



# MultiLingual

Language | Technology | Business

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**Review:**

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**Reviewed by Richard Sikes**

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MultiTrans and Across Language Server**

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### Interaction with SDL Trados, MultiCorpora's MultiTrans and Across Language Server

When we think of software solutions that have been designed for language service providers (LSPs), we tend to think first about translation memory (TM), and there can be no dispute that TM creation, persistence and usage are central to cost-effective translation. There are many excellent TM products, and LSPs have nearly universally jumped on the bandwagon and acquired one or more of the best-of-breed solutions. These solutions are typically TM-centric, and they vary in the depth of their ability to create and manage projects, to assign and monitor project resources and communication, and to analyze profitability.

From the beginning, the Plunet perspective has been different. The product had its genesis approximately eight years ago when the Würzburg-based system house EDV-Konzepte was approached by a local LSP, Eurotext AG. Like many LSPs, Eurotext had attained sophistication in managing TM solutions, but had found that the management of translation

#### Plunet BusinessManager 5.0

Price varies with number of licenses and additional modules.

#### System strengths

Scalable and powerful business and process management solution with connections to all leading translation tools.

projects as a business depended on a pot-pourri of homegrown and off-the-shelf applications that were limited in their ability to connect with one another. This resulted in operational inefficiencies and hampered management of the company on sound, quantitatively based business principles.

Eurotext envisioned a solution that featured three primary attributes. First, because the company management travelled extensively and because many of their translation resources were geographically distributed, a web-based solution that allowed easy access from any location was essential. Second, all project correspondence and materials needed to be stored in a consistent and easily repeatable manner. And, third, the solution needed to focus on the business aspects of translation management as opposed to the management of TMs. Thus, BusinessManager was born and spent its toddler days as a proprietary solution implemented solely at Eurotext.

During the first year, primary among the lessons learned was that the investment needed to extend the BusinessManager's functionality to fully satisfy Eurotext's vision exceeded the level that one LSP alone could finance. To continue development, the financial load needed to be spread out, and the way

to do this became clear: The BusinessManager had to be commercialized. To make commercialization possible, Eurotext and EDV-Konzepte formed a joint venture that founded Plunet as an independent business with the mandate to further develop and market the BusinessManager solution. Today, Plunet has a customer base that extends worldwide and is the generally acknowledged leader in its market category.

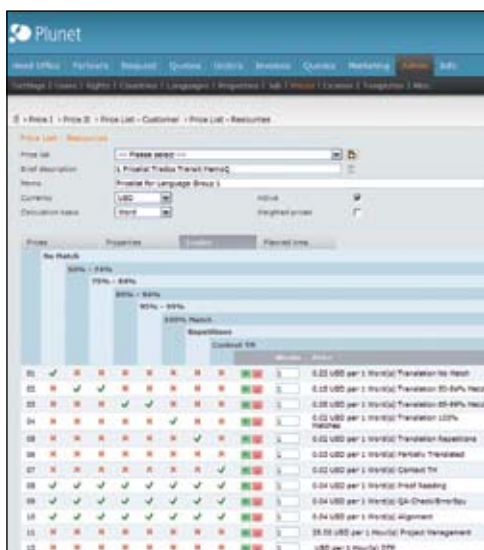


Figure 1: Price matrix.



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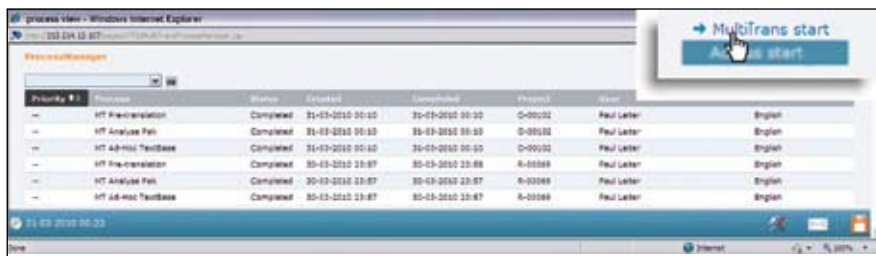


Figure 2: The MultiTrans ProcessManager.

