

## Intento for Translators

**What are the pros and cons of using a tool like Intento that allows you simultaneous access to dozens of machine translation (MT) engines? (When I say “a tool like,” I’m really not being particularly accurate because it’s actually the only tool that does what it does.) If you’ve used generic MT engines like those from Google, Microsoft, or DeepL via your translation environment, you know that it’s rather tedious to create an application programming interface (API) key on their respective websites and then enter it into the application you’re using. It might be okay if you just want to use one or two MT engines, but if you would like to access 10 or 20, this becomes a real headache (and honestly untenable—if only because you don’t even know many of these engines exist or how to jump the language barriers of the many East Asian specimens to connect to them).**

**W**hy exactly would you want to have access to so many engines? The answer to that depends on a number of variables. For instance, if you work in a language combination that’s not particularly well supported by MT engines,

the performance between different texts you translate may differ widely. The same might be true for languages that are well supported, particularly when it comes to different kinds of text or subject matter. You might be well situated if you’re already using a customizable

MT engine such as OPUS-MT or ModernMT. (And, yes, it’s also fine if you don’t use MT at all.) But for others, it might be rather attractive to have only an API-based agreement with one entity (in this case, Intento) to connect you to engines such as AISA, Alibaba,

Amazon, Apptek, Baidu, CloudTranslation, DeepL, Elia, Fujitsu, Globalese, Google, GTCOM, IBM Watson, iFLYTEK, Kakao Developers, Kawamura International, Kingsoft, Lesan, LINDAT, LingvaNex, Microsoft, ModernMT, Naver, NTT Com, Pangeanic, Process 9, Prompsit, PROMT, Rozetta, RWS, SAP, SYSTRAN, Tencent, Tilde, XL8, Yandex, YarakuZen, Youdao, or Zinrai. (I know. I didn’t know many of these MT providers existed, either.)

Clearly not all of them will be relevant (Fujitsu’s Zinrai engine, for instance, supports only English->Japanese), but there’s a good chance that some engines will be relevant for your language combination, and an even greater likelihood that there’ll be more than you think.

So, how does one work with Intento? First, you’ll need to work with either Lingotek, memoQ, Trados, Smartcat, Wordfast Anywhere, Wordbee, or XTM if you want to bring MT suggestions via Intento into your translation environment. For each of these tools, a free plugin is provided (either readily integrated or separately installable) that enables you to connect to Intento. Then you’ll need one of the plans that Intento offers to access its ready-made connectors to its MT partners. The newly unveiled plans that are relevant to individual translators include:

- **Localization Starter for \$25/month:** This will provide access to all non-customizable engines,

including the option of selecting one of 16 domains and up to one million characters per month. (All fees that are payable to the original MT providers are paid by Intento.)

- **Localization Expert for \$75/month:** This will provide access to all non-customizable and customizable engines with your own credentials, including the option of selecting one of 16 domains and up to one million characters per month with the possibility of incremental payments for overage use. (All fees that are payable to the original MT providers are paid by Intento.)

You can find the different options and offerings listed at [inten.to/localization-teams](http://inten.to/localization-teams).

While the second option is attractive, my sense is that the first will be the most popular with translators. Why? Because the main differentiator is access to customizable MT engines, including AutoML, DeepL (with its terminology training component), Google, Microsoft's Custom Translator, ModernMT, and many others. I have a hard time imagining a single translator building and maintaining several different MT engines that they would like to access through a tool like Intento. Although, for a small or mid-sized language services provider, the latter option might very well be interesting.

By the way, before you apply your preferred MT engine to your text, you can run a test that compares

several outputs in the Intento Console. Or you can just select the engine you might know is likely to produce the best results right in your translation environment.


The first time I wrote about Intento in my *Tool Box Journal* newsletter, I stated: "I very strongly encouraged Konstantin Savenkov [Intento's chief executive officer] to look into developing ready-made access plugins for tools like Memsources, memoQ, and Trados." Well, Konstantin has done that and much more, and I'm glad they did. I'm thankful every time an interesting piece of translation technology becomes available not only to enterprise customers or language services providers but to freelancers as well. And there's no doubt that Intento's technology is here to stay. Pavel Doronin, the product lead at Intento with whom I talked to for this article, told me that there are 57 (!) full-time employees working for Intento around the world at this point. Also, the reports on the state of MT that Intento publishes annually on its website are required reading if you're interested in how the landscape of MT is morphing in front of our eyes.

