



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Live Text Translation Software

Developing innovative translation software to help draft and publish live Welsh-medium

Mawrth 2024

Background and context

Transport for Wales is a company owned by the Welsh Government. The organisation has overall responsibility for rail services across the Wales and Borders network and also provides support and expertise for Welsh Government transport projects.

Transport for Wales had two different websites: one for general information and the other presenting specific information about the train services. A decision was made to create one bilingual website that would combine these two services.

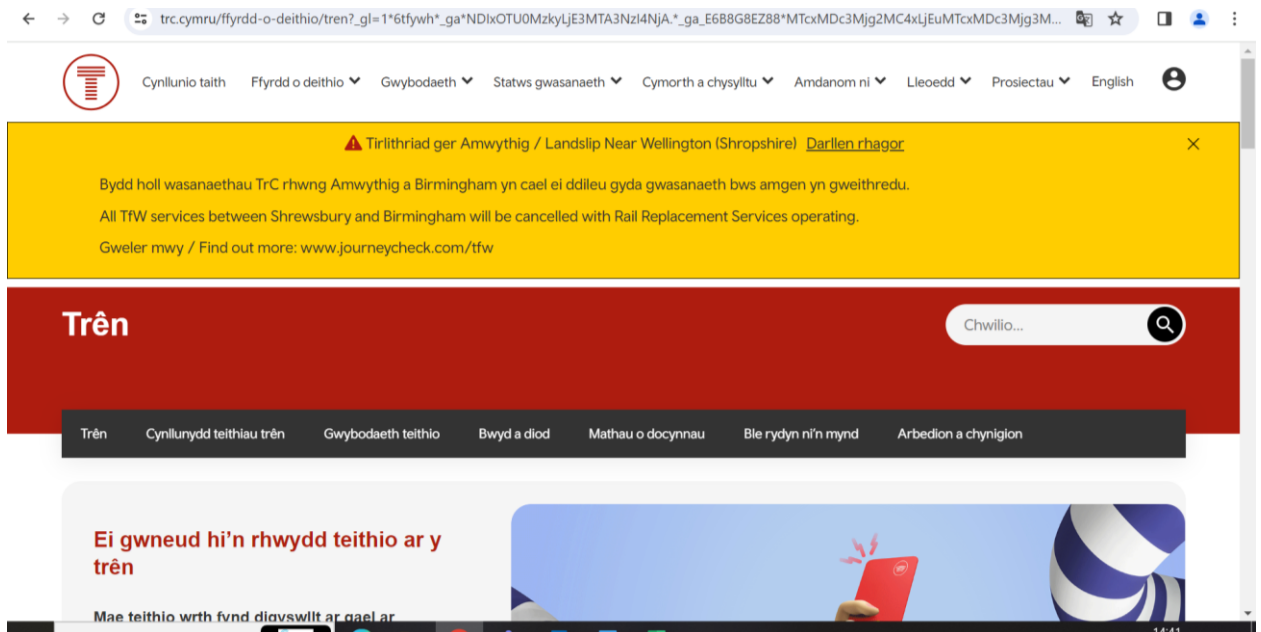
What prompted the change?

When developing the new website, it became clear that English was the medium for a great deal of the information gathered from different external sources (such as National Rail's Enquiries feed). As a result, the information appeared on the Transport for Wales website in English only. This meant that the website did not comply with the requirements of the Welsh language standards. Nevertheless, this information was key to share with the residents of Wales as it provided live updates about transport services.

It was clear that translating every text into Welsh would not be practical as new text was being published continuously, and Transport for Wales did not have enough resources to undertake the task. As a result, Transport for Wales had to think innovatively about how the problem could be resolved and ensure that the public in Wales could get the information in their language of choice.

How was the plan implemented?

In order to tackle this challenge, Transport for Wales decided to acquire new real-time translation software for the new website.



The software offer the following key elements:

- **API Integration:** It integrates seamlessly with Transport for Wales' existing systems and website, ensuring that any English content, which feeds into the website from external sources, is translated and uploaded straight to the website in Welsh.
- **Machine learning:** By uploading Welsh content into the engine's translation memory it enabled the machine to expand its corpa allowing it learn and improve the quality and accuracy of the translation over time.
- **Workflow management:** It simplifies the translation process, by allowing translators to directly manage their workflow.

Advantages

- **Automatic translation of live content:** This has enabled Transport for Wales to maintain a fully bilingual website. It has also improved the user experience for Welsh speakers, by translating external content, which would otherwise have been exclusively English.
- **Reduced workload for translation staff:** The software handles the initial translation, freeing up translators to focus on refining the text for accuracy and tone of voice.
- **Allowing a unique tone of voice:** Unlike other translation software, the new software enables the creation of a consistent 'tone of voice' within the translation memory, ensuring that all the content translated into Welsh reflects the organisation's identity.
- **Measurable output:** The software can measure translation output, allowing Transport for Wales to track and evaluate the performance of the translation process.

Challenges and further considerations

Although machine translation and learning is an extremely useful and valuable resource, it is necessary to ensure that arrangements are in place to check the accuracy of the translated content that comes from external sources. The software does not replace the role of the translator, but rather facilitates the work and lightens the burden of translating a constantly changing text.

This project has highlighted the value of skills and technical expertise within the organisation to continuously find innovative solutions to the challenges in offering contemporary high quality services in Welsh.

Contact details

Organisation:	Transport for Wales
Email:	lowri.joyce@tfw.wales
Contact Officer:	Lowri Joyce, Welsh Language Strategy Lead

Welsh Language Commissioner's opinion

The Welsh language belongs to us all and the people of Wales need to have confidence that the Welsh language services offered to them are of the highest quality. I therefore welcome the efforts of Transport for Wales in tackling the challenge of translating live content from external sources into Welsh in order to ensure that Welsh speakers can receive the latest service and information in their chosen language.

The ability to translate and load external content seamlessly in real time ensures a comprehensive and equal experience for Welsh speakers. I also note that the software's ability to learn and improve over time offers a sustainable method of maintaining translation quality.

I must emphasize that the translator's input remains a key part of guaranteeing the accuracy, and tone of voice of the text and the service, and in turn, offering full assurance that the Welsh service is going to be correct.

I welcome all efforts by organisations to use innovative methods to offer and improve Welsh language services and I believe that this is a valuable example for other organisations trying to overcome similar challenges.