be increased?
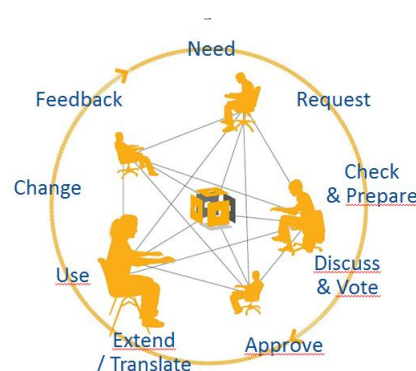
Motivation is Key

With two real-life best practice examples from a corporation and an organisation, this paper demonstrates how collaborative life cycle management and social media elements enable and enrich terminology work.

For example, a global engineering company with a high-technical background provides a challenging field for terminology management, all the more as about 39.000 terms have to be handled in 24 languages. The goal of the terminology process here was to achieve consistent wording in all publications, but also to eliminate "project names" from corporate communications, making sure to be state of the art also in language management, and to respect the copyrights of competitors.

This setting is quite in contrast to the terminology work at an educational organisation. With more than 180 degree programs and students and researchers coming from about 130 countries, German and English university terminology needs to be standardized and harmonized with that of other countries. The challenge of finding the most equivalent English term needs to be tackled as the educational realities behind a term differ from country to country or even university to university.

These two examples differ in terms of requirements and audiences. Nevertheless, the challenges remain the same: How do I motivate my colleagues, especially the non-terminologist ones, to get involved, to use, and to participate in terminology work? How can a working terminology life cycle for defining, approving and keeping terminology up-to-date be arranged – and, last but certainly not least, how can terminology be available for everybody – if necessary even for externals, e.g., translators - through different channels and devices?

Motivation through Collaboration

Any terminology work has to strive for the highest possible acceptance and use of terminology and a
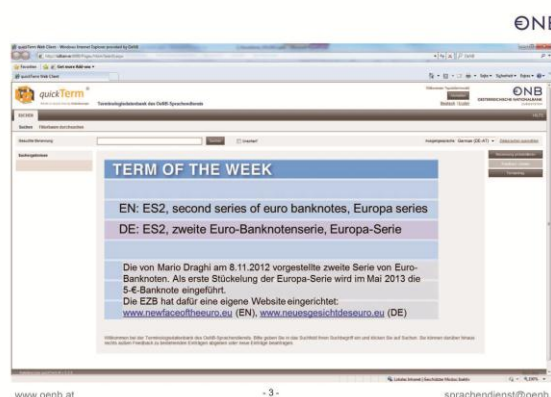
sustainable and lasting company-wide process for terminology work. That is the common denominator. The answer to all these questions and challenges lies in a collaborative approach to terminology work. In order to manage this approach, the right kind of tools for all the different scenarios is needed.

This starts with the user who is looking for a term. Casual users need fast and simple support through all channels (PC, tablet, smartphone, on- or off-line) and should be enabled but in no means restricted to access existing terminology nice and easy. The presentation needs to be simple to understand, even though the content is complex, for instance, when to use what term.

In addition, users should be able to easily and quickly make term proposals, to request changes, to give feedback, to discuss terms and exchange ideas with colleagues in a chat. Every user should be invited and be able to contribute to terminology work by providing useful information or expert knowledge.

At the same time, quite contrary to a Wiki-type approach, we do believe that terminology should be managed very carefully. It is a valuable asset, containing a huge potential for knowledge management, training, information about the core competencies, processes and products of a company or organisation. Increasingly, we see the worlds of knowledge management, semantic web and terminology merge and approach one other. These worlds, too, are highly standardized, and terminology should therefore also be.

What is required, thus, is a collaborative and "motivating" workflow, which, nevertheless, follows strict rules, hierarchies and decision-making processes so that all aspects of a concept will ultimately be accepted by different branches of an organisation.

This involves the main staff such as terminologists and approvers, but also less frequent users such as external translators or in-country reviewers. Particularly for these, the collaboration should be multi-channel and intuitive. They simply should read the concepts and click on Approve or Reject. According to best practices, the terminologist should then have the last word and "sign off" on the entry.

