MedL10N
A CSOFT LIFE SCIENCE BUSINESS

4 Million Words in 8 Weeks

INTRODUCTION

As companies and intellectual property are bought and sold across borders, technical accuracy is of paramount importance and can be extremely complicated when the two companies involved in such exchanges operate in different languages. Such was the case for one of CSOFT's clients, a large automobile manufacturer. After purchasing intellectual property of another automaker, they needed to put the technology to immediate use in producing their next line of vehicles. To do so, they needed CSOFT's help in translating approximately four million words from English to Chinese – within just eight weeks.

THE CHALLENGE

This project presented a particularly challenging timeline, owing to the sheer volume of text to be translated: 21,400 pages, or 3,800,000 words, of technical documentation from English to Chinese in only eight weeks. Ordinarily, a project of this scale using standard project guidelines (two or three translators working on any one language, with English-to-Chinese translators producing between 2,500 and 3,500 words per day) would take anywhere between one and two years to complete. CSOFT was given a deadline of eight weeks. To accomplish this, we needed to utilize far more resources than normal – in this case, 30 translators working simultaneously. However, this introduced additional challenges to the project: ensuring consistency and quality in translation across such a large group, keeping the project on track, and making the most efficient use of resources.

SOLUTION

CSOFT DEVELOPED THE IDEAL SOLUTION

Tà (Translation Automation). As a cloud-based translation management system (TMS), Tà supports automated collaboration amongst project contributors, provides real-time translation memory updates, and generates quality controlled results.

Tà was used to strengthen every aspect of the translation workflow, from project management and tracking to online translation and review, facilitating a more efficient end-to-end process. Files undergoing translation or review could be accessed in real-time from multiple locations using Tà, so the need to send and receive files by email was drastically reduced, simplifying the communication process, averting project delays, and allowing project managers to more effectively monitor the status of each file and project.

Additionally, by leveraging automation within the translation process, Tà diminished the number of steps required to complete this project, thereby reducing turnaround time and overall cost.

