

Solving Terminology Problems More Quickly with 'IntelliWebSearch (Almost) Unlimited'

Michael Farrell

IULM University, Milan

ABSTRACT

Michael Farrell received several descriptions of university courses to translate from Italian into English in early 2005. The syllabuses boiled down to a list of topics and laws of mathematics and physics: not many complex sentences, but a great deal of terminology which needed translating and double checking with the utmost care and attention.

To do this, he found himself repeatedly copying terms to his PC clipboard, opening his browser, opening the most appropriate on-line resources, pasting terms into search boxes, setting search parameters, clicking search buttons, analysing results, copying the best solutions back to the clipboard, returning to the translation environment and pasting the terms found into the text.

He quickly realized that he needed to find a way to semi-automate the terminology search process in order to complete the translation in a reasonable time and for his own sanity. He immediately started looking around for a tool, but surprisingly there seemed to be nothing similar to what he needed on the market. Having already created some simple macros with a free scripting language called AutoHotkey, he set about writing something that would do the trick.

The first simple macro he knocked out gradually grew and developed until it became a fully fledged software tool: IntelliWebSearch. After speaking to several colleagues about it, he was persuaded to share his work and put together a small group of volunteer beta- testers. After a few weeks of testing on various Windows systems, he released the tool as freeware towards the end of 2005.

At the beginning of his workshop, Michael Farrell will explain what prompted him to create the tool and how he went about it. He will then go on to describe its use and its limitations, and show how it can save translators and terminologists a lot of time with a live demonstration, connectivity permitting.

The workshop will conclude with a presentation revealing for the first time in public some of the features of a new version which is currently being developed under the code name "IntelliWebSearch (Almost) Unlimited" (pre-alpha at the time of writing).

The workshop is aimed at professional translators, interpreters and terminologists in all fields, especially those interested in increasing efficiency through the use of technology without lowering quality standards.

1. How did IntelliWebSearch come about?

I wrote IntelliWebSearch for my own personal needs: I am a professional translator and not a professional software developer. I wrote it to solve a specific problem I had. I was translating a set of syllabuses for degree courses in physics and mathematics from Italian into English. The files boiled down to a few introductory paragraphs followed by a list of various laws and theories of physics and mathematics. It was obviously extremely important to use the most standard name for each law and theory. So I found myself doing literally hundreds of terminology checks per page, which is of course extremely time-consuming. I quickly realized that I needed to find a way to semi-automate the terminology search process in order to complete the translation in a reasonable time and for my own sanity. So I immediately started looking around for a tool, but surprisingly I could not find anything similar to what I needed on the market.

2. Terminology research before IntelliWebSearch

Without IntelliWebSearch, I had to select the term to look up in my translation environment and copy it to the PC clipboard. It was then necessary to launch the browser and open the search engine, online dictionary or online encyclopaedia I wanted to use, sometimes a different one for each term or even several for the same term, if I was cross-checking. After that I had to paste the term into the search box in the web page, edit the search string if necessary, set the search parameters, click on the "search button" and wait for the result page to load. Seeing all this, one word comes immediately to mind: macro. However I could not write a MS Word macro because I was using the translation environment tool Déjà Vu X. So I chose an application-independent macro language that runs on Windows called AutoHotkey. IntelliWebSearch is a sophisticated free-standing AutoHotkey macro compiled with Ahk2Exe. The macro script cannot therefore be altered by the user, but its behaviour may be customized by changing a wide range of settings.

3. Terminology research with IntelliWebSearch

With IntelliWebSearch, the term search process becomes much simpler. You need to start, as before, by selecting some text in your favourite translation environment. Then you have to press CTRL+ALT+B. You can of course change this shortcut key to anything you like. This calls up the IntelliWebSearch search window, where you can edit the search string if need be. For instance, you may want to add another keyword or change a plural to a singular. You then have to click the button corresponding to the search you want to perform. If the search you require is the one highlighted in blue, you can simply press the Enter key on the keyboard. If you do not want one of the buttons displayed, you can always change the group: the searches are organized into five different groups of ten searches corresponding to the ten buttons. In other words, you can reach up to fifty different searches through the IntelliWebSearch search window. The buttons may

correspond to search engines, online encyclopaedias and online dictionaries, or even local dictionaries and encyclopaedias on CD-ROM or your hard disk. They may even correspond to the same search engine configured fifty times with different advanced settings and parameters. In reality, it is possible to save more than fifty search configurations in IntelliWebSearch, but a maximum of fifty may be associated with buttons at any given time. After selecting an on-line resource, your default browser is launched and your chosen search engine, dictionary or encyclopaedia appears with your search results. If you choose a local resource instead, your local dictionary or encyclopaedia result window opens.

