



Case Study

HACH Company Moves Water Safety and Measurement Equipment To Global Markets Faster While Reducing Effort and Costs

HACH Company manufactures and distributes analytical instruments used to test water quality and safety around the world. Hach's technical writing team is faced with the challenges of producing complex, high quality documentation to suit thousands of products in dozens of global markets. This case study demonstrates how HACH achieved rapid ROI with end-to-end deployment of SDL's technologies.

SDL SOLUTIONS:

SDL WorldServer™

SDL Trisoft™ Component Content Management System

SDL Global Authoring Management System™

Case Study

Background



Since 1947, Hach Company has manufactured and distributed analytical instruments, test kits, and reagents for testing the quality of water and aqueous solutions, with products for lab, process, and field. Their products are designed specifically for quality, accuracy, and simplicity, and today are in use around the world.

Business Challenge

Most people don't know that they benefit from products developed by HACH Company. HACH's products for water quality testing and water quality analysis are used by experts globally to ensure the safety and quality of water for millions of people around the world. To support those products and the experts who use them, HACH must produce high quality documentation that is technically accurate, up to date, and can be read in twenty-seven languages.

With the speed and number of product releases increasing, and the number of supported global markets expanding, the small HACH team responsible for documentation and localization found itself on the critical path of the product release cycle and undergoing uncomfortable and unprecedented executive scrutiny. Not only did the team have to deliver this documentation in twenty-seven languages, but they had to support a 'dual-brand' strategy that required multiple branded variations of their documentation. With the growing awareness that documentation and localization were identified on the critical path, "We decided to meet the challenge head-on and identify ourselves as an official bottleneck," explained Emily Mydlowski, HACH Company Technical Publications Manager. By doing so, the team received an executive mandate to tackle the growing challenge.

There Has to Be a Better Way

The HACH team was using what have long been traditional methods of localization and documentation. Processes were so cumbersome that the team would attempt to avoid introducing any new business requirement that would weigh them down further, such as the dual branding strategy and multi-lingual documents. "There has to be a better way," we said to ourselves," remarked Mydlowski. "We simply didn't have the bandwidth to take on more than we were already doing, and we weren't keeping up as it was." So the team set out to look at what it could do in the short term and long term.

As the team explored the emerging best practices in the market, they realized that they needed to tackle improvements in both localization and technical writing processes. An immediate solution was an improvement in the localization process with the deployment of a translation management system from SDL. The longer term goal was to move into a structured content writing methodology with DITA and a Component Content Management system.

Step One—Improving Localization with SDL WorldServer

The HACH team realized that the tedious localization process was a significant part of the bottleneck in the company's go-to-market processes. In 2008, the team targeted one particular step in the localization process for improvement, a step called DTP, an acronym for Desktop Publishing. DTP is the last step in the localization process. In this final step, the translated files must be inspected manually by a native speaker who ensures the layout is correct for that particular language. The DTP specialist checks for page breaks, text-expansion and other forms of layout adjustments caused by translation.

“This last step in localization is both time consuming and expensive,” explained Mydlowski. “It is a major part of the bottleneck we were trying to eliminate.” Under Mydlowski’s leadership, the team realized that if they could improve the desktop publishing process, they could achieve two goals at once: realize faster time to market and reduce localization costs by a significant percentage.

The HACH team looked at a variety of language technologies and identified SDL WorldServer as the most compelling solution for the team. Mydlowski explained, “By enabling us to take control of our translation process, and by separating the content from the file formats during translation, we could drastically reduce the cost of DTP and leverage less costly labor in our own offshore facility. None of this was possible with the black box localization process we had previously been using.”

Within the first year of deploying SDL WorldServer, the HACH team had achieved a \$260,000 savings and attained the projected ROI for their on-demand localization solution. In addition to the reduction of desktop publishing costs, HACH was able to eliminate the cost of reviewing already translated sentences with an SDL WorldServer capability called ICE matching. ICE matching knows whether a previously translated sentence originated in the same context and thus whether it is an appropriate translation to use again. This built-in intelligence eliminates costly duplication of effort in the translation process, and further validates the economic benefits thus far reaped by the HACH team.

“The success of the SDL WorldServer adoption won us credibility with management for the ROI we achieved. That set the stage for us to tell management where we wanted to go next.

Emily Mydlowski
 Technical Publications Manager
 HACH Company



Capitalizing on Success With DITA and Structured Content

With one definitive success under its belt, the HACH team then turned to their next goal: moving to a structured content methodology with DITA, an XML standard for technical writing. After experimenting with storing DITA files on a file system, the team realized they could not possibly manage without a Component Content Management system specifically designed for DITA. The team outlined their requirements for a content management system that supported multi-lingual content, provided an easy-to-use environment, would be cost-effective to deploy, and most importantly, offered strong DITA support. “SDL Trisoft met those criteria for us,” explained Mydlowski. “And the fact that Trisoft was a sister technology to SDL WorldServer was quite advantageous. We had already established a good relationship with SDL and knew the rigorous testing their products go through.” In addition, Trisoft was a compelling solution in its own right, particularly because it was so easy to use and deploy, and because of its strong baselining capabilities.

