

Community Review

What is community review?

Community review is now a routine feature of most translation projects. It is one of the last steps in finalizing a translation and adds an extra level of quality control to ensure the translated document will effectively communicate to “average” members of the target population.

Who are the community reviewers?

Community reviewers are health professionals who work in clinical settings with members of the target population and are familiar with the informal speech typically used by their clients.

What do they do?

Reviewers look at the document from the perspective of the “average” consumer and comment on the appropriateness of the language, format, graphics and colors.

Why is community review so important?

Research shows that effective health documents present information in an “inviting” format with language that is easy to understand. The community reviewer comments on the translation from the perspective of the consumer. Typically, they suggest terms or phrasings which are more easily understood and alert us to graphics or colors that would be considered offensive or inappropriate.

What if the translator and community reviewer disagree?

There is often a natural and healthy tension between the community reviewer and the professional translator. Translators tend to view departures from the original document as threats to the ultimate certifiability of the document. Reviewers often have liberal and interpretive understandings of the meaning, or intended meaning, of the source document. And differences of opinion about language matters are infinite. Ultimately, we ask this: Will the suggested change—or some portion of it—improve the quality or accessibility of the translation without making a substantial departure from the source document? Any portion of the reviewers’ comments that achieve this goal are welcomed and noted in our glossaries for future use.

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