

TIPS: Avoid Third-Party Application Havoc When Localizing

Eve Lindemuth Bodeux |  @ebodeux
May 2016

Software developers often use **third-party applications** to increase their products' functionality. For example, many applications use the reporting features Crystal Reports to power their own application's reporting functions. Why re-invent the wheel if an excellent application already exists that helps yours be even better?

From a localization standpoint, however, using third-party applications within your product can cause problems if not carefully managed.

Sometimes, **the localized versions of the third-party apps can be purchased from the manufacturer, or already exist in open source format.** In such cases, this may be lucky, or not. Pre-existing translations of high-quality will reflect positively on your product. Poor translations may make your product look unprofessional since your users won't realize the translations weren't actually provided by you.

Another issue to consider when using a third-party application's translations is that, if your application uses the same English terminology as the third-party application, any **translations you provide should match the translated terminology in the third-party application** too. In other words, you need to make sure your translation teams are aware of the pre-existing third-party terminology so that your final product uses consistent terms throughout. The previously translated third-party content should be provided to your translation vendors for reference so everything is consistent in the end.

If the third-party **application you are embedding within your own application is not already translated**, make sure that its content can indeed be translated by you. Does the developer allow such changes to its application? If they allow it from a technical standpoint, is their software able to accept the changes you need to make? Will it accept and correctly display the characters you need for your selected target languages? Consider these questions and their answers as you plan your localization project.