



acrolinx case study



Thanks to Acrolinx, CLAAS Speaks With One Voice Worldwide

Language Efforts Pay Off

FACTS & FIGURES

(October 2013)

Designations in the database: **52.000**

Terms in the database: **7.000**

Users in the technical documentation dept.: **60**

Users in the marketing dept.: **10**



THE PROBLEM

Over the last 20 years, CLAAS has experienced a significant boost in international sales. Today, source content is authored in three different languages – German, English, and French – and is translated into 30+ languages. Terminology consistency in the source languages is crucial for correct translations.



THE SOLUTION

CLAAS uses Acrolinx as a terminology system to coordinate initial cleanup and ongoing maintenance of their terminology. The system also supports terminology users across the company to help them with writing, proofing, and translation.

The linguistic capabilities of this solution are unique on the market. Not only does it check spelling and grammar, but also style.



Ute Rummel
Group-Wide Terminology
Manager, CLAAS



High-quality products go hand-in-hand with high-quality documentation. Among other implications, this means that a company's terminology appears consistently across all its communications.

At CLAAS, a leading manufacturer of agricultural machinery, consistent terminology conveys reliability and competence to their customers. In order to ensure consistency, CLAAS recently implemented Acrolinx content optimization technology.

CLAAS is based in Harsewinkel, Germany, and produces the super-sized LEXION 780 – perhaps the world's most powerful combine harvester. The operating manual for the LEXION is about 1,000 pages long and the repair manual is 2,000 pages long. To minimize confusion and misunderstanding, all of the terminology that customers see in these manuals should be identical to the terms in the sales brochures and any other CLAAS documents.

Until recently, terminology was not always consistent. Time and again, the CLAAS Customer Service department received queries about products and components cited in marketing documents that did not appear with the same name in the spare parts lists.

To address this problem, the company spent several years trying to streamline its terminology. The reason why the terminology became so heterogeneous in the first place was because of international sales growth over the last 20 years.

Today, content is authored in three different languages – German, English, and French – and is translated into 30+ languages. Terminology consistency in the source languages is crucial for correct translations. To ensure this, the source content is now being checked using Acrolinx software. This increases both service quality and customer satisfaction.

Terminology management is taken very seriously at CLAAS. Ute Rummel from the Corporate R&D Engineering Standards & Processes department has been acting as the group's central Terminology Manager since March 2012. A trained machine engineer, Rummel prepared the introduction of Acrolinx together with Olaf Rehders, coordinator of the terminology project. This involved seeking out all the terminology sources, eliminating any inconsistencies, and building a master terminology database.

Technical documentation was the first department to take advantage of the language checking solution. As of spring 2013, terminology can be researched via the Acrolinx Term Browser within the globally accessible CLAAS intranet.

Unique Linguistic Capabilities

The terminology team headed by Rummel included representatives from three different departments that employ terminology: marketing, technical documentation, and engineering. Together, they picked Acrolinx as the most suitable solution. Rummel explains: "The linguistic capabilities of this solution are unique on the market. Not only does it check spelling and grammar, but it also checks the style of our content."

Other advantages include the Acrolinx Term Browser, which anyone using CLAAS corporate language has access to, as well as the integration with CLAAS's existing translation management system.

Terminology as a Corporate Link Between Individual Departments

“The fact that so many of our product components were called so many different names was because we did not have a standardized terminology that we could share with all departments,” explains Rummel. The main departments were marketing and technical documentation, because they author the bulk of CLAAS content.

For example, the marketing department produces about 60 standard brochures per year. The technical documentation department takes care of annual document updates such as the operating manuals for the LEXION and all other CLAAS products. Rummel’s role in the company is to act as a go-between for the engineering, marketing, and technical documentation departments.

Until recently, there were 20-30 different documents that served as the terminology sources for product and component names. These included various SAP lists, Excel tables, and most crucially a CSV-formatted terminology database, which was the main reference source for the CLAAS design engineers.

Eventually, this database included 80,000 terms. “For example, holder left, holder L, and holder welded would all refer to the same part,” says Rummel about the inconsistent use of terminology. “In a previous effort some years ago, we managed to reduce the number of terms down to 4,000.” That was an important first step. However, there also was the CLAAS technical dictionary, a sizeable source of data containing another 4,000 terms. This paper-based dictionary covered five languages and was created and maintained by CLAAS Customer Service.

Merging Multiple Data Sources

Before Acrolinx was introduced, these sources – particularly the termbase and the technical dictionary – weren’t connected. CLAAS used Acrolinx to standardize all terms coming from all sources, and create a terminology system that coordinates processes such as initial cleanup and ongoing maintenance. The software also supports terminology users in areas such as text authoring, proofing, and translation.



