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Trends in Adoption of MT as a Globalization Technology

Don DePalma, Chief Strategy Officer and Founder, Common Sense Advisory. Don DePalma's 30+ years of experience in technology, language services, and market research are what drive Common Sense Advisory, the preeminent market research firm for language services. Don launched and developed coverage of localization maturity, enterprise language processing, business-driven globalization, practical machine translation, return on investment for localization, and multicultural domestic marketing. Co-founder of Interbase Software, VP for corporate strategy at translation technology supplier Idiom Technologies, and, initiator, at Forrester Research, of content and knowledge management, internet application development, and business globalization coverage. His book, *Business without Borders*, is widely used in academia and industry. Don holds a PhD from Brown in Linguistics and has studied at universities in Russia, Czech Republic and Costa Rica. As a linguist, Don has studied a range of Indo-European languages and visited 40 countries.

ABSTRACT: Enormous volumes of digitized information flood onto storage devices every day. Companies and government agencies must translate some of it for international markets or domestic constituencies. Many of them would like to translate even more content to improve the user's experience with their products or websites, but many organizations simply don't have enough money or translators to meet even their basic needs. The net result: Most information remains locked forever in the language in which it was written.

Enter machine translation. More than a half-century in the making, MT has made enormous strides in usability, accessibility, and quality in the last five years. Useful translations can be had at little or no cost online and on smartphones, and commercial MT solutions have dropped enormously both in price and in the infrastructure they require. With these advances has come choice. Buyers can pick out-of-the-black-box machine translation for lowest cost and integration anywhere. They can choose to train their MT engines to their industry jargon. Or they can have humans post-edit the MT output to maximize quality while holding down costs.

Given the huge amounts of untranslated content and the prospect of using MT to rescue it from its source-language dungeon, what's not to like? Apparently, still a lot. Quality issues or security concerns put off some potential users, application integration discourages others, and the absence of expertise to train the software is a game-stopper for less IT-savvy shops. Meanwhile, many practitioners who might fill the role of post-editor for MT fear that the technology will cost them their jobs as users replace their high-quality output with automated drivel.

There's obviously a lot of white space between the views of machine translation advocates and opponents. In this presentation, Dr. DePalma will review the trends that Common Sense Advisory has uncovered in its long-term research into machine translation. He will address what companies and government agencies find compelling about the technology, the hurdles that they have encountered, and where it fits in their translation buying strategies. He will also discuss how and why freelancers and language service providers will need to incorporate MT into their practices.