In a standard workflow without the benefits of Tà, a localization engineer prepares a quality assurance (QA) report once translation is complete, after which the report is sent to the translator to review, make rebuttals, or implement corrections. Tà simplified this process by creating an online translation environment that includes a powerful QA engine, capable of catching errors (e.g. inconsistent translations, missing tags) in real-time, thus improving efficiency without sacrificing quality. Through Tà's ability to support real-time QA, several steps in typical workflows were avoided. With Tà, as soon as a single file was translated, it was automatically sent for review, post-processing, and desktop publishing.
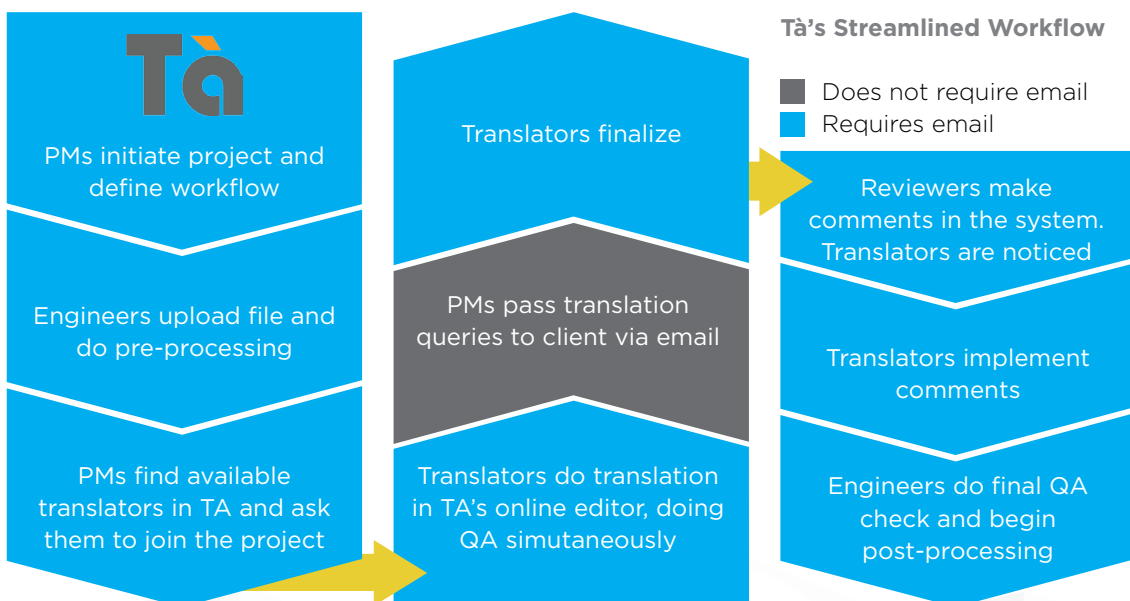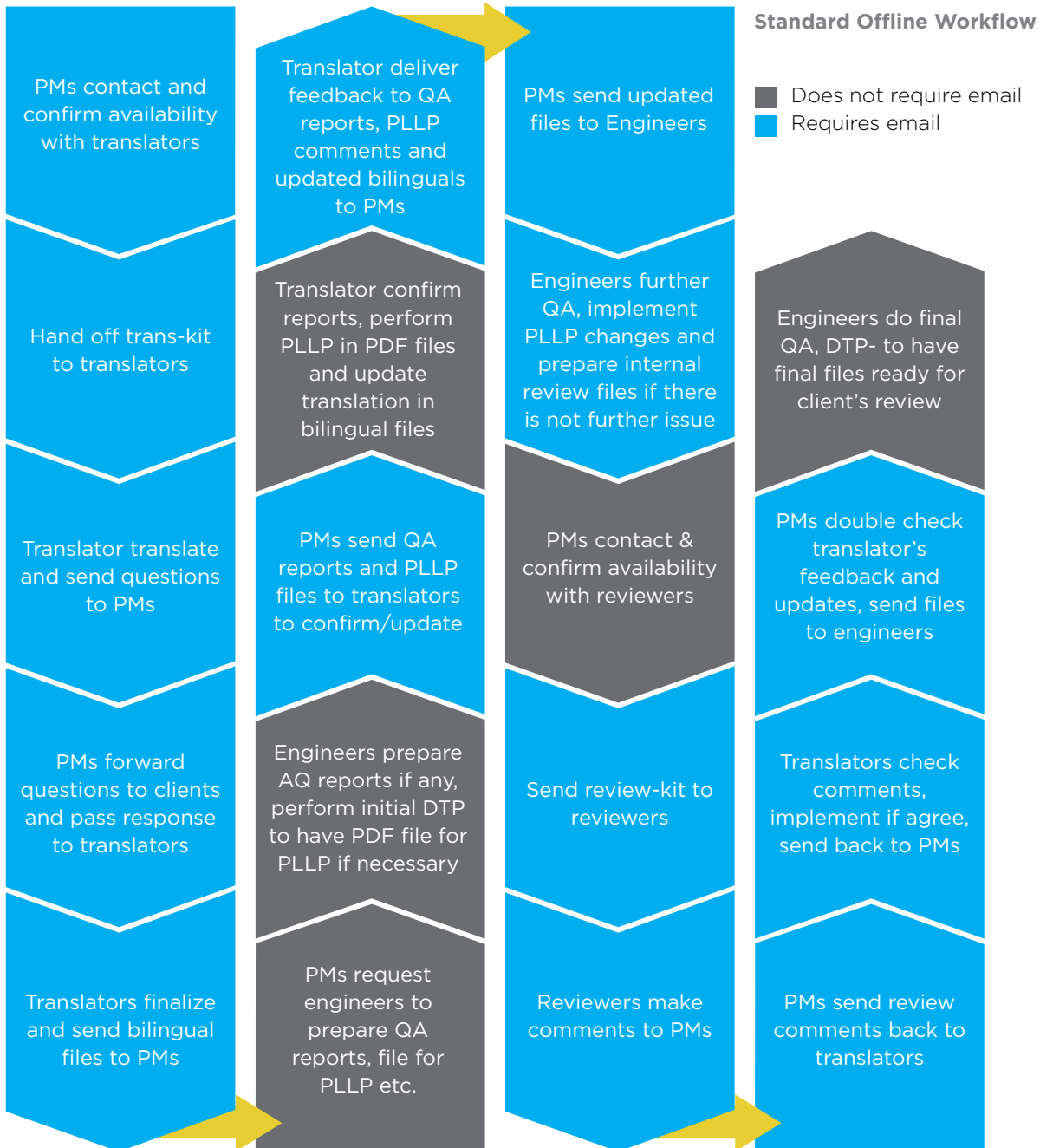
MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

For this project, 30 professional linguists with experience in the transportation and automobile industries were brought on as English-to-Chinese translators. Ordinarily, involving such a large number of translators would lead to a high number of inconsistencies and mismatched translations. As translation memories are usually only updated once a project is complete, many of these differences would go undetected until much later in the process. However, by supporting real-time translation memory updates and providing reviewers the opportunity to edit translated material as soon as it had been translated, Tà made these large teams a perfectly viable option.

