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## Tips for Writing with Localization in Mind

To write effectively for a global audience, consider implementing these content globalization best practices. To learn more about how best to globalize your content, contact ABLE Innovations via email at: [info@ableinnovations.com](mailto:info@ableinnovations.com).

### Active Voice

Use active voice to enable translators to easily identify the subject of the sentence.

### Acronyms

Limit the use of acronyms and be sure to define acronyms at the first occurrence.

### Audience

Address the reader in second person voice (*you* or *imperative*) to provide consistency for both the reader and translator.

### Consistency

Use standard and consistent wording to improve translation accuracy, throughput, and cost savings.

### Dates and Time

Write out dates (for example, January 1, 2006) to avoid ambiguity in foreign languages. Different countries use different formats for dates. In the United States, dates are written as MM/DD/YY, but a date such as 03/12/05 could mean December 3 or March 12, depending on the locale of the reader.

### Formatting

Use consistent formatting conventions to signal different types of information, such as overviews, tasks, and steps. Use a standard document template or style sheet whenever possible.

### Glossary of Terms

Provide a comprehensive glossary of terms for the reader.

### Graphics and Illustrations

Avoid culturally-biased graphics. Use graphics when words alone are not sufficient to enhance the users' learning process. Do not use graphics or screen captures for the sole purpose of breaking up text or making the page visually interesting. Do not paste graphics or illustrations into the text, as graphics boxes are typically hard to anchor to text, especially when text expands to accommodate translations. Rather, be sure to link graphics and illustrations to the text.

### International Examples

Do not limit examples or demonstration data to United States-specific geography (Northwest), companies (Safeway), or Anglo-Saxon names (John Smith). Provide international examples, if possible.

### Modifier Strings

Avoid long modifier strings (consisting of many consecutive nouns or adjectives) to enable effective translations. You can usually make modifier strings more readable by reversing the order of the words and using prepositional phrases and relative clauses to clarify relationships between words.

### Present Tense

Use present tense as much as possible. Most cases of future tense can be rewritten in present tense. Use future tense in instances when the order of events is important.

### Parentheses

Avoid nested parentheses unless you are presenting mathematical equations. Do not enclose an *s* in parentheses (*s*) to indicate that something can be either singular or plural, as this can be confusing for translators. If it can be plural, use the plural.

### Slashes

Avoid using slashes such as *and/or* or *when* combining two nouns. The resulting meaning of introducing the slash is often difficult to translate.

### Slang

Avoid idiomatic expressions, jargon, and slang (for example, *behind the scenes*, *in a nutshell*, *on the fly*, and *so on*). Often, these figures of speech have no corresponding term in other languages.

### Units of Measure

Include the metric equivalent in parentheses and spell out all U.S. units of measurement such as feet, inches, and so on.

### Verbs and Nouns

Avoid using the same word as both a verb and a noun (such as *default* and *record*).

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