

# Motorway Autoroute Autopista



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In any language, the A30 project offers a roadmap for translation services

by Hamish Wood



AS WITH ANY public-private partnership (P3), for the stakeholders to have a top-quality experience and to ensure that non-performance is a non-issue, success depends heavily on good clear communication between the partners and the

various entities involved. Working with international groups where several languages may be part of the process provides some communications challenges.

In early October 2008 in Montreal, members of the Government of Quebec announced the signing of a P3 agreement between the Ministère des Transports du Québec and the Nouvelle Autoroute 30, S.E.N.C. consortium, for the design, construction, financing, operation, maintenance and repair of the Autoroute 30 (A30).

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Nouvelle Autoroute 30, S.E.N.C. is made up of Acciona Nouvelle Autoroute 30 Inc. and Iridium Nouvelle Autoroute 30 Inc., which are Canadian subsidiaries of Acciona, S.A. and Iridium Concesiones de Infraestructuras, S.A. Both are based in Spain, and are investing their respective capital in the partnership. Other companies participating in the project are Acciona Infraestructuras Canada Inc., Dragados Canada Inc., S.I.C.E., Arup Canada Inc., Construction DJL Inc., and Verreault Inc.

The project will require investments of \$1.5 billion for all activities relating to the design, construction, financing, maintenance, operation, and repair, over the next 35 years. The date for completion of the project – for the A30 to be open to traffic – is no later than December 2012.

Chair of Quebec's Treasury Board, Monique Jérôme-Forget, specified that "in addition to generating major savings, this P3<sup>1</sup> will also enable a significant amount of risk to be transferred to the private partner, specifically with regard to cost overruns and production delays – these are risks that would otherwise be assumed by the government ...."

The partnership agreement established between Nouvelle Autoroute 30 and the Ministère des Transports du Québec encourages the private partner to offer users a top-quality service. If the partner fails to respect the requirements stipulated in the agreement, deductions will be made from the payments owed to the private partner as a result of this non-performance.

Obviously, a lot of time, work and money, companies, individuals, and reputations are on the line with this project. For this P3, that challenge is complicated by the fact that communication must be clear and concise...

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<sup>1</sup> The approach that has been selected for the completion of the Western section of the project is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The proposed development method involves entrusting the private sector with the design, construction, operation, maintenance, and financing of the section of A -30 between Châteauguay and Vaudreuil -Dorion.

frequent... and in three different languages: English, French and Spanish.

So, with time and accuracy at a premium for the partnership, what are the most important factors a procurement department should look for from a language service provider (LSP) when considering a project of this size and nature to effectively communicate across language barriers in legal, financial and technical terms?

Traditionally, translation has been handled by end-users in local affiliates with no cohesion resulting in losses from no economies of scale. Furthermore, even when the purchasing department within an international organization selects a translation provider, this choice is almost impossible to enforce among a distributed, global organization. With no easy point of contact, local habits prevail.

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Some of the areas that are vital to translation project procurements are:

- How much will I really spend in translations globally?
- How can I get economies of scale?
- How can I control technical quality, consistency and message coherence?
- How can I leverage technology to achieve those aims?
- How can I enforce the choice of my translation supplier within a global organization – made up of several different companies and entities?

In the case of the A30 project, an LSP contract has been awarded to TranslateMedia, whose technology is seen as the answer to the hard challenges that encompass a translation project

of over 750,000 words in three languages combinations, spanning a projected duration of 18 months and 3 specialty categories. Central to their technological edge is an in house designed and built Web-based translation portal.

According to TranslateMedia operations manager Matt Train, “Our technology has been developed for use by everyone in the translation process to facilitate a quick and efficient service. Our platform is like a command and control centre, enabling our client to receive real time information on their jobs, and delivering top quality service at a surprising speed. Achieving, and in many cases surpassing, the requirements of the highest certification available on the market today – the BSEN 15038 – reflects the outstanding competence of our internal processes, as well as our commitment to providing a quality service.”

The overarching benefit of a Web-based platform for the A30 project is the seamless project coordination it provides between the London and New York operational bases of TranslateMedia, translation teams located in Canada, the US, and the UK and in France, and A30 project management based out of New York.

Web-based translation services provide benefits to a truly large and global organization. Moreover, purchasers will empower the end-users and give them full visibility and control on the translation process. So, for example when an A30 project manager in New York wants to know about real achieved turnaround for the month, he or she can simply log on and build a customized report on each job.

The same applies for tracking the delivery of a document either in preparation, translation or proofing; the information can be obtained in a

centralized location available to all at any time, 24/7. High-productivity organizations want to incorporate the translation process into their controlled environment. They also want increased security and confidentiality regarding the document transfer. More importantly, these features must be only a few clicks away, for their Russian, Brazilian employees or their London-based staff.

Further benefits are derived from the integration of translation memory software.

Translation memory tools do not replace the human element of the translation process, but when engaged professionally, they certainly provide a nice assist. Through populating databases with both source material and the ongoing translations, translation teams are provided with prompts for matching words, segments and phrases. Again the benefit of having this tool available online, means that information is updated instantly for all team members to access whenever and from wherever they are located.

When fully integrated within the Web-based process, this becomes very powerful, and provides the client with the benefits of consistency and quality, improved turnarounds and lower prices as known or duplicated words and phrases are priced at lower rates.

This technological approach is attractive to large, and in the A30 case, fragmented organizations that have regular translation demands and who understand the economic benefits from outsourcing this service, as well as to organizations that simply do not have the technical ability to perform translations in house. The Web provides the highway for integrated translation technology and services. 

Hamish Wood, managing director of TranslateMedia – America's Division, is based in New York and can be contacted directly at hamish@translatemediacom.com.

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