eTermino Q&A - Multilingual Internet Terminology Assistant

C. Sestier

Linguistique & Technologies

9 Avenue du Canada, 91978 Courtaboeuf, France

csestier@lingtech.com

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Abstract

While a multilingual translation project is going on, participants usually fix terminology issues by sending emails to the project manager who will maintain an history database of questions and answers. The idea is to replace this traditional terminology management process with an interactive shared terminology list over the Internet. The list itself implements an intuitive question and answer workflow process and intrinsically acts as an history database reference, allowing participants to share all questions and answers in a simple way. This Internet terminology assistant tool is not intended to replace existing terminology database software but has been designed as a companion tool to help people ask terminology questions and get answers throughout the project.

Overview

eTermino Q&A will achieve the following major objectives:

Collaborative "Questions & Answers" eSharing

Using the potential of the Internet, the tool provides a shared Q&A content between the participants. Customer reviewers, project managers, translators and proofreaders will get the same up to date information.

Multilingual Editing eService

The list fields are all customisable to accommodate customer needs. Multilingual editing capabilities allow the list to be modified by participants from different countries using a standard browser: the only required tool is Internet Explorer 5 with the proper language packs. The list can be easily shared by teams working across time zones. Intrinsically built upon the new Internet enabling technologies such as xml, the shared content can virtually accommodate any Unicode languages. All participants benefit from the built-in sorting and filtering capabilities, and can copy/paste the list into Excel at any time, enabling the creation or update of local multilingual glossaries.

On line/Off line Operation

The list also features distinct access modes for participants permanently connected to the Internet as well as remote users over a dialled up connection, who would prefer working in disconnected mode. In addition, the shared content can be modified on line for teams permanently connected to the Internet but also off-line for remote translators over a dialled up connection.
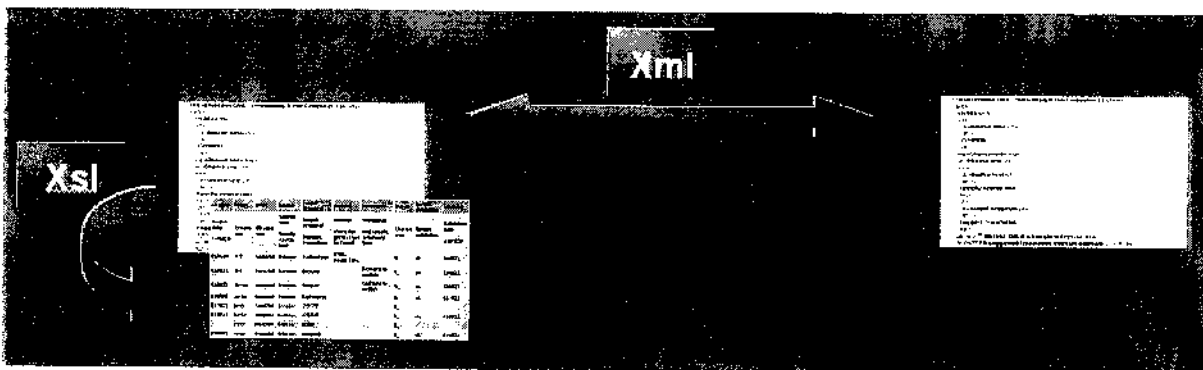
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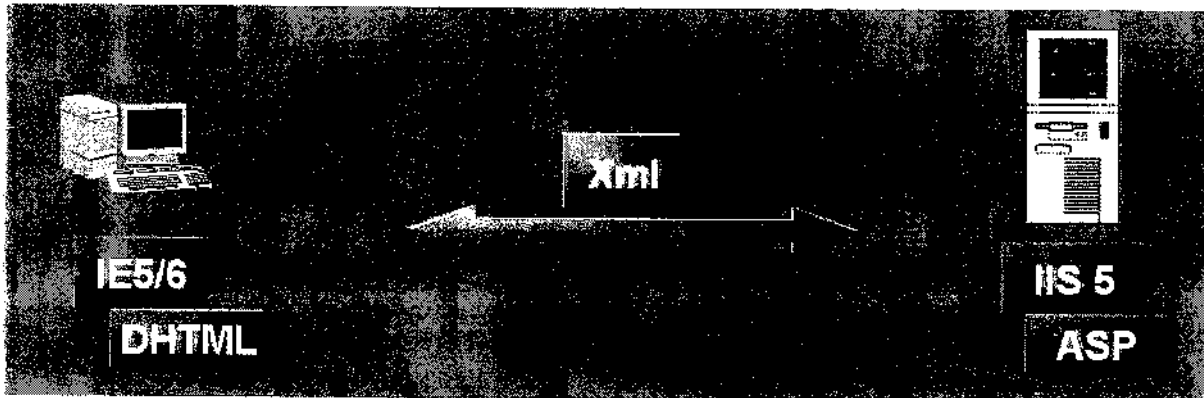
eTermino Q&A client-server basics

