SIEMENS

Global corporation opts for automatic translation

Siemens AG

Siemens (Berlin and Munich) is a global powerhouse in electrical engineering and electronics. The company has 434,000 employees working to develop and manufacture products, design and install complex systems and projects, and tailor a wide range of services for individual requirements. Siemens provides innovative technologies and comprehensive know-how to benefit customers in 190 countries. Founded more than 150 years ago, the company is active in the areas of Information and Communications, Automation and Control, Power, Transportation, Medical, and Lighting.

Reliable, high-quality automatic translation required

In a globally operating company like Siemens, communication in English is becoming increasingly important. This makes special demands on its staff, who must not only be able to understand English Web sites, information sheets and news items but also write their own complex letters, e-mails and contracts in English in no time at all.

Therefore, electronic tools came to be used more and more according to the language skills and preferences of the individual employees. Translation aids such as dictionaries, machine translation, vocabulary trainers and collections of phrases were easily available for use on the Internet, and some were also acquired as software for local installation.

Although the translation tools gave the staff a great deal of help, they also caused the company major problems, because the different software installations had a high maintenance overhead. In addition, the diversity of the programs and Internet services used led to highly inconsistent results in terms of both translation quality and terminology. Above all, however, the unregulated exchange of internal data and documents with online translation services constituted a serious security risk for the company. "As an alternative and to improve the data security to prevent data from being used by unauthorized third parties, it was decided to install our own system in the secure Siemens intranet", explains José-Luis Ortega Lleras, project manager for the "Automatic Translation" project.

When access to the free online translation services in the intranet was blocked, innumerable complaints from the users revealed the enormous need for them within the company.   ▷ ▷ ▷
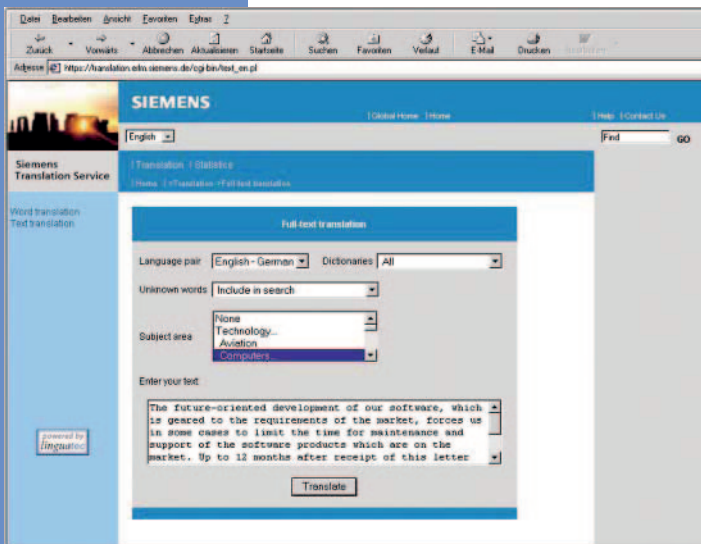
At a glance

Company:
Siemens AG
Industry/Market:
Electrical engineering
and electronics

Requirements of the desired translation software:
■ **High functionality in the translation process**

■ **Low maintenance overhead**

■ **Security through server-based solution**

■ **Standardized and internally extendable terminology**

■ **Extendable to other languages**

■ **Easy to use**

Enterprise-wide translation solution makes high demands

It was quickly decided to offer a central, high-quality, automatic translation service within Siemens, which would meet the security requirements. The project was managed by the language department in close collaboration with IT and IS.

The Siemens-specific needs were determined in detail in a requirements analysis. The IT department insisted that the internal software must satisfy the data protection provisions. Operation of the solution had to be simple and maintenance low. It was also crucial that the software could be managed centrally via a server. The users wanted a solution for the most important tasks such as full-text translation, looking up words in the dictionary, translation via e-mail, and Web-page translation directly in the browser. In technical terms, the application had to be easy to use and produce high-quality translations.

Right from the start, the project called for a standard that would also meet the linguistic requirements and guarantee long-term maintenance. For the international corporation it was important that standardized terminology would be used worldwide and could be extended internally as required. Once the solution had been successfully introduced, it also had to offer the option of adding further language pairs to German/English.

High acceptance already in the test phase

In an in-depth market analysis, potential providers were considered from all angles. To help with the selection, the project team also consulted intensively with other companies who already use an automated translation system in their intranet. Three systems made the shortlist. The eventual winner was the linguatec e-Translation Server – for several reasons: The server-based solution meant that they would be independent of external translation offerings on the Internet, and the e-Translation Server required only minimal customization. The network version had already been used in the company and proved its worth a hundred times over. The quality was also confirmed in tests, in which the e-Translation Server produced the best translations.

The e-Translation Server from linguatec was trialed in an intensive four-month test phase throughout the Siemens organization, during which, for example, the interface was adjusted to meet the wishes of the users. The server was managed by IT, while the language department, with its linguistic expertise, became the central point of contact for user queries on the new translation service. The latter also set up subject-specific dictionaries and ensured smooth operation. Already in the test phase, when only a limited group of users used the e-Translation Server, more than 240,000 accesses were counted. In August 2002, the e-Translation Server began productive operation in the worldwide Siemens intranet. ▷ ▷ ▷

Expectations exceeded

Proving that the e-Translation Server was positively received from the word go, user numbers rose steadily. "Because the vocabulary of the e-Translation Server is very extensive, it was enough for the time being to add a list of Siemens-specific abbreviations to cover the typical vocabulary. The work involved is even less than we expected", explains Mr. Ortega.

The cost-effectiveness of the e-Translation Server is outstanding. The running costs (hardware costs, dictionary maintenance, administration) were allocated to the various divisions of the Siemens organization to avoid the need for direct billing for each translation. The system is stable and maintenance by the IT department is barely required.

> "The quality of translation from the e-Translation Server is exceeding our expectations. We can see from the frequent positive feedback that the e-Translation Server is going down very well. It simply allows more productive work. Further proof of the high acceptance is the high access figures."
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> José-Luis Ortega Lleras, Project Manager "Automatic Translation"

Conclusion

The e-Translation Server has been in use in the corporate intranet since 2002. Today it gives staff uniform access to automatic translation, which is continually supplemented with internal Siemens terminology. "Bearing in mind that it always takes a while for word to get around that a new service is available on the intranet, we can expect the access figures to still increase considerably." Because of the high level of acceptance by the staff and the increased requirements, the additional language pair French/German has since been added. This secure solution now satisfies both the needs of the worldwide users and the standards of the IT and language departments involved.

Linguatec is the leading provider of language-technology software for office use. Key areas are automatic translation, language recognition and speech output. Linguatec offers software ranging from desktop solutions to comprehensive solutions for multilingual corporate communication in internal company networks.

References:

Further application areas can be found on our website: www.linguatec.net

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