Increasing efficiency while simultaneously reducing cost, Tà delivered something to our client that other TMS (translation memory systems) couldn't. While all TMS are capable of determining exact matches and fuzzy matches prior to translation, Tà, due to its cloud-based nature and real-time updates to translation memory, was also able to determine "potential fuzzy matches," or phrases that closely resembled previously translated content. These potential fuzzy matches reduced the amount of completely new content in the text still to be translated, thus diminishing the amount of work to be done and speeding the entire process.

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

As previously mentioned, 30 translators were involved in this project. Beyond simply risking translation issues, having so many people work on one project could easily lead to confusion in the form of miscommunication, missed emails, lost files, and a general lack of organization. All of these potential problems were addressed with the implementation of Tà. With its comprehensive project tracking and management functionality, Tà enabled every member of the team to access files and communicate within the TMS, thus avoiding all unnecessary and inefficient email exchanges.

Standard Offline Workflow

- Does not require email
- Requires email

PMs contact and confirm availability with translators

Hand off trans-kit to translators

Translator translate and send questions to PMs

PMs forward questions to clients and pass response to translators

Translators finalize and send bilingual files to PMs

Translator deliver feedback to QA reports, PLLP comments and updated bilinguals to PMs

Translator confirm reports, perform PLLP in PDF files and update translation in bilingual files

PMs send QA reports and PLLP files to translators to confirm/update

Engineers prepare AQ reports if any, perform initial DTP to have PDF file for PLLP if necessary

PMs request engineers to prepare QA reports, file for PLLP etc.

PMs send updated files to Engineers

Engineers further QA, implement PLLP changes and prepare internal review files if there is not further issue

PMs contact & confirm availability with reviewers

Send review-kit to reviewers

Reviewers make comments to PMs

Engineers do final QA, DTP- to have final files ready for client's review

PMs double check translator's feedback and updates, send files to engineers

Translators check comments, implement if agree, send back to PMs

PMs send review comments back to translators

Tà's Streamlined Workflow

- Does not require email
- Requires email

PMs initiate project and define workflow

Engineers upload file and do pre-processing

PMs find available translators in TA and ask them to join the project

Translators finalize

PMs pass translation queries to client via email

Translators do translation in TA's online editor, doing QA simutaneously

Reviewers make comments in the system. Translators are noticed

Translators implement comments

Engineers do final QA check and begin post-processing

On this project, Tà allowed for unparalleled, real-time collaboration by supporting seamless and timely communication between a large number of linguists and project team members. Rather than acting as a go-between for file transfers, the project manager was able to oversee translation and review handoffs amongst all those involved, including translators, reviewers, engineers, and publishers. Automated handoffs meant that as soon as one step in the process was completed, the next person to handle the file was alerted immediately to begin their contribution, further enhancing efficiency.

ENSURING QUALITY

The accuracy of the technical translations for this project was of critical importance. Even the slightest mistake regarding a measurement or part reference could impair manufacturing procedures down the line. As such, ensuring quality was essential to the successful completion of the project. Fortunately, Tà's real-time QA editor was capable of catching most issues, including:

- Spelling errors
- Erminology inconsistencies
- Number inconsistencies
- Tag inconsistencies
- Punctuation and formatting errors

Accomplishing a great deal of work that would otherwise be carried out by editors and reviewers, Tà drastically diminished the volume of human review, thus allowing the reviewers to spend their time assessing more problematic or crucial areas. By cutting down the amount of human subjectivity, Tà ensured consistency throughout the project, despite the number of different translators involved.

CONCLUSION

Using Tà, CSOFT was able to deliver the four million word translation project within the allotted eight-week timeline. 30 translators, leveraging translation memory in real time, produced 2700 pages, or 500,000 words, of translated content per week. Productivity experienced an estimated 25% improvement over that of standard projects, and linguistic quality was not only maintained, but increased. With Tà, CSOFT achieved the seemingly impossible: cutting costs for our client while increasing overall translation quality, and decreasing turnaround time.