

Yamaha, developing product manuals in over 20 languages.

Global musical instrument manufacturer increases efficiency and reduces costs using Adobe FrameMaker and translation memory tools.



“The greatest advantage to introducing FrameMaker is the ability to produce multilingual manuals without increasing translation costs.”

Yukio Endo, Department Manager, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation



SOLUTION

Adobe FrameMaker

RESULTS



EFFICIENT PRODUCTION

Increased language coverage for multilingual manuals without increasing translation costs



STREAMLINED BUSINESS

Used conditional text in FrameMaker to create more manuals faster using less budget



COMPATIBILITY

Opened older manuals created in FrameMaker easily and without backward compatibility issues



AUTOMATION

Automated numerous, complex cross-references for more user-friendly manuals

Yamaha Corporation

Established in 1887

Employees: 19,967

Hamamatsu Shizuoka, Japan

<http://jp.yamaha.com>

CHALLENGES

- Consolidate and streamline product manual production
- Establish a method for better calculating translation fees
- Update old manuals with new product information



Yukio Endo, Department Manager, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation



Hideaki Ishikawa, Assistant Manager, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation



Hirofumi Oishi, Supervisor, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation

Four manual production divisions adopt Adobe FrameMaker

Yamaha is a worldwide musical instrument manufacturer, with a history spanning more than 125 years. The company has developed a diverse product lineup, from expertly crafted acoustic and electronic instruments driven by leading-edge digital technology, to hybrid instruments in which the two types of technology are integrated. Yamaha is highly regarded by music lovers around the world, from beginners to professionals.

Yamaha's manual production studio deals exclusively with manuals for non-acoustic instruments and audio products, to help users master these Yamaha products. In the past, manual production was organized in four divisions: electronic instruments, professional audio (PA) devices, audio visual (AV) devices, and sound networks. These divisions were consolidated as part of a restructuring. The 20-person studio has played a central role in advancing manual production through the collaboration of in-house documentation authors and several outsourced production and translation companies.

Yamaha has been using Adobe FrameMaker software for manual production since the late 1990s. Yukio Endo, Department Manager of the Manual Development Department, reflects on how FrameMaker was introduced: "Our products are favored all over the world, but by 1997 or 1998, our multilingual manuals were produced in only four languages: English, German, French, and Spanish. As our overseas subsidiaries increased in number due to further global development, it became necessary to accommodate all 20 of the official languages of the EU nations for our digital pianos and other hot-selling products. However, because the cost of translation would be too high using conventional methods of manual production, we sought a production environment that would allow us to efficiently incorporate multiple languages."

“Creating templates in FrameMaker made it possible to preserve the visual appearance of the manuals and retain a sense of cohesion in them.”

Hideaki Ishikawa, Assistant Manager, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation

At that time, each of the four previous manual production divisions was independently searching for an efficient environment for incorporating multiple languages. All four divisions separately adopted Adobe FrameMaker.

“The greatest advantage to introducing FrameMaker is the ability to produce multilingual manuals without increasing translation costs due to strong compatibility with translation memory tools,” adds Endo.

Using FrameMaker and translation memory to minimize costs

Just what was it that made FrameMaker so effective in the production of multilingual manuals? One reason was its strong compatibility with the translation memory tool, Trados. This meant more than just streamlining translation tasks and standardizing and improving translation quality.

“Until that time, no method was established for calculating the rate of reuse of legacy resources in the translation fees, so it took a huge amount of time and effort to determine these fees. Using translation memory made it possible to set up an environment that would allow us to rationally calculate fees in a form that all parties could agree on,” says Endo.

Yamaha then asked its outsourced production companies to adopt Adobe FrameMaker as well, which resulted in a manual production environment that would allow the efficient incorporation of multiple languages. Even when the number of words to be translated increased, using Trados made it possible to keep translation costs in check. “While the number of products we supported increased, the translation fees we paid to translation companies over the course of the year showed virtually no change,” says Endo. “It also became unnecessary to adjust fees with the translation companies, while becoming easier to estimate the necessary budget beforehand.”

