

MemoQ Advanced Translation Solution,
Developed by Kilgray Translation Technologies
A Hungarian company set up in 2004
Company slogan: "MemoQ users have more fun"

Let me start with the name of this gem of a translation environment tool. On the last day of MemoQ's first user conference in April this year, it was changed on the basis of a straw poll of the conference delegates from the two-syllable "MeMock" to the three-syllable alternative "MeMoQ". Personally I preferred the former version, but I also did feel that this was not really something that the delegates should have interfered with. However, the Kilgray management team signed the Declaration of Name Change, which one of the delegates had quickly drawn up. This willingness to respond to customers' requests is just one of the many reasons for Kilgray's popularity.

Name preferences aside, the most striking difference between MemoQ and other translation environment tools is MemoQ's Integrated Translation Environment. All the components of this tool (project manager, translation editor, translation memory and term base engines, and document aligner) are built into one application. Where user friendliness, intuitiveness and not least stability are concerned, this modern software architecture is definitely preferable to working with multiple applications simultaneously.

The project-based approach is another noticeable difference. Setting up a project is very quick and easy, involving five simple steps: naming your project, selecting source and target language, adding additional project information using predefined metadata fields, adding your source documents, and finally adding/creating translation memories (TMs) and term bases (TBs). It is easy to share MemoQ Projects with other users via the Export (and Import) Complete Project functions.

As Word and RTF documents are added and subsequently imported into a project, their formatting is first stripped away, after which the pure text is segmented, leaving just the translatable segments visible in the translation editor. Instead of having to deal with complex formatting tags, simple numbered tags are inserted into the source text as placeholders for the missing formatting information. All the translator needs to do to ensure that formatting information is transferred correctly is insert these numbered tags into the appropriate places in the target segment using a keyboard shortcut.

At first sight, this approach may appear too simplified as though the user doesn't have enough control over the handling of tags. This, however, is where one of MemoQ's most appreciated features - as yet unparalleled in other tools - comes into play, namely the Real-time Preview, which for the translator is a reassuring indicator that formatting information has been transferred correctly.

More complex inline tag control is offered to the translator when translating more complex file formats, such as xml, html, inx, mif, ttx, etc.

MemoQ supports the following File Formats: ppt, doc, xls, inx, mif, xml, xliff, html, txt, pxf, ppf, tmx, csv, tsv, Trados Bilingual (.ttx, .rtf, .doc, .bak), as well as the MemoQ proprietary formats.

The option of working with Multiple TMs and TBs is a very valuable MemoQ feature. One of the TMs added must be selected as the Primary TM and it is this to which the translation units are added. The remaining TMs in a project are used as Reference resources from which matches (101%, 100%, fuzzy, concordance and fragment matches) may be retrieved. The same Primary/Reference principle also applies to TBs.

When using the Pre-translate function, matches are automatically retrieved from the TM and inserted into the source document(s). Auto-propagation, which automatically propagates the translation of identical segments throughout the document, thus ensuring consistency, is another extremely useful feature.

MemoQ's translation editor has a Vertical Grid Layout by default although this has recently been expanded to include the option of a Horizontal Grid Layout.

The editor's toolbar and keyboard shortcuts offer the translator many productivity-boosting features, two of the most useful ones being the keyboard shortcuts for adding terms to the term base. Highlighting the source and target terms followed by a choice of two keyboard shortcuts enables you to add terms in two ways. Ctrl+E invokes the Create Term Base Entry dialogue, where you can simply click on Ok to insert the terms or, alternatively, click on More to first add additional metadata. Ctrl+Q inserts the terms into the term base directly, bypassing the Create Term Base Entry dialogue.

The 101% context match is a feature unique to MemoQ. It guarantees context sensitivity, i.e. the segment before and after the current segment are identical to those of the 101% match. The New Project dialogue provides options for various other useful translation memory settings including Preferred Author and Allow Multiple Translations.

When the documents of a project have been finalised, they are exported back into a prepared target language folder via a predefined but changeable export path for easy location. This is a very useful integrated project and file management feature.

The documents are converted back to their original file format during export and all the stripped formatting is reapplied.

MemoQ's fully fledged Server Version includes unique features such as:

- Simultaneous Online Document Sharing enabling simultaneous team translation and proofreading
- Centrally Moderated Term Bases ensuring a high standard of terminology management
- Chat and Discussion Forums

Online Synchronisation of server TMs and TBs after completing an offline project using the Checkout Server Project function is another extremely valuable feature for maintaining TMs and TBs.

The API (Application Programming Interface) enables seamless integration with, for example, content and workflow management systems.

Additional features include:

- Creation of different Views allowing the user to translate segments in a preferred order
- Impressive Project Analysis Statistics options including a Homogeneity Analysis that reflects the internal similarities within a project
- Quality Assurance tool
- Spellchecker options (MS Word or Hunspell)
- Longest Substring Concordance boosting productivity by automating concordance lookups.
- Auto-translatables (automatic conversion of measurements, degrees, etc. and the option to create your own additional auto-translatables using regular expressions - for more technically adept users)
- Non-translatables (list of non-translatable text for quick insertion into target segments)
- Negations (list of negation terms, which activate the negation match penalty, when the current segment differs from a TM match only by a negation term).

MemoQ is available in a choice of editions. Check out the Kilgray website for detailed product information on www.kilgray.com. If you would like to try MemoQ, you can download a full version for free and use it for 45 days.

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Kilgray has built up a reputation for providing excellent customer service and prompt technical support for its customers. The MemoQ Yahoo User group, where experienced users as well as Kilgray's founders and support staff are very quick to reply to new users' questions, is an invaluable alternative to paid support.

This description of MemoQ probably leaves nobody in any doubt about my feelings for this translation environment tool. Having been a translation memory user and trainer for over 11 years, I'm delighted to say that I have found a great new tool, which in my view surpasses other tools on the market in almost all areas, and I now use MemoQ for the majority of my translation projects.