Evaluating vendors for machine translation and post-editing

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Abstract

Avaya identified machine translation and post-editing as the next step in their strategy for global information management to deliver against the ever-present business objectives of "Increased Efficiency and Additional Localized Content". Avaya shares how they assessed the market and selected their chosen vendor.

1 Introduction

Currently the post-editing of machine translation is getting a lot of attention, and interest is definitely on the increase. In the AMTA and SDL 2009 Automated Translation Survey[1] 30% of all respondents indicated they were already post-editing or had imminent plans to do so. In the same survey of global business, 50% of respondents reported they are more likely to use machine translation compared with 2 years ago. This represented a significant 10% increase in just one year.

2 When does Post-editing make sense?

So when does post-editing of machine translation make sense in a commercial environment?

- When time doesn't permit human translation alone.

- To speed up delivery and reduce time to market to gain an advantage over competitors.

- When the budget doesn't permit full human translation, or more content needs to be translated within the same budget.

- When content is valuable but has a short life so the time and cost of only human translation cannot be justified.

2.1 What content suits Post-editing?

Today human post-editing of machine translation works well on structured content like technical documentation, user guides, product manuals, product support articles and product alerts. These may be traditional printed documents, digital documents or website content.

A machine translation engine can be customized through training to suit these domains and deliver a level of translation quality that makes post-editing effective. If machine translation does not deliver a sufficient quality translation, then the post-editor is often not productive enough to justify post-editing, compared to just using human translation of the original content.

SDL has been active with machine translation for nearly 10 years and has been post-editing machine translation since 2004. The post-editing team of 300 computational linguists, project managers and post-editors deliver projects and continuous translations for large global customers, including Avaya Inc.

3 The Avaya Story

Like many organizations, Avaya faces the business realities of competing in markets with local companies and receiving requests from regional offices for more localized content.

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[1]See SDL Automated Translation Survey 2009 results www.sdl.com/machinetranslation

These requests have to be balanced with flat or reduced localization budgets and staff.

Avaya identified machine translation and post-editing as a viable option to produce more localized content within the resource constraints.,

3.1 Assessing the Market

This conclusion was reached based on industry research and information including web research, webinars, and trade publications. This was followed by reaching out to technology vendors on what they could provide.

The criteria used during the assessment stage were:

- Provision for use of machine translation in general purpose ("gisting") and post-editing modes

- Machine translation quality

- Cost of the solution

- Language pairs covered

- Setup and configuration requirements including people, hardware and other resources.

3.2 The Avaya Infrastructure

Avaya currently maintains its technical product documentation in a content management system. The content management system is integrated with SDL's Translation Management System (SDL TMS). All localized product software, online-help, and documentation is processed through the workflows established in SDL TMS.

3.3 The Solution

Based on their analysis, Avaya chose to implement SDL's Language Weaver machine translation solution along with SDL's post-editing capabilities. Automated workflows within SDLTMS will be updated to route content to the MT engine and then on for post-editing before the Quality Assurance of the localized content.

3.4 Next Steps

The implementation is currently in progress.

A trial project has been identified. Success of the project will be judged on cost of localization, project timelines, and ultimately quality of the localized content.
Expansion of the MT solution will follow a successful trial.
The solution is likely to be expanded to support crowdsourcing with selected business partners and also other areas of Avaya that need localization, like training and knowledge base articles.

References

Harpham. 2010. *SDL Research - Automated Translation Survey 2009*, www.sdl.com/machinetranslation