

Power to the DeepL

In our second feature looking at how large companies can introduce new technology effectively, the team at Avaloq explains bringing in DeepL Pro

In 2020, the Language Services department at Swiss company Avaloq (a global leader in digital banking solutions, core banking software and wealth management technology) began introducing new language technologies. The second major project was implementing DeepL Pro.

We had become aware that many people in the company were using a variety of machine translation (MT) services – usually free versions. We took the view that if people are going to use machine translation anyway, then it's far better to use our knowledge and expertise to ensure they do so securely, and to educate non-linguists about the pitfalls and the types of texts that are (and are not) suitable for MT.

We opted for DeepL because in the three years since it was first brought out, it has impressed all of us. Neural machine translation has of course completely changed the field for translators, and DeepL has established itself as a leading provider in this environment. There were other advantages for us too: it offers translations in all our working languages; it draws on the Linguee

corpus – this was a major point in its favour, as we had all been using Linguee for years; and the paid version, DeepL Pro, has an encrypted server connection and does not store any confidential data.

Pilot and guidelines

We consulted counterparts in other Swiss companies on their experience of MT. This proved to be a very useful information-gathering exercise and laid the groundwork for our own planning and implementation. After that, in December 2019, we ran a survey in our internal newsletter to find out whether our colleagues would be interested in using a machine translation service offered by the Language Services team. The

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replies confirmed that many people at Avaloq were already using MT to understand the general gist of texts in a language they're not proficient in. This was not surprising, considering that we are a Swiss-based company with offices in 10 countries across the world. Most commonly, people were using the free versions of DeepL and Google Translate. Obviously, this was of concern to us because we had no idea what sort of information people were submitting to these services, how the services might use that data and what reliance users were placing on the output – in other words, what potential dangers they might inadvertently be exposing the company to. All the respondents also expressed interest in using an approved MT tool, though a handful said they would only use it if Language Services ensured the quality through post-editing.

Once Data Protection at Avaloq had approved DeepL Pro's privacy policy, we ran a trial in our own team, wrote a roll-out plan and created a group of around 20 pilot users who had expressed interest. The members of the pilot group ranged from accounting and technical product development to sales, tax and project management. We asked them to use DeepL Pro for a month and to give us feedback in another survey we produced. Based on our own evaluation and the pilot users' feedback, we decided to purchase starter licences for our colleagues and advanced licences for our own team.

At the same time, we wanted to ensure that our users realised the pitfalls of MT – especially regarding quality and confidentiality – and would use DeepL Pro with caution. We drew up guidelines on the type and style of texts that are and are not suitable for MT, which are sent out in response to every request for a licence, and we provided a getting-started guide to enable users to set up their DeepL Pro accounts.

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Post-editing issues

Post-editing of machine translations (PEMT) is an increasingly prominent issue in our field (and it's one that *ITI Bulletin* frequently explores). The texts that we work on in Language Services tend to be ones that are important for internal or external communication, so our PEMT work is usually at the publication-quality end of the spectrum. We were relatively new to PEMT and were surprised at the intensity of the work involved in post-editing to the quality we demand for the documents we handle; it shouldn't be underestimated. Nevertheless, we're finding MT a very useful addition to our toolbox, especially given the volume explosion we're experiencing (up over 50 per cent year-on-year in 2020 alone). Since DeepL Pro with an advanced licence can be integrated into our CAT tool (memoQ) via a plug-in, MT is available to us as an additional resource in our familiar working environment alongside translation memories, termbases and other information sources. Whether we work on a segment-by-segment basis or pre-translate full documents using DeepL Pro, most of our PEMT work within the department is done directly in memoQ.

The Language Services team at Avaloq is:

Zoë Morrow, Deputy Head of Language Services, works from German, French and Spanish to English
Michaela Schnetzer, Language Services Specialist, works from English and French to German

Carina Freitag, Head of Language Services, works from English and French to German

Emma Gledhill FITI, Language Services Specialist, works from German, French and Dutch to English

Esther Scowen-Bolz, Language Services Specialist, works from English and French to German.

