



Acrolinx Enhances SAP Content Quality

FACTS & FIGURES

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Style and grammar rules: **200 for English,
100 for German**
Users: **1,000**



THE PROBLEM

Before Acrolinx was introduced, the quality of SAP's product information varied widely. Because employees around the world were creating content in two source languages (English and German) – sometimes even in the same document – customers often perceived their content as disjointed. SAP wanted to establish a standard to enable them to speak with one voice.



THE SOLUTION

Acrolinx automatically checks the content for terminology, spelling, grammar, and style, and guides writers to make improvements. Acrolinx incorporates detailed style rules and integrates with a wide array of writing tools. The resulting content is more readable, more consistent, and feels like it comes from one company.

We introduced Acrolinx because this product offered the most scope for customization to meet our specific requirements. You can incorporate very detailed and specific style rules into the language checking.



Melanie Wells

Support Engineer Language
Technology, SAP AG

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For over ten years, SAP has been using Acrolinx content optimization software to produce standardized, error-free company and product content. They have created technical documents, training materials, and internal reports that can be understood by everyone. This is essential for a global corporation using German and English as source languages while localizing content in 42 other languages.

Based in St. Leon-Rot, Germany, SAP Language Services coordinates the translation of all SAP product information, documentation, and training/sales materials. In each content area, 100 translation agencies support the SAP Language Services network. With a team of 20 people, the Language Technology group provides each content area with the necessary infrastructure. Among other things, they are responsible for operating and developing automated proofreading with Acrolinx.

SAP was interested in language checking even before Acrolinx had been developed. In 2000, they approached the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence

(DFKI), which had just started developing a language software system. “We introduced this system because it offered the greatest scope for customization to meet our specific requirements. Later, the Acrolinx software was developed from this,” remembers Melanie Wells, Support Engineer at SAP Language Technology.

Inconsistent Source Language Quality Hinders High-Quality, Efficient Translation

Before Acrolinx was introduced, SAP saw wide variations in the language of its product information: technical handbooks, training and support materials, internal reports for risk assessment, and many others.

Even in a single publication, some chapters may be written in German and others in English. Content in one language is then translated to the other, with the result that the tone and quality of the content varied considerably. The only way to achieve better translations was by improving the quality and consistency of the source.

To help improve SAP’s content, Acrolinx had to be capable of automatically checking for terminology, spelling, grammar, and style. But it also needed to integrate with the SDL Trados translation memory software, which SAP had already installed two years before Acrolinx was introduced.

“Spelling and grammar checks can also be performed with Word,” says Matthias Becker, Manager, Language Technology, “but above all else we wanted to enforce our highly detailed style rules directly within the writing tools. In addition, we needed a solution that would work with a broad range of writing tools – not just Microsoft Office.”

Style Rules Can Be Customized

The style rules in SAP Standards and Guidelines can be transferred to Acrolinx and customized there. For German source language, Melanie Wells relies greatly on the standard Acrolinx rules. For English, she has developed most of the rules herself. Acrolinx checks for compliance against one hundred of the most important English rules from SAP Standards and Guidelines.

In addition, Acrolinx eliminates the need for writers to look up any expression they were unsure about; the software contains built-in guidance.

Support for a Wide Range of Editors

Today, SAP authors use Acrolinx to check the terminology, spelling, grammar, and style. Acrolinx highlights potential mistakes, and provides alternative suggestions. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of their authoring operations and their content quality, SAP uses Acrolinx Analytics and SAP Crystal Reports. The software group receives constant updates on their use of Acrolinx through these reports.

Language checking is directly integrated into the user's writing tool thanks to Acrolinx's support for Microsoft Office and a wide range of XML editors and content management systems. Integration in SAP R3 is also possible, because help information and customer tips can be written directly in the ERP software. The latest version of SDL Trados Studio will also integrate with Acrolinx.

Far Fewer Translator Queries

When the technical editor comes across expressions such as, 'To find more information' or 'For detailed information,' Acrolinx advises to use this phrase only: 'For more information, see...'. This kind of consistency reduces the cost of translation because writers use phrases that have already been translated instead of coming up with new variations that drive new translations. "We have to keep an eye on translation costs at all times," says Matthias Becker. "By introducing Acrolinx in conjunction with our translation system, we've been able to reduce these costs considerably." Previously, SAP documents were often hard to understand, which led to delays and higher costs because translators had to ask for help. Thanks to the improved quality of the source language, there are now far fewer translator queries than before.

User Numbers Set to Skyrocket

Technical Documentation was the first department to use Acrolinx. Over time, Support, Training, and other departments such as Risk Assessment also came on



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Matthias Becker, Manager Language Technology, SAP AG



board. By the end of 2013, there were around 1,000 users of Acrolinx across SAP. This figure will soon rise dramatically, however, as SAP introduces Acrolinx in its system for customer problem notifications. “This means we have a potential user base of 30,000,” Melanie Wells predicts.

Terminology Imported to Acrolinx Over Time

SAP used software to check terminology in the past, but it was limited to 10,000 product names and terms from Corporate Branding. For over twenty years, SAP has managed each sector’s specialized terminology in its own terminology database. But starting in 2014, this too will be imported into Acrolinx.

Importing SAP’s entire terminology database into Acrolinx is a major project, because there are over 250 product/service domains within SAP, each of which has its own terminology. Melanie Wells wants to transfer this multi-tiered hierarchy to Acrolinx over time.

Whenever questions of terminology arise in the future, the clear advantage of using Acrolinx is this: the software checks the terminology used and automatically provides suggestions for improvement. It’s a proactive approach that will help SAP improve its content even more.

The Company

Headquartered in Walldorf, Germany, SAP is the leading provider of enterprise software. Since it was founded in 1972, SAP has developed into the world leader in enterprise software through innovation and growth. Thanks to its applications and services, more than 251,000 customers worldwide are able to operate profitably, constantly adapt to new demands, and grow sustainably.



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