4. Direct search shortcut keys

A particular search can also be done even more rapidly using a direct shortcut key. You start in the same way by selecting some text in your translation environment. However you then press a previously assigned shortcut key to skip the IntelliWebSearch search window entirely and display the results directly in your favourite search engine, online dictionary, online encyclopaedia or local resource. Obviously, to do this, each search configuration must be associated with a different shortcut key.

5. Return shortcut key

Another convenient shortcut key combination (CTRL+ALT+C by default) copies any text you select in your browser/local dictionary result window to the PC clipboard and returns you to the translation environment, where you can choose to paste it in using the application's own paste function (Edit menu>Paste or CTRL+V). In other words, IntelliWebSearch remembers which application you launched the search from and returns to it with the results of your search, saving you having to click about with the mouse.

6. PluriSearch

To look for the search string in several pre-selected resources almost simultaneously, you can choose the PluriSearch button on the IntelliWebSearch search window. The searches are not perfectly simultaneous: one is performed a fraction of a second after the other. In most browsers, the various results are shown under different tabs. Again in this case, you can skip the IntelliWebSearch search window and go straight to the results using a customizable shortcut key (CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+B by default).

7. GroupSearch

To look for the search string in all the resources belonging to the group displayed on the search window almost simultaneously, you can choose the GroupSearch button. Note that it is not necessary to fill all ten buttons in a group with search configurations, so GroupSearch might correspond to just two or three searches.

8. How does the tool know which searches I want to do?

IntelliWebSearch comes with a new user's starter pack that includes the settings for over eighty search engines, dictionaries and encyclopaedias. There is also a settings database on the IntelliWebSearch website with an even greater number of search configurations and resources. If

you cannot find the settings you need, you have to write them yourself. It takes a few minutes, but only needs doing once.

9. IntelliWebSearch Wizard

IntelliWebSearch comes with a Wizard which guides you when setting up your own searches. The Wizard steps you through the procedure with simple on-screen instructions.

10. Where can you find IntelliWebSearch?

IntelliWebSearch has its own website (www.intelliwebsearch.com). The tool comes with user interfaces in English, Catalan, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, thanks to the help of volunteer localizers. You can also follow IntelliWebSearch on Facebook, Twitter and other social media, and there is even a peer-to-peer users' group on Yahoo! Groups.

11. Online help

If you have any problems, online help is available in English, French and Italian: just press F1 when any IntelliWebSearch window is active, or choose help from the tray icon menu.

12. Freeware

IntelliWebSearch is freeware, but not open source. If you are happy with it, you can show your satisfaction by becoming a paid registered user. Registrees get to choose how much they want to pay.

13. Evolution since 2005

After a few weeks of testing, IntelliWebSearch v. 1 was launched at the end of November 2005. During December the user interface was localized into German, Italian and Russian, and on the 18th of the same month, IntelliWebSearch v. 2 was released. The tool was now UTF-8 compliant and it was possible to choose a specific browser for web term searches (not necessarily the OS default browser). The tool interface was localized into Dutch in May 2006 and French in December. The readme (help) file was translated into French and Italian in January 2007. A Spanish user interface was added in May and "Form Fill" mode was introduced so that the tool could access a few websites that had, up to then, eluded it (notably Le Grand Dictionnaire). IntelliWebSearch v. 3 went beta in December and was released in January 2008. The new features included PluriSearch, direct search shortcuts, term search in local resources (dictionaries on HD or CD-ROM), five groups of ten buttons (originally there was only one group) and the new user's starter pack of search configurations. The IntelliWebSearch user interface was localized into Catalan in February 2008. In March the same year, the Wizard went beta and was released with IntelliWebSearch Version 3.1.0.3 in April. GroupSearch was introduced in October 2009 along with a Czech user interface. In November it was possible to become a paid registered user. In September 2010 IntelliWebSearch could be installed as a portable app, and in January 2013 the settings database was launched on the IntelliWebSearch website. Virtually all the changes listed were made thanks to feedback and requests received from users, not to mention the generosity of volunteer localizers.

