

Free lunches may not exist, but free translation resources do!

Online resources for translators

Got the translator's block? Gearing up to build a style guide for your app or website translation, but don't know where to start? Always admired a global company's content style and wondered how they do it?

Don't send up silent prayers to the universe hoping for help. This list of freely available resources for translators that we have put together is just what you need. Each resource in this list has some general guidelines as well as instructions specific to their website, product, or service.

Apple

Apple's [internationalization guide](#) is geared towards developers – it lists a wide range of programming resources for iOS as well as Mac developers. Apart from guidelines on making apps ready for localization, the guide points to a downloadable glossary. However, it requires a login.

Facebook

Facebook [Translation App Guide](#) available is meant to help translators using the Facebook app for translation. It explains various nuances of the app such as tokens, variations, attributes, inline translations, and voting with the app. It also touches on linguistic aspects such as translating with gender in mind, given that Facebook offers the option to users to not mention their gender.

Facebook accommodates the difference conventions of languages with the help of tokens, variations, and attributes. It also offers [style guides](#) and glossaries for every language on Facebook. Volunteer translators can head over to the Translator Community when they have feedback, suggestions, or questions.

Google

[Google Global Advertiser's](#) localization guide consists of tips on how to work with translation companies and a short glossary. Again, this too isn't meant for translators, so detailed resources aren't available. The same goes for [Google Maps'](#) page on localizing.

Microsoft Language Portal

It is by far one of the most comprehensive and [freely available termbases online](#). You can search the English equivalent terms in over 100 languages and even download the termbase for offline access. The portal also offers localization style guides, localized error message lookup tool for Microsoft products, a reference library for building global-ready apps, and many more resources.

Mozilla

Mozilla's [extensive style guide](#) stresses that translators must make translations resonate well for their culture and audience instead of trying to be strictly faithful to the format and style in the source language. It says [here](#): "Localized content shouldn't be a literal translation, but it should capture the same meaning and sentiment. So feel free to pull it apart and put it back together; replace an English expression with one from your native language; Mozilla-fy it for your region."

In fact, its style guide is a series of questions to the translator on how dates, time, and abbreviations, among other things, are used in their language.

I particularly liked some of the tips on translating difficult concepts...

- "Know your product and understand the function of the feature.
- Consider similar ideas for those functions in your culture.
- Associate a culturally specific image with the meaning and function of the term."

... and advice on developing new term bases

- "Avoid overly borrowing English expressions
- Referencing another language from the same language family may inspire you to come up with your own terms
- Consider the product target audience (age, level of literacy, education, social and economic status)
- Will you use loan words from another language or coin new terms in your language to maintain language purity? Is there government requirement or policy to encourage creating new terms for new concepts, or will loan words be sufficient to reach broader masses and expedite new technology adoption?"

TED

Apart from a short style guide, TED has a rich mine of support files for [subtitling](#). In true TED spirit, the style guide starts off with tips on collaboration asking people to direct criticism at the work, and not at translators. Translators are also encouraged to contact their Language Coordinators in case of disputes.

TED talks have been subtitled by volunteer translators in over 100 languages.

Twitter

Twitter provides a [glossary](#) for the language you choose to translate into. This is available in the Help section of Twitter Translation, which can be accessed after signing up for translation and agreeing to Twitter's terms.