



White paper

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# Comparing the top 5 TMS

**Choosing an appropriate translation management system (TMS) is no easy business.**

This comparison has chosen 5 of the most popular and prevalent TMSs available on the open market. The criteria for a TMS to appear here are:

1. That it must be a fully contained system for processing, managing and translating project files.
2. It must incorporate its own TM, Termbase and editor.
3. It must provide automated workflow and repeat project templates and a GUI which can be self-serviced for instant quotation. Therefore it must store customer data such as price lists and apply these automatically to the results of its file analysis.

Trados Studio, Trados Groupshare, memoQ Enterprise... have not been considered TMS. They have no out-of-the-box facility for storing and handling client data or providing automated workflow and automatic quotations, although their API allows them to be connected to other tools which do offer this, such as Plunet. Plunet has been excluded as it is a business management tool and requires an additional translation system to be connected.

Lionbridge TMS has been excluded as its use is exclusive to Lionbridge and its customers. Globalsight has also been excluded. Although there is an Open Source version, it is owned by WeLocalize and not supported for use by LSPs. Smartling, Easyling and Transifex have been excluded as they are designed first and foremost as proxy web servers and software translation environments and do not fulfil the entire specification as set out above for handling multiple vendors or customers, and all divisions of a customer's translation process, as well as the full range of file formats.

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Scores given out of 10 are subjective and not based on a specific performance matrix. This comparison is the tip of the iceberg in what is a huge area of consultancy in the localization business. We hope you find it useful, and we're more than happy to discuss any of these options further with anyone who is interested.

	SDL TMS	SDL Worldserver	Across Language Server	XTM Cloud	MemSource	COMMENTS
<b>Inter-operability</b>	8	7	3	8	5	SDL holds the crown for inter-operability with its own tools: there is a "publish to Groupshare" button in TMS and APIs allow 3rd party tools to "scrape" the inbox so that the PM does not really need to access the TMS but can operate in Groupshare. In practice such setups are extremely rare. XTM must be commended for its extensive work with memoQ. XTM has the edge over SDL in terms of transfer of meta data to and from memoQ while also being compatible with Studio. MemSource has some way to go on meta data. Across is a closed system, but Across do sell a wide range of other tools e.g. for Assisted Authoring.
<b>On-server Performance</b>	7	7	5	8	7	These scores are not based on timed performance matrix. This is subjective dependent upon the types of task to be performed. Processing files for project creation and getting that project over to the vendor is particularly fast with XTM. Projects containing many hundreds of files may take some time to process a change of status or to prepare for translation in SDL and Across.
<b>Ease of use / learning curve</b>	6	5	6	7	7	For Administrators and Project Managers familiarity with any TMS is a major advantage when learning another. There are far fewer steps in XTM, MemSource and Across in terms of generating containers and content necessary for a Project. Once Project Workflow templates and User Groups are all set up, project management and translation are also easy to follow in SDL tools which then require the user only to understand his own inbox. Across is sometimes obtuse in terms of where containers are located but the manual is easy to follow.
<b>Offline Capabilities</b>	8	7	5	8	6	XTM and SDL score highly in their compatibility with the leading translation workbenches: Trados Studio and memoQ. MemSource is also compatible via XLIFF package but currently has more meta data problems. Across is a closed system. Its own offline translator is better than Worldserver Desktop Workbench or XTM Translator, but neither of these are contenders and should not be considered against Studio and memoQ.
<b>File handling / processing</b>	9	8	7	7	7	SDL tools score highly as both contain an in-built copy of Studio to handle file processing. An advanced user of Studio can configure any of the file processing tools, so it is easy to train an experienced translator to configure SDL TMS or Worldserver. MemSource has easy to use Wizards. XTM has lots of scope but aside from XML most changes to file handling needs engineering support. That said, most formats are available out-of-the-box. Across is a closed system.

	SDL TMS	SDL Worldserver	Across Language Server	XTM Cloud	MemSource	COMMENTS
<b>In-Context Review / Translation</b>	5	4	4	6	6	This should now be standard for Web content: HTML and XHTML in most TMS based on plug-in connectors for the most common WCMS such as Sitecore and AEM. Additional charges apply. SDL and XTM have connectors offering some other preview e.g. InDesign Server. MemSource has a connector aimed specifically at video sub-titling.
<b>Progress tracking / Reporting</b>	7	6	3	5	5	Across was originally designed as a LAN tool. If used in this way, Project tracking is good. Usually however no progress is reported until the LSP returns the package. That would be similar for all TMS. Although they have online editors only XTM and MemSource are practical to use. XTM and MemSource have a "Dashboard" centre where reports may be generated. These are quite restricted and simplistic and there is too much focus on workforce costs, which actually has no data unless all your translators always work online. SDL tools offer many more complex Project and Customer reports, but few clients use them and they are not set up by default even in the SaaS package. SDL has made a move towards more visual chart reports on the home page. Overall, all TMS score low in this area. There is some way to go before all data reporting can be achieved live.
<b>Ease of Glossary and Term Base Access</b>	4	3	6	5	5	All TMS have a termbase. Access from the online editor is poor. None of them have automatic live look-up. The number of steps required and windows to open to search for a term varies with Worldserver the worst and Across the best. Perhaps this is irrelevant since most translation would be done offline. Excellent live termbase look-up can be achieved in Studio and memoQ but that is not the same termbase as on the TMS, so not relevant for this discussion.
<b>Updating and saving project work</b>	6	6	5	8	7	Up-to-date translation data storage is most frequent with a live cloud system. XTM and MemSource have richer online translation editors which are practical to use. XTM allows each segment to be passed to the Reviewer after translation and does not wait for the whole file. All tools also have an offline translation option. Updates are only as frequent as when the translator chooses to re-upload the package. SDL tools score higher if used with Trados Studio and real-time connection to the TMS, however this is difficult to achieve unless the TMS and Translators belong to the same company.
<b>Total:</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>55</b>	The overall winner is XTM Cloud across all the scores, but we are very much aware that different clients have different requirements. Where some TMS score highly on updating and saving, that might not be something you need, where by contrast, interoperability is vital. So the real use of this table is to look at whether a TMS does what you need it to do well.