



## GeekSpeak

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### Interpreting URLs

The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost also publishes a free technical newsletter for translators ([www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit](http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit)).

**This segment** might bore a lot of people who are more technical than the rest of us, but here it is anyway.

I have found it very helpful to learn to interpret URLs (Web addresses) from a language/translation point of view. There are numerous parts of a URL that can identify the language of the Web page it displays. The cool thing about this is that chances are that same Web page is also displayed in other languages (otherwise, there is not much reason to note the language in the first place).

For instance, let us look at this long URL from the Microsoft help site:

<http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/en-US/help/fe7ea80e-52a2-48d6-947a-05e02e78bc371033.msp>

Not really interesting you might say, but if you need to translate something for which you need that particular terminology, things might be different.

This URL has two language identifiers. One is very obvious: en-US (in this case, a mixture of the standards ISO 639-1 and ISO 3166). The other

identifier may not be as obvious: the last four digits at the end are the widely used Microsoft Locale ID (see [http://msdn.microsoft.com/de-de/goglobal/bb964664\(en-us\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/de-de/goglobal/bb964664(en-us).aspx)).

To change that page into, say, Japanese, you could just manually replace the URL in those two places with the appropriate codes:

<http://windowshelp.microsoft.com/Windows/ja-JP/help/fe7ea80e-52a2-48d6-947a-05e02e78bc371041.msp>

Doing so would create the Japanese counterpart with all the Japanese terminology at your fingertips.

Here is another URL that I have been using a lot lately. There is a lovely English and German parallel SAP glossary at [http://help.sap.com/sap/help\\_glossary/en/index.htm](http://help.sap.com/sap/help_glossary/en/index.htm). In this case, all you need to do to change the language is to replace the “en” with “de.” However, since this is a glossary within an HTML frame, it is not quite as easy to get to specific entries. If you click on any of the actual English entries in the above page, the URL

does not seem to change. However, Firefox has a sweet and easy way to let you open the page within the frame as a stand-alone page.

Once you click on an entry and have the English term and description displayed, right-click on that page and select “This Frame> Open Frame in New Tab.” This might open

[http://help.sap.com/saphelp\\_glossary/en/3b/57a67b78608045852d629395c6844b/content.htm](http://help.sap.com/saphelp_glossary/en/3b/57a67b78608045852d629395c6844b/content.htm)

And sure enough, we get the translated page just by changing it to

[http://help.sap.com/saphelp\\_glossary/de/3b/57a67b78608045852d629395c6844b/content.htm](http://help.sap.com/saphelp_glossary/de/3b/57a67b78608045852d629395c6844b/content.htm)

Now I realize that this particular example is only good for the small handful of you who work in that language combination, but there are many other cases where this can be adjusted easily to other Web pages and language combinations.

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