**Pricing management**

Because the Plunet solution focuses on translation as a business, there has been great emphasis on flexibility to record and apply granular pricing information to projects and project analysis. BusinessManager allows users to define an unlimited number of price lists. These lists can contain any number of freely definable line items, and they may be associated with any participant in the translation process. Then, when assembling a quote or order for services out of the individual component jobs, the project manager can easily calculate the profitability of the service as a whole. This is certainly a powerful feature, but BusinessManager's power only begins there. It is in the automated association of the granular pricing model with TM analyses of new projects that BusinessManager really shines. This review explores how this association works in connection with three best-of-breed TM applications.

The key to associating prices with word counts lies in BusinessManager's price matrix. Figure 1 shows the matrix for a sample price list that is associated with Trados fuzzy match bands. The green check marks indicate where a specific price is assigned to a particular band. For example, note the two green check marks in the second row. These indicate that the price \$0.18 per word, which is defined in a

table that appears when the user clicks on the grey "Prices" tab, is to be used for both the 50%-74% range and the 75%-84% range.

Users can easily activate or deactivate the connections between prices and fuzzy bands by clicking on the squares that contain either a red "x" or a green check mark. Default price associations are defined in

associated not only with different service types and TM applications, but also with translation resources such as internal employees, freelancers, subcontracted agencies or other peripheral suppliers, as well as individual customers. In this way, as a quote is assembled, a complete price structure is automatically generated. The salesperson assembling the quote or the project manager assembling resources for a project can easily monitor the profitability of the project as it comes together and, if appropriate, swap out assigned resources to adjust profitability to comply with company targets.

**Automated analysis**

In its original and simplest form, then, BusinessManager reads TM application log files, but BusinessManager is capable of much more. If a TM serving application is

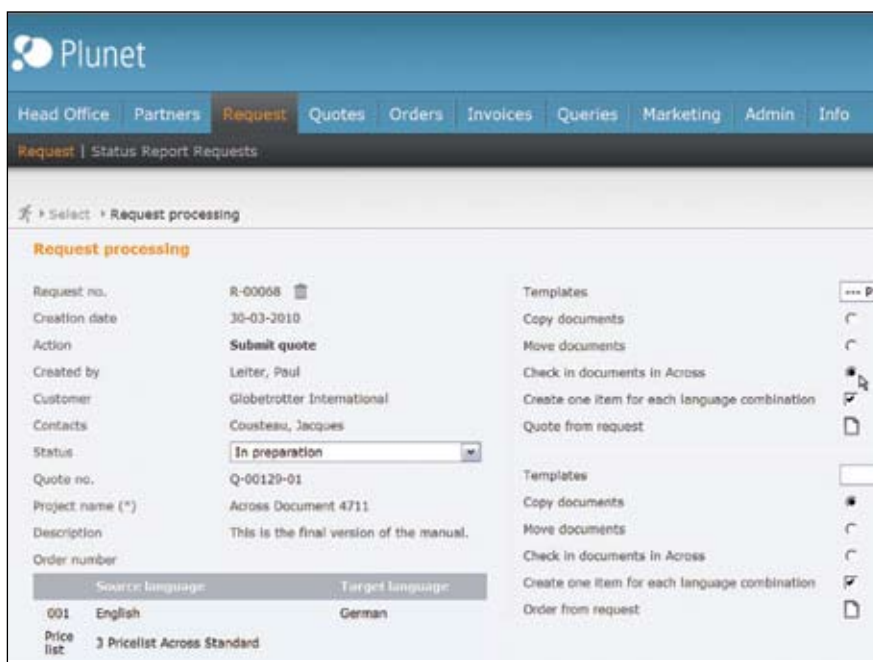


Figure 4: Preparing a quote for the Across Language Server.

this manner in the administrative section of BusinessManager. Then, when BusinessManager reads a log file that has been generated by the analysis function of a TM application, these default prices are displayed in line items for the appropriate bands together with a word count and a calculated total price. If desired, the user can at this point override the default prices by entering different amounts for the particular line item units. The adjusted price list remains associated with the quote or job; it does not flow back to the default list.

Because there are no constraints on the number and application of price lists, BusinessManager administrators can set up a wide variety of lists. Individual lists can be

present within the system, BusinessManager can automatically run an analysis and pre-populate a quote or order with the resulting numbers. It can also create a pre-translation by applying the TM to the uploaded source document. In conjunction with the SDL Trados TM Server, a pre-translation can be inserted into the project file system in TTX format. Several settings can be chosen as appropriate, for example, whether or not to insert a pre-translation into the project file system for later download by the translation resources, and whether or not to make use of ContextTM.

