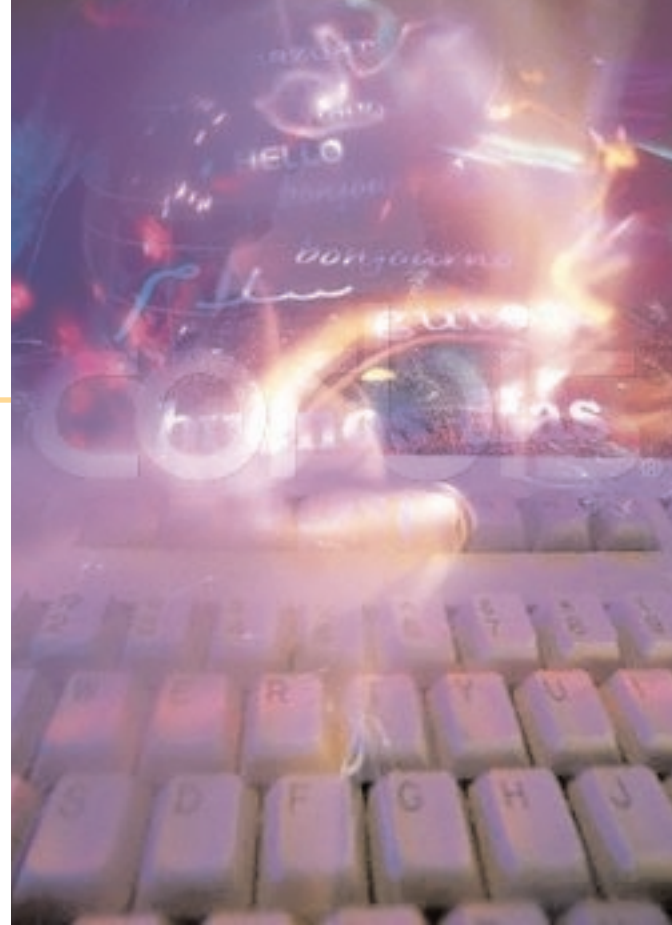


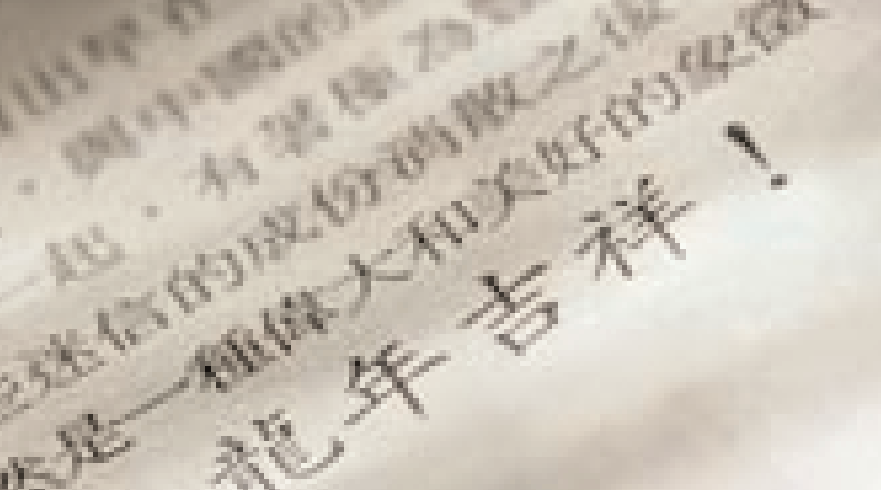
# translation

## gsa makes it easy

Ms. Ferrara, an elegantly dressed, Wharton-educated 30-something, confidently waltzes into her office building. Brimming with enthusiasm and poise, she greets her co-workers as she saunters to her office at the end of the hall. She opens the door, hangs up her coat, and turns on her computer. She has just finished compiling a **series of important technical documents** for an **online publication** and is truly satisfied with the outcome. As she checks her e-mail, an urgent message from her boss appears: “THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS APPROVED THE BUDGET TO **TRANSLATE OUR DOCUMENTATION INTO SPANISH AND CHINESE!!**” Ms. Ferrara is well known around the office for her ability to complete projects in a timely and efficient manner, and she feels up to the task. But, having never dealt with the translation process before, she knows that this will be a challenge, to say the least.

**Are her documents ready for translation?**





particularly in technical documentation. For example, if the source text is convoluted and poorly written, the translation will mirror the style of the original document.

## So, how long does it take to complete a translation project?

If you are new to the translation process, ask as many questions as possible, provide as much information as you can, and allow ample time to complete the work. It won't take as long as it took the author to write the

original, but if you want a good translation, you must allocate a reasonable amount of time. Keep in mind that changes in the scope of the project, such as adding or replacing documents or, languages, or moving up the due date, will incur rush charges and affect the costs.

## How can you evaluate the accuracy of a translation?

You have several options: have the translations evaluated by qualified native speaker reviewers. The native speaker of the target language will contribute with knowledge about the terminology, particular to an industry or subject matter.

Another option is a “back translation”, where a translator who was not involved in the original project back translates the translation to the source language. This process is helpful in cases where you must show proof of compliance with government or other legal regulations. Sometimes, it can even help detect ambiguity, inconsistency, or poorly written areas in the source text.

## How to prepare a project for translation

Congratulations! You have already completed the first step, and have successfully identified a qualified and experienced translation vendor. How can you help your language services vendor provide the best possible work product to meet your quality standards, delivered on time and within budget?

If you are responsible for the content of the documents that require translation, review them for words and expressions that won't translate well, such as slang or colloquial expressions. Business jargon, metaphors, proverbs, and certain idiomatic expressions are difficult to translate because they must be contextually shared by the target culture. Sport or religious metaphors, and quotes from the Bible are some examples.

If the source document is written with an international readership in mind, the translation process should be smooth. Take basic style issues into account. Since most countries use the day-month-year format, use letters for the month to write dates. For instance, 12/08/04 can be interpreted in two ways unless the month is spelled out (December 8, 2004). The same rule applies to time. Most of the world uses a 24-hour clock. If AM or PM are used, make sure they are used every time to avoid confusion.

Also, make sure the text is complete and clear. Revisions (also known as author's alterations or mid-term changes) after the translation process has begun will require extra time to manage and implement, and result in delays. It can also lead to additional expenses, especially if the document is being translated into multiple languages.

If you are involved in a project over which you have no content control, keep in mind that the translation will be only as good as the source,

