



# Top 10 Tips for Software Localization

Take your product local and drive your business into new markets.

Localizing software can be a daunting task. But, with a little preparation and the right team, you can ease the process enormously, saving time and money. Here are our top-10 tips to avoiding the common pitfalls of taking your online, desktop or client-server application to new language markets.

A note about software localization jargon: don't panic! There's no getting around it: software localization acronyms and terms can make anyone's head spin. We reduced the jargon as much as possible, but if you have any questions or need further clarification on these tips, feel free to contact us.

1. **Analyze the internationalization situation before you begin.** Taking software across borders requires more than Unicode and externalized strings. Sort-orders, data-entry forms and concatenations are examples of other common considerations. An internationalization analysis before you begin localization will help identify problem areas that could pose challenges or even derail your project.
2. **Verify localization readiness with a “pseudo-localization.”** This simulated-translation and testing effort is a relatively quick and cost-effective dry-run of your localization process. This step will eliminate issues that would have otherwise emerged during later phases of the project.
3. **Use standard resources.** Using standard file formats for your development environment (.rc, .resx, .properties...) will aid in keeping costs down. If you are working in a custom development environment, use a consistent file structure that follows a standard such as XLIFF. Having translatable text in these established formats makes it easy for translation tools to process them – which will place less demands on your development team and add up to fewer engineering and QA hours by your service provider.
4. **Understand translation tools.** Getting to know a little about how translation tools work will help you maximize the benefit of this technology. *Translation memory* refers to a translation tool that stores all translations into a database in real-time as the translator works. This builds a bank of translation assets (phrases, sentences, paragraphs) that can be reused when the same English is repeated elsewhere in the project, or in updates. This greatly diminishes the time and cost of translation. Controlling changes to the English source language text and batching updates will help you to leverage these tools to minimize translation costs.
5. **Invest in a style guide and glossary.** Defining conventions, style and terminology upfront will help you assert control over the translation process and maintain consistent language throughout your products and related information. This strong language foundation will improve the quality of your translations, minimizing inconsistencies and time-intensive changes late in the process.
6. **Plan for the whole process.** The text translation phase is often less than half of the overall software localization effort. Pre-translation preparation, building, testing and integrating feedback from the field are critical steps to a successful localization project, and need careful consideration during scheduling. Also, include room in your schedule and budget for development changes and new updates – we almost never see a project that doesn't have them.

7. **Teamwork and communication.** Appoint a central contact for all localization project issues, as well as specialists per function (Engineering, Testing, Documentation...) who can interface directly with their localization provider peers. Plan to have a kickoff meeting to introduce the team members, clarify requirements and review the process. Weekly status meetings throughout the life of the project can be critical to maintaining momentum and resolving issues before they can impact the overall project.
8. **Document your localization kit.** Create a go-to resource for project requirements, from locales to file naming conventions and encodings. The localization kit is a critical tool for ensuring a successful localization process – and will pay off in spades once the project is in full swing. Make sure that your technical requirements are clear and that your localization provider understands them.
9. **Test. Test. Test.** Testing by trained localization QA professionals is an integral step in the translation process. Testing will expose technical issues with truncations, hard-coded strings and build integrity. This is also the first time a linguist sees the language in full context, often resulting in required changes to the translation. Therefore, testing should be completed and verified before releasing to the field for their feedback and approval.
10. **Get ready to review.** It is critical to setup the review at the start of a project, rather than when the project is ready for the field. Provide the reviewers with the schedule, review goals, background materials (style guide and glossaries), feedback guidelines, and a method to communicate with the linguists. Following this tip will ensure a quick and successful review.

A successfully localized software product can be the key to driving your business into new language markets. Working with a localization partner who can navigate both cultural and technological challenges will not only take your project across borders but also help it succeed across cultures. Read our top-10 tips on software globalization testing at [www.acclaro.com/software-globalization-testing-tips](http://www.acclaro.com/software-globalization-testing-tips). Learn more about software localization at [www.acclaro.com/software-localization](http://www.acclaro.com/software-localization).

**About Acclaro:** Acclaro is an international translation and localization firm that helps the world's leading brands succeed across cultures. We translate websites, marketing campaigns, documents and software to give clients an authentic voice in key language markets.

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