The translation business management systems market: a study
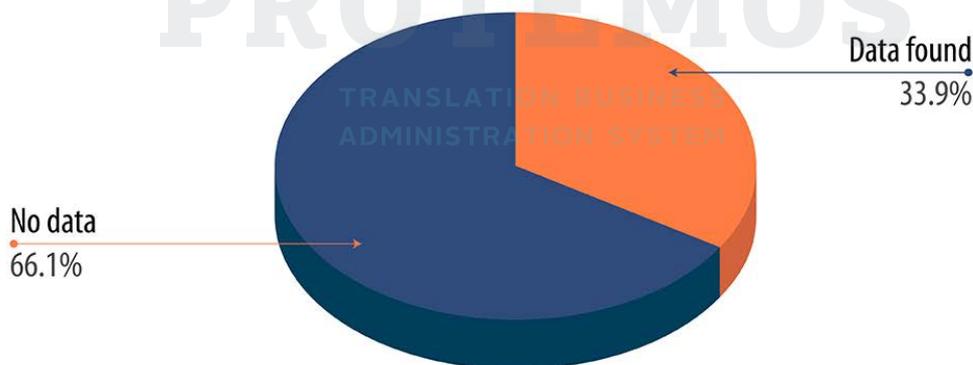
A few years ago, we interviewed translation agencies about the translation project management systems they use. We decided to repeat the survey and find out what changes have occurred in the market in recent years. We also changed the methodology of the study and asked just one simple question: **what are currently the most popular translation business management systems**?

General information and methodology

The study consisted of the following stages:

1) We compiled a list of companies belonging to various translation associations (*GALA*, *Elia*, *ATC*, *ATA*, etc.) mentioned on the websites of translation business management system developers and in various online catalogs.

2) We checked the websites of the translation agencies above to see what Translation Business Management Systems (TBMS) they use. We also studied the lists of companies on the websites of translation management system developers. We already knew what systems some companies used.

3) If we weren't able to determine which TBMS the translation agency uses, we contacted them and asked.

At the time of writing this article, there were 1,747 translation agencies on our list. We obtained information from 592 of them.

Meaning that we were unable to get any information from 2/3 of the companies on the list. This can greatly impact the final results, so we will be updating our stats as soon as we receive the required information from translation companies.

Results of the study

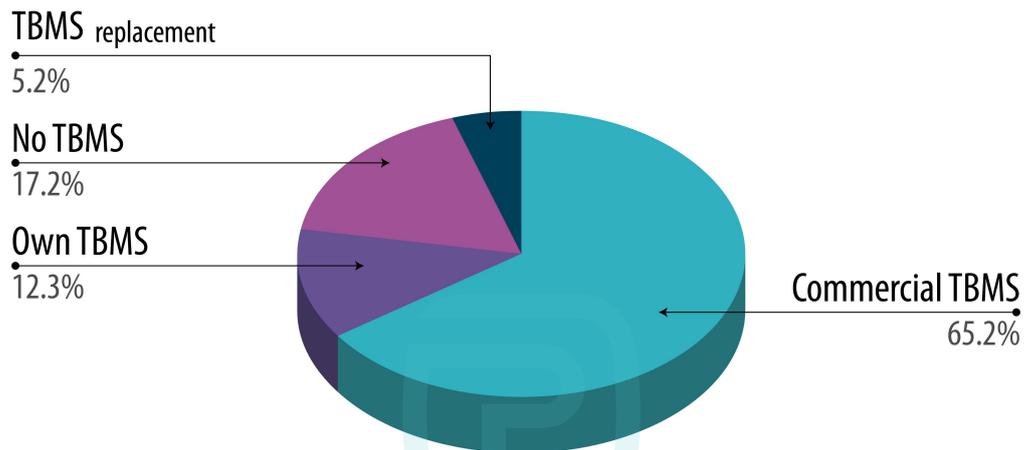The statistics below relate to 592 companies that provided information.

The first question we asked was: **do you use a translation business management system?**

Only 17% of the companies in the sample don't use such a system. Most often these are small agencies; the rest use a certain system.

12% use a system they personally developed.

5% have adapted other tools (CRM, TMS, accounting programs, etc.) or combinations of these tools for their project management needs.
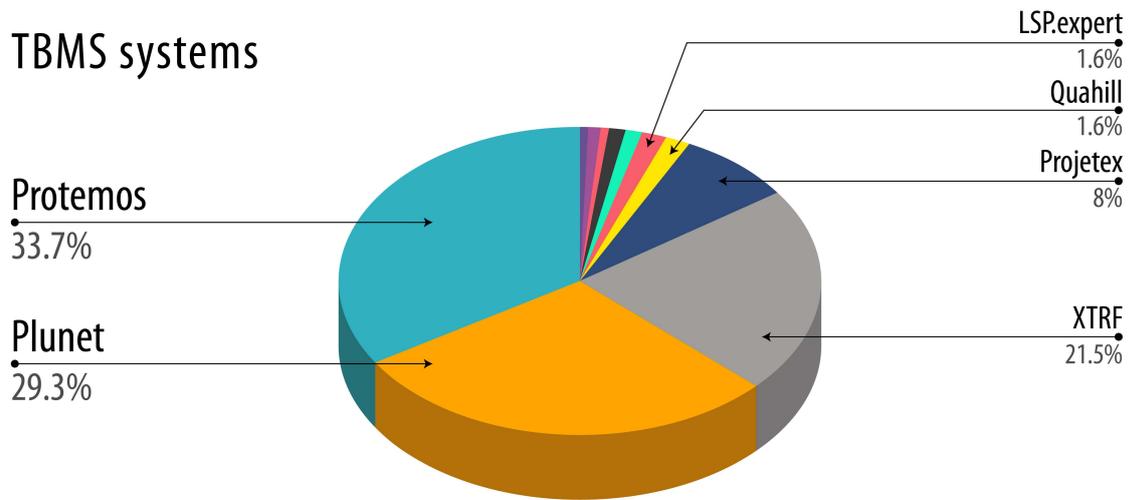
Almost two-thirds (65%) of companies use some kind of commercial translation business management system:

