

Bilingual technology toolkit: good user experience

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The Welsh Government has developed a toolkit to ensure that information technology offers users a good Welsh language experience. The aim of the toolkit is to explain how to put the user at the centre of the design process when ensuring good quality bilingual design principles. The Government wishes to drive the bilingual software market in the hope that more companies will offer such services. It can be used for internal project design or external IT procurement. They use the toolkit in tenders and for assessing applications for new technology. The toolkit also refers readers to more detailed information if required, including the Welsh Language Commissioner's comprehensive advice document on the subject: [Technology, Websites and Software: Welsh Language Considerations](#).

The simple way in which the toolkit has been written is suitable for users who are not technology experts. It begins with a glossary and the user is then taken through a table in the form of a checklist, enabling them to prioritise different requirements within a bilingual technology project. There is column to record how these detailed requirements will be achieved and to ensure that Welsh language requirements are included in the project specification or plan.

The toolkit can be seen here: [Bilingual technology toolkit for good user experience](#)

Background

The Government prepared the toolkit for the following reasons:

- Bilingual software procurement processes were noted as both a challenge and an opportunity in the Government's [Welsh Language Technology Action Plan](#).
- It was receiving a large number of enquiries from colleagues, external organisations and technology companies on the best way of offering good quality Welsh language digital services.

Sometimes, technology developers were not completely sure how to develop a good bilingual/Welsh language experience for users, as 'user centred' principles were not available in summary form or easy to include in tender documents. Therefore, there was a risk that specifications were not sufficiently detailed for prospective suppliers to know exactly what was required in order to provide a good quality Welsh language experience. In the context of Welsh language services, barriers could include services

that are difficult to find, Welsh text that is not as current or easy to understand as the corresponding English text etc. These are some factors that make it less likely that Welsh speakers will use the Welsh language version of digital services.

The work undertaken

The Government led a project to create a toolkit, with external companies, Welsh Language Commissioner officers and others invited to provide input. The toolkit was based partly on the Commissioner's detailed advice document, [Technology, Websites and Software: Welsh Language Considerations](#). Reference was also made to software localisation guidelines and terminology that developers could use to create a good quality bilingual service.

The Government is eager to get feedback on the toolkit from users in order to improve it in the future.

Results to date

The toolkit is now publicly available and can be found on [this](#) page under the heading Good User Experience. It helps to ensure that IT projects offer a good service in Welsh as well as in English. It facilitates the provision of Welsh language services by developers with the aim of improving the Welsh language services available and increasing their use in due course.

The toolkit turns the principles in the Commissioner's advice document into a practical checklist, making it easier for developers to offer Welsh language services, and easier for organisations publishing invitations to tender to know that they require good quality products that will promote the use of the Welsh language.

Qualitative and informal feedback from those who have used the toolkit indicates that it has saved time and simplified the tendering process for Welsh services and products.

How can this work for other organisations?

The Welsh Government has published the toolkit under the Open Government License v3.0 to encourage others to use, adapt and share it without requiring permission.

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The Welsh Language Commissioner's View

Multilingual technology provision is already commonplace at an international level, and technology is an integral part of our day to day lives. Yet, Welsh and British organisations tell us that there are technological barriers to including the Welsh language on IT platforms such as their websites.

We already know that giving full consideration to the Welsh language from the beginning of a project is far easier than adding in at the end. That is the principle on which the Commissioner's comprehensive advice document is based. This toolkit provides further support by highlighting the principle within a structure that is suitable for commissioners and providers, ensuring a practical and succinct framework and checklist to consider the quality of the Welsh language service.

Every organisation has an influence on the use made of Welsh language services. Organisations subject to the Welsh language standards regulations and Welsh language schemes should consider whether it would be beneficial for them to use the toolkit in the context of their obligations under the standards or policy making commitments when making decisions on IT services, in addition to the requirements of standards for websites, online services, forms and apps.