The application enables collaborative editing through the Internet between clients and a server.

Internet Information Server 5 with Active Server Pages (ASP) is used on the server side. Clients are running Internet Explorer 5 (or later).

Xml/Xsl list management

The application is based on exchanging xml over http between the client and the server. An xml file on the server side is used as the 'database'. In order to be able to share the list between several users, the tool implements an optimistic locking mechanism.[1]

The list presentation on the client side is done via an xml/xsl transformation. Other examples of this xml/xsl transformation can be found in [2] and [5].

Because of a loosely coupled scheme between client and server, some edit tasks can be handled off line on the client side. The edit logic is designed on the client with JavaScript/Dhtml and on the server with ASP. Updates (adds, edits, deletions) are passed to and from the server in the form of small xml updategrams, requiring a low bandwidth only.

Fields, roles and workflow

To be able to focus on the user aspects of this tool, it is necessary to introduce a fictitious scenario involving people (roles), the list itself (fields) and to describe how users interact with the list (workflow).

Roles

The teams (roles) involved in the project are defined as follows:

Side/Role	abbrv	Definition	Task description
Customer	CR	Customer Reviewer	Person(s) involved in validating the questions (e.g. terminologist).
Multilingual Management	MPM	Multilingual Project Manager	Person(s) managing the whole multilingual project.
Local management	LPM	Local Project Manager	Person(s) in local teams managing the localization project into one only language.
	LPR	Local Proof-Reader	Person(s) in local teams in charge of the proofreading tasks.
	LTR	Local Translator	Person(s) in local teams in charge of the translation tasks. E.g. in house or freelance translators.

Field Description

The table lists the fields available and their related parameters.

Question/ Answer	Title	Type	Predefined values	Usage	Roles involved	Example
Question	**id**	system	auto incremented	system	n.a.	101
	src date	string		Question date in the YYMMDD format	LPM	010825
	lang	combo	es-es fr-fr de-de it-it ko-kr ja-jp ru-ru zh-cn zh-tw	Language code of the country issuing the request.	LTR LPR LPM	es-es
,	**prod**	combo	newprod	Product concerned by the question.	LTR LPR	newprod
	source	string		Text for the English source terms needing attention	LTR LPR LPM	browser
	target proposal	string		If any, text for the target suggested translation	LTR LPR LPM	explorador
	context	string		File name + Whole sentence where the term(s) can be found.	LTR LPR LPM	Html viewer title

Question/Answer	Title	Type	Predefined values	Usage	Roles involved	Example
	comments	string		If any, used to add specific comments.	LTR LPR LPM	
	issuer	combo	bh_ cp_ dg_ lt_ na_ oms_ rm_	Initials of the user asking the question.	LTR LPR LPM	lt_
	target validation	string		target validation.	CR MPM	ok
	val date	string		Answer validation date in the YYMMDD format.	CR MPM	010826
	val user	combo	bh_	Initials of the user	CR	dg_
Answer			cp_ dg_ lt_ na_ oms_ rm_	validating the answer.	MPM	

Workflow

To best use the list, a workflow schema can be defined as follows, according to the fields and roles previously defined.

Question pending

Role	Action	Mandatory fields	Optional fields
Local Translator Local Proof-reader Local Project Manager	Add a new question to the list after checking that the question has not already been asked	lang prod source issuer	target proposal context comments

At that time, the src date field is not documented on purpose. The local project manager will then decide to keep the question or not.
Pending questions are displayed on a blue background.
Here is an example after adding a question to the list:

Question pending status

Answer pending

Role	Action	Mandatory fields	Optional fields
Local Project Manager	Validate the request in documenting the src date field.comments	src date	target proposal context

From now on, the question is opened and can be answered by the reviewers.

