



Communication:
in any language

Translation Memory Datasheet

What is Translation Memory?

Translation Memory (TM) is software that enables you to store and reuse translated text segments (or chunks) either within a document or across a series of documents. Translation Memory tools are designed to assist translators to produce faster and more consistent work by leveraging previous translations.



Benefits of TM

If well managed and in the right circumstances, the use of TM can offer substantial benefits.

Reduced Costs

If previously-translated text segments can be reused, then these will not have to be retranslated. With less new text to translate, costs decrease.

Time-to-market

With less to translate, the amount of work is not as great and turnaround times improve.

Increased consistency

By reusing existing translations, translators do not have to rely on their own memories to track previously translated material. When teams of translators, multiple documents and subsequent updates are involved, TM ensures that consistency is higher.

Higher quality, greater approval

TM software allows approved terms to be incorporated e.g. dictionaries of standard translated terms for your industry or glossaries of terms which you prefer to use. Translations need to be acceptable in local markets and the approval of your in-country teams is often a major milestone. Involve reviewers early enough, leverage what they've approved before through TM and you're more likely to complete on time, to budget.

Improve your document creation

The greater the consistency and discipline in your document authoring, the more you leverage value from your existing information.

Strategic benefits

Use well-managed TM across your departments, divisions and whole enterprise and it can be a tool for integration. The benefits you get depend on how widely you open up your business' documentation.

For first-time translations you start with an empty TM. The TM is built as the text is translated and housed in a TM database. An alternative is to create a TM from existing translations where TM software has not been used before. When this material is updated or new material requires translation, the TM tool compares the new text with the TM database and reports text segments that match.

Text segments are typically sentences, but can also be chapter headings, error messages or items in a list. Segments are very rarely as granular as a single word, because translations vary according to the context of the word.

Segment matches are reported in the following way:

- 100% matches – text segments that are identical.
- Repetitions – internally to a document.
- Fuzzy matches – text segments that are similar, but require translator editing to make it an exact match.
- New words – text segments that do not match any other text.

Over time, the number of 100% matches and fuzzy matches increases, while “no match” or new word segments will go down.

Translation Memory works best with

- Technical documents that are large, repetitive or both.
- Similar materials such as software UI, Help files or Websites.
- Documents that are frequently updated.
- Multiple products and documentation that is similar.
- Controlled authoring (i. e. employing a simpler writing style and consistency of the source text).

Translation Memory works less well with

- Marketing materials, because they contain text that tends to be nuanced and concepts that are not always easy to convey in another language or culture.
- Small collateral documents, where the small amount of repetitive text does not justify the cost of implementing TM.
- Documents that do not display the format and layout of the document.
- Last-minute changes to the translation – these are difficult to incorporate into the TM “real time” and are usually added to the TM after the fact, which can introduce errors and increase TM maintenance costs.
- Custom file formats – custom filters must be developed in order to include these components.



It's not a recipe for vanilla documents, nor is it instant translation – expert management of the TM process and experienced translators are crucial.

It is important to be aware that there are costs associated with having your localization vendor use Translation Memory. These include file processing activities such as text extraction from the source document and loading into the TM system, interim processing fees for text updates, and post-processing activities to place translated text back into the source document. Fees are generally charged per hour and by language and are calculated by the amount of text, number of updates throughout the project, and source (some source formats are more difficult to process).

TM ownership policies can vary from vendor to vendor, however it is generally accepted that the client owns the memories and NOT the vendor. It is vitally important that TM ownership is clear at the outset of a project to prevent problems from arising later when you want to change or expand vendor relationships.

At Conversis we have experienced translators and language technology managers who use TM to help make your international communication projects a success. You can expect us to consult with you on the appropriateness of TM given your project and product requirements. Conversis Project Managers update and maintain TM databases and always deliver TM back at end of every project.



Conversis provides our clients with a full range of language services from localization and international strategy consultation, content management, software and Website localization, translation, desktop publishing and language technology. All of our services are tailored to our client's business objectives and strategic needs; all are backed by our strong quality control and testing processes and built on our expert multilingual project management.

To find out how OC Translation Memory Management and our other tools and services can help to transform your localization projects, email us on info@conversisglobal.com, call us on +44 (0)845 450 0805 or find out more on our Website www.conversisglobal.com.