Streamlining translation tasks using conditional text and limiting the number of characters

Hideaki Ishikawa, Assistant Manager of the Manual Development Department, explains how using the functions of FrameMaker greatly streamlined the business. “When authoring manuals for two products that have the same functions, using conditional text makes it possible to adapt a single source for the two manuals. This made it possible to produce manuals for about half of what we used to spend,” says Ishikawa. “We also didn’t have to worry about missing something when doing maintenance on the manuals, since it was from one source. Creating templates in FrameMaker also made it possible to preserve the visual appearance of the manuals and retain a sense of cohesion in them.”

Ishikawa also deals with simplifying sections in the text that follow a prior model, and reducing the number of pages and the amount of text, during manual revisions. Ishikawa explains that this does not merely reduce costs, it also improves user-friendliness.

“This is just my personal opinion, but I think FrameMaker is well-suited for writing documentation, not only for operators and designers who have experience with DTP, but also writers and technicians. If possible, technicians should move up from writing documentation to becoming au fait with FrameMaker.”

Hirofumi Oishi, Supervisor, Musical Instruments & Audio Products Development Group, Manual Development Department, Yamaha Corporation

“With products that have a long life cycle, there may be sections in the text of previous editions that feel old,” so we polish them up to sound more current. Today’s users don’t really read long stretches of text, even if it’s well-written,” says Ishikawa. “I think that with, for example, content that is more easily conveyed through visual rather than written form, users tend to prefer that we post video clips on a web site and do other things to divide information that we want to convey, clarifying in the planning steps how much should be explained in the manual, and leaving out superfluous explanation.”

By improving the user interface of its products, Yamaha deals with creating products that can be operated intuitively, even without the manual needing to be read. There are also times when Ishikawa is involved with the user interface from the standpoint of manual production.

Achieving exceptional compatibility and continuity

With products that have a long life cycle, there are also cases when product manuals from ten years ago are revised. Hirofumi Oishi, Supervisor of the Manual Development Department, discusses backward compatibility with older versions as one of the attractions of FrameMaker. “Even when using a newer version of FrameMaker is used to open a manual that was made ten years ago, there are practically no problems,” says Oishi. “Layout is stable and requires minimal effort, which is of tremendous help. With files made using FrameMaker, it is relaxing to know that old manuals can be handled as well.”

For Oishi, another advantage to using FrameMaker is that when producing long manuals having more than 300 pages, the numerous and complex cross-references can be automated.

“We’ve been using FrameMaker since version 6. Before that there was no DTP software capable of cross-referencing, so we were inputting reference pages and chapter titles into the manuals by hand,” says Oishi. “By automating this task, cross-references can be incorporated without any concern about downstream processes, which allows us to produce more user-friendly manuals. Corrections are also automatically updated, leading to a significant decrease in man-hours.”

Oishi continues, “This is just my personal opinion, but I think FrameMaker is well-suited for writing documentation, not only for operators and designers who have experience with DTP, but also writers and technicians. If possible, technicians should move up from writing documentation to becoming au fait with FrameMaker.”

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe FrameMaker

Sharing FrameMaker knowledge with an eye toward document structuring

Prior to the four manual production divisions being consolidated into the present manual production studio, Endo was affiliated with the electronic instrument division, Ishikawa with the PA device division, and Oishi with the AV device division. Due to there being minimal exchange of information between the various divisions, the knowledge for using FrameMaker and creating manuals was isolated within each division.

“Going forward, I want to share the knowledge separately held by the four divisions in relation to manual creation and FrameMaker, and use it to further streamline the business. Although we have yet to use document structuring, which is another FrameMaker feature, we remain aware of it and are keeping an eye on the situation,” says Endo.

Sharing this know-how undoubtedly allows Yamaha to create manuals in a more efficient and user-friendly way.

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/framesmaker.html



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11/15