

SUPPORTED EDITORIAL

Breaking free

Antonio Cesari, CEO at 1Stop Translations, makes the case for translation services being the backbone of industry innovation



PROFESSIONAL translation services and linguistic localisation have contributed greatly to the awareness of the entire gaming industry, facilitating the shift from improvisation to professionalism and allowing the industry to break free from the narrow and somewhat obscure constraints to which it was confined.

Professional linguistic adaptation has enabled the transition from an industry that was poorly organised in terms of content management in other languages – relying on the unlikely skills of students, interns and amateurs in the field – to the use of professional localisation companies, promoting full game immersion and bringing igaming closer to the world of video games.

All of this has facilitated the process of legitimising gambling that we are witnessing. This is an ongoing but rapidly evolving process, especially after the acceleration brought about by Covid.

“PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATION SERVICES AND LINGUISTIC LOCALISATION HAVE GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE AWARENESS OF THE ENTIRE GAMING INDUSTRY”

NEW GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The incorporation of video game principles into gambling is undoubtedly a crucial innovation for the industry, bridging two parallel worlds that were previously distant. As for the future, I believe that artificial intelligence – as it is already doing – will bring a revolutionary transformation to the sector. Think, for example, about betting on virtual sports or the algorithms that inform gaming companies about players' statistical preferences.

For 1ST, AI serves as a catalyst and an incentive to continually strive for excellence. We have embraced this technology from the outset, achieving remarkable results. Like all innovations, its impact is disruptive for many companies, as history has taught us innovation often is.

However, for others including us, it represents a fascinating challenge. We firmly believe that AI is meant to enhance human performance and does not compete with it. Rather, it complements human work and we believe that human input will likely remain necessary in the



years to come, allowing us to provide premium services in translation, content creation and digital marketing.

TRANSLATION MARKET TRENDS

In addition to the traditional European market, in recent years we have witnessed the emergence and rapid development of new markets that demand increasingly regulated gaming.

I am referring to Latin America (especially Brazil), east Asia and central Africa – continents where we are very active and which we will continue to focus on in the coming years, without neglecting Europe. We maintain constant communication with our clients through trade shows and events worldwide as there is nothing better than direct client interaction to understand market trends.

Our merger into Qontent Group in 2020 allowed 1ST to leverage the know-how of and extensive experience in highly specialised services such as those related to multi-lingual content in different sectors – in some cases even more complex than igaming like the medical field.

The history of a multi-language vendor like Qontent Group enabled the transfer of accumulated experience into igaming from areas such as legal (think of the policies and contracts

on igaming websites and casinos) and financial (consider payments and blockchain).

Finally, Qontent Group's legacy is evident in integrated linguistic localisation services including creative graphic design and layout, management of various textual formats (JSON, HTML, etc.) and international digital marketing services such as SEO and link building. These synergise with content management services such as translations and content writing, as digital marketing is impossible without the latter.

THE ESPORTS BOOM

The constant convergence of igaming with the world of video games has given rise to a true fusion: esports. Consequently, our client base has naturally expanded to include companies that create esports and manage the betting side. Moreover, the dynamic igaming sector also attracts other innovative fields such as blockchain and a range of related businesses.

1Stop Translations, with its linguistic localisation services, significantly contributes to immersing players in what are ultimately genuine video games adapted for betting.

Through our digital marketing services, 1Stop Translations enables these companies to grow and attract players.



Thinking ahead

Antonio Cesari, CEO at 1Stop Translations, outlines how “forward-thinking” approaches are key for African expansion

WITH the European igaming industry well established, the battle lines are drawn and despite changing regulations, there is a definitive blueprint for expansion.

But in the emerging Africa market, Antonio Cesari, CEO of 1Stop Translations, tells *INTERGAMINGi* that it takes “ingenious and forward-thinking” approaches to grow an igaming business on the continent.

“To build a successful relationship between supplier and operator in the igaming market, we need a combination of factors, regardless of the fact that we are talking about Africa or Europe,” he says.

“Trust and transparency” are key building blocks, he states, while “regular communication” helps to create a “solid relationship” and resolve potential issues in a “timely manner.”

Following on from that, Cesari points to the crucial role expos and events play in Africa in getting the industry together.

“In Europe, which is more mature and saturated, relationships are born and then developed on the web, while in the African market human relationships continue to be essential. This is proven by the countless fairs and summits organised across the continent.”

“THE AFRICAN MARKET HAS THE RIGHT POTENTIAL TO GROW AND BECOME ONE OF THE MOST THRIVING MARKETS IN THE ONLINE GAMBLING INDUSTRY”

STAYING LOCAL

But while industry experts getting together as one is key, understanding their differences is equally important, Cesari says.

“1Stop Translations is adopting defined strategies for each area of the continent – French-speaking West Africa, East Africa and South Africa – as these macro areas have different regulations and cultural preferences,” he explains.

“In the context of igaming, translation and localisation are essential aspects to access and successfully operate in the African market.”

Cesari outlines how digital marketing plays an “essential role” in translation and localisation, since “translations in local languages of the target countries must be carried out on all

relevant content contained on the platforms, including website texts, user interfaces, games descriptions, terms and conditions, FAQs and marketing material.”