TBMS replacement
5.2%

No TBMS
17.2%

Own TBMS
12.3%

Commercial TBMS
65.2%

We then analyzed the distribution of shares of specific commercial systems among the companies using them. We wanted to know what translation business management system different companies use. Most often we could obtain this information by simply reading the agency's website, or the information was already available to us.
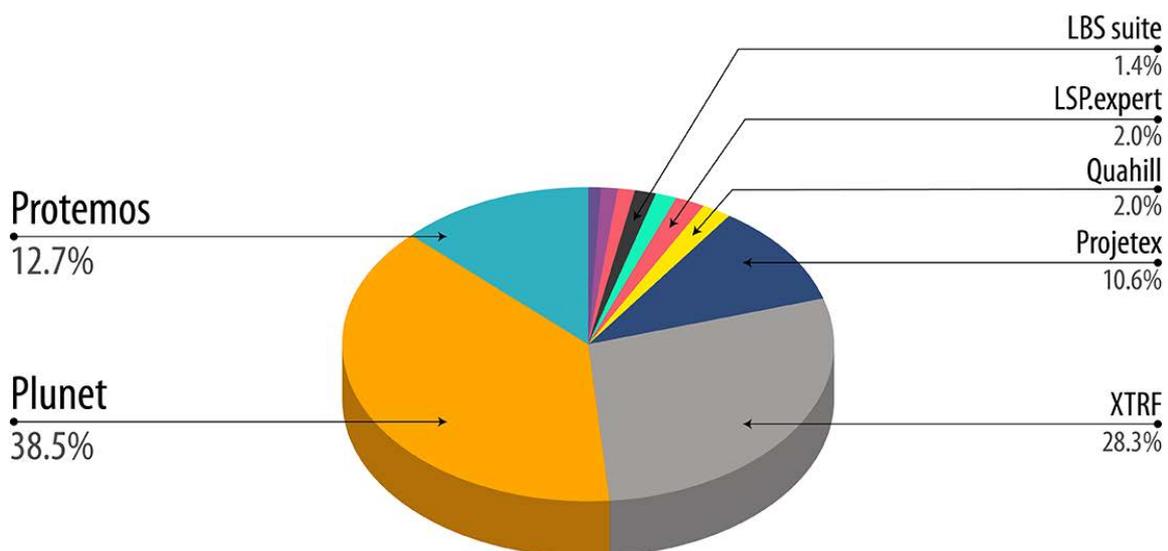
The initial results were as follows:

TBMS systems

Protemos
33.7%

Plunet
29.3%

LSP.expert
1.6%

Quahill
1.6%

Projetex
8%

XTRF
21.5%

According to the chart, *Protemos* is the most popular system. It is clear that this result is distorted: we had a complete list of *Protemos* users and information from only 34% of the companies in the sample. The remaining 66% also use a system, after all.

We assumed that among these 66% of translation agencies which we have no information on, the distribution of TBMS systems used will be approximately the same as among the 34%, only without *Protemos*. Extrapolating the available figures to the remaining 66% and bringing the data together, the results are as follows:

Protemos
12.7%

Plunet
38.5%

LBS suite
1.4%

LSP.expert
2.0%

Quahill
2.0%

Projetex
10.6%

XTRF
28.3%

Predictably, according to the renewed chart, the most popular systems are *Plunet* and *XTRF*. These "old-timers" have been on the market for over 15 years, and their customer base is understandably larger than the rest: translation agencies rarely change the system they use.

Protemos is in third place: it is a relatively new system launched only in 2016.

Projetex has about a 10% market share, although it is inferior to newer systems. The remaining translation business management systems are noticeably less popular and in total have a less than 10% market share.

Conclusion

The above figures should of course not be blindly trusted, since the study contains a number of forced assumptions. The actual market share of each of the translation business management systems may differ from our results. But the gap between the four leaders—*Plunet*, *XTRF*, *Protemos*, and *Projetex*—and the rest of the systems is so wide that it is unlikely that they need to worry about losing their top-4 place in the near future.

We are continuing to collate data, and if you can provide us with any information to create a more complete picture, we will be happy to add it to the results of our study.