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L10N Server
Collaborative Translation System

Andriy Kushnarov
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1 Introduction

L10N Server is TYPO3 extension. The main purpose of this project is to implement an easy system for collaborative work on translation of TYPO3 parts (TYPO3 core, extension, etc.).
This project was founded as a part of Goolgle Summer Of Code 2009 project (http://socghop.appspot.com/).
Let me introduce you project team. The developer is Andriy Kushnarov (me ;-)) a student from Ukraine. He does most of development work. Ingo Renner is a mentor for this project. This position name is taken from GSOC terminology and means something like team leader or project manager.

1.1 Why should we build it?

Currently the situation looks like this. There is a dedicated server for translation. Translation is made in backend by BE users. There are shared BE logins for each language. Translation process is handled by TYPO3 extension llxmltranslate (http://typo3.org/extensions/repository/view/llxmltranslate/current/).
Current way of translation has several issues:

- Core labels are not always current

- Community members who want to help translate labels need to get in contact with their preferred language's team to get the backend login for that language

- Users share passwords

- Backend login is required and translation can be made only from BE

- To start working on translation user needs to find out who his language's team leader is, so participation is complicated

- Translations can not happen spontaneously

- The whole process is not transparent and the community can not track progress of translations

1.2 How will new server work?

So, how should work a new translation system? What improvements will be done to translation process?
Based on previous experience and some new ideas it was developed basic scenario for collaborative work on translation in new manner. This process looks like this.
A frontend user first registers on typo3.org. In profile user sets the languages he can speak. User needs to set languages only once and there is no need to select that languages each time he wants to make a translation.
When registration is complete user can start working on translations. Especially he goes to the translation server/page and sees the overview of projects available for translation. These projects can be core or TYPO3 extensions.

After choosing a project user can select a part he wants to work on. In the core that would be a module, context sensitive help or other smaller chunks of the overall core. For extensions these smaller parts would be backend modules, frontend plugins, context sensitive help, field labels or other available parts. After that user starts translating. He/she picks a label and provides a translation. This translation is saved as a suggestion. Other translation suggestions may exist.

At some point the chief translator (translation leader for a language) looks over the available suggestions. This could also be triggered by notifications after a certain part has been translated and an email has been sent to the chief translator. The chief translator looks over the available suggestions and accepts one for each label. When done, a package of the finished translations is released to the TYPO3 Extension Repository (TER) and distributed to the TYPO3 installations (distribution already works).

1.3 Advantages/Deliverables

The new translation process will be really simple and flexible. Whole translation process happens in frontend! Every registered user can make suggestions for label translation. Each user (translator) can make suggestions in several languages he can speak. There is a role of chief translator which controls the translation process for some language and makes final decision of which suggestions are correct.

Furthermore Collaborative Translation System has a possibility for tracking statistics. So it will be easy to identify top translators, check which projects/languages need translators most of all. As an additional functionality it will be possible to use a desktop translation tools for translation, e.g. import/export ".po" files.

2 Development process

The guarantee of successive project is right development process with project specification, design, schedule, etc. As soon as we found a lot of new ideas to be implemented and we understood that our team is not so big it was decided to choose an iterative development model. According to this model development will be divided to several iterations. At the first iteration it is implemented main functionality. At the next iterations secondary functionality is implemented and main functionality is better tested and improved.

2.1 Specification

Specification for the project is made for each iteration separately but of cause it should take in account (or be based on) the specification from the previous iterations. Specification includes information on **what** should be done but not **how**.

Each specification document includes some use cases and use case diagrams. Use cases describe main scenarios. Functionality for implementation of these scenarios should be developed.

Despite the use cases we found very useful to add some basic appearance design for new functionality. This design shows very basic view of new tables/forms/etc.

2.2 Design

Starting from version 4.3, TYPO3 supports new MVC system so new translation server will be based on this system. This means that design for the project also should be made according to this system.

2.3 Schedule

The schedule for development process is written based on design. Actually new TYPO3 MVC system should improve the time used on development. New extension framework "extbase" plus new templating system "fluid" do decrease the time spent on development of TYPO3 extension.

2.4 Tools

In development process of new collaborative translation system it was used next tools:

- **extbase**, the framework for building of TYPO3 extensions using all advantages of new MVC system

- **fluid**, new templates engine

- **forge.typo3.org**, the powerful tool for project hosting: SVN, Issue tracker, Wiki, etc.

3 Conclusions

As you could see new translation server will make translation process much easier and really transparent, management process lightweight and the life of translators spectacular :-)