

Using Automatic Translations The Do's And Don'ts

Feb 1 2026 - FOSDEM

Tom De Moor

Hi there 🖐️

Tom De Moor  tom@social.controlaltdieliet.be

Long time open source contributor

Contributing as a volunteer to Mattermost for about 6y



Translations



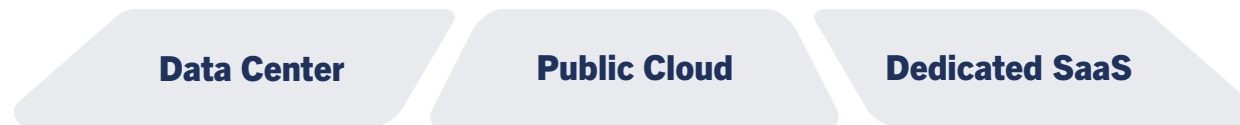
Documentation



Some programming

Intelligent Mission Environment

Secure Collaboration Platform for Mission-Critical Work



The Scale of the "Word Mountain"

22 languages / 5 million+ words translated



12.700+

Strings

85.000+

Words

What's this talk about?

Our first experiment

LGTM!
Boom!
Lessons learnt

Let's do this again!

Better setup
Better checks
Safely merging

Questions

One for you!
Many for me?

01

Our first experiment

How we broke the product



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/EducateThyself/photos/d41d8cd9/1255910563237856/>

The Experiment: Playbooks & Calls



5000

strings



2

components



All

Languages

Our first experiment – under the hood

Weblate



DeepL



Automatic translation mode

Add as "Needing edit"

Filters ▾

state:<translated

Please note that translating all strings will discard all existing translations.

Source of automated translations

- ☐ Other translation components
- ☒ Machine translation

Machine translation engines

Search...

Available:

DeepL

Weblate

Weblate Translation Memory

Chosen:

DeepL

Weblate

Weblate Translation Memory

Score threshold

80

LGTM! Ship it

Our SN8 moment



- ✓ All green in Weblate
- ✓ All green in Github
- ✓ Product crashes in some languages



https://images.vrt.be/vrtnws_web/2020/12/10/c838892d-3ab2-11eb-aae0-02b7b76bf47f.jpg

The Post-Mortem

Translation

English

Key /c+F8S

Call from {callerName} with {others}

Dutch

NBS

...

“

”

‘

’

(-)

-

-

-

Oproep van {callerName} met {anderen}

Unsaved changes! 51/500 · 50

Review state

Things to check

!

1

ICU MessageFormat

One or more unknown placeholders in the translation: callerNamedfd

One or more placeholders missing in the translation: callerName

02

The Korean Challenge

Scaling up

The Korean Challenge

One language

All components

The challenge

7000
untranslated
strings

0
Translators

3
Months

Our Setup

1

New project

2

Translators

5

PRs

Where we are now?

- ✓ Modified +7000 strings
- ✓ 350 strings needed fixing
- ✓ 0 product crashes



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:STS-114_Landing.jpg

Q&A

Community



<https://www.gettyimages.be/detail/foto/people-stacking-hands-together-in-the-park-royalty-free-beeld/1093935162>

- ✔ **Translator Community Managers
Community**
<https://localization.cloud.mattermost.com/i18n/channels/l10n-community-managers>



www.linkedin.com/in/tom-de-moor/
tom@social.controlaltdieliet.be
tom@controlaltdieliet.be

Grab your stickers and pens!



Community

- ✔ **Translator Community Managers
Community**
<https://localization.cloud.mattermost.com/i18n/channels/l10n-community-managers>



www.linkedin.com/in/tom-de-moor/
tom@social.controlaltdieliet.be
tom@controlaltdieliet.be