

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT BERT

A Practical Guide to Localization

Written by:

BOB CLARK

John Benjamins Amsterdam/Philadelphia  
ISBN 90 272 1956 7 (Eur)/1 58811 006 0 (USA)

Book reviews? I can take them or leave them. Come on, let's face it. Under normal circumstances I think I'd rather watch paint dry than write a book review. But every once in a while a book comes out that makes you say, "Wow, this is special!" I had the privilege of being involved in the pre-publication review process of *A Practical Guide to Localization*, which, with a hefty page count of nearly five hundred, was no mean feat. By the time I had finished it I was just itching to review it. I have no doubt that the sheer volume and quality of information squeezed into those five hundred pages will qualify this book as being one of the most important reference works of the decade. Esselink has managed to deliver a detailed overview of the entire Localization process in an intelligently structured format that just about anybody can understand. In his introductory chapter he provides definitions for all those confusing "ation" words, Translation, Localization, Internationalization, Globalization (you still often hear the question, "What is the difference between Translation and Localization?"). In the same chapter he traces the development of the Software Localization Industry and explains how a handful of service providers have managed to dominate the market. He also supplies us with an answer to that age-old question, "Why has this Localization ghetto sprung up in Ireland of all places?" When you think of all the money that must have been spent over the years by the major Localization players "getting it right", it almost seems like Esselink is sharing State Secrets with us. Not only does he describe the Localization process in minute detail, covering Translation Technology, Documentation, Engineering, Evaluations, Graphics, Project Management, Quality Assurance, Terminology, Software, Online Help, Website Globalization, he actually gives us step-by-step instructions on how to carry out each phase of the process including the use of the appropriate tools to do so. If that were not enough, he also includes checklists along the way to make sure that we have not overlooked any-



thing, for example, in Chapter 9, Desktop Publishing, we see, "Use the following check lists for the format check of localized documents. In the front matter, check to ensure that:

- The correct product version number is included.
- Copyright information and date are correct.
- Part or item numbers are correct for each localized document.
- Publication date and "printed in" information are correct.
- US specific statements or contact information have either been deleted or adjusted.
- All copyright and trademark symbols, such as ® and ©, are present and printed properly."

A quick browse through the Table of Contents is enough to convince even the most sceptical reader that *A Practical Guide to Localization* is indispensable to anyone involved in Translation/Localization, from University students to Localization "veterans". This goes without saying. The genius of Esselink lies in the fact that he manages, possibly without intending to do so, to inspire us to get out there and localize. We must, of course, exercise caution here. Just as simply following a recipe never guarantees the desired result in the dish produced, no "How To" book will ever be a substitute for experience. The Localization Industry, constantly bemoaning the fact that there are never enough qualified practitioners to meet the demand, must surely welcome the publication of Esselink's book. However, the Localization Industry would hardly be pleased to see an army of "cowboy" localizers flooding the market! I can already hear some of you saying, "Ah, that's all well and good, but, in my experience, by the time a book is finally published that deals

with a subject changing as rapidly as Localization, it is totally out of date." Our friend Bert is way ahead of you. Well in advance of publication he had already set up a website, [www.locguide.com](http://www.locguide.com), to provide updates to his book as well as supporting exercises and sample files. As book titles go, I suppose *A Practical Guide to Localization* is as good as any – I would have preferred *The Localization Bible*. It would have done Esselink more justice.