



The Future of Localization

A Varied Spectrum of Service Models





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an industry where multi-gigahertz processors analyze hundreds of sentences per minute, translators still require roughly the same amount of time that they did 25 to 50 years ago to deliver a page of new text in the target language.

Language service providers know that operations such as translation memory will always benefit from technological innovations, while functions like transcreation, editing and quality assurance will always rely heavily on human interaction. But neither can live without the other, in spite of the productivity gap that divides them. Meanwhile, the industry charter is to deliver the best possible translation for the lowest price, in the shortest period of time.

Or is it?

This paper examines this productivity gap and asks why service levels and industry pricing models have not kept pace with changing customer needs. It explores the role of content, quality and cost, and asserts that language providers must take the lead in collaborating with customers to define service levels and pricing that squarely meet the needs of translation buyers.

MAIN MESSAGES

- Given that translation tools result in ever-increasing productivity, while human translation shows little or no growth in productivity over time, the industry is ripe for a formal approach to differentiated pricing and service levels.
 - Translation companies have failed to show leadership in this regard by sticking with the same range of services and pricing models.
 - The industry must evolve by defining quality one customer or application at a time and developing new models around content and cost.
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