



2020

The Definitive Localization Dictionary

Learn all the localization terms and phrases that you need to know to become an industry expert.

Localization is an evolving industry using new technologies to grow.

It's one full of industry veterans that are helping to pave the way for future scale as well.

However, like other industries that have been around for a while, localization is riddled with terms and phrases that aren't always obvious to understand. It can easily feel like your peers are having a conversation that you may not understand. Even if you're an industry expert, projects with new companies can throw new terms your way causing you to search Google for the latest localization trends.

To help with that, we've compiled a list of the important localization terms in a simple, and straight-to-the-point localization dictionary.



A Localization Deep Dive

Terms, Phrases, and Definitions

Application Program Interface (API)

An API, short for Application Program Interface, is a piece of software that allows two applications to interact with each other.

Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) Tool

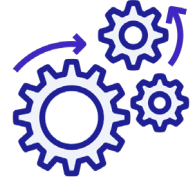
A Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tool is one that's built to help translators increase the speed and consistency at which they translate content. Some of the more popular features of a CAT tool include Translation Memories and Termbases.

Content Management System (CMS)

A content management system is a software tool that allows companies to create, edit, and publish website content more easily than traditional methods. Common CMS systems include WordPress, Contentful, and Drupal.

Continuous Localization

Continuous localization refers to a workflow where localized content is published more frequently, allowing for agile additions and changes to copy. This process works in place of longer cycles where bigger batches of content are localized at once.



Fuzzy Matching

Fuzzy Matching is the process where a CAT tool looks for segments inside of a Translation Memory with similar meaning and spelling. Fuzzy matches are often between 75-99% similar to an existing entry.

Globalization

Globalization is the idea of bringing different countries and cultures together, whether separated by people, economies, or borders. Often-times, globalization is thought of as the umbrella goal that localization, internationalization, and translation all work to accomplish.



Internationalization (i18n)

Internationalization is a building block at the beginning of an application or product that defines a framework for adaptability. Simply put, internationalization “prepares” applications and products to easily support languages. The process typically starts early on with developers as they build the application or product.

Language Code

A code created to identify languages. There are different schemes that produce different codes - for example, the scheme ISO 639-1 code for Spanish is ES.

Locale

A term used in the localization industry to define the combination of a language and specific geographic region where a difference in culture warrants different content. For example, French (France) and French (Canada) are two different locales, even though they share a common language.





Localization (l10n)

Localization is the process of actually adapting to a specific locale or region. This often includes all visible pieces, like text and images, to make sure that they align with the culture.

Language Services Provider (LSP)

LSP is short for Language Services Provider, a company that offers services like translation or possibly interpretation.

Machine Translation (MT)

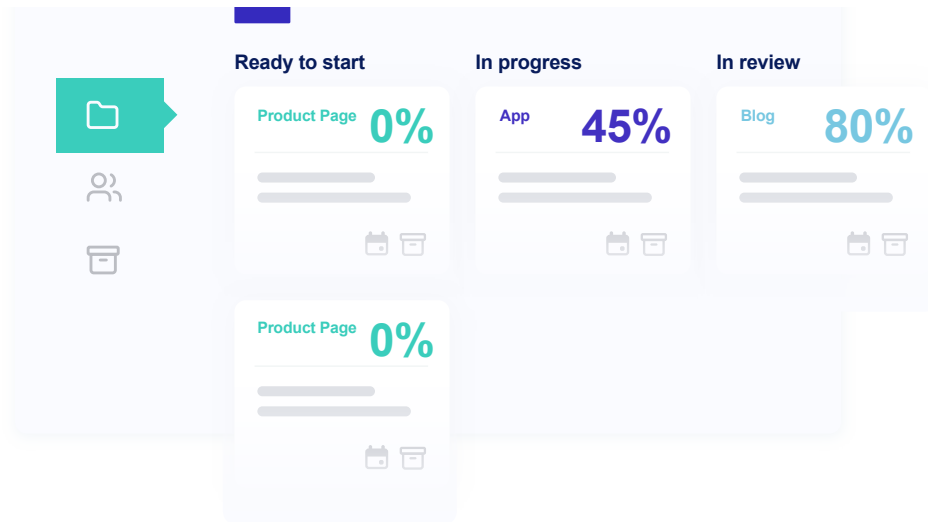
Machine translation is fully automated software that translates content from one language to another. Since a large portion of the world's content is inaccessible to people that don't speak the original source language, MT can effectively translate content faster and into more languages. There are multiple types of machine translation, including neural, statistical, and rule-based.

Markup Language

Markup languages like HTML, XML, and XHTML, are coding languages used to format the layout and style within a text file. The individual tags that surround the beginning and end of the word or phrase specify the formatting that will appear on a page.

Multilingual Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Multilingual SEO is the process of optimizing online content so it's easier to find across multiple language markets in online search results. Unlike optimizing for countries specifically, multilingual SEO focuses on optimizing for language regions.



Machine Translation Post Editing (MTPE)

Some companies use a translation approach called Machine Translation Post Editing (MTPE), where content is translated using MT then reviewed by human translators after the fact. While this workflow does cut costs, the quality is typically lower than human-in-the-loop machine translation or human-only translation.

Right-to-Left (RTL)

RTL describes the languages that have writing systems that are read and written from right to left. Some common RTL languages are Arabic, Urdu, Japanese, and Hebrew. When it comes to localization, moving to and from RTL languages can

Transcreation

Transcreation is a process often used by advertising and marketing departments where the meaning of a message is translated into another language, all while

Translation Management System (TMS)

A TMS is the software system that manages the localization process from start to end. More often than not, they're meant to automate and streamline the localization workflow, making it easier to pass content back and forth for translation.

Translation Memory

A TM is a database that stores all previous translation segments. Those segments can then be used in future translations, saving time for translators, ensuring consistency for brand, and saving costs for businesses.

TM Leverage

This is the term used to track and measure the frequency of TM use. The higher the leverage, the more often a TM is referenced in subsequent translations, likely providing faster turnaround and lower costs.

Unicode

The international encoding standard for use with different languages and scripts, Unicode assigns a unique numeric value to each letter, digit, or symbol across different platforms and programs so that multilingual character sets can be supported when developing global software applications.

While understanding these terms is important, it's also crucial to work with a vendor that can work with you to understand how to build and scale your localization programs. New terms are still appearing, so it's important to stay on top of the latest developments in the industry and work with a trusted localization vendor.

Choose a strategic partner.

From engineering, product, marketing, sales, and support – there are many factors to consider when expanding to a new locale. One of the most critical aspects is to partner with a localization team dedicated to helping you succeed in measurable ways.

When choosing translation software and translators, partner with a company that provides a thorough proof of concept (POC) service during the sales process. You can measure both the quality of translations as well as efficiency gains. Through this process, you can better estimate the time-to-market and cost of localization.

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