Study at the University of Limerick

Learn about a virtual technical communication course

ISTC

Communicator

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

Autumn 2015

Viable options for replacing QWERTY

Have you thought about working remotely?
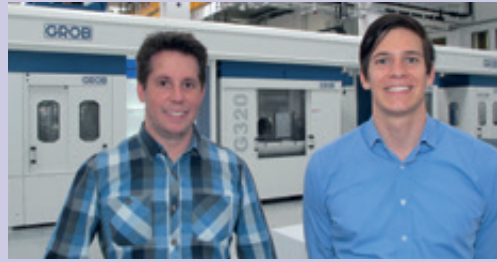
Do women make better technical communicators?

RoboHelp 2015 and PerfectIt product reviews

A company-wide semantic network

GROB Group optimises writing processes with the help of Acrolinx for consistent terminology in multiple languages.

Andreas Zeller, Translator and Manuel Hörmann , Project Manager for terminology management in the GROB Group

Are cable tracks and energy chains the same as cable chains?

More precise and consistent source texts have a positive impact on the overall quality of the translated content.

The Acrolinx database includes more than 100,000 terms in all languages.

Do the terms light grid, light curtain and light barrier refer to the same thing? And are cable tracks and energy chains the same as cable chains? GROB, a globally operating family business based in Germany, developing and manufacturing machine and production solutions for the world's leading automotive manufacturers, their suppliers and further renowned companies in various industries, was looking to standardise and simplify these and other terms that were coexisting in the company's content. The Acrolinx platform helped the company get closer to their goal of speaking with one voice.

To ensure terminological compliance among engineers, technical communicators and other experts who create content within different departments, the company needed a software solution to coordinate editing processes. With this in mind, GROB initiated a project to collect and manage all terms in a concept-oriented database.

Towards a consistent corporate language

"Up until now, you could tell by the style and structure of the content who the author was, and we wanted to get past that," says Manuel Hörmann, project manager for terminology management in the GROB Group. GROB aimed for a consistent corporate language by realising the motto of Acrolinx: speak with one voice. Minimising linguistic variation and lead times while strengthening terminological clarity and creating translation-friendly content was expected to reduce translation costs in the long run. More precise and consistent source texts result in a reduction of unnecessary or duplicate translations and have a positive impact on the overall quality of the translated content.

For the duration of a year, GROB defined specific needs and goals, re-thought business

processes and searched for technical solutions. As a result, GROB chose the Acrolinx platform because of its leading position, easy handling, wide functionality and the fast and professional support of Acrolinx.

Rule-based editing processes

Since September 2013, GROB has used the Acrolinx platform to register and manage terminology across divisions and departments and help writers use their terms in a standardised and consistent way. More precisely, editing processes have been based on specific rules, while style and spelling have been checked during the writing process. As the platform has proven to be helpful within technical documentation, GROB is planning to implement Acrolinx in its engineering, commissioning, project management and sales departments as well. Even the company magazine *GROB International* is going to be checked with Acrolinx.

Initially, Peter Vogl, Vice President Engineering & Technology, wanted to unify dictionaries that circulated in different divisions. These Excel lists were originally based on one source, but over the years they came to develop a life of their own. "Uniting these dictionaries was not enough," says Manuel Hörmann, which was why GROB started a company-wide terminology project with members of different departments. Their first task was to investigate how many glossaries actually existed and to what extent the uncontrolled development had spread.

The team found that the most important source was a dictionary within the GROB Information System (GIS), a license-free Java application based on SAP. The technical documentation and engineering department used the GIS dictionary as a basis for translating the German source texts to the three

The GROB universal machining centers G350, G550 and G750 are used in a wide range of different industries

other company languages of English, Chinese, Portuguese, and an additional 13 customer-specific languages. The language service of the technical documentation department presorted these terms within the previous terminology database, which served as the basis for the new, consistent terminology database in Acrolinx.

Higher-level terminology and knowledge database

Andreas Zeller, a translator at GROB: "We will continue using the GIS dictionary because it is directly linked to the SAP material master data. However, using Acrolinx as a higher-level terminology and knowledge database helps us establish a consistent term base within this dictionary, which is synchronised with Acrolinx, optimising the way terminology is created and used in GIS." When implementing Acrolinx, GROB was able to continue using existing systems to support writing processes. These systems subordinated to the new Acrolinx platform and adopted its rules.

