

# CASESTUDY: BLACKBOARD

## Reimagining Localization – It's All About the User

### CLIENTPROFILE

For Blackboard Inc., a global provider of enterprise education software and learning management systems, linguistic accuracy and consistency with the English version are no longer enough to define a successful localized solution.

User experience (UX) is key and what matters most. Using translations that are too much of a direct reflection of the source English can feel unnatural to the user and can drive down satisfaction and overall product usage.

#### FACTS

175 LANGUAGES  
1000+ EMPLOYEES  
21 GLOBAL OFFICES  
4TH LARGEST US LSP\*  
7TH LARGEST LSP WORLDWIDE\*  
\*SOURCE: COMMON SENSE ADVISORY, 2016

#### OFFICES

USA  
UK  
IRELAND  
ITALY  
GERMANY  
CHINA  
JAPAN  
ROMANIA  
SPAIN  
HUNGARY

#### HEADQUARTERS

241 EAST 4TH ST.  
SUITE 207  
FREDERICK, MD 21701  
T: 301.668.0330  
T: 800.370.9515  
SALES@WELOCALIZE.COM  
WELOCALIZE.COM

### CLIENTCHALLENGE

Blackboard and Welocalize set out in 2015 to build a localization program designed to produce a User Interface that truly feels like it is written for the student, regardless of where in the world that student may be. The ultimate goal was to generate a user experience that inspires confidence in the product, drives adoption, improves usability metrics and ensures the international success of Blackboard.

### WELOCALIZESOLUTION

To achieve this, Blackboard and Welocalize put in place new localization rules where:

- ✓ Content writers would no longer feel constraint to create globally neutral content
- ✓ Translators would no longer feel they had to linguistically respect source content and follow rigid language assets
- ✓ Quality Assurance (QA) testers would no longer restrict their changes to grammar and spelling

These new rules were aimed at creating content that is not only accurate but most importantly, locally relevant with user satisfaction as the main quality metric. Translation teams would also be provided with “in-context” knowledge and support, to minimize the traditional limitations of “translating blindfolded.”

### GLOBAL CONTENT STRATEGY MANIFESTO

At the start of this localization program, which centered on User Experience, came the creation of a Global Content Strategy Manifesto. This was generated from a three day workshop attended by both Blackboard and Welocalize, where Design Thinking was applied to identify a shared vision, insights, principles, definitions, journey maps, personas, needs, opportunities and action plans. The collaborative effort ensured every participant through the global content supply chain worked closely together on the localization process. This way the translation was no longer perceived as a task where one simply “throws the English strings over the fence.”

*“Good user experience is ultimately what leads to user satisfaction. Localization programs that keep their focus on linguistic accuracy are not likely to deliver content that is most natural to users in their target language. Welocalize and Blackboard have collaboratively built a program with the user experience central to all activities. It has been a great success for all teams, and most importantly for our users.”*

Marie Hanabusa, Localization Manager, Blackboard

# CASESTUDY: BLACKBOARD

## *Reimagining Localization – It's All About the User*



### CERTIFICATIONPROGRAM

With the Manifesto in place, a Certification program was created to deliver the message across extended teams throughout the localization supply chain. User satisfaction and good user experience had to become the main success metrics against which the localization program would be measured, not the traditional linguistic accuracy.

This Certification program became the mandatory on-boarding tool for all 250+ Welocalize resources working on the Blackboard account. It provided the necessary information on Blackboard's products, students, style, and stressed an approach to localization that required linguists to look at Blackboard's products from the perspective of the user and encouraged linguists to apply bold adaptation and creative thinking. Translators and testers alike were told to "forget the English" and were encouraged to stray from direct translation in an effort to produce the most natural user experience possible for students in their respective geographies.

The Certification program also acknowledged the human element in translation, aiming to engage, empower, and generate excitement among linguists with the belief that a committed team of translators would produce localized content at the highest level of usability. The response was incredibly positive. The translators, testers and other project team members saw the localization approach as fresh, playful and inspiring.

### IN-CONTEXTTRANSLATION

With new localization guidelines in place, another challenge was to ensure translators were working "in-context". Linguists, translators, and reviewers need as much content in-context as possible. A new position, named User Experience Language Lead (UX Lead), was created at Welocalize to help gather contextual references and offer guidance. Further support was provided by in-context quality assurance (QA). As translators are empowered to stray from direct translation to produce a more natural user experience, in-context QA testers validate the translation and confirm it is appropriate. The testers are able to make further adjustments that could not be made by the translators at the string level.

### THEFEATURES

- ✓ Translators & Reviewers encouraged to produce natural UX
- ✓ QA Testers not limited to linguistic accuracy
- ✓ Global Content Strategy Manifesto
- ✓ Certification Program for the full supply chain
- ✓ Focus on "in-context cultural relevance"

### THEBENEFITS

- ✓ User experience central to localization program
- ✓ User satisfaction is main quality metric
- ✓ Positive impact on a wide range of Blackboard products in up to 26 locales
- ✓ Localization of UI, Help, mobile and multimedia content all follow a consistent strategy
- ✓ Freedom for English content creation, based on the confidence that translations will not be direct

#### ABOUT US

WELOCALIZE, INC., FOUNDED IN 1997, OFFERS INNOVATIVE TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION SOLUTIONS HELPING GLOBAL BRANDS TO GROW AND REACH AUDIENCES AROUND THE WORLD IN MORE THAN 175 LANGUAGES. OUR SOLUTIONS INCLUDE GLOBAL LOCALIZATION MANAGEMENT, TRANSLATION, SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT, PEOPLE SOURCING, LANGUAGE SERVICES AND AUTOMATION TOOLS INCLUDING MT, TESTING AND STAFFING SOLUTIONS AND ENTERPRISE TRANSLATION MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES. [WELOCALIZE.COM](http://WELOCALIZE.COM)

