



acrolinx^{case study}



14 words instead of 45: How HOMAG uses Acrolinx to reduce translation costs.

FACTS & FIGURES

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Terms in the database: **7939**

Cost savings in translation: **approximately \$100,000 US/year**



THE PROBLEM

HOMAG Group already automated and optimized most of its translation workflows, both internally and externally. The price per word was already reduced to a minimum. However, there were plenty of possibilities for optimization in content creation.



THE SOLUTION

While looking for an authoring tool for controlled language, HOMAG evaluated two different approaches: language checkers based on linguistic logic and authoring memories based on reuse of existing translated sentences. HOMAG implemented Acrolinx Content Optimization Software because this solution combines both approaches in a single system.

*We wanted to optimize our processes.
We asked: how can we reduce costs in
the content creation of the source text
and at the same time increase content
quality. Acrolinx was the solution.*



Martin Bussieweke

Head of Training and Software
Product Manager at Weeke
Bohrsysteme GmbH



A single system for linguistic checks and content reuse

HOMAG Group AG is the international market leader and leading manufacturer of machinery in the woodworking industry. To keep its competitive edge, HOMAG must translate all manuals and user interfaces into 26 different languages. Over the past years, HOMAG automated and optimized the workflows between technical editing, development, and external translators. However, it lacked linguistic checking for the German source content. With the implementation of Acrolinx content optimization software, HOMAG achieved savings in translation costs and increased the content quality.

The HOMAG Group has 15 production entities as well as 21 sales and services entities in seven countries. The second largest entity is the Weeke Bohrsysteme GmbH. At Weeke, the department of training services combines both training and technical documentation. Martin Bussieweke, training director and

software product manager at Weeke, explains the benefit of having a single person acting as trainer and technical editor: “When these employees give training sessions, they receive feedback from customers, partners, and co-workers. They can integrate this feedback directly into the user guides and manuals.”

With this workflow, HOMAG has been producing high-quality documentation for years. Technical authors at the production entities create their documentation using Microsoft Word and send it to SDL, the leading provider of global Customer Experience Management, for translation. Developers create content for user interfaces in customized and specialized tools. Custom software developed by HOMAG then converts this content into XML which translators can read and edit. “At this stage in the process, we implemented a terminology database. However, this process was not comparable to a thorough quality check,” explains Bussieweke. “Basically every developer could send all of their text to the translator without checking or review.” Over the years, SDL created extensive translation memories (TMs) for each target language. With these TMs, translations could be reused. If a

new sentence is found but a similar sentence has already been translated, the software proposes the existing translation to the translators. They can then adapt the translation to the new source text.

Looking for improvement opportunities

“It seemed like we implemented all available means to save costs in the translation workflow. For example, we reduced the average price per word to the bare minimum,” explains Bussieweke. So HOMAG had to look into other opportunities: where could they further reduce costs while still increasing content quality? Martin Bussieweke analyzed the different departments in the production entities and the types of content they produced. He discovered that for every concept or task, each department used different wording. HOMAG did not speak a single, consistent language.

For example, one sentence could be written in several variants, and each variant increased the amount of content to translate. After implementing Acrolinx, a

sentence that formerly consisted of 54 words now consists of just 14 words. This means that Homag was able to reduce their cost for translating their preferred variant into all 26 target languages by 31%. Acrolinx helps identify wording variants and thereby makes these cost reductions possible.

Acrolinx combines two principles of content checking

HOMAG identified two different approaches to content optimization: language checking, which is based on a linguistic engine, and authoring memory, which reuses existing content. “The advantage of Acrolinx is that it combines both of these approaches,” explains Bussieweke. With Acrolinx, HOMAG checks content for grammar, terminology, and style issues. The Acrolinx Reuse feature helps authors identify similar sentences with identical meaning so they can avoid writing new sentences that require costly additional translation.

After implementing Acrolinx, HOMAG sent all 18,000 user guides and 145,000 UI strings to Acrolinx.