“Writing with structured content seemed like a natural progression for us for several reasons,” explained Mydlowski. “With DITA, we could write content and publish it rapidly in different variations. This would make it possible to produce our multi-branded, multi-lingual documentation at the push of a button. This was a significant advantage for us. DITA and SDL Trisoft would also automate the publishing process and completely eliminate DTP during localization. Our SDL WorldServer implementation already drastically reduced that process - now we could do away with it entirely.”

The HACH team took their new vision to management and maintained that they could deliver their projects 30 days faster if they could move to DITA. As it turned out, they were able to realize the projected ROI six months sooner than they anticipated, as soon as documentation for a single product set was moved into DITA. The translation savings alone paid for the capital expense.

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Implementing DITA and Lessons Learned

In 2009-2010, the HACH team put DITA and SDL Trisoft into practice with one of the company's high-profile new product development projects and the largest tech pubs initiative in the company's history. The team wanted to use a real project to accelerate the learning curve for the new methodology and technologies. According to Mydlowski, the biggest lesson learned is that you don't need complicated workflows - keep it as simple as possible, at least in the beginning. The team also learned that you can't fully plan out every detail because in the beginning, you simply don't know what will be important down the road. As an example, the team never would have anticipated that conventions around file naming would end up being such an intensive discussion. The team also found that the development of style sheets was probably the single most time consuming part of the process. Because printed documentation is so important to HACH customers, their style sheet development was critical to the success of their DITA implementation.

Business Case for DITA and SDL Technologies

With DITA and SDL technologies in place, the HACH team was able to reduce translation from 70 days to 15-30 days, while at the same time increased the throughput of documentation. Because DITA and SDL Trisoft empowered content to be reused in English, there was significantly less content to translate and review. The new methodology and system enabled ten documents to be translated for the cost of only four. In addition, the SDL Trisoft system allowed 'push-button' production of documents containing more than one language, a process that in the past had been a drastically prolonged step that could go on for days. With DITA and SDL Trisoft, Mydlowski says, "We can start a project of multiple documents in multiple languages in the morning, and all documents would be ready for distribution by noontime." With all of these benefits combined, the HACH production processes decreased from three months to less than three weeks.

Sample ROI for Layout Desktop Publishing

Before DITA/CMS	With DITA & SDL Trisoft
ROW [Rest of World] Documents 8 languages x 10 minutes = 80 minutes x 20 books Length of Time: (1600 minutes / 26 hours or 3 days with 12.5 days of DTP)	ROW [Rest of World] Documents 8 languages x 10 minutes = 80 minutes x 20 books Length of Time: Less than 5 minutes
EU Multi-Language Manual 23 languages x 10 minutes = 230 minutes x 20 books =4500 minutes =76 hours Length of Time: 7.5 days	EU Multi-Language Manual 23 languages x 10 minutes = 230 minutes x 20 books =4500 minutes =76 hours Length of Time: Less than 10 minutes

Additional Unexpected Benefits: The Happiness Factor

In addition to the incredible ROI, the HACH team found other unanticipated benefits. These included:

- Reducing the backlog so they are no longer a bottleneck
- Publishing multi-branded documentation at the push of a button
- Ensuring a consistent look and feel across brands and global markets
- Increasing documentation usability and accuracy
- Empowering collaborative and creative work environments for employees
- Initiating the start of translation earlier in the release process

Mydlowski summarized, “We could now provide quantifiable value that was necessary to increase headcount. We reduced translation costs by 60% and translation time by 40%. We implemented a solution that can easily achieve dual-branding. And if that weren’t enough, my team’s ‘happiness index’ increased by 80%.”

Where to Go from Here: Global Authoring

With the internal recognition the HACH team achieved, the team set its sights on additional process improvements. The HACH team is now in the process of rolling out the SDL Global Authoring Management System to help improve content quality and consistency even further with the implementation of style and linguistic guidelines, terminology management, and as-you-type suggestions of previously written content.

With a suite of SDL solutions in place, the HACH team envisions streamlined, efficient processes that produce quality results and lead to even greater ROI for the company.

Challenges

- Complex technical content
- Multiple brands
- Global markets
- Increased volume

Featured Solutions

- SDL WorldServer
- SDL Trisoft
- SDL Global Authoring Management System
- DITA

Business Benefits

- Decreased translation cycles from three months to 15-30 days
- Reduced translation costs by 60%
- Cut translation time by 40%
- Decreased backlog from 3 months to 2-3 weeks
- Reduced publishing efforts from 10.5 days to 15 minutes
- Implemented push-button publishing of multi-lingual manuals
- Increased happiness factor by 80%

SDL is the leader in Global Information Management. Global Information Management enables companies to engage with their customers throughout the customer journey –from brand awareness, to sales and after-sales support– and across languages, cultures and channels.

SDL's best-of-breed Web Content Management, eCommerce, Structured Content and Language Technologies, combined with its Language Services drive down the cost of content creation, management, translation and publishing. SDL solutions increase conversion ratios and customer satisfaction through targeted information across all customer touch points.

Global industry leaders who rely on SDL include ABN-Amro, Bosch, Canon, CNH, FICO, GlaxoSmithKline, Hewlett-Packard, KLM, Microsoft, NetApp, Philips, SAP and Sony. SDL has over 1500 enterprise customers, has deployed over 170,000 software licenses and provides access to on-demand portals for 10 million customers per month. It has a global infrastructure of more than 60 offices in 35 countries. For more information, visit www.sdl.com.