Localisation, meanwhile, goes “well beyond translation,” Cesari says, to cover the adoption of graphic layout, images and visual elements alongside the “cultural context and preferences of the target audience.”

That means “nuances and cultural sensitivity” are taken into account to ensure content is “respectful” but also “engaging,” while also avoiding “potential misunderstandings.”

“This aspect is of the utmost importance in the French-speaking countries of West Africa,” Cesari states.

ONES TO WATCH

For Cesari, South Africa – “historically one of the most important countries in the African igaming market” – takes first place for the countries to watch for igaming growth, thanks to its “well developed infrastructures and relatively mature regulations.”

“Nigeria, with a big population and a growing middle class, offers significant market potential for industry operators,” Cesari adds, while also pointing to Kenya for “showing interest in regulating and taxing online gambling” amid its “tech-savvy population that could contribute to the growth of the igaming market.”

“Uganda is also an interesting market thanks to its recent regulations that have exempted the income from the online betting sector from taxes.”

As for the challenges facing Africa’s igaming growth, Cesari looks towards the over 40 different currencies across the continent as well as the “unstructured sales channel, due to the presence of few publishers and distributors in local markets.”

Cesari adds on the concerns in Africa that there are “poor and often inadequate regulations related to the igaming and sports betting sectors” that are associated with an “increase in the number of episodes of hacking and potential fraud during games caused by insufficient regulation of the industry.”

Nevertheless, he notes that the average age of players in Africa, 20, compared with the European average of 44, shows promise for long-term growth alongside the installation of 5G networks which has begun in several countries.

“There is also growth in the number of mobile network subscribers – as many as 100 million new users in the last three years.”

KEY DEALS

“Last year, we entered into an agreement with a big African company to provide translations and localisations in 25 languages, including some African ones,” Cesari starts on pivotal deals for 1Stop Translations across Africa.

“This important collaboration strengthens our presence in that market. With other publishers and distributors, we are in the process of entering into agreements to provide localisation services for their games, betting platforms in some African languages and digital marketing services focused on mobile devices, as well as targeting young people with an average age of 20.

“Ninety five per cent of African gamers play on smartphones and tablets instead of PCs, according to a recent survey by the research organisation Newzoo.”

AI PROMISE

While artificial intelligence may not be the current top priority for many igaming companies in Africa amid the development of the continental market, Cesari says AI in general will bring “unprecedented changes during this decade and the next, similar to what happened with the internet at the end of the last millennium.”

“1ST has established within the company an R&D department that is focused on the study of the innovations that AI is introducing in machine translations and in the learning processes of the last-generation automatic translation systems.

“The use of evolved MTs will lead to lower production costs and faster deliveries. However, human revision will still be necessary, especially in the online gambling sector, which is strongly linked to the customs of the local markets.

“On this path, an important goal achieved by 1ST is the obtainment of the ISO 18587 certification, which regulates the MTPE (Machine Translation Post Editing) procedures.”

“NIGERIA, WITH A BIG POPULATION AND A GROWING MIDDLE CLASS, OFFERS SIGNIFICANT MARKET POTENTIAL FOR INDUSTRY OPERATORS”

Advancing igaming through AI

Antonio Cesari, CEO at 1Stop Translations, explains the importance of artificial intelligence to igaming and the growing industry trends across Europe

INTERGAMINGi: What are your plans for 2023?

AC: Our plans for 2023 are first and foremost to strengthen our traditional and established markets by forging partnerships with the industry's big names. We also aim to grow more and more in high-potential extra-European markets – Asia, Africa, LatAm – where we have already been present for some time. At the same time, we are focused on the development of AI technologies applied to multilingual content management for igaming.

The challenges we anticipate mainly concern the increase in the number of competitors. The igaming world now interests more and more companies and there is a need to keep up with the rapid changes in the industry and technological innovations. However, these challenges do not frighten us.

On the contrary, they are an incentive for us to do better and better and we are confident that our expertise and attention to clients will allow us to maintain our reputation and market leadership.

Were any of 1ST's services more popular across Europe than others in 2022?

In 2022, in addition to professional translations, two services in particular were in high demand: content writing and SEO outreach. They were often combined to strengthen our clients' marketing strategies.

On the other hand, as far as services that we expect to become increasingly popular in Europe are concerned, we cannot fail to mention influencer marketing - with its huge potential already seen in 2022 - accompanied by digital and international marketing services such as digital PR and advergaming.

Do you have any new products or services in the pipeline?

Speaking of innovations, I would again mention the innovative marketing services related to Web3 such as advergaming, which were premiered at ICE London 2022 and immediately received great interest.

In addition, we are developing an AI technology to significantly decrease the quality gap between human and machine translation, as well as systems that improve and speed up internal processes to guarantee an increasingly advanced service to our clients.

What areas in Europe are you focusing your growth on as a company?

We are already present throughout Europe, particularly in the Mediterranean basin where our offices are located. The main one is in Italy

(in the beautiful Apulia) and the operational one is in Malta. We are consolidating our presence in the Balkans, an area with great potential, and in the Scandinavian countries.

