

Integration of MT into the business process

The integration of machine translation (MT) into the business process should be viewed from an overall perspective thus requiring several factors to be taken into consideration. These include selecting the right product, appointing the right people, restructuring the work flow, and measuring performance to finally achieve the projected productivity gain.

The opinions expressed in this paper refer to computer-integrated translation (CIT) as part of an integrated document production process and do not merely highlight the aspects of machine translation itself. Tools such as terminology databases and translation memories are therefore included. The approach discussed in this paper is based on the experience gained in introducing CIT tools over the last five years.

The illustrations are based on the assumption that no additional staff members can be recruited to integrate CIT, that the new tools have to fit into the existing information technology environment and that productivity gains have to be reached within a reasonable period of time. In this respect, the technical aspect may turn out to be the most difficult element when determining the most suitable product, as the range of hardware and software platforms offered for CIT tools is very often limited.

Having selected the most suitable product does not however guarantee that the new tool can be integrated successfully. What are the possible pitfalls, and why can CIT projects fail during the implementation phase? What aspects should be considered when planning the integration of CIT? How can endless delays be avoided? To what extent can the composition of a team foster or hamper a project? How must a project team be coached and organized to minimize any detrimental impact on daily business and to reach the objective for the new productivity tools. What are the potential incentives for project members?

Integrating CIT into an existing business process requires certain changes in structuring the work flow. How can this be done without causing "friction loss"?

To what extent can project controlling prevent a CIT project from gathering too much momentum thus missing the target and becoming too expensive? How can performance be measured to show whether the objectives are met?

There are various ways to approach a CIT project but only a few eventually ensure optimization of the translation process, with the quality achieved, the deadline met and costs under control. Finally, there are three target groups with different needs to be satisfied: the customer (quality and deadline), the translator (job satisfaction) and the corporation (cost effectiveness).

In summary, a successful integration of CIT tools goes hand in hand with effective project management