acrolinx *case study*   ◢FIDUCIA

Acrolinx provides language checking and terminology management for the leading IT services provider in the financial services sector

FACTS & FIGURES
(January 2013)

Terms in the database: **6,700**
Registered users: **1,880**
Daily checks: **1,000**

△ FIDUCIA

! THE PROBLEM

Employees at Fiducia spent a great deal of their time and effort researching language-related questions. Authors had to consult several different sources to find the correct spelling of terms and product names. The time and effort necessary for ensuring high quality of their content was equally high. Altogether, the language used in different departments and the perceived image of Fiducia among customers and prospects were highly inconsistent.

✓ THE SOLUTION

To achieve consistency in their corporate language and across all types of content, Fiducia implemented Acrolinx in all departments. Acrolinx is used to extract and manage terminology and to check content for various types of language issues. An important part of the Acrolinx implementation was the creation of a terminology database which is integrated into the intranet and knowledge management system.

A consistent and company-wide mandatory terminology is an example of Fiducia's know-how and is an important aspect for establishing a positive image of Fiducia and for building long lasting customer relationships. Acrolinx is the perfect preparation for a potential internationalization and the multilingual requirements of our business.

Eva-Maria Lewark,
director documentation and terminology, Fiducia IT AG

Fiducia speaks with one voice

Fiducia IT AG, the largest IT services provider in the German financial services sector, maintains a close daily communication with its affiliated banks. Linguistic precision and accuracy are most important, while consistent terminology across all channels helps establish a unified appearance. Fiducia has been investigating and implementing terminology management since 2007. It ultimately chose to implement Acrolinx content optimization software. The software helps authors create content that is easier to comprehend, cheaper to translate, and easier to find. It can be used for virtually any type of content such as technical documentation, training and marketing material, and customer communication. Acrolinx is based on linguistic intelligence. The software acts as an ever-vigilant copy editor, flagging problems in terminology, style, sentence construction, and even tone of voice. Regular customer surveys prove that since implementing Acrolinx, Fiducia's content has become more understandable and consistent.

To establish consistent language, Fiducia needed to consolidate and standardize their already existing dictionaries. The goal was to establish a single terminology database for its 3 technical languages (banking, IT, and company language). For this, it was necessary to implement a company-wide and systematic terminology management system.

During 2007 and 2008, Fiducia investigated and assessed the area of terminology work and initiated a pilot project with participation from all affected departments. Additionally, several academic studies provided the scientific background and insights into the technical and structural aspects of establishing terminology guidelines. At the end of the evaluation phase, Fiducia was convinced of the benefits of terminology work. Eva-Maria Lewark, director of documentation and terminology, explains Fiducia's objectives: "We wanted a consistent appearance of our content, increased understandability of our customer communication, and significant decrease of the need to research terminology when producing new content."

While implementing an automated copy editing system that checks text for issues in terminology, style, spelling, and grammar, Fiducia also began building their terminology database. In 2009, Fiducia started their company-wide terminology work with Acrolinx. "We chose Acrolinx because at the time we implemented it, the software was the only system offering language checking and terminology management in one solution," explains Mike Maurer, Acrolinx product manager at Fiducia. During the course of the project, all workstations were equipped with Acrolinx and all employees were obligated to using the system.

In 2009 and 2011, Fiducia collaborated with students at the University of Karlsruhe to build the initial terminology. As of today, this initial database has grown to 6,700 terms.

In summer 2012, a company-wide survey on the usage of Acrolinx and terminology work in general was conducted. The results are currently being evaluated and will be used to establish new guidelines.

Implementation on all levels

The top-down implementation of terminology on the first level shows how important terminology work is to Fiducia's management. In 2011, the guideline "Provision and use of terminology" was implemented into the corporate code of conduct.

On the second level, the roles and responsibilities of terminology work are integrated into all processes where customer-facing content is created. On the third level, terminology work is part of individual employee goals. This makes it possible to measure its success and determine key figures. "Terminology work must be established on all levels. Using terminology in customer-facing content is obligatory for all employees," explains Ayten Turhan, terminology manager at Fiducia. "Continuously communicating the importance of terminology work among all employees increased the awareness and acceptance of this project."

Roles in terminology work

At Fiducia, different tasks related to terminology work are separated into 4 different roles: terminology manager, terminology agent, terminology approver, and terminology user. The terminology manager plays a central role in the terminology process. His tasks include the final approval of terms, reviewing terms, importing terms into the database, maintaining the terminology guidelines, and leading the terminology committee.

