

GUIDE

The Complete Playbook for High-Quality Global Content

A detailed guide on how to get the best
from your translators



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Part 1

Typical Review Process

Typical Review Process for Translations

Quality translations come from quality feedback during the localization process. If you have ever seen a site or product with quality translations, it is because it is the direct result of deliberate steps taken by the localization team throughout the localization process to make sure that translators have enough feedback to work with in order to produce the best results.

Not all companies will have a formal review process in place, but it is something we highly recommend to ensure quality translations. Of course, this will also depend on the type and amount of content you are localizing. For example, if you are localizing a full website, you will ideally pay a lot of attention to every translation piece, whereas a blog post may be fine in your team's eyes to just use a direct translation without review.

“..the key best practice to keep in mind is that the translator and the reviewer should not be the same person.”

Regardless of what type of content you are reviewing, the key best practice to keep in mind is that the translator and the reviewer should not be the same person. This is why localization teams typically have different roles for Translators and Reviewers, so each person has respective privileges and permissions to do their job. And, most importantly, so they can focus on the specific piece they own.

In many cases, companies will not require reviews of blog posts and documentation. Some even use Machine Translation without review, while others are reviewing every piece of translated text – again, this depends on the company and your team’s specific preferences.

Content Review Cheat Sheet

Recommended for Manual

- Review
- Website
- Web apps
- Legal docs

Can Be Reviewed Less Regularly

- Blog posts
- Documentation



Part 2

2 Key Ways to Provide Translation Feedback

2 Key Ways

Quality translations are a direct result of two main factors: the translator or agency doing the translating and how much the localization team they are working with is setting them up for success. Just as an individual athlete is only as good as his or her team, a translator is only as good as his or her localization team.

In order for translators to be able to provide high quality translations, they need effective feedback and context on what they are translating. Imagine just being given a document full of text without any direction on how it will be used or who will be reading it through which channels – you might as well have just pasted that text into Google Translate!



The short of it: translators need effective feedback and context so they can better understand the environment and use case of the text they are working on and, as a result, deliver higher quality translations. Specifically speaking, it is important to give translators as much information as possible to help them understand where the text will appear on your page or product – will it appear on the main website, mobile app, button, blog title, documentation, or elsewhere?

1) Visual Context: Screenshots

One popular way to provide visual context to your translators is through screenshots. Any team using this method will take and share screenshots of whatever is being translated so that translators can understand where each string they translate belongs to.

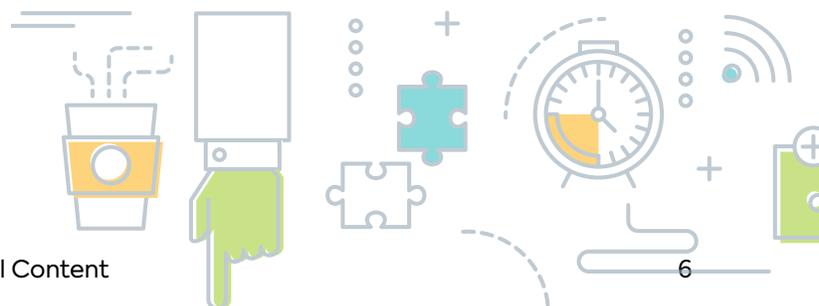
If you're using a localization technology or translation management system (TMS), some will support screenshots (like Transifex does) so localization managers have the option to upload screenshots they take from the app and/or websites directly to the platform. This way, you can also map the strings – that the translators are working on – to the corresponding screenshots that explain where the string will appear on the user-facing screen.

After this whole screenshot mapping process, translators can go directly into the platform to access the screenshots. And then with a comprehensive TMS like Transifex, translators can then also easily edit and translate text (using the respective mapped screenshots) directly from the platform as well because the interface allows them to do so all from one place. This is one way to provide translators visual context on the string they are working on.

Gathering Screenshots

There are two main scenarios that can happen during the QA & review process. The first is to have a dedicated QA team take screenshots throughout the QA process.

In action, this is typically one person who is responsible for taking screenshots based on what the UI looks like, and then forwards it onto localization managers who will upload the screenshots to Transifex. The second option is to automate the process with a little help of your engineers and a robust localization platform like Transifex. This means that the platform will periodically grab screenshots of the translated content and then queue them up alongside the respective content for context during review.



2) Context for Files: Integration

The second method is one that we have worked to refine through our Transifex platform, through a feature we call Context for Files. This method is particularly useful for anything accessible through a web app, and is set up by inserting a piece of code to your web app or website. (For those familiar with our Transifex Live solution, it works similarly).

The code you insert will sync up the website page to the editor on the translator's end. This way, any pages slated for translation will be added to the translator's editor and can be easily accessed through a link. Once the translator clicks on this link from the Transifex platform, they are directed to the page where the string they are working on appears within the context of the live site.

Context for Files is great and a customer favorite because it eliminates a great deal of manual work for localization managers, translators, and even developers. The website integration automatically pulls in all the context for the translation strings and therefore removes the need for localization managers to manually upload screenshots through Transifex. With Context for Files, Transifex also takes care of how the translator will access the info by providing links to the pages where the strings belong – all easily accessible from the platform so translators can easily find on the page where the respective string appears.

“Context for Files is great and a customer favorite because it eliminates a great deal of manual work...”



Deciding Which to Use Based on Your Resources

If you are deciding between which of the above two methods to use, start by evaluating your resources in terms of team and time. Both are useful but the first method of visual context by way of screenshots requires that you have the resources to invest in manually taking the screenshots, then uploading them to the platform and mapping them. Sure, you can remove the manual upload process with the use of APIs that help with automation the uploading and mapping of screenshots, but then this requires engineering resources.

