

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

LTC Organiser 2.92

ALL LEFT-TO-RIGHT LANGUAGES. WINDOWS 95/98/NT. LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY CENTRE LTD. MODULE LICENSES SOLD SEPARATELY. FIRST LICENSES FOR TRANSLATOR AND CLIENT MANAGEMENT (BASE) \$790; PROJECT MANAGEMENT \$790; REPORT \$300; FINANCE \$300.

Translation project management tool adapts to different user needs

The single most important factor for the successful completion of a translation project is effective project management.

Projects have become more complex in recent years, with more languages involved and teams working on the same projects in different locations around the globe. E-translation on the Internet has become a reality (see www.uniscape.com or www.berlitzit.com). Most processes can now be handled electronically: the request for quote and the issuing of a purchase order; the distribution of the source material to the service provider; the return of the target material from the service provider back to the client; and, finally, electronic invoicing.

However, there have been no ready-to-go software solutions available on the market that will assist organizations to set up and manage such an electronic translation service.

The LTC Organiser aims to cover this gap in the market. It claims to be the first off-the-shelf product to provide an integrated solution for project managers who have to handle large and complex translation projects.

It approaches this task in a modular way, providing project management, finance and report modules and working with a variety of databases covering key data on translators and clients. A quick wizard and export/import facilities complete the solution on offer.

The project management module stores project profiles, including costs and delivery dates, instructions for team members and archives for the different stages of the project. A scheduler provides a clear graphical view of the project progress. This helps managers to identify delays early and assists them to implement appropriate corresponding adjustments in the schedule.

Quotes, invoices and purchase orders are automatically generated at the push of a button using the Organiser's client and translator management modules. This module also provides access to an additional module providing a variety of price list management options.

Reporting is considered to be one of the key responsibilities for project managers. Yet, most project managers will tell you that they spend

too much time collating reports when they should really concentrate on planning current and future projects and when they should be in direct contact with their suppliers and clients. This is why the LTC Organiser provides a customisable report module, which automatically generates status and progress reports to a variety of input and export formats.

No management system would be complete without a comprehensive coverage of all the important client and vendor (translator) data. The LTC Organiser can instantly match translators available for a specific subject area with the requirements for a client's project. This information is supplemented with data in relation to previous dealings a company had with specific clients and translators. Managers no longer have to rely on their memory or hand-scribbled notes

working before they implement this solution in their organizations.

Often, the costs associated with the adaptation of workflows by far exceed the costs involved in the purchase of a management tool.

Another issue, which has to be of interest to potential users, is the tool's export and import facilities. It is a key requirement that organizations can reuse and import the data they have accumulated over the years on their projects, on their translators and on their customers and that this data can be seamlessly integrated in the tool.

On the other hand, should organizations wish at some stage in the future to migrate from the LTC Organiser to a different application, this should also be as painless as possible. The LTC Organiser provides

export and import functions to facilitate this process. Potential users, however, will want to assess these functions carefully before they move their data into the application.

Other important questions potential users will ask have only indirectly to do with the application itself and more with its developer. Will the Language Technology Centre be in a position to maintain, support and develop the Organiser in the medium to long-term future?

Will the company, which started off as a service provider, be able to successfully manage the integration of this new aspect of its business into its overall business strategy?

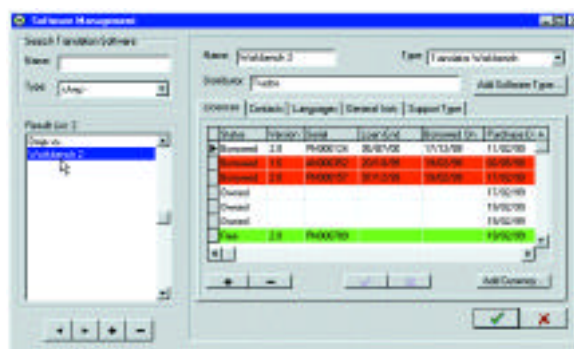
Ten years ago, when the software giant IBM competed with the small translation service provider TRADOS about the market leadership in the emerging translation database application market, only a handful of enthusiasts believed in the power of TRADOS. Today, only few remember the IBM application — most use the TRADOS Translator's Workbench.

Whether this extraordinary success in the market for translation technology tools will be repeated in the emerging market of translation project management tools is uncertain, but it is certainly not impossible. All the indicators are positive.

The LTC Organiser is offered in the following modules: Translator and Client Management; Project Management; Report; and Finance. Prices for these modules vary depending on the number of licenses purchased.

This review is based on version 2.92. LTC has recently released version 3.01, which offers a choice of using an Access or SQL Server database. This version supports larger workloads and many more users. A Web-based version of the software is to be released in July/August 2000.

—REINHARD SCHÄLER



LTC Organiser's Software Management dialog box

to check what the payment history of a specific client is and whether a specific translator delivers quality work on time.

Dr. Adriane Rinsche, director of the LTC, believes that "currently many businesses use several pieces of software to manage their translation projects. The LTC Organiser provides a complete solution. It's quick and easy to use and greatly reduces project management costs."

In addition to the effective management of each stage of the translation workflow, Rinsche believes that the tool her company developed will help organizations to implement standard processes. "We no longer have to keep every single detail of a large project in our heads or on paper. And if a project manager falls ill or goes on holiday, someone else can easily take over."

Ironically, what is probably the tool's most useful feature, the need to standardize processes and organize workflow, can also become the most difficult issue for organizations that want to use it.

The developers of the LTC Organiser were obviously aware of this problem. They developed a tool that can be adapted to address the needs and requirements of different users. Potential users, however, should carefully assess to what extent the tool can be adapted and to what extent they will have to adapt their way of