

Localization Guidelines

Do the best you can and send an initial version of your locale files to MicroImages. You can refine and expand your localization after you have received some feedback from the users of your initial version. It takes only a few hours to update locale files for a new release of the TNT products, so take the occasion of the next release to consult others and then review and refine your translation choices according to the feedback you have received.



Establish a Vocabulary

In technical disciplines such as those encompassed by the TNT products, rigorous and consistent vocabulary is essential. To avoid ambiguity and confusion, the first task of localization is to define precise vocabulary, and select consistent terms.

Before you begin translating to prepare your locale files, settle on the terminology for your translation. Select `SUPPORT / LOCALIZATION / GENERATE DICTIONARY` from the TNTmips menu. Create an output text file named `GLOSSARY.TXT` for your working translation terminology.

As you look for equivalent terms, refer to the TNT products glossary in the appendix of the on-line reference manual to see both the focus and the breadth of the English usage. Proper names (such as Delaunay) and acronyms (such as SPOT) need no translation. Some common English words are used with a particular meaning in the TNT products, so a careful and consistent choice of terminology in the target language is necessary. For example, “object” has a wide, imprecise meaning in the computer industry that is much broader than its particular meaning in TNT (where it always refers to a raster, vector, CAD, TIN, or database object in a Project File).

For more details on the process of translation and localization, refer to the booklet *Getting Started: Changing Languages (Localization)*.

Don't Get Bugged Down

As important as it is for you to prepare your translation vocabulary, do not let uncertainty halt your progress. Translators usually discover that it is difficult to find equivalents for some technical terms. Moreover, it may not be easy to settle on the gender, case, tense, or voice to fit all a term's contexts. Thus, if you finish the easy 90% find yourself stumped on the difficult 10%, go ahead with what you have as a “first draft” localization and plan to refine it after it has been used for a while. Consider using some creative solutions for difficult situations:

- Transliterate. Consider just using the alphabet of your locale to spell the English word. Since many technical terms are new to users and must be defined as part of the learning process, a transliteration may be all you need.
- Leave an English word unchanged. The computer users in your locale have already encountered other software products with all or part of the interface in English language and alphabet. It is acceptable to leave some technical terms in the interface in English.
- Invent your own term. If, as far as you know, you are the first in your locale to face the task of translating a certain technical term, then you may wish to set a precedent and invent a suitable term in your language.

Above all, do not postpone the completion of your translation effort until you have a finalized translation for every last term and concept. It is better to deliver an acceptable mixed-language localization than to deliver nothing at all.