Those just starting out typically like to explore the visual context approach first, and then evaluate what kind of automation they need to provide comprehensive and ongoing feedback for their translators. Depending on the amount of content and frequency you need it translated, the way in which you provide feedback to your translators will vary. And in general, will evolve over time as well.



Typical Features to Leverage for Effective Feedback

Comment Section

Outside of visual context, there are other ways to provide context to translators. If you have a smaller team that might not have as large a budget or pool of manpower, we recommend making robust use of the comments. Most localization platforms will have a comments section tied to each respective translated portion. Localization managers can go into this section to provide additional information for strings, and translators can have the option to directly ping the localization manager as questions arise. This is a great way to enable translators to ask for additional context and clarity on what they are translating, and for managers to easily reply.

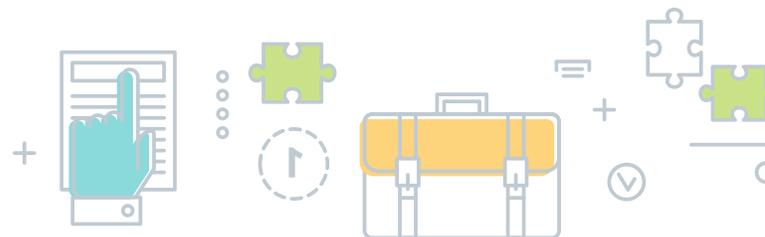
String Instructions

Another way to provide context is through instructions associated with specific strings. Specifically, you can provide links to images and files outside of the website and translation platform for even additional visual context. These links could direct you to a specific website page, a screenshot,

Best Practice

Create a Glossary

To clarify whether specific terms should be translated or not (e.g., your brand name shouldn't be translated; these specific terms should be translated in French but not other languages).



or some text explaining that the string is ‘part of a button’ or ‘part of a title’ so the translator has specific information to better understand where the string is located. In Transifex, one use case of String Instructions we have seen is teams uploading images to Google Drive and then sharing links to these images with translators for more context.

Discussion

If the translation fix or localization bug requires more inputs from other teammates or translators, you can also open up a team- or group-level discussion within some localization platforms. In Transifex, for example, there is an announcement section that enables localization to create team-wide announcements. Instead, if you’d like to just

get a message to specific groups within your team (e.g., only Spanish translators), you can create discussion forums for the respective groups to inform and update the respective group’s translators without spamming the rest of the team. In Transifex, this announcement feature is available to the entire team, not just the localization managers.

“...you can create discussion forums for the respective groups to inform and update the respective group’s translators...”

Translation Checks

Aside from feedback after the actual content is translated, you can also take measures to account for and prevent the errors that will inevitably arise during the translation process. In a platform like Transifex, localization managers do this by setting up **translation checks**, which can take one of two forms:

- **Warnings:** Messages that translators will see as they are translating,

warning them that something is incorrect. If the translator is unable to fix the incorrect area, they can still submit it for review so that the reviewer or manager can take action and go into the platform to fix it.

- **Errors:** Errors are more restrictive than warnings because they block the erroneous translations from being submitted without first contacting the localization manager (usually through the comments section).

Which of these two translation check types you set up depends on the preference of your team. In a platform like Transifex, it is all easily configurable beyond the default statuses that come with the platform. This way, localization managers can set up the specific processes to best support their translators and the rest of the localization team. These rules can also all be set up on an organization-level depending on how you want to handle such cases.

Keep in Mind Character Spacing and Sizing

When translators translate things in to different languages, sometimes you will need more or fewer characters in the translated text. For example, translating a phrase from English to German or Chinese has two vastly different implications with regards to character lengths: the same word in English could be 20 characters in German and 2 in Chinese). Because of this, you need to make sure that the UI will not break due to the extra characters and there is actually this space to put extra characters when you switch to the Chinese language.



“Together, the team can find a way to either increase the limit by changing some elements in the UI to support the translation”

In cases like this, you can provide character limitations for each string. This prevents translators from exceeding the limit so that he works within the UI-dictated character count. In practice, this means that translators cannot submit translations if they have exceeded the predetermined limit, and will need to revise any translations that break these rules. This avoids breaking the UI when translating between languages. In this case, the QA process is typically conducted more quickly and with fewer errors.

If the translator cannot actually meet the character limitation and it's not possible to actually translate without losing the original meaning and staying within character count, the translator can ping the localization manager or engineer (depending on how communication is done across teams). Together, the team can find a way to either increase the limit by changing some elements in the UI to support the translation, or evaluate if the translation can be accepted as valid in its current format.



Remember!

When Testing Agencies

Note: Each vendor specializes in specific fields – you need to be aware of the fields they are specialized in so if they say they have a lot of experience in professional translation for legal documents, you expect high quality so you can send 1-2 files and give them a week to produce/ translate.

A note on managing crowdsourced translations

There are also companies that work with their user communities to crowd-source localization. These translators from the community typically don't get paid because they are volunteering their translations motivated by passion for the product

While crowdsourced translations are a great way to simultaneously cut localization costs while engaging users, the translations and the community of translators need to be properly managed in order to ensure effective processes and quality translations.



In some cases, you will have a translator that is producing bad translations (either because they lack the skills or sometimes even on purpose just to mess with content). If you are working with a large enough community, people typically will report this outlier's work and behavior so you can remove them from the team and future translation projects. Similar to testing out agencies, we recommend implementing a test period when crowdsourcing translations as well. This can be done by sharing out a test translation project with the community and evaluating everything over a 2-4 week period.

Go Global with Transifex

For more technical information on effective tips and features for your localization team – from translators to developers, visit docs.transifex.com. If you're interested in giving Transifex a try, sign up for a free 15-day trial at www.transifex.com/signup.

