

Controlled English - Uses and Benefits

Position Paper

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Key Points

- **Expanding global uses for documentation requires greater source control.**
 - **Employing Controlled English (CE) techniques delivers a more streamlined, more user-oriented document.**
 - **Utilizing CE when creating new content improves consistency, saving time and costs during localization and translation.**
 - **LT offers CE-based solutions that use the latest technology and methods to ensure maximum benefits for our clients.**
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Source Control – At the Heart of Globalization

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As the globalization of our economy continues, companies increasingly are focused on delivering culturally-correct content to their target consumers. Companies today must expect that their product documentation - whether it is the user manual for an automobile, the maintenance procedure for a military aircraft, or the “Help” text for a child’s computer game - will be read at some point by users who do not speak English.

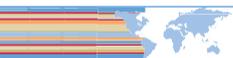
Large, globally savvy firms will localize their documentation to ensure its acceptance by worldwide audiences. Smaller firms may resort to a simple translation of the materials, which is less effective but also less costly. A key driver in both these solutions is the nature of the source content. The “tighter” and less ambiguous the source material, the lower the cost to adapt it to the target language(s). Unfortunately, few firms understand these impacts and fewer still know how to compensate for them.

This situation has given rise to a new service industry that enables firms to leverage proven techniques to structure their source material in anticipation of taking their documentation to a global audience. Technical writing that incorporates Controlled English (CE) is revolutionizing the industry, saving companies time and money without sacrificing customer satisfaction.

This paper provides an overview of CE, examples of how adopting CE can improve the overall impact of technical documents, and a look at the value this generates for companies operating in a variety of industries.

How CE Works – Applying Structure to Meaning

CE works on a very simple principle: By controlling the source language we can:



Stylistic, grammatical, and terminological inconsistencies are exposed and compounded each time the material is translated into a new language.

- Improve quality
- Enforce the use of consistent and correct terminology
- Produce a consistent writing style
- Leverage these same benefits in all subsequent language versions

Imagine this scenario: A technical publication suite for a new product consists of thousands of pages of data written by a dozen different writers. To support the global sales of the product, the company will have to translate the publications into at least five languages, and potentially as many as 20. While diligent editing of the original source material eliminated many of the overt discrepancies among the individual writers, the remaining stylistic, grammatical, and terminological inconsistencies are exposed and compounded each time the material is translated into a new language.

CE addresses these issues by employing a standardized terminology database and technology known as a “parsing engine” at the time of writing. This engine analyzes the text as it is being created and scores it against a set of internal “rules” that govern the desired degree of control. When a segment of text conflicts with the approved terminology or exceeds the defined structural parameters, the system highlights the segment and offers recommendations for revision. In this way, writers learn as they write, ultimately adapting their style to conform to the requirements. Some examples of rules that can be specified are:

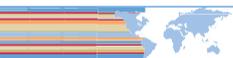
- No more than 25 words per sentence
- No more than seven sentences per paragraph
- No use of slang or words ending in “ing”
- Use the active voice

By applying the same rules across an entire writing engagement, you can ensure the delivery of a highly consistent document suite to your customers, regardless of which resources actually write the content.

CE In Action – An Example of Its Impact

Documents created using CE deliver a clear, concise message to the reader.

Documents created using CE deliver a clear, concise message to the reader. While CE applications are expanding each day, so far this approach has proven most effective for procedures-based publications such as user manuals for complex machinery or technology. The example shown on the next page consists of excerpts from a maintenance manual for an item of farm equipment. The first file contains the initial content, created without CE, while the second shows the revised copy produced using CE technology. Note both the streamlined manner in which the information is conveyed and the ease with which the content could be translated in the second version compared to the first:



Without CE

1 Shorter sentences and paragraphs highlight critical content more effectively

2 Safety conditions: Warnings relating to potential loss of life must come before cautions and notes

3 Simplified language improves understanding

4 Bullets help streamline complex instructions, reducing the potential for error

INTRODUCTION

This section gives full details of the service procedures necessary to maintain your tractor at peak efficiency. The lubrication and maintenance chart on page 7 provides a ready reference to these requirements. Each operation is numbered for easy reference.

In addition to the regular maintenance operations listed, check the following items every 10 hours or daily during the first 50 hours of operation:

- Wheel nuts for tightness
- Front axle hub oil levels

IMPORTANT: Park the tractor on level ground and, where applicable, extend all cylinders before checking oil levels.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Read and observe all safety precautions listed in "Servicing the Tractor" in the Introduction Section at the front of this manual.