In our corporate example, the workflow starts with the "source languages" German and English. These are gained through term requests, prepared by the terminologist with the help of "subject matter experts" via the web-based terminology management software quickTerm. Once the entry is prepared, the terminologist submits it to approval within the terminology group, which is made up of people from many different areas of the corporation. If agreed upon, the entry is marked as "final" in German and English.

After that, the foreign-language workflow starts which, in this case, is outsourced to the translation service provider, but tightly integrated with an approval process through the in-country reviewers. This again is managed web-based through quickTerm.
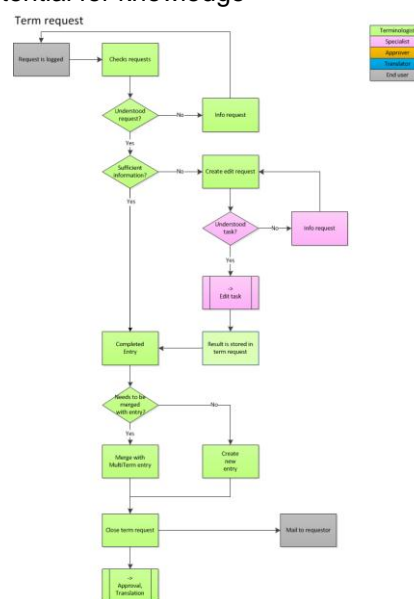
From Monologue to "Multilogue"

As mentioned in the introductory statement, the key to a successful terminology work lies in the motivation of all users. We have witnessed a baffling success of all kinds of Social Media with their possibilities for interactivity and motivation. There are enormously successful crowd sourcing projects in all realms, powered by a common cause, enthusiasm for a product or the feeling of belonging to a community. This gave us the impetus to think how we can incorporate some of these useful participatory elements into a terminology software solution.

Another critical success factor of all terminology projects we have seen is the constant "self-marketing" of the terminology group. It is necessary to permanently remind people of both the

termbase´s existence and benefit for know-how and information. Thus, we have developed some ideas on how we can spice termbases up with some "marketing instruments" and fun little edutainment tools.

One example is the "Term of the Week". For instance, as employees sign in to the intranet, a specially prepared editorial "Term of the Week" welcomes and thus familiarizes them with terminology in an easily accessible way. In this manner, the language department (or any department in charge of terminology work) can provide the colleagues with important concepts and terms, tailored to their work environment. The Term of the Week is updated weekly and can contain quite different information: Dictionary, false friends, new terms, or key words from the media. Useful phrases for everyday business are also offered. And from the Term of the Week, the user can dive into the termbase itself with just one mouse click. All these initiatives increase both the use and the length of use as the extremely positive feedback from companies and organisations as the Oesterreichische Nationalbank (Austria's central bank) demonstrates impressively.

The "Term of the Week" is only one example for "luring" people into the termbase. Another one is to offer regular "term quizzes". These are terminologically relevant questions which have to do with the termbase content or frequently misused terms, for instance. Again, by giving wrong answers, the user is motivated to check the correct term in the termbase, and once again you have the users right where you want them: in your termbase.

New fastening device
What is the name of our great new fastening device which is a bolt with a hole at the end?

Hole screw	Ring bolt
Eye bolt	No idea

Question 1 of 1 / points 0 of 1   Click on the corresponding answer!   Next

With these additional elements, our university example was able to maintain an interest in the termbase and obtain input from many different subject-matter experts. This in turn improves the quality of the termbase, thus enhancing the satisfaction of the user, the acceptance of what it has to offer, and the enthusiasm to collaborate in its improvement and extension.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to show:

- It is possible to motivate people to actively participate in the terminology process by offering an intuitive system and additional "fun" elements which "lure" them into the termbase and into participating in the project. This in turn boosts both the quantity and the quality of the input.
- It is vital to establish a controlled yet collaborative workflow to define terminology and to enhance acceptance.
- This not only requires a solid software foundation, but also constant self-marketing and a well-defined process.

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Grew up with languages and computers in Austria and the US. Studied conference interpreting in Vienna & Monterey, California, and technical communication at Danube University Krems. Long work

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