Acrolinx then extracted all HOMAG-related terms. “The amazing thing about Acrolinx is that the software automatically filters the most relevant terms,” explains Ingo Vogt, technical author and trainer at Weeke.

Adding 5,000 terms to the terminology database

Acrolinx sent HOMAG a spreadsheet with all extracted terms. Among other information, this spreadsheet contained details about the frequency and contexts of the terms. Martin Bussieweke then forwarded the terms to the relevant production entities where the terms were classified as deprecated or admitted. HOMAG then imported their initial 5,000 terms into the Acrolinx terminology database. Since then, all terms are available to the authors and developers for checking. Acrolinx acts as an ever-vigilant copy editor, flagging problems in terminology, style, sentence construction, and even tone of voice. Authors step through the flagged issues and receive further information and suggestions.



I find the linguistic approach of Acrolinx amazing: The software automatically filters exactly the most relevant terms.

Ingo Vogt, Technical Editor and Trainer at Weeke Bohrsysteme GmbH

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Checking in Word and the custom software environment

Technical authors at HOMAG use Microsoft Word for authoring and they check their documents with Acrolinx. Software developers use custom software that HOMAG integrated through the Acrolinx SDK to implement checking into their development tools. They copy words and sentences into Acrolinx and check them for compliance with terminology. If a term exists, the author can continue working. When the software sees new terms, it automatically adds them as proposed terms. The technical authors of the different production entities regularly discuss new terms. They review proposed terms and decide how these terms

will be used. This process ensures that only reviewed and approved terms are used in the various user guides and interfaces. Since the implementation of Acrolinx, content quality has significantly increased. The terminology database is constantly updated and enhanced with every new product HOMAG develops.

HOMAG benefits from Acrolinx on multiple levels. First, HOMAG saves time during content creation because terms are more easily researched and found. Second, HOMAG could ultimately decrease the translation costs, although they initially increased after implementing Acrolinx. Existing content had to be rewritten for the new terminology, which led to fewer matches in the translation memories

at SDL. In the long term, though, the amount of content has decreased because departments began using the same terminology and wording. Additionally, Acrolinx style rules guide authors to write shorter text. A typical page of documentation now contains 136 instead of 160 words. For a typical manual with 2,000 pages which is translated into 26 languages, this means that 1.248.000 words less need to be translated. This allows Homag to reduce their translation cost dramatically.

Benefits of content checking can be difficult to quantify

“Measuring software benefits is always a subjective and ambiguous task,” explains Martin Bussieweke. “For HOMAG, the most important aspect is the increase in content quality. Before Acrolinx, both our customers and our own sales organizations had problems with the understandability of our content. Implementing consistent source language drastically reduced the number of understandability issues and helped to increase the quality of our translated content.”

Acrolinx was successfully implemented into the technical authoring and software development departments. The next step will be to make Acrolinx available in more departments, specifically in marketing and sales. Martin Bussieweke does not plan to instruct other departments to use specific style rules. However, it is important that every author use the same terminology. HOMAG’s custom software is well suited for the integration of Acrolinx into common graphics and desktop publishing tools. Authors in the sales department, specifically when creating price lists, should also check their text with Acrolinx. Because content from the price lists is directly added to the quotations that are sent to customers, consistent language and terminology are very important.

Another project is the update of translation memories that still contain translations of old, unoptimized text. These sentences will be replaced with Acrolinx-approved content, which will then be available for reuse. The result will be consistent terminology regardless of the language a customer speaks.

The Company

HOMAG Group is the world's leading manufacturer of machines and equipment for the woodworking industry. In 2011, 5,141 employees helped generate revenue of 799 million euros. HOMAG offers its customers perfectly aligned solutions, from the stand-alone machine through to complete production lines. For project management, HOMAG offers engineering capacities for integrated solutions. The portfolio also includes services, training, and spare parts manufacturing.



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