NOTE: Dispose of used filters and fluids properly.

CAUTION: Do not check, lubricate, service or make adjustments to the tractor with the engine running.

PREVENTING SYSTEM CONTAMINATION

To prevent contamination when changing oils, filters, etc., always clean the area around filter caps, level plugs, drain plugs, dipsticks and filters prior to removal. Before connecting remote cylinders, ensure that oil contained within them is clean, has not degenerated due to long storage and is of the correct grade.

To prevent dirt entry during greasing, wipe dirt from the grease fittings before greasing. Wipe excess grease from the fitting after greasing.

With CE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the instructions for the maintenance of your tractor. The Lubrication and Maintenance Chart on page 7 shows the items for maintenance. Each item has a reference number.

DANGER: Always stop the engine before you service the tractor or apply lubrication.

WARNING: Always park the tractor on a flat, level surface. Before you check the oil levels, extend all hydraulic cylinders.

CAUTION: Always read, understand and follow the safety instructions as shown in the Introduction Section, "How to Service the Tractor."

NOTE: When you discard any engine oil, oil filters or hydraulic fluid, you must follow the instructions on page 40.

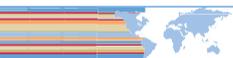
Maintenance for the Hydraulic System

Check these items every 10 hours, or each day during the first 50 hours of operation. Use the hourmeter to measure the hours of operation.

- Check the torque on the wheel nuts.
- Check the level of the oil in the hub for the front axle.

How to keep the hydraulic system clean

- Before you add oil or change any filters, clean the area around the filter caps, dipstick and drain plugs.
- Before you connect another hydraulic cylinder, check that the hydraulic fluid inside the hydraulic cylinder is clean. The hydraulic fluid must not contain dirt, metal or other particles.
- Clean the grease fitting before you apply grease. After you apply grease, clean the nipple on the grease fitting.



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Software organizations gain substantial ROI by implementing CE at the start of the documentation effort.

Value of CE – Is the Effort Worth It?

With most corporate processes, the age-old adage is: the greater the standardization, the greater the efficiency. Until now, however, individual interpretation and variations in overall style have made standardization of the writing process challenging. With the advent of CE-based tools and methods, your writers can operate under the same guiding principles as an assembly line, producing consistent, high-quality materials. The benefits of using CE include:

- Improved terminology consistency
- Improved clarity
- Easier to read for non-native English speakers
- Easier to translate
- More repetition of words and phrases, which aids Machine/Computer Assisted Translation (MAT/CAT)
- Lower product lifecycle costs for clients
- Reduced liability from ambiguous instructions.

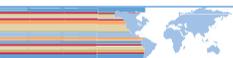
A key potential benefit of CE that currently is being explored is its synergy with MAT/CAT and fully automated Machine Translation (MT). As term and structure consistency improves, so, too, does the ability to apply these tools. By translating larger amounts of your source text using these systems, you can improve the turn-around time dramatically on large projects while reducing the overall cost.

Many companies already are enjoying the benefits of using CE. Several years ago the aviation industry in Europe began using a standard known as AECMA Simplified English, a very strict form of CE that increases the readability of aviation documents for people who speak English as a second language.

Many large software vendors also are employing CE. Because a successful software application may be localized into dozens of languages, these organizations gain substantial return on investment (ROI) by implementing CE at the start of the documentation effort.

Engaging LT for CE – Partnering for Success

L10N Technology (LT) has been a leader in adopting and applying CE techniques since the mid 1990s. Our team of technical writers is trained in the latest methods and tools and can customize a CE solution to meet your needs. From initial content development to localization and electronic distribution, we can manage your entire documentation effort through our innovative SGML/XML content management and publishing systems.



About LT

L10N Technology (LT) is the leading provider of translation, localization, technical writing and interpretation services that enable businesses to deliver locally relevant and culturally connected products, services and communications anywhere in the world. Companies throughout the world use our solutions to help grow their businesses in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Our scalable end-to-end solutions can help accelerate a company's time to market while improving the quality and consistency of the company's products and services. Our wide range of clients include leading businesses in information technology, automotive, e-learning, life sciences, entertainment, telecommunications, aerospace and power and utilities industries.

To learn more, contact us at mcgcompany@naver.com or find us on the web at www.liontech.co.kr.