At this point, the Acrolinx database includes more than 100,000 terms in all languages, 15,000 of the terms being German. These terms are complemented by additional information such as definitions, multimedia content, comments, sources, context examples and links to other terms. Many terms are linked to antonyms and thus establish a vast semantic network. In addition to the default rule sets, GROB imported rules from their previous style guide, for example that sentences should only contain one abbreviation, or how to deal with non-breaking spaces.

The Acrolinx language check is integrated into Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint. For software that doesn't have Acrolinx integration, GROB is using the Acrolinx Desktop Checker. One example is the current editing system, which will soon be extended with a more powerful tool to fulfil the company's needs.

From creation to publishing, Acrolinx has covered the whole chain of content production. As a result, the translation management software GROB used to translate content into around 20 languages also needed synchronising. In addition to introducing Acrolinx, the company also replaced the previous translation memory system with the Acrolinx Language Server which is accessible to both internal and external translators.

Targeting more than 1,000 users

At the first stage of the project, 30 editors from the technical documentation department are working with the automated language check from Acrolinx, but soon, the system is to be rolled out throughout the whole organisation. Future users include more than 500 engineers and almost 400 employees

in the commissioning department. "This is one of the most creative departments where content covering new functions is created every day," Andreas Zeller explains. "Our colleagues from the engineering and commissioning departments are working with Microsoft Excel and will soon be able to use the Acrolinx language check as well." At the final stage, more than 1,000 users are supposed to create content with the help of Acrolinx. At this point, many employees are working with the Acrolinx Term Browser in the GROB intranet where the terms are available in the language of each location.

The Acrolinx platform enables GROB to create different types of content more efficiently. "Terminology costs money; no terminology costs more money," says Manuel Hörmann. With a simple example he shows how beneficial Acrolinx is for GROB. In the past, the simple instruction "Prüfprotokoll erstellen" ("create test report") required eight variations, meaning that instead of two words, the company had to pay for 21. With average translation costs of EUR 0.2 per word for 20 languages, the costs added up to EUR 84. Today, the company needs to spend only EUR 8 to communicate this instruction to all users worldwide. The savings of 90% speak for themselves.

The company

The GROB Group is an internationally operating family business with headquarters in Mindelheim, Germany, three production plants in São Paulo, Brazil, Bluffton, USA, and Dalian, Peoples Republic of. China, as well as eight sales and service branches in South Korea, China, India, Russia, Great Britain, Hungary and Mexico. The product portfolio ranges from a universal machining centre to a highly complex, automated manufacturing system, as well as assembly units in machining and fully automated assembly lines. With around 5,000 employees, the GROB Group generated a turnover of EUR 1 billion in 2014. GROB has been family-owned since its founding in 1926. W: www.grobgroup.com C

From creation to publishing, Acrolinx has covered the whole chain of content production.

At the final stage, more than 1,000 users will be creating content with the help of Acrolinx.

Frank Zscheile is a freelance IT journalist, based in Munich, Germany. He has more than 16 years' experience in publishing articles for several magazines which focus on ECM/ workflow/product data management, SAP-integrated solutions, language examination and processing.
E: presse@agentur-aufakt.de
Tw: @frankzscheile

See what else we offer...

If you enjoyed this article, visit our website to see what else we do.

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators is the largest UK body representing information development professionals, serving both our members and the wider technical communication community.

What the ISTC offers

Professional development and recognition

Resources and opportunities to develop and diversify skills, stay up to date with trends and technologies, and get recognition for achievements.

Our CPD (Continuous Professional Development) framework enables you to provide evidence of your learning in all its forms, and our Awards programme gives you the opportunity to showcase excellent work.

Communicator professional journal

Communicator is the ISTC's award-winning quarterly professional journal, covering the breadth of technical communications, offering in-depth articles, case studies, book and product reviews.

Now you've read a sample article, would you like to see more? The journal is free to our members and is also available on subscription.

ISTC Community

The ISTC offers opportunities to network, exchange expertise, and stay in touch with the UK technical communication industry – through a range of online groups, local events, and InfoPlus+ (our monthly newsletter).

You can find us on LinkedIn, Eventbrite, YouTube and Twitter (@ISTC_org).

Technical Communication UK

The ISTC hosts Technical Communication UK, the annual conference that aims to meet the needs of technical communicators, their managers and clients, from every corner of the industry.

Open to all, visit www.technicalcommunicationuk.com for the latest news.

ISTC Resources

The ISTC offers access to a range of resources, including our own books, various templates, articles summarising key technical communication issues and discounted British Standards publications.