Pending answers are displayed on a green background.

Here is an example after a question has been accepted:

id	src date	lang	prod	source	target proposal	context	comments	issuer	target validation	val date	val user
001	Source date YYMMDD	Choose one	Choose one	Source text Specify source text	Target proposal Suggest translation	Context where the term(s) can be found	Comments Add specific comments here	Choose one	Target validation	Validation date YYMMDD	Choose one
102	010820	fr-fr	newprod	Browser	Explorateur	HTML viewer Title		lt_			

Answer pending status

Answer validated

Role	Action	Mandatory fields	Optional fields
Customer Reviewer Multilingual Project Manager	Validate the request in documenting the src date field.	target validation val date val user	

From now on, the answer is validated and the process completed for this specific question.

Closed validated questions/answers are displayed on a salmon background.

Here is an example after an answer has been validated:

id	src date	lang	prod	source	target proposal	context	comments	issuer	target validation	val date	val user
001	Source date YYMMDD	Choose one	Choose one	Source text Specify source text	Target proposal Suggest translation	Context where the term(s) can be found	Comments Add specific comments here	Choose one	Target validation	Validation date YYMMDD	Choose one
102	010820	fr-fr	newprod	Browser	Explorateur	HTML viewer Title		lt_	ok	010821	bh_

Answer validated status

Horizontal or vertical filtering, sorting

List items can be filtered in many ways. It is possible to display only row(s) that contain a matching text anywhere in that line.

It is also possible to customize the view in filtering columns. This will cause the corresponding deselected columns to be hidden.

The list can be sorted by different columns by clicking on the column headings.

Export list into Excel or Word

At any time, you may export the list into Excel for further processing.

The copied range can be restricted by filtering (lines or columns). If filtering is active, only the cells displayed on the screen will be copied.

A Practical Case Study: using eTermino Q&A with Wordfast

In this case study, in order to demonstrate how eTermino Q&A can be used as a companion tool to other Translation Memory software, we have chosen Wordfast. a new emerging translation memory tool. This tool is very interesting in many respects. "Wordfast is actually a set of macros (a template) compatible with any version of Microsoft Word. It builds on the standard Microsoft Word window adding special Wordfast buttons and implements all typical TM tool functions: segmentation, creating/using translation memories and glossaries, exact/fuzzy matches, pretranslation, context search (concordance), exporting/importing glossaries and translation memories."[4]

We will assume that a group of freelance translators are working together on a common translation project with Wordfast and see how eTermino Q&A can be shared to fix terminology issues over the Internet.
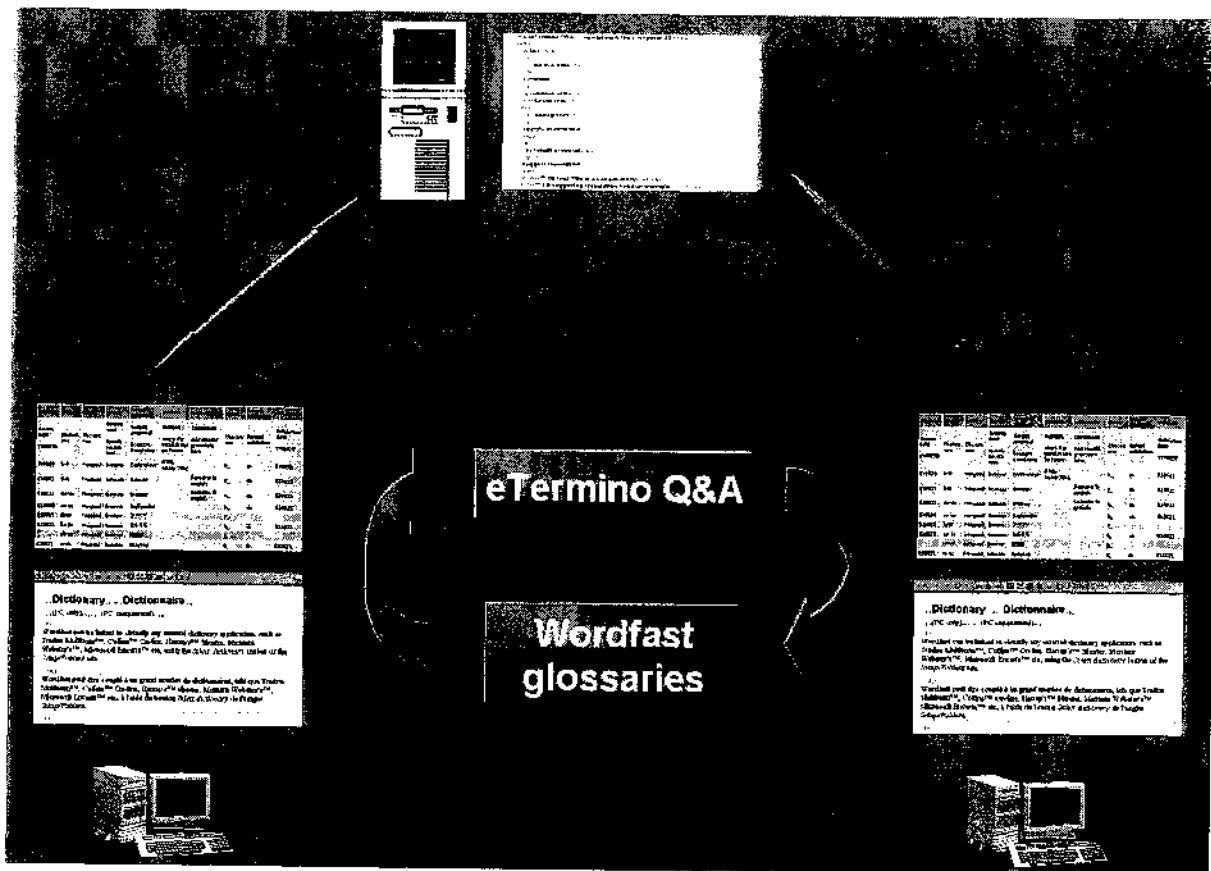
eTermino Q&A as a Wordfast companion