THE EUROPEAN LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE IS VERY LIVELY AT THE MOMENT

Igaming in Europe may be growing, but do you believe there are any concerns in the region that need tackling?

The European legislative landscape is very lively at the moment. It is important to monitor in particular the situation in countries such as Belgium, Germany and Albania with regard to the limits imposed, the management of licenses and enforcement mechanisms, as well as the renewal of the legalisation of sports betting as of 2023.

What other markets is 1ST focusing on?

As previously mentioned, although Europe remains our core market, we are rapidly reinforcing our presence in other continents. Starting from 2023, our goal is to become a benchmark for global igaming in language localisation combined with international digital marketing.

1Stop Translations has been in igaming for 17 years now. How do you and the company reflect on the growth of the industry since then?

Year after year, the igaming market has become more mature and aware of the crucial role of language localisation for business growth. The explosive development of the industry has gone hand-in-hand with the increasing importance given to professional translation, managed by structured and reliable partners.

It is no coincidence that in recent years, more and more clients have turned to 1ST not only for the management of multilingual content from scratch, but also for the revision of glossaries, translation memories and texts that so far had been translated by improvised translators – therefore without proper attention and quality control. As a reminder, 1ST is ISO 9001, ISO 17100 and ISO 18587 certified for the quality of language services.

How are you dealing with cryptocurrency, blockchain and other emerging technologies?

We have seen an increase in the number of crypto and blockchain companies turning to 1ST for localisation and digital

marketing services. In addition, we have long been equipped to accept and handle payments in numerous cryptocurrencies.

How do you reflect on 1ST's work in 2022 and what have you learned?

2022 brought us great satisfaction. The number and importance of acquired clients has grown exponentially and the range of services has been expanded. In this regard, the intuition of integrating language localisation with digital marketing is the natural evolution of our offer.

Almost 20 years of experience in multilingual content management, combined with the talents of our digital marketing division, represents the great added value that 1ST offers to its clients.

2022 confirmed that in-person events and networking play a crucial role. The importance of human relations is a given, hence our willingness to participate in all major igaming events globally. Localisation proves to be decisive in business growth and internationalisation processes and in 2022 we noticed a growing awareness not only from large companies, but also from small and medium-sized ones.

Where do you expect to be as a company by the end of Q4 2023?

We certainly expect further growth. We are already a benchmark in Europe and our goal is to replicate that in Asia and America as well. We also aim to establish partnerships with the biggest names in the industry worldwide.



Discovering 1Stop Translations

INTERGAMINGi spoke with **Antonio Cesari**, CEO of 1Stop Translations, the language localisation and international marketing company, leader in the igaming, esports, fintech and crypto sectors



CAN you tell us what the company offers exactly?

1Stop Translations is a company belonging to the Qontent Group, a long-running Italian company leader in the management and localisation of multilingual content. Qontent serves multinational companies in various sectors, but for the igaming market we needed to create a unique business unit, highly specialised and focused on this one sector.

Today's gaming industry, as you know, is very demanding. It no longer accepts the improvisation style of work from a few years ago, and it's now perfectly aware of the fact that professionally managed content can give real push in the market. Players want to feel at home. The gaming experience must be perfectly adapted to their own language and culture: all of this makes a tangible difference.

Browsing your site, one discovers over 30 services that aren't strictly related to linguistic localisation. Could you tell us more about that?

Through our long-term collaboration with the most important players in the sector and managing a community of over 20,000 translators and 2,500 professional writers around the globe, we have acquired enormous experience in this sector, and we have consolidated a network with the best igaming suppliers in the market. We have a 360-degree view of the needs of both established companies and start-ups entering the industry.

In recent years we have received a large number of requests for advice and suggestions on how to move forward and what steps to take to enter new markets and internationalise, with the frequency of these requests increasing, so much so that we've been encouraged to create an internal International Digital Marketing department. Today we are able to offer companies complete marketing and

“IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE RECEIVED A LARGE NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO MOVE FORWARD AND WHAT STEPS TO TAKE TO ENTER NEW MARKETS AND INTERNATIONALISE”

communication strategies and all the essential tools to set them up.

What is your methodology?

Let's start with a key concept: trust. It's the foundation of any successful business, and it's crucial in this niche sector. Our customers trust us, they know that we are allies because of our common interests and goals. And above all, we're always by their side throughout the process.

Many companies seek our support after trying traditional marketing agencies and complaining about the lack of industry-specific expertise and lack of support in critical moments. In other words, they don't feel properly supported in their key projects. Our goal is to walk side by side with the company by building, step by step, a bespoke strategy that leads to meaningful and measurable results. We're not interested in selling as many services as possible—instead, we're focused on helping igaming, esports, fintech and crypto companies fulfil their ambitions.

To achieve these results, the internal departments of 1ST collaborate closely with one another. Our broad experience in linguistic localisation is a differentiating and crucial element for the achievement of company objectives and represents our added value. You won't believe the number of ideas and synergies that take place in the meeting room when it comes to defining the