

## Post-editing Guidelines...

**Statistical Machine Translation (SMT)** has many uses - from the translation of User Generated Content (UGC) to Technical Documents, Manuals and Digital Content. While some use cases will require only a 'gist' translation (no post-editing), others will require a light to full human post-edit, depending on the usage scenario and project costs.

**Post-editing** is the process of 'fixing' Machine Translation output to bring it closer to human translation standard. This, of course is a very different process than carrying out a full human translation from scratch that's why it's important you provide full training for staff who will carry out this task.

Training will ensure that post-editors fully understand what is expected of them when asked to complete one of the many different post-editing type tasks. Research (Vasconcellos – 1986a:145) suggests that post-editing is a honed skill that takes time to develop, so remember your translators may need a while to reach their maximum post-editing productivity levels. KantanMT works with many companies whose translators are post-editing at a rate over 7,000 words per day, compared to an average of 2,000 per day for full human translation.

**Types of Training:** The Translation Automation User Society (TAUS) is now offering [online training courses](#) for post-editors.



"Post-editing: examination and correction of the text resulting from an automatic or semi-automatic machine system (machine translation/translation memory) to ensure it complies with the natural laws of grammar, punctuation, spelling and meaning, etc."

Draft of European Standard for Translation Services (Brussels, 2004)

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## Post-editing Levels

Post-editing quality levels vary greatly and will largely depend on the translations use. It's important to get an exact understanding of user expectations and manage these expectations throughout the project.

Typically, users of Machine Translation will ask for one of the following types of post-editing:

- Light post-editing
- Full post-editing

The following diagram below gives us a general outline of what is involved in both light and full post-editing. Remember however, that the effort to achieve certain levels of quality will be determined by the output quality your engine is able to achieve.



INFO SOURCE: COMMON SENSE ADVISORY (CSA)

## Productivity Measurement:

*Generally, MT users would carry out productivity tests before they begin a project. This determines the effectiveness of MT for the language pair, the domain and the post-editors ability to edit the output. Productivity tests will help you determine the potential Return on Investment (ROI) from MT and the turnaround time for projects. It is a good idea to carry out productivity tests periodically to understand how your MT engine is developing and improving. (Source: TAUS)*

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You might, as others have, develop a tailored approach to post-editing levels to suit your company's own needs, but the above diagram offers some nice guidelines to start off with. Please note that a well-trained MT engine can produce near human translations and a light touch up may be all that is required. That's why it's important to examine the quality of the output with post-editors before setting productivity goals and post-editing quality levels.

### Post-Editor Skills

In recent years, post-editing skills have become much more of an asset and sometimes a requirement for translators working in the language industry. Machine Translation has grown considerably in popularity and the demand for post-editing services has grown in line with this. TechNavio predicts that the market for Machine Translation will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.05% until 2016, and the report attributes a large part of this rise to "the rapidly increasing content volume".

While the task of post-editing is markedly different to traditional translation, the skill set needed is almost on par.

According to Johnson and Whitelock (1987), post-editors should be:

- Expert in the subject area, the text type and the contrastive language.
- Have a perfect command of the target language

## Post Editing Automation:

*A quick way to improve the quality of your Machine Translation output and reduce your post-editing requirements is to apply KantanMT's PEX tool to correct any repetitive errors in the output text. Using simple find and replace rules – PEX easily fixes errors throughout a document. By applying PEX rules to a machine translated document, MT users can significantly reduce the amount of human post-editing required. Read more about [PEX here](#).*

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Is it also widely accepted that that post-editors who have a favourable perception of Machine Translation perform better at post-editing tasks than those who do not look favourably on MT.

### How to improve Machine Translation output quality

#### Pre-editing

Pre-editing is the process of adjusting text before it has been Machine Translated. This includes fixing spelling errors, formatting the document correctly and tagging text elements that must not be translated. Using a pre-processing tool like KantanMT's GENTRY can save a lot of time by automating the correction of repetitive errors throughout the source text.

#### Recommendation: John Kohl's

[book](#): The Global English Style Guide: Writing Clear, Translatable Documentation for a Global Market, has a section devote to writing for MT. This could be a useful for educating content creators and technical writers on writing for MT.

#### More pre-editing Steps:

**Write Clear and Concise Sentences:** Shorter unambiguous segments (sentences) are processed much more effectively by MT engines. Also, when pre-editing or writing for MT, make sure that each sentence is grammatically complete (begins with a capital letter, has at least one main clause, and has an ending punctuation).

**Use the Active Voice:** MT engines work impressively on text that is clear and unambiguous, that's why using the active voice, which cuts out vagueness and ambiguity can result in much better MT output.

There are many pre-editing steps you can carry out to produce better MT output. Also, keep in mind writing styles when developing content for Machine Translation to reduce the amount of pre-editing required. [Get tips on writing for MT here.](#)

Post-editing Machine Translation speeds up the translation process and enables translation users to translate higher volumes of content, and content that might not otherwise be feasible to translate. However, while post-editing can be highly productive and rewarding, a deep understanding of MT and post-editing, and pre and post MT processes is required to manage the process and the expectations of end users. For more information about any of KantanMT's products or services, please email Gina Lawlor, Customer Relationship Manager ([ginal@kantanmt.com](mailto:ginal@kantanmt.com)).