

KfW Banking Group Takes Innovative Approach to Composition of Foreign-Language Texts

Across Language Server Supersedes Existing Translation Service and Opens New Perspectives

The KfW Banking Group has decided to replace the existing system with Across Language Server, thereby achieving a higher degree of organization of the translation work. The translation workload is to be reduced even for texts with a low repetition rate.

The numerous international tasks of the KfW Banking Group require the internal language service to translate a wide range

of texts into English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian which include business reports, information sheets, terms and conditions, web texts, press releases, dissertations, lectures, contracts, financing offers, expert reports, correspondence, and meeting minutes. The texts cover a broad spectrum of subjects with a comparatively low repetition rate (approximately 20% on average). The major source language is German. English is the major target language, and also plays an important role as a source language.

The language service comprises seven long-standing employees. The terminology database and concordance search are mainly used as complementary tools to achieve a high level of consistency in the style and terminology of the translations. Currently, the terminology database, which is expanded as needed, contains approximately 8,000 terms. "We do not try to map every new term directly to all languages. We only enter specialized terms in the database when they are translated for the first time", explains Christian Schmidt, Across coordinator in the KfW language service. Most of the texts to be translated are Microsoft Office formats (Word accounts for more than 95%), which are translated with the Across Language Server and then checked out in the original format.

Previous System No Longer Adequate

Internal analyses revealed that an update of the previous system would have cost more than the introduction of Across. Among other things, the old system needed a separate server for the terminology database. Therefore, the time had come to look for a new solution that would meet the following key criteria:

- Processing and output of Office documents,
- Powerful terminology solution and concordance search,
- Efficient organization of translation tasks, as this area was to be structured more effectively,
- Central platform for all corporate language resources.

The decision makers understood that the Across Language Server would fulfill these requirements. "The well-designed concept,



the extensive possibilities for efficient work organization, and the good price/performance ratio convinced us", summarizes Christian Schmidt.

Not Reinventing the Wheel

The basic workflows of the KfW language service did not change with the implementation of the Across Language Server. The Office documents are checked in to Across, and the translation task is set up. Depending on the deadline, the translation may be assigned to a single person or up to three staff members. All employees access the tasks assigned to them via crossLAN. All needed resources are made available within a client/server architecture, i.e. the information is stored on a central server and is consistent for all involved.

A new feature is that all translations are now set up as projects in crossProject. "Thus, 'quick and dirty translations' that used to be done casually belong to the past", adds Schmidt. He admits that the team members somewhat regret this. On the other hand, all

Christian Schmidt: →
"The previous system was no longer adequate for our requirements. Using the Language Server, we were able to map both our previous workflows and the desired process optimization."



in writing the source texts with the translation in mind. Apart from consistent documents in all languages, this approach has shown to cut translation costs and save translation time. Thus, this is a highly attractive perspective for the further development and optimization of the technological infrastructure of the KfW language service.

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possibilities must be used to continually increase the quality and guarantee cost-reducing recycling of previously translated passages with the help of computer-aided translations. For this, Across offers a wide range of functions.

After a document is checked in, it is analyzed by the system and synchronized with the crossTank translation memory. 100% matches, i.e. sentences that are identical in the source text and in the translation memory in terms of wording and formatting, can automatically be transferred to the target text as pre-translation. If this is not the case, the translator sees the more or less corresponding crossTank entries for the sentence currently in work. The translator can adopt these entries in his translation and edit them as needed. Differences between the current sentence and the entry in the translation memory are highlighted. The translation memory is also very useful for the correct use of terminology. The concordance search lists all sentences in crossTank that contain the requested word and provides insight on the context in which the word was used in the past.

Higher Degree of Organization: Benefits and Challenges

As an integrated overall system with combined deployment of project management, terminology system, translation memory, and quality assurance, the Across Language Server has resulted in more efficient translation management and increased quality of the translations at the KfW Banking Group. The introduction did not cause any problems, though, looking back, the one-day employee training proved to be too short. "The complexity and possibilities of Across and the higher degree of organization required for using this system was a bit more challenging for employees who were less proficient in using IT", admits Schmidt.

In his opinion, the new system represents another milestone in attaining the important goal of further increasing the quality of translations. In the next step, the authors could be assisted



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Bank for Economic Momentum

The KfW Banking Group, an institution under public law, promotes medium-sized enterprises in Germany and investments abroad. It provides impulses for society, economy, and ecology. Among other things, eco-friendly measures are supported. Loans for prospective house owners support the construction industry and trade. In 2006, the total financing volume of the federal (80%) and state-owned (20%) banking group, comprising KfW Förderbank, KfW Mittelstandsbank, KfW IPEX-Bank, KfW Entwicklungsbank, and DEG, amounted to EUR 76.8 billion. As of the end of 2006, the banking group had 3,831 employees.

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