This is a fantastic system for our technical writers, as it encourages them to author standardized texts. By using style rules, we can specify how an operating manual should read in the source language.

Eva-Maria Rode, Coordinator of Terminology for Technical Documentation, CLAAS



The terminology team compiled the termbase and the technical dictionary and deleted all of the redundancies in order to populate the Acrolinx database. The final build took place in March 2013. The Acrolinx terminology database now contains around 7,000 terms with a total of 51,000 names and spellings. It contains more names and spellings than terms because each term includes its translation in multiple languages. Each term includes a full description and a number of specific types of term names: full term name, short term name, abbreviation, and language versions. The terminology team is currently checking all the term names in the Acrolinx database against the style guide and adding additional content such as definitions and context descriptions.

Acrolinx Encourages Standardized Text Authoring

As of spring 2013, approximately 60 members from the technical documentation team use Acrolinx to check spelling, grammar, terminology, and style. Acrolinx works within FrameMaker, which is the authoring tool for the TIM-RS® authoring system from Fischer Computertechnik. Eva-Maria Rode, one of the team members from the technical documentation department, points out: “This is a fantastic system for our technical writers because it encourages them to write standardized text. We can specify how an operating manual should read in the source language by using style rules. Ultimately, this also reduces the cost of translation because our sentence structures repeat in a consistent manner. For our translation management

team, this is a key factor in reducing costs.” The first step is for the translation agency to receive text from the technical documentation department that have been checked using Acrolinx because this makes them easier to translate. The next step is for the translation provider to be given direct access to the terminology database.

Another CLAAS team that makes use of language checking is Corporate Marketing, which has around 50 members and is responsible for authoring and translating brochures and other marketing material. The team is headed by Sarah Peitzmann, who coordinates the marketing department’s terminology use. Here, Acrolinx is currently being used predominantly for defining and managing CLAAS product names. Next year, Acrolinx will be used for terminology checking, both at the source language level and as part of the translation process. “Thanks to Acrolinx, we always have an overview of exactly how our product names are meant to be written,” enthuses the marketing manager. “New team members can also look at the context descriptions to find out exactly what each term is used for.”

Term Searching on the Intranet a Big Success

The language checks used by the technical writers to proof sentences for spelling, grammar, terminology, and style are not the only advantages offered by Acrolinx. Another very popular feature is term searching, which is accessible to everyone: CLAAS has integrated the Acrolinx Term Browser into its intranet, where all of the group’s employees around the world can access it in the three source languages (German, English, and French). Here, everyone can look up term definitions and also read up on context information. In the future, access to the CLAAS Glossary is planned for partner businesses such as sales agents, who will be granted restricted access.

“After we released the tool in May 2013, we immediately got several hundred hits,” states Rummel. This shows how much uncertainty concerning correct spelling and style had existed within the worldwide CLAAS workforce, and how Acrolinx is providing long-overdue guidance.

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Sarah Peitzmann,
Terminology Coordinator
for Marketing, CLAAS

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The CLAAS Glossary contains preset filters that can refer directly to the terminology as well as the CLAAS product names, giving users instant access to the data that is relevant to them. “The CLAAS Glossary is a huge step forward from simple word lists that only contained terms in the source and target languages. Our new glossary is well-designed and provides useful additional information for all the specific terms,” says Rode. “This is a real first at CLAAS. Beginners and native speakers alike can simply read the context example to understand exactly what each term describes. There’s even a pronunciation guide.”

Thanks to Acrolinx, the entire CLAAS group now has a more consistent corporate language. Even the tiniest of spare parts is named identically in all documents. The fact that thousands of employees no longer need to look up correct spelling and style anymore also saves the company a lot of money. Ute Rummel will continue to expand the Acrolinx project over the coming years, making it available to more user groups, and further increasing language quality across the CLAAS group.

About the Company

Founded as a family business in 1913, CLAAS (www.claas.com) is one of the world's leading manufacturers of agricultural technology. Based in Harsewinkel, which lies in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the company is the European market leader for combine harvesters. With another one of its major product ranges, the self-propelled forager, CLAAS is the world market leader. Other areas where CLAAS is a leading global manufacturer of agricultural machinery include tractors, agricultural balers, and forage harvesters. The company's product range further includes state-of-the-art computer systems for agricultural applications. CLAAS has a total international employee base of 9,000, and achieved a turnover of €3.4 billion in 2012.



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