The team members have nearly a century of experience between them, which they draw on to provide translations and to proofread company documents. They also curate the corporate terminology, provide language consultancy for natural language processing and localisation projects, and have implemented and use a wide range of language technology solutions.

and for purely internal communication and correspondence. Legal documents, documents intended for internal and external publication, and specialised texts containing technical terminology should never be machine-translated, because the quality of the translation does not generally meet our standards. If anyone does decide to use MT for a published or binding document, we specify that the output needs to be post-edited by us.

For confidentiality reasons, documents classified as secret or confidential, and documents containing personal data, must not be machine-translated either. Even though DeepL Pro – unlike the free version of DeepL – guarantees that transmitted texts are not stored for any purpose, it is still a web-based service and its data security is not within our control.

We also drew up a disclaimer, in conjunction with our legal department, that all users must agree to before using the tool; they have to confirm that they will use the service at their own risk and in accordance with our guidelines. In addition, they are asked not to use any other providers of MT services once they have access to DeepL Pro.

Requiring our users to read and agree to our guidelines and accept the disclaimer was an obvious step to us, yet this simple solution serves to satisfy our duty of responsibility and to raise awareness among our users both of the risks of MT and what the Language Services department brings to the party.

Pilot phase feedback

The survey we sent to our pilot users after one month showed that many of them had been using DeepL Pro regularly – most respondents were using it at least weekly, and about half of them even daily. We were pleased to see that the majority of users generally considered DeepL Pro very easy to use, from account activation to the translation of whole documents. For them, the main advantage of the paid version over the free version of DeepL was data confidentiality; another benefit was the ability to translate entire Word and PowerPoint documents, which most of them considered very easy to do and very useful. Even though the


free version does offer this to some extent, the Pro version gives much wider opportunities. It was also interesting to see that there was an almost even split of usage between translating out of (comprehension) and into (providing information) a language our users don't speak, with about 30 per cent using MT in both directions. One response was: 'DeepL has made it easier for me to read emails.'

We also asked the users if they were happy with the quality of DeepL Pro when they used it to translate texts into a language they understand (so are able to judge the output); and they gave it a rating of 4.8 out of 5, which was very encouraging. We were also pleased that all survey respondents said that they intend to continue to use DeepL Pro in their work and that they would recommend the tool for business purposes.

Views in practice

Just 10 months after we first asked in our newsletter if there was any interest in a machine translation service offered by Language Services, almost all our starter licences had been claimed and are in use on a

regular basis, with the user base expanding across even more areas of the company. Word has got around of the benefits of DeepL Pro, and several of our pilot users have recommended it to their colleagues: 'I hope this is made available for everyone in the team.' The only negative feedback we've received is that 'translations are not always consistent throughout a document', that it was 'a bit disappointing [that there] was an inconsistency in translating terms that could be left in English' and that DeepL doesn't translate PDFs well because of the way text is segmented (it translates individual lines instead of sentences). The general consensus is it's a very helpful tool, but 'of course, there's always a need for a human review'.

The process of implementing DeepL Pro was relatively straightforward, and the tool can be used 'out of the box'. Nevertheless, running a corporate project and choosing the provider is always a responsibility, and 'straightforward' doesn't mean you can cut corners. You still need to do your due diligence, and that takes time. In the end, from research to completed project took over a year. 

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR TRANSLATIONS, AND HOW TO GET PAID MORE!

Date: Thursday 15 April 2021 **Time:** 2.30-4pm

Venue: Online

Marian Dougan, who has several years' experience as a translator and editor, will consider how we can improve our translations by casting an editor's eye over the target text and making the end product more readable and user-friendly. She will also consider the thorny questions of raising rates and expanding your customer base.

Cost: Free for LRG members, £5 for non-members

Find out more from: Nathalie Reis at n.reis@btinternet.com

Eventbrite link: <https://seminar-with-marian-dougan.eventbrite.co.uk/>