14. Comparable tools that have appeared on the market since 2005

Around 2011 Rolf Keller, a German translator, launched Multifultor (freeware). It was described on a popular web forum for translators as the “new IntelliWebSearch”. The main difference is that, unlike IntelliWebSearch, it works with its own built-in browser. This has the advantage that Multifultor can access some sites directly which IntelliWebSearch can only access through the “last-resort” form fill mode. The downside is that you cannot use your favourite browser.

Some people use the freeware application Click-to, which I imagine is particularly appealing to “mouse lovers”. Web searches are however not the primary purpose of this tool and its search capabilities are comparatively limited (see comparative article listed in the webography).

Several translation environment tools have incorporated IntelliWebSearch-like capabilities, including Wordfast Classic, memoQ, Fluency Translation Suite and CafeTran. Wordfast Classic has actually had web search capabilities since before 2005 and CafeTran was first released at around the same time as IntelliWebSearch. CafeTran has an option to import IntelliWebSearch resource settings. All these TEnT implementations suffer from the same major drawback compared with IntelliWebSearch: it is only possible to launch searches from within the environment itself. IntelliWebSearch is instead a system-wide application.

Furthermore memoQ, Fluency and CafeTran do searches in a built-in browser window, thus consuming part of your “screen real estate”, although CafeTran also allows users to search with an external browser if they prefer. Wordfast Classic only allows searches with MS Internet Explorer. The much-respected tool guru Jost Zetzsche recently described memoQ’s web search feature as “comparable to (an anemic) IntelliWebSearch” [sic] (see webography). At the risk of sounding immodest, I believe that IntelliWebsearch is still today the most feature-rich tool of its kind on the market.

15. New version, new features and future developments

A new version is currently being developed under the code name "IntelliWebSearch (Almost) Unlimited" (pre-alpha at the time of writing). The aim, which is evident from the code name itself, is to remove most of the arbitrary limitations found in the previous version. Why only five groups of ten buttons? Why not an unlimited number of groups of an unlimited number of buttons? Another major change will be the introduction of direct shortcuts for GroupSearches, thus removing all differences between GroupSearch and PluriSearch. To put it another way, there will be an unlimited number of different PluriSearches. The Wizard will also be redesigned to make it easier to use and several other small changes are planned.

References

Farrell, M. (2008): “Notes for Upgraders from Version 2”, IntelliWebSearch, <http://www.intelliwebsearch.com/gb/upgrade.html>

Farrell, M. (2008): “ChangeLog for version 3”, IntelliWebSearch, <http://www.intelliwebsearch.com/changelog.asp>

- Keller, R. (2014): Praktisches Recherche-Werkzeug: Mit Multifultor mehrere Terminologie-Quellen gleichzeitig durchsuchen, <http://bit.ly/1worMF5>
- John, E. (2013): "Turborecherche mit click.to und IntelliWebSearch", Infoblatt, ADÜ Nord, p. 5-7, <http://infoblatt.adue-nord.de/infoblatt-2013-02.pdf>
- Moslem, Y. (2012): "Using External Dictionaries in WFC", [http://www.wordfast.net/wiki/Using External Dictionaries in WFC](http://www.wordfast.net/wiki/Using_External_Dictionaries_in_WFC)
- Unknown author (n.d.), "Use memoQ Web Search", memoQ 2013 Help, http://kilgray.com/memoq/2013/help-en/index.html?use_memoq_web_search.html
- Kmitowski, I. (n.d.): "Performing Web Searches", CafeTran, <http://cafetran.wikidot.com/performing-web-searches>
- Zetzsche, J. (2014): "Getting There and Beyond (Premium Edition)", Softoolkit, <http://softoolkit.com/articles/getting-there-and-beyond-premium-edition>