



Deployment of Across Language Server at Medium-Voltage Switchgear Subdivision of SIEMENS AG

Fast creation of multilingual product information thanks to optimized processes

Since recently, the technical writing office of the Power Distribution Division, which belongs to the Energy Sector, has been using the Across Language Server for controlling the numerous translations of product documentation. By using the Language Server, Siemens has been able to cut translation management costs in this area and to realize processes that ensure processing transparency and reliability and further improve the quality of the translations.

The Siemens Energy Sector currently occupies a spearhead position in the field of gas-insulated switchgear technology in the medium-voltage range. The Frankfurt site is considered to be the global competence center for the development and production of gas-insulated product lines. The technical writers who prepare the needed product documentation,

Gas-insulated switchgear technology in the medium-voltage range produced by Siemens. →



such as operating and installation manuals for 13 gas and air-insulated products and their customer-specific adaptations, also work here. Each of these documents consists of approximately 150-180 pages and must subsequently be translated into various languages. Additionally, the writing team is responsible for the translation of other texts, such as drawing sheets and Siemens standards, which are required in several languages. Until recently, the texts used to be forwarded to the individual international subsidiaries for localization. „As long as we only needed to handle four or five languages, the workflows were easy to control and manage“, explains Christian Zimmermann, head of the Technical Writing team. „The situation changed about one year ago, when the sales departments started asking for more and more languages, especially those spoken in Eastern European countries. Meanwhile we supply our product information in up to 19 language variants. These two aspects – the larger number of languages and the outsourcing – also

made the translation management more complex. What is more, Siemens had just introduced the XML-based editorial system TCToolbox from Ovidius.

Before long, it became clear that the previous translation procedure was not a sustainable solution. „We had to think of something new for the translation management. In particular, we wanted to optimize the administration

processes associated with the order processing“, explains Zimmermann. „For example, we had no process reliability at all. Keeping track of the progress of various translations, ascertaining which file still needed to be translated, whether it was currently under way or already in the correction stage was only possible on the basis of error-prone Excel lists. If you have several writers, you will quickly reach the limits of this approach.“



Compelling Arguments in Favor of a Translation Management System

The planned introduction of a TMS was to facilitate the implementation of three central objectives: cost savings, process reliability, and quality improvement. Another requirement was that existing translations were to be stored as translation memory and managed in a system. Thus, it would be possible to use them for future translations, thereby eliminating redundant translation costs. Market analyses and tests revealed that the Language Server of Across Systems met the requirements to the highest degree possible. For the company, the decisive factor was that compared to the other systems available in the market, Across boasted an excellent price/performance ratio. Furthermore, the Language Server excels with its practical functionality. Another important point was that Across is based on a modern software architecture. Thus, Across can be connected seamlessly to the existing TCToolbox from Ovidius, thereby enabling continuous processes. „Due to the server-based data exchange capability, all systems access a central data pool. Processes can be triggered automatically, documents no longer need to be checked in and out manually. Among other things, this provides us with the process reliability we desire“, explains Zimmermann.

Realization of Seamless Translation Processes

Since November 2007, Siemens has been working productively with Across. Following an extensive test run, the system was rapidly installed and commissioned. The first step was the definition of workflows that were to be supported by the systems and automated, such as the project assignment, translation, and subsequent review. The next step was the connection of external language service providers who also use Across. This takes place with the help of the crossGrid collaboration tool, which is shipped along with the Across Language Server and by means of which the Siemens Language Server connects directly to the Language Servers of the language service providers. Now, when a text needs to be localized at Siemens, the employee selects the function „Check out for translation“ in the editorial system, completes the required deadlines and other meta information, and triggers the task. The contents to be translated are transferred directly from Ovidius TCToolbox to Across, where the project is set up with the defined information. Here, the translations of the texts and information units can be controlled, distributed, and duly processed. Upon completion, the translations are automatically transferred back to the editorial system. This eliminates the need for time-consuming imports, exports, and manual exchange with translation service providers via e-mail.

„All that needs to be done within the scope of the project management is to pack the crossGrid package and send it to the service provider, possibly along with some reference material“, says Zimmermann, happy about how much easier things have become. „Due to the interaction between the editorial system and the translation management system, we have been able to achieve substantial cost savings in connection with the translation process.“

„For example, an external translator gets her assignments directly from the Across Language Server and operates like an internal staff member via a terminal server application“, adds Zimmermann. With the new system, the issue of project transparency has been solved: a well-arranged list provides the technical writing office with information on the editing status of the translation. The progress, status, deadlines, and descriptions of the individual projects are displayed at a glance and enable quick orientation and informative controlling.

Company-Wide Language Platform with Across

Working with the translation management system is also efficient and comfortable for the external translation providers. Thanks to the networking with crossGrid, external translation providers work on the basis of the same data as the writers – especially on the basis of the same crossTank translation memory and the same crossTerm terminology system. Thus, previously translated contents and data can be used by all involved. The translation memory shows matches with existing wording and translations from the database, which can be adopted, edited, or rejected. This approach ensures high-quality translations and consistent texts for all products. Moreover, the high degree of recycling of existing translations has enabled significant cost savings. The savings potential for a translated text that needs to be localized anew due to changes or updates is about 70 percent. Even in the case of an entirely new translation of a text, approximately 25 percent are covered by existing entries in the translation memory system.

Gradually, Across is to be established as platform for all translation processes at Siemens. „We want to expand the Across Language Server in such a way that all translations can be managed centrally and colleagues from other departments can also use it“, says Zimmermann. „Additionally, we plan to use the terminology and translation memory

system to establish a central knowledgebase containing all terms, images, and graphics of the medium-voltage components of Siemens and their translations. This will help especially new employees to get acquainted with the internal Siemens terminology in a short time.“

All in all, the expectations of Siemens for an improved translation management were fully satisfied: „We were able to cut the administrative overhead for translations by 50 percent. Moreover, the processes are much more transparent, and the project status can be queried at all times“, says Zimmermann, expressing his appreciation for the comfortable solution.



← „The possibilities that Across offers in the field of project management and features like out-of-the-box workflow control, quickly convinced us of the system“, recalls Christian Zimmermann, head of the Technical Writing team.

About Siemens Energy Sector

The Siemens Energy Sector is the world's leading supplier of a complete spectrum of products, services, and solutions for the generation, transmission, and distribution of power and for the extraction, conversion, and transport of oil and gas. The Power Distribution Division of the Energy Sector combines medium-voltage components and systems, power automation solutions and services for power equipment and networks.

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across 

Across Americas
+1 877 922 7677
Across Europe
+49 7248 925 425
info@across.net
www.across.net