

When to Automate Translation Processes Calculating Cost Along the Automation Continuum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper analyses the financial benefits and costs of automating translation workflow. The first section outlines the steps of the translation process that can be automated, and examines factors contributing to the value of automation. The second section explores how these factors affect translation and transaction costs across applications, and how Lionbridge can help clients determine their breakeven point and choose a solution that suits their needs.

Automated translation has exploded in recent years, improving quality and reducing costs and production time. Automation is applied at several steps of the process: handoffs; transmission of files to and from translators; file preparation; automation of complex translation workflows; and communication and information management. Automating these steps reduces manual work, turnaround time and errors, improves coordination and communication among global work teams, and provides transparency and auditing to the translation process.

A number of factors effect the value and efficiency of automation, including:

- Translation Factors: Structured data (fields, tags, metadata), authoring consistency, and technical vs. cultural content.
- Project Factors: Language pairs, text volume, duration, and turnaround time.
- Update Frequency; Frequency of transactions, or content change.

Increased automation factors and rates of change increase *transaction costs* relative to *translation costs*, that is, savings realized by automating translation as opposed to performing it manually. While programs with higher automation factors and frequent updates, such as eSupport, reap higher benefits from automation, products with regular release cycles and fewer updates might stick with traditional methods.

Lionbridge helps clients analyze their workflow and breakeven point, the point at which the initial investment pays off over time, to determine the ideal solution for their individual organization's needs.