After the user chooses desired settings, the ProcessManager is launched. Progress is indicated in a new page that is similar regardless of which TM server application is



Figure 3: A job placement template.



Figure 5: The project as displayed in the Language Server projects list.

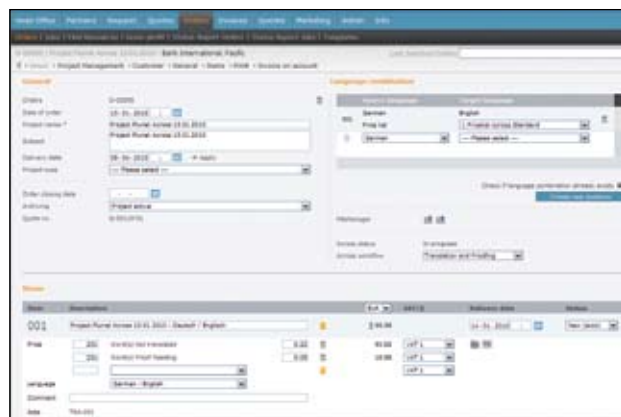


Figure 6: Language Server sends data back to BusinessManager.

running in the background. Figure 2 shows the ProcessManager for the MultiCorpora MultiTrans implementation, the functionality of which is analogous to that of the TradosManager.

After the ProcessManager has finished its run, the line items on the Quotes page for the project become automatically populated with the results. At this point, the quote can be returned to the customer for approval or, if there is a service level agreement in place that allows the translation project to commence without specific customer response, the quote and its line items can be automatically transformed into an order that moves out into the translation production infrastructure.

In Plunet parlance, both Quotes and Orders consist of component Items. These generally correspond to language pairs that enter into the translation process, for example, move through the phases of translation, editing and proofing. Items contain Jobs whereby, in North America, a Job might be considered a Task that some individual contributing resource performs as part of the larger Order or project. For new Plunet users who are native US-English speakers, this terminology can be somewhat confusing in the beginning; however, one gets used to it after a while.

## Templates

BusinessManager ships with a set of templates for Word and for e-mail that can be applied to communications that are generated by the system for various

activities during the translation project life cycle. These templates are automatically populated with project data that are appropriate for the particular phase or task or recipient.

Figure 3 shows a job placement template in which a number of fields have been populated by BusinessManager. These include address data, the order number, the contact name plus telephone, e-mail and date. Also included are a number that specifically identifies the job itself, the subject of the job, the rules, a comment (blank in this case), the job deadline and the fee. A template such as this that is generated in Word by the system will be converted to PDF format if it is attached to an e-mail. The BusinessManager also stores every piece of project correspondence including all automatically generated e-mails and Word documents. These include quote requests, quotes and confirmations of various types, job placements, invoices and delivery notices.

BusinessManager, in conjunction with either the MultiCorpora or the SDL server, provides automation right from the customer request stage. For example, if a client is designated within BusinessManager as a MultiTrans customer and if a representative of that client requests a translation through the BusinessManager customer portal by specifying a project and uploading some source files, the BusinessManager will then automatically call the MultiTrans server to analyze the uploaded source files against the existing TextBases and TermBases and

then populate the quotation page with the results of that analysis. The vendor project manager can even then run an automated pre-translation of the documents, which will then be made available to the chosen translators. TradosManager works in an analogous manner, although the analysis and leveraging are performed against TM as opposed to the TextBases and TermBases that characterize the MultiCorpora solution.

## Workflow integration

Thus far, we have looked at how the Plunet BusinessManager solution works with SDL Trados TM Server and the MultiTrans server, best-of-breed products that do not have their own intrinsic workflow component. But the BusinessManager also integrates with the Across Language Server. Given that the Language Server has a richly featured project management (PM) and workflow component, the BusinessManager approach must be somewhat different. Here we have considerable overlapping of functionality, so it is of utmost importance that the two solutions elegantly “talk” with one another in order to keep their partner solution continually updated on project progress. It is also necessary to have a clear separation of which application does what and where the hand-offs between them are. For example, consider that both the Across Language Server and the Plunet BusinessManager store customer and resource data, and neither one is fully functional without that content. If a project for a particular customer requires certain resources, one application must tell the other that those resources have been allocated, for whom and for what period of time. This implies a much deeper integration than is the case with the MultiCorpora or SDL TM systems.

Figure 4 shows the initial setup for creating a quote that will be relayed to

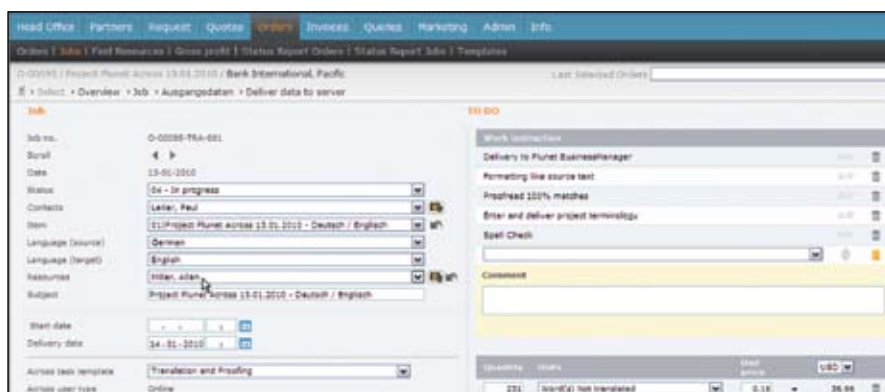


Figure 7: The Workflow Resource Manager suggests Allan Miller.

the Language Server. A standard price list for Across has been chosen. This can be automatically assigned from the system – analogous to the implementations for MultiTrans or Trados – or manually assigned by the project manager. An additional radio button labeled “Check in documents in Across” is present in the user interface (UI). If this is chosen, the uploaded documents will enter the Across solution universe in addition to being stored within the BusinessManager directory structure. After initiating the action in BusinessManager, Across’ process manager springs into action, checking the files to be translated into the Language Server and running an analysis, again analogous to the functionality of the other two solutions. At this point, though, the implementation differs from MultiCorpora and SDL, and we move into the Across world.

In Figure 5, we see that the project has appeared in the Language Server project list. The Language Server analyzes the documents against relevant TMs and returns the results to BusinessManager as the numerical basis for a quote (Figure 6).

Assuming that the quote is approved by the customer, the next thing to do would be for the project manager to assign resources to carry out the various tasks (or Jobs in Plunet lingo). For this, the project manager could first choose an Across workflow type from a list of predetermined workflows from the Across section in the BusinessManager Quote page and then initiate a search within Plunet that would return resources that are appropriate for the project language combinations and job types that are contained within the chosen workflow. Although the BusinessManager’s Workflow Resource Manager can be used to create custom workflows of many types, in connection with Across these are specific to the partner application.

In this case, the Workflow Resource Manager has suggested Allan Miller (Figure 7) among other resources, and the project manager has accepted this suggestion. We are also provided with more Across specific information, including the Across task template and the user type that is assigned to Miller within the Language Server environment. As part of the job assignment, the BusinessManager can also identify specific work instructions. These form a checklist of items that the resource must mark off before returning the translated text back to the BusinessManager. This is standard BusinessManager functionality, so it is also available to MultiTrans

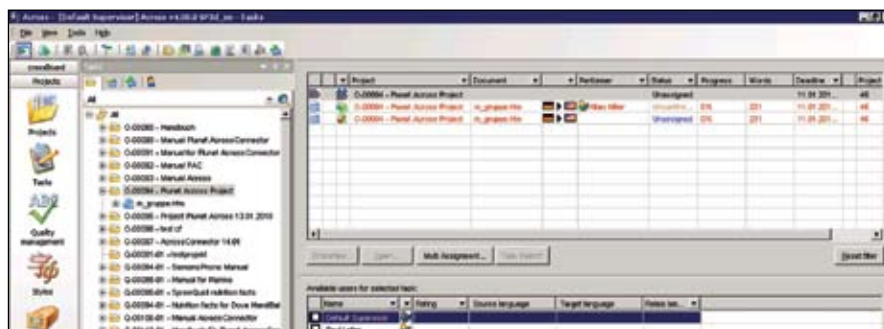


Figure 8: The Language Server task view shows the BusinessManager job.

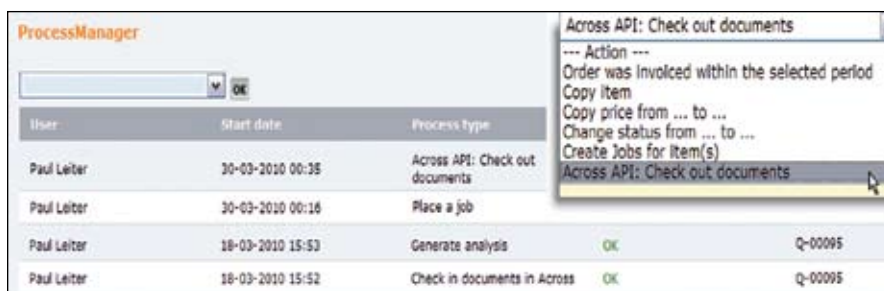


Figure 9: The translated content is checked out of the Language Server.

and Trados users. To be fair, it should also be pointed out that custom workflows can be used with other TM server solutions, including both MultiCorpora’s and SDL’s.

The job is ready to be assigned, and the project manager can now do so by clicking the “Assign Job via Across” icon. Across’ process manager once again springs into action and sends the job assignment to the Language Server. Simultaneously, a job placement order is automatically created and sent to the translator by e-mail. As before in other analogous cases, the order document is populated automatically by the BusinessManager, and the user can manually override the pre-populated document to make any desired changes.

Meanwhile in the Language Server, the assigned resources are logged and monitored in the Task view. The translation task has automatically been assigned to Allan Miller. In this particular example, we also have the Default Supervisor and a user named Paul Leiter listed (Figure 8). They could be assigned to the proofing stage of the project because they meet the prerequisites for the work.

Once the project is returned from the workflow phases, the project manager needs to check the finished version out of the Language Server (Figure 9). Once again, this is done from the BusinessManager user interface, which causes the ProcessManager to retrieve the relevant document from the Language Server and move it back into the BusinessManager environment.

Now, all that is left for the project manager to do is to place the retrieved document into the “[!\_Out]” directory within the BusinessManager’s directory structure, which is the place from which the customer can pick it up through the BusinessManager’s built-in web portal (for customers, only the “[!\_In]” and the “[!\_Out]” folders are visible). Placement of deliverable materials in the Out folder is not unique to the Across implementation but, rather, is a standard part of working with BusinessManager, regardless of which TM technology is used on the back-end phases of the translation process. Also, customers do not have to use the portal. Project managers can easily send deliverables to customers by e-mail or other means.

### Project analysis

At this point, the interaction of the BusinessManager and the associated TM product, whether it be SDL Trados, MultiCorpora’s MultiTrans or the Across Language Server, is finished. The power of the BusinessManager is not finished here, however. Standard practice at this point is automated creation of a delivery notice that informs the customer that there is something to pick up from the BusinessManager portal and the initiation of invoicing procedures. The BusinessManager also has powerful query functionality that allows users to monitor and display project data in many ways. Creation and tracking of invoices as well as reminder notices for aging receivables can be handled within

the BusinessManager. Cost analysis and profitability can be detailed by project, by customer, or by numerous other views of the data at various stages of project completion. Financial data also can be exported to several popular accounting programs for further usage there.

Because it has been designed from the ground up to offer powerful and automated interaction with a variety of third-party, best-of-breed TM solutions and because it does so via a browser-based UI that requires no additional, superfluous desktop software, the BusinessManager

offers a maximum of flexibility and applicability within many LSP and corporate environments. Although its primary *raison d'être* is to serve the language industry, there is no reason why the BusinessManager cannot be used in a more generic context that requires resource and PM combined with e-mail communication and file management. Plunet itself uses the BusinessManager to handle all of its customer contact and implementation information. This is yet another case where "German engineering" has gotten it right!

While we have examined the interaction between the BusinessManager and SDL Trados, MultiCorpora's MultiTrans, and the Across Language Server, other options are available. These include connectors to the memoQ Server by Kilgray and also to content management systems via Clay Tablet products plus incorporation of support for ErrorSpy and PractiCount. The Plunet BusinessManager 5.0 featuring a rework of the UI to simplify and enhance usability as well as to provide additional functionality, will be released in mid-2010. **M**

## Plunet BusinessManager

It's more than a software...it's your business

Plunet BusinessManager is the integrated business and workflow management solution for translation companies. Whether you work in project management, sales, controlling or at the senior management level – Plunet's web-based BusinessManager platform is the complete solution for successful translation management. All around the world, hundreds of companies are already using Plunet BusinessManager to optimize their business and translation processes.

Score for your business success too!



### Want to know more?

Contact us for a Plunet BusinessManager demo and get your free process optimization consultation!

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