Let me add one thing that I think is important to consider when using Intento, and then a few things I would like to see in the future.

First, it's really important to know about the confidentiality settings of the different engines. I've mentioned many times before that Google, Microsoft, and DeepL all assure us that they treat our data confidentially if we use their API to access them (which Intento does), but my sense is that these are the exceptions rather than the rule. Depending on your clients and their privacy needs, this is very important to keep in mind. In fact, it would be a very helpful service for Intento to provide clarity about the privacy considerations of their various partners.

Two other options that I would welcome are:

- The proposal of more than one engine per segment so the translator can mix and match the suggestions.
- A "smart" routing to the best-suited engine on a segment and not just on a document level.

Since I was successful with my last suggestions (though it admittedly took three years), maybe I'll be successful again. 

**It's really important to know about the confidentiality settings of the different engines.**



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*This column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals.*

# ModernMT

In the January/February 2021 issue I wrote about the surprising quality and ease-of-use of the OPUS-MT and OPUS-CAT products.<sup>1</sup> When I interviewed developer Tommi Nieminen, an experienced professional translator and MT researcher, about the OPUS tools, he said—much to my surprise—that according to his testing, his products (the locally installed MT and the connector to CAT tools) are as good as or better than any other trainable machine translation (MT) engine.<sup>2</sup> Except one: ModernMT.

ModernMT is a cloud-based adaptive solution for neural machine translation (NMT), just like a number of other systems (including the above-mentioned OPUS tools). Interestingly, though, the adaptive part of the technology is fundamentally different than its competitors because there are actually no changes in the base engine happening at any time. Instead, the system uses a technology called “instance-based adaptive NMT.” This consists of the translation request first being sent to a translation memory (TM) layer (which can consist even of a relatively small TM as long as it’s highly tuned). With similar segments found in that TM layer, the NMT engine’s “hyperparameters” are adapted on-the-fly so that a more suitable suggestion is generated.

The base engine, which is hosted in a number of data centers, including in Rome and San Jose, is trained in 46 languages (see the list at the homepage [www.modernmt.com](http://www.modernmt.com)) on the large data sets collected by Translated, the Italian language services provider

and tech developer of the massive MyMemory TM. (Translated also owns a majority of the shares in ModernMT.) And while the base engines are retrained once or twice a year, your data effectively sits in the middle and adapts the MT suggestions to your style and terminology.

The benefit is that you don’t ever need to actually train a specific MT engine, but you can instead use a large generic engine whose suggestions are specialized by having the query parameters adapted as the translation is happening.

When ModernMT was first released as a commercial product in early 2019 it had two major problems: it was outrageously priced and used a completely outdated privacy concept that used customers’ data for general training purposes.


After being nailed with criticism from many sides (as well as little customer support), they completely overhauled both their pricing and their privacy considerations. There’s no longer any cross-training, and any data that you upload to enhance your own MT will

be strictly used by you alone. Kind of what you would expect from a paid product these days.

The pricing is also in line with other tools. You pay by the number of characters as a language services provider or translation buyer (between \$8 and \$50 per million characters, depending on whether you want to train the engine as you translate or queue documents for a batch translation) and a monthly fee if you’re a freelance translator (\$25).

You can use ModernMT via its website, but as a professional translator you would be more likely to use it via their application programming interface through a translation environment tool. Presently, you can use it directly within Trados Studio with an app you can download from the RWS app store, with memoQ through an already integrated plugin, and of course with MateCat (“of course” because MateCat is also owned by aforementioned Translated). Presently, the ModernMT team is working on a Chrome extension as well, which should allow for the

use of any browser-based translation environment and ModernMT.

There is a free 30-day-trial period you can access at [modernmt.com/pricing/#translators](http://modernmt.com/pricing/#translators). And unlike with other products, it might actually make sense to try it out first because, again, there is literally no setup aside from connecting to the MT and choosing a well-suited TM to “sit in the middle.” 

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Zetzsche, Jost. “(More) Advanced Human-Computer Interaction For Translators,” *The ATA Chronicle* (January/February 2021), 30, <https://bit.ly/Zetzsche-Chronicle>.
- <sup>2</sup> Zetzsche, Jost. “Any Artistic Work, Especially One on a Large Scale,” *The Tool Box Journal*, Issue 21-4-324 (April 2021), <https://bit.ly/Zetzsche-ToolBox>.



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Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzche at [jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com](mailto:jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com).