

What You Need to Know When Searching for a Translation Management System

One would think that the term Translation Management System is unambiguous. But in reality, with just one qualifying word, its meaning completely changes. For example, Translation Project Management System, Translation Business Management System, and Content Management System for Translation are completely different systems.

All of them address specific aspects of work in a translation agency. But there is much more to the work of agencies: you need to manage translation quality, the publication of translated content, translation project finances, the manager and translator team, terminology, sales, invoicing and payments, etc.

No developer is able to create a system that covers all of this, so a variety of systems have been developed to address different aspects of work in translation agencies. However, all these programs are categorized as Translation Management Systems. And the layperson is not even aware that there is little in common between them.

(A similar problem arises with software: *automatic* translation programs, i.e., performed by a machine, for some reason are combined with *automated* translation programs performed by humans, although these are two different types of programs.)

For example, on the [Translation Management Software page of the Capterra website](#), all the following systems are listed together:

- Translation business management systems
- Website translation systems
- Online CAT systems
- Machine Translation Systems
- CMS connectors for translated content
- Remote interpretation systems

There are other riddles on the page. Half of the systems have unclear descriptions, making it hard to understand what exactly they are for. The dominant marketing message is “we will significantly speed up and simplify your processes!” What exactly will you speed up? How will you simplify our processes?

And commercially marketed systems share this page with systems developed by major players in the translation market to meet their

And *Capterra* also has a function in which you can compare the incomparable, such as *Protemos*, *memoQ*, and *Boostlingo*. Comparing these systems is like comparing a swimsuit, a puffer jacket, and a reflective vest. These are all items of clothing, after all.

Why are the program lists in these aggregator sites such a mess and why doesn't anyone sort them out? Because the situation, for various reasons, suits everyone. More precisely, everyone *thinks* that it suits them.

Users search for a Translation Management System without specifying which kind of system (and sometimes not knowing about the different kinds of systems) they want and end up on an aggregator site.

Realizing that potential buyers do not do exact product searches, developers do not take the risk of correctly categorizing products. They are guided by the following logic: it is better to let my product be found in the wrong place than not found in the right place.

Aggregator sites are also perfectly happy with this state of affairs: there are myriad programs, it takes a long time to classify them, and why spend energy on this if developers have systems to offer and there is demand from users. The site is going to get traffic either way.

As a result, everyone suffers: users do not find what they need, developers get the wrong users, and the aggregator site gets extraneous traffic.

Conclusion: If you are searching for a Translation Management System (whatever you understand by this term), specify what exactly you need. Otherwise, you will be offered a puffer jacket for a trip to the beach

or overalls for a night at a Viennese ball. List the features you need and check with the developers to see if they have been implemented in their system. This will save a lot of time for both parties.

We also recommend checking out the [Nimdzi Language Technology Atlas](#) resource. Nimdzi has undertaken the first serious attempt to systematize this mess and classify the systems used in the translation industry.

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