



This case study was developed with a client of SDL, which is now part of RWS Holdings plc



Industry: Retail & Consumer

Machine translation helps Best Buy Canada translate more content faster, fueling growth

SDL's Neural Machine Translation Enables Best Buy Canada to Scale While Saving on Translation Costs

The Challenge

Best Buy Canada opened their first stores in Quebec in 2005 and at the same time began working with SDL to deliver bilingual marketing.

Best Buy Canada had an agreement with the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) to publish translated web SKUs 72 hours after the English web SKUs were published, giving SDL a 48 hour turnaround time window. A typical batch of web SKUs averaged between 25,000 and 50,000 words for translation. By 2011, the volume of content in the Best Buy Digital Asset Management (DAM) system and web SKUs began to strain capacity and budget.

During the 2015 holiday season, Best Buy Canada experienced a huge unexpected volume peak from October to December. The largest batch was almost 300,000 words with one-third new content (98,000 words new + fuzzy matches). SDL put a team of 30 translators on the batch, but still struggled for weeks to clear up the backlog. With conventional translation, if translators are expected to translate 2,000 words per day, a team of 75 translators would have been needed to translate this batch within two days. It was quickly becoming apparent that a human-only translation solution would not meet Best Buy's ongoing requirements.

In addition to scaling up translation capabilities, Best Buy Canada was looking for other program improvements:

- A reduction in translation costs without impacting translation quality
- An established SLA to better manage expectations on both sides
- A quarterly call with the web SKU team and SDL to analyze the previous quarter, discuss forecasts and develop contingency plans

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The Solution

As a trusted partner, SDL recommended a more scalable workflow utilizing machine translation (MT) with post-editing for the e-Commerce content. Best Buy had concerns about MT translation quality but agreed to try. Upon review of the first batch of post-edited content, it was immediately apparent that the quality was acceptable.

With the new workflow, SDL can translate a batch of web SKUs with up to 20,000-25,000 new words within two business days.

In addition, SDL prepares early to scale up resources for the busy holiday campaign period (October-December). The SLA, forecasting and quarterly call help facilitate communication, planning and minimize unexpected surprises.

Reducing manual tasks to increase efficiency was achieved through implementation of an automated workflow. As soon as an English description changes on Best Buy's side, the STEP software recognizes the update. Translations accumulate during the business day and one job is automatically sent to SDL via the Connector at 6pm each day. MT is applied on all batches, SDL translators post-edit the materials and content for all languages is delivered back to Best Buy through the STIBO connector automatically, fulfilling the 48 hour turnaround commitment.

SDL met Best Buy's objectives:

- Efficiencies gained from MT and translation memory (TM) reduced cost by 43% vs. conventional per word rate
- An automated process for content submission and retrieval was implemented, streamlining the process
- A clear SLA was established for consistent understanding of expectations and requirements

The Results

Best Buy achieved several additional benefits as a result of this new solution:

Machine translation is very efficient when it comes to content that is clearly written, repetitive and concise. Short product descriptions that consistently follow the same word order make the web SKUs a perfect fit for Neural MT.

With the successful implementation of MT to translate the web SKUs, Best Buy Canada suggested exploring the use of MT for conventional content. Based on the results of testing and quality expectations, Best Buy and SDL defined the content types that were a good fit for MT. In October 2018, MT was implemented for some general translation requests, such as blog articles, Learning & Development content and Retail Operations documents.

Since October 2018, 90% of general content is now translated using MT, saving Best Buy Canada over \$60,000 during the last year. In addition, working with SDL allows Best Buy to access the latest technologies to gain further efficiencies and quality improvements over time.

"Today, I am proud to say that we have reached the best balance between quality, cost and long-term performance. SDL is like an extension of my in-house team and we work together for quality and consistency while meeting the deadlines."

Karine Morcet,
Best Buy Canada

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Challenges

- Human translation was not sustainable due to increasing volumes and shorter timelines
- Desire for reduced translation costs without sacrificing quality
- Need for better communication, forecasting and planning
- Scalability of translation teams

Key Facts & Figures

- 90% general content translated with MT
- \$60,000 translation savings in one year
- 43% cost reduction due to MT and MT efficiencies
- 48 hour turnaround for 20,000-25,000 translated words

Results

- More scalable workflow for web SKUs utilizing neural machine translation (MT) and post-editing
- MT program extended to other content types due to success with web SKUs
- Faster time-to-market and significant translation cost savings
- Automated, streamlined file handoffs more efficient, minimizing manual tasks
- SLA, forecasting and regular team calls curtail disruptions and facilitate planning
- Translation quality maintained with MT and post-editing workflow

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About RWS

RWS Holdings plc is the world's leading provider of technology-enabled language, content management and intellectual property services. We help our customers to connect with and bring new ideas to people globally by communicating business critical content at scale and enabling the protection and realization of their innovations.

Our vision is to help organizations interact effectively with people anywhere in the world by solving their language, content and market access challenges through our collective global intelligence, deep expertise and smart technology.

Customers include 90 of the globe's top 100 brands, the top 10 pharmaceutical companies and approximately half of the top 20 patent filers worldwide. Our client base spans Europe, Asia Pacific, and North and South America across the technology, pharmaceutical, medical, legal, chemical, automotive, government and telecommunications sectors, which we serve from offices across five continents.

Founded in 1958, RWS is headquartered in the UK and publicly listed on AIM, the London Stock Exchange regulated market (RWS.L).

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