



TRANSLATION SERVICES BUYERS GUIDE

AN INTRODUCTION TO
PROFESSIONAL
TRANSLATION SERVICES

- For Business & Professionals -



- A PUBLICATION OF AFFINITY TRANSLATION -

Translation and Interpretation

Know the difference

Multiple times a day language services companies receive telephone calls or emails from prospective clients requesting a “translator” when in fact the service these inquirers are interested in are those of an “interpreter.” Here’s the difference.

- **Translation** involves written language. Linguists who perform translation services are translators.
- **Interpretation** involves spoken language. Interpreters perform interpretation services.



Translation and interpretation are related language services but are separate and distinct skills typically performed by different language specialists. Not all translators perform interpretation, and vice versa.

Native Speaking Translators

What's meant by this phrase?

Professional translators typically work mainly in a language pair (e.g., English-French or English-Spanish, et. al.). Translators are bilingual in both languages of their language pair, although only one of the languages would be their first language, considered their native language.

Generally speaking translators should be native speaking in the target language (the language translating into).



Most professional translation companies assign only native speaking translators to their projects. It's still recommended to ask this question and confirm the practice.

How Translation Pricing Is Calculated

By word, by page, or what?

The most common pricing model among professional translators is a per word rate based on the source text word count. Sometimes when source word counts are difficult to determine (e.g., non-editable text) pricing is based on the resulting target word count known at project conclusion.

Other less common pricing methods

- Per page basis
- Hourly basis
- Fixed price project basis




Volume discounts and cost reductions due to text repetition within projects can lower translation project costs. Check with your language services provider for their policy on repetition and volume.

What File Types Do Translators Work With?

MS Word, Excel, InDesign, Powerpoint, PDF & others

Professional translators can work with a wide variety of file formats that contain text for translation including:

- MS Word
- Excel
- InDesign
- Powerpoint
- JPEGs and other image formats
- PDFs
- Text files
- Other miscellaneous formats



In most cases translators prefer to work with editable files so text can be easily changed to the target language, and usually retain much of the original formatting for design purposes or for visual indications of correlation between source and target language text.

10 Most Popular Languages For Business Translation

In combination with English (into and from)

The ten most popular languages for translation requested from clients are (not in order of popularity):

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1) Spanish | 6) Portuguese |
| 2) French | 7) Chinese |
| 3) German | 8) Japanese |
| 4) Russian | 9) Korean |
| 5) Italian | 10) Arabic |



There are roughly 6,500 spoken languages in the world today. However, about 2,000 of those languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers. The most spoken language in the world is Mandarin Chinese.

Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/>

Document Design Formatting Services

InDesign & other design applications

Formatting services in InDesign and other popular document design applications are available for any projects requiring finished print ready materials in the target language.



Formatting services are separate from translation. Translation does not typically occur within a design application such as InDesign. Print ready formatting services if requested are performed after the translation process is complete and proofread.

- Legal
- Technology
- Marketing
- Medical
- Manufacturing
- Elearning/Education
- Financial
- Video

A few industries and application sectors that traditionally require frequent translation services.



“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is really a large matter — it’s the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.”

MARK TWAIN

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During Regular Business Hours

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What About Google Translate

Is it good enough for us to use?

For professional purposes almost never.



Google Translate is an online tool that uses a form of machine translation. It may have limited utility in some instances, such as to get a quick rough idea of a translation. However, it's not a professional tool for producing high quality translations. Also we add it should never be used as a method of evaluating the work of professional human translators.

I Need Translation Services

What are my options?

- a) A Professional Translation Company
- b) An Independent Freelance Translator
- c) A Colleague Who Took 3 Years of High School Spanish and Speaks “Fluently.”
- d) Machine Translation



In our experience options A & B above are each viable options for professional level results, each with their respective advantages. Option C is probably not a good option to achieve professional translation results. Verbal fluency does not necessarily a translator make. Option D for high confidence professional results? Fughetaboutit.

How Long Will It Take To Translate My Project

What are my options?

Project durations scale with the word count. On an average basis a professional translator will competently translate 2000-3000 words per day.



When faster project turnarounds are necessary projects can be divided up among multiple translators. When possible, assigning only a single lead translator is ideal for overall translation continuity.

Translation Memory (or TM)

What is it?

TM stands for translation memory. Professional translators sometimes use special software that detects repetition in projects and helps translators incorporate translation continuity throughout a project.



Use of a TM and high occurrences of word/phrase repetition within or among translation projects can result in lower translation costs for buyers. TM is most useful for larger projects where significant repetition is more likely to be present.

WORDS



“Woe to the makers of literal translations, who by rendering every word weaken the meaning! It is indeed by so doing that we can say the letter kills and the spirit gives life.”

VOLTAIRE, French Philosopher

Translation Clients' 2 Most Frequently Asked Questions


- 1) How Much Does It Cost?
- 2) How Long Will It Take?



These are good and necessary questions, although these questions alone imply that translation services are a commodity, which they are not. A few more questions follow on the next page.

Good Questions for Your Translation Services Provider

- 1) What is your quality control process (e.g. Is proofreading by a second translator included)?
- 2) What are the language qualifications of translators (e.g., native speakers, experience level, et. al.)?
- 3) Will translators qualified in my text's subject matter be assigned to the project?



These and other questions go a step beyond 'how much' and 'how soon.' Savvy translation buyers will ask these questions and consider the answers.

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