Electrocomponents plc, the parent company of RS Components, is a dynamic and international business that distributes a wide range of products to development and maintenance engineers in all types of businesses around the world. It is the leading international high service distributor of electronic, electrical and industrial supplies.

RS Components had a new business strategy that required large product ranges to be available in the local language, initially in France, Germany and Italy, but ultimately across the globe. The initial project required translation into three languages of on average 60,000 products per catalogue. RS had a 3 month window for work which would have taken 6 months using traditional translation methods.

The existing process involved each country having their own individual product offering which was managed locally. This meant that content was sent for translation with a local supplier who then translated it using traditional methods. These processes were not scalable to deliver the amount of translation required in the short period of time available to complete the project. The process was also expensive, since large volumes of content were being translated manually.

**Building an efficient and cost-effective translation process**

RS Components spoke to SDL about the different possibilities for improving efficiencies in the translation process. “Our new business strategy required a much wider offer in the Electronic and Electro-Mechanical area that would be common across all markets. In order to globalize the offer, we had to provide a high volume of multilingual content in a limited period of time,” said Rob Fifield, Head of Media Production at RS Components. “Additionally, we had the desire to move from managing multiple processes, with multiple translation providers to a more centralized and efficient solution. SDL suggested the high volumes might best be handled through the use of their automated translation solution, SDL intelligent Machine Translation.

From an authoring perspective the organization decided to move from an RTF format to an XML format. This would provide them with the ability to reuse content and improve the authoring process. Additionally, the XML format is a more effective method for passing content through the localization process, since it is easier to filter and extract text for translation.

SDL intelligent Machine Translation (SDL iMT) is the intelligent combination of translation automation software with linguistic skills, delivering up to three times the throughput of traditional methods. Innovative software is used to automatically identify key terms and phrases in source content. These are used to improve the performance of automated translation, after which translators post-edit the output into its final form. Translation memory is maintained to ensure sentences are only translated once. The whole process is controlled by SDL Translation Management System.

RS Components decided to commence using SDL iMT first into French, German and Italian. Over one million words of content were put through the system, with strict deadlines to be met.
SDL Translation Management System was put in place for RS Components so that content could be submitted for translation which would be passed through SDL iMT. Once new content is detected, SDL Translation Management System automatically picks it up and passes it through the automated translation process, so that no time is lost in getting the translations under way. RS Components’ in-country reviewers are also able to access the system to comment and make changes to the multilingual content. SDL Translation Management System also ensures the content is automatically returned to RS Components once it has been through the process of translation and approval, completing the cycle of managing global information.

Before the content is returned to RS Components’ content management system and after automated translation has been applied, SDL’s post-editors and reviewers make any necessary changes to the content to ensure it is of the highest quality. This has provided process improvements which have made the translation cycle much faster. Once this has been done, it is then automatically passed back into RS Components’ Stibo Step Catalogue system. RS Components achieved a 25% improvement in productivity and was able to reduce the costs of providing multilingual content by 27%, helping to ensure increased operating margins for the business.

The Global Information Management solution provided RS Components with the ability to simultaneously launch new catalogues into multiple markets. The translation process is now handled on a continuous basis. It is 35% faster when compared to the previous, extensive batch process, which used to take upwards of 6 weeks per batch. This translates into faster time-to-revenue in international markets. “It also supports our desire to launch new products on the web more rapidly and continuously across multiple markets,” commented Rob Fifield.
CHALLENGES
• Over a million words of documentation to translate
• Delays in time-to-market on global content
• Fragmented, manual processes for managing global information
• Ineffective and costly processes
• Initial translation into 3 languages, moving to 5 in the near future

BENEFITS
• Ability to simultaneously ship into global markets
• 25% improvement in productivity
• 35% reduction in time-to-market
• Automated centralized process improves efficiency
• 27% cost savings
• Improved consistency for global branding

SOLUTION ELEMENTS
• SDL intelligent Machine Translation
• SDL Translation Management System
• Integration with Stibo Step Catalogue content management system
• XML content authoring

TECHNOLOGY SUMMARY
SDL intelligent Machine Translation is the intelligent combination of translation automation software with linguistic skills, delivering up to three times the translation throughput of traditional human translation.

SDL Translation Management System is the Global Information Management (GIM) application that unifies the translation and localization supply chain, providing the collaboration, control, integration and process flow required to prepare content for a global audience. By maximizing localized content reuse and enforcing corporate terminology, SDL TMS dramatically reduces localization costs and improves localized content quality.

Post-editing and review are conducted by skilled linguists specifically trained for post-editing and the resulting translations passed through the appropriate DTP or engineering processes to create the final translated content. The system is built on industry standards, including XML and TMX, to protect investment in translation assets and provide easy integration with enterprise systems.
Next steps
RS Components has been impressed with the results of SDL iMT and is now looking at using the solution to provide more content into more languages. “We have been delighted with SDL intelligent Machine Translation says Rob Fifield. “The process ran extremely smoothly, time pressures were met and the quality was high. Additionally, we have improved the productivity of providing multilingual content and reduced costs substantially. We are now looking at broadening the project to include translation of more content through SDL iMT and we have already moved to also translate into Spanish through this process, with an intention of adding further languages in the near future.”

“SDL intelligent Machine Translation has provided us with a 25% improvement in productivity, as well as a reduction in costs of 27%. It meets our tight deadlines and provides us with high-quality multilingual content, which enables us to support our new business strategy.”

Rob Fifield
Head of Media Production,
RS Components