eTermino Q&A can be seen as a Wordfast glossary extension for pending terminology issues. If a term or expression is not found in the local Wordfast glossaries, the new term or expression can be shared through the Internet, making it available to any other users in the translator's team. Once the issues are fixed, they can be put back into Wordfast glossaries for local use.

In addition to the powerful TM functions of Wordfast, this tool "can be linked to virtually any external dictionary application..."[3], possibly to eTermino Q&A. It is then possible to automatically browse the eTermino Q&A list from any requested word or expression selected in Wordfast.

In the following example, we will show how Wordfast displays the translation memory match (green background) and the glossary search results with a blue highlighting (calibration table).

Let's assume we would like that the expression 'NGA compound' be available to all translators. In this particular case, 'NGA compound' was not in the Wordfast glossaries. In order to further check this expression, eTermino Q&A has been queried on 'compound' with the Wordfast dictionary lookup facility and returned two items. The first one, entry 110 (compound group name) already validated (salmon) and the second one, entry 111 (compound lens system) in a answer pending state (green).

Direct eTermino Q&A query with Wordfast dictionary lookup

'NGA compound' is not in the eTermino Q&A list and we will add it. It will then be entry 112 in a question pending state (blue). This question is now available to the translator's team.

Once the terminology issues are fixed (answers validated), each translator can then update it's local Wordfast glossaries accordingly.

Characteristics

eTermino Q&A runs on any hardware configuration where Internet Explorer can be installed. It needs Internet Explorer 5.0 and later with the appropriate language packs installed. It doesn't run under Netscape.

Performance

Number of list items

This tool is designed for small (<100 items) to medium (<300 items) size lists. By design, this tool is not intended for large lists. There is no actual limit to the list size but performance may be affected.

Mean response times

Depending on several criteria, response times may vary significantly.

Specified values have been measured for lists between 1 to 300 items.

Function	Response Time	Depends on local computer speed	Depends on list size	Depends on Internet link speed	Depends on server load
Add row	5 to 60s	high	medium	no	medium
Open list at log on (or reload list at Refresh)	5 to 60s	medium	high	high	low
Save list	3 to 60s	no	low	no	high
Sort column	3 to 60s	high	high	no	no
Filter (on lines)	5 to 20s	high	high	no	no
Filter (on columns)	5 to 20s	high	high	no	no

Conclusion

Although not intended to replace existing terminology database software, this Internet terminology assistant tool can be used as a companion tool to help people ask terminology questions and get answers throughout translation projects with an interactive shared terminology list over the Internet.

Acknowledgements

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References

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