Terminology agents are strong contributors to their respective departments. They are well versed in terminology work and have advanced knowledge of Acrolinx software. Their tasks include editing lists of terms, forwarding these lists to the terminology manager, and collaborating with the terminology approvers. Terminology approvers review proposed definitions and terms, and discover synonyms.

Each department employs at least one terminology agent and approver. Technical authors also act as

terminology agents for their supervised products, while the product managers are the approvers of terminology for their respective products.

Terminology committees are responsible for terminology questions in their respective technical language. For example, product experts and product managers for the banking language work together with terminology agents to establish the definition, status, and spelling of a new term.

Terminology users all use the Acrolinx Term Browser and Acrolinx checking components. The software is integrated into Microsoft Office, Lotus Notes, and JustSystems XMetaL XML editor.

Currently, 1,800 registered Acrolinx users perform over 1,000 checks each day. Thanks to integration of authoring tools with the Acrolinx server, authors can check their text in their respective content creation tool.

For example, after writing a letter to a bank, a salesperson starts an Acrolinx check inside Microsoft Word. The software flags every style, grammar, and spelling issue. The software also flags deprecated terms and suggests the preferred variants. Authors may also access the entire terminology database through the Acrolinx Term Browser, a web-based resource that is available to all as central point of reference. This setup allows authors to check and look up terminology at any time during the content creation process.

Fiducia also integrated individual style rules into its Acrolinx system. These rules are specifically tailored for Fiducia's use cases and, for example, specify that sentences must not be longer than 27 words. Different sets of style rules apply to different types of documents.

Constantly increasing understandability

Cornelia Kuster works in the marketing and communications department, responsible for brand management and corporate identity. Acrolinx helps her avoid writing overly long sentences and using too many nouns in a row when editing in Microsoft Word. Her colleague Heinrich Greis works in the technical writing department and uses Acrolinx primarily in his authoring tool, which is JustSystems XMetaL. Acrolinx helps him avoid unnecessary wordiness in his texts and guides him to use the correct sequence of condition and action. The software improves every writer's personal writing style and constantly increases the understandability of their content.

The terminology database currently consists of more than 6,700 terms, both single terms and compounds. Ayten Turhan plans to "reach 10,000 terms within this year because the tool's acceptance among writers decreases if an author can't find the searched terms." And while 75% of all terms are from the banking language domain, the technical writing department is focused on further enhancing the database for their IT and corporate languages. Since mid-2012, Fiducia also uses the Acrolinx term contribution feature, which allows every user to propose new terms for the database.

Fiducia does not plan to implement multilingual terminology in its database in the near future. Instead, they are focused on another project: the upgrade of their "agree workstations," which are used by over 100,000 employees of different banks. Fiducia plans to migrate the agree workstation to a new software architecture and enhance it with a new web interface. This project will require an extensive re-design of the existing user interfaces while maintaining the consistency of their terminology.

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Mike Maurer, Acrolinx
product manager,
Fiducia IT AG

Another Acrolinx feature that Fiducia uses in the terminology process is the capability to measure the number of Term Browser accesses. Acrolinx and Fiducia are currently working on a way to adapt Acrolinx's help messages to the language level of the individual author. "Every author will rate his language skill and Acrolinx will display help messages that are specifically tailored for the author's language skill. This requires every author to critically self-assess his own language skill. But since Acrolinx is well received in the entire company, Eva-Maria Lewark is certain that "this enhancement will improve language skills throughout Fiducia."

The Company

Fiducia IT AG is headquartered in Karlsruhe and is one of the largest IT service providers for the banking sector. Seven hundred cooperative banks and 50 private banks rely on IT solutions from Fiducia and trust the security of Fiducia's data processing center in Karlsruhe. Additionally, several public administration departments and other companies leverage Fiducia's know-how and infrastructure.

Fiducia currently administers and maintains over 17 million checking accounts, processes 3.8 billion transactions every year, services almost 100,000 workstations, and ensures the functionality of 23,000 ATMs. Additionally, Fiducia offers the currently most secure system for online banking, Sm@rt-TAN Plus.

Fiducia operates two high-security data processing centers. It develops and offers the leading banking system "agree" which is employed at 760 branch offices. In 2011, Fiducia printed about 500 million pages and enveloped 167 million letters. Fiducia IT AG and its subsidiaries employ more than 3,100 employees. The company's turnover in 2011 was over 708 million euros.

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