

TIME AND SPACE:

Planning Ahead For Multilingual Video And Interactive Presentations

International companies need to make marketing, training and education materials available in a variety of languages, as does any organization with a diverse workforce within our country. If you plan ahead when creating original video or computer-based training, the process will be simpler and more cost efficient—and you will obtain better results. ASIST has helped many clients translate and dub their electronic media pieces to other languages, and we can help you get your message across.

Many translations are simply *longer* than the English original. For example, word counts can run 25% higher in Romance languages such as Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian. This requires leaving some extra *space* when

designing your screen layouts—splitting bullet text, subtitles, job titles, warnings and so on into smaller segments or multiple screens.

Even more important, however, is the issue of *time*. Each segment of narration, interviews and on-

camera dialog is affected by the increased word counts. If your original English video has been edited very tightly, it will

be very difficult to make translated audio fit unless you 1) abridge content heavily, meaning that a slightly different message reaches each audience, or 2) edit and time-compress voices to a much more accelerated pace, in order to force the alternate language to fit. Ideally, the latter option should be avoided, because the results can range from overwhelming to overtly comical.

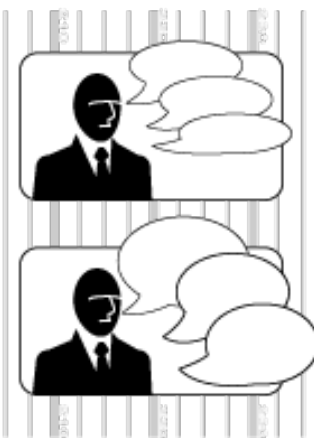
The solution is to build globalization into your projects from the start. As you create your video, plan for possibly extending “B-roll” sequences so that translated narrations can run at a natural pace (by re-editing those segments to last several seconds longer than the respective English). As you edit excerpts from interviews or on-camera presenters, allow extra time for the alternate-language versions, by digitizing some additional footage and generally leaving transitions longer. As a general rule, if the pacing of the English video you provide for dubbing and localization seems a little *too* relaxed, that’s probably just about right!

For video, interactive and other electronic media, ASIST provides translation, project consulting, voice talent, audio production, video editing and localization, as well as final proofing prior to release—in any language. Contact us today if you would like to discuss any upcoming project.

Any Time Is The Right Time

Even if you’re just beginning to conceptualize your video/multimedia project, it’s never too soon to contact ASIST for your translation needs. Often the best way to deal with problematic issues is to prevent them altogether.

ASIST often consults with clients prior to starting our translation process, identifying sequences where timing may be excessively tight for a natural-sounding translation, and suggesting edits to the original video or interactive presentation (when possible) so that it lends itself better to being dubbed to other languages. As with any other translation project, we also can alert you about content that could be culturally irrelevant or inappropriate to the target language and culture.



We always look forward to hearing from you.

To email comments or suggestions for future issues, please click:
marketing@ASISTtranslations.com

Request a Quote

Call 614-451-6744
and ask for Marketing,
or send an email to

info@ASISTtranslations.com



The Measure Of All Things

Because 90% of the world uses the metric system, conversion of measurement units from the English system still prevalent in the US involves more decision-making than the simple calculations one might imagine.

Close Enough!

The first issue is always the degree of precision required. For example, when telling consumers to store a gas cylinder at least 3 feet away from an open flame, common sense should tell you that “one meter” away is an acceptable approximation. Specifying “0.9144 meters” leaves them wondering whether a few tenths of a millimeter really make a difference!

On the other hand, for tools and machinery, you need to be very specific. Wrench, nut and bolt sizes are a common example, and we frequently see


this mishandled in amateur translations. When a 5/8" wrench is required, that's what must be communicated in any language. Specifying only 1.5875 cm (or much worse, rounding it to 1.6 cm) leaves the user not knowing which tool is required... or possibly stripping the nut because of a misleading conversion in the translation.

All of this is relative to the scale, and the significant digits in the original measurement. When providing high-altitude recipes for cookie batter at 3,000, 5,000 and 7,000 feet, it doesn't make things any “clearer” to the audience if you specify 914.4, 1,524 and 2,133.6 meters. On the other hand, when a component is only several centimeters long in the first place, fractions of a millimeter can often be important.

Out of Order!

You may decide to use both metric and “English” units (officially known as the United States Customary System)—to ensure that units from the original situation or component are retained, or to provide approximations that help your audience get a sense of the sizes, weights or distances involved. In translation, as a general rule the common measurement units of the target language appear first, followed by the original equivalent (within parentheses, for example). Again, the translation team must have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter—and common sense—to know when a word like “approximately” is called for, and the appropriate level of precision for each conversion.

However, there are exceptions to this default order, like the wrench example cited in the previous section, or where the product itself is supplied in English units—spools of cable in lengths of 100, 500 and 1,000 feet, for instance. When documents are directed towards non-English-speaking populations within the U.S., it is also common to use English measurements—sometimes followed by their metric equivalents if that will provide additional clarity.

ASIST translates from and into any language. Our professional translators and project coordinators will help you with these and similar localization issues. Don't hesitate to contact us for guidance in any upcoming translation project. 


METRIC TRIVIA:

The famous platinum bar established as the meter standard in 1799 (at an international scientific meeting in Paris) was supposed to represent one ten-millionth of the distance from the North Pole to the equator.

The measurement was wrong! We now know that this distance is actually 10,002,000 meters, and our standard meter is actually about 0.2 millimeters short of that exact proportion.

Today's definition of a meter is the distance traveled by light in a vacuum in one 299,792,458th of a second. Yeah, that makes it much easier to remember...

Thomas Jefferson devoted much effort to make the United States the second nation in the world to adopt the metric system. Obviously, he was unsuccessful. However, it should also be noted that France, the birthplace of the metric system, was reverted to the older system of measurements (livre, aune, etc.) by Napoleon in 1812, and didn't complete full conversion back to the metric system until the end of World War I.

Only three countries have not officially converted to the metric system: Myanmar (Burma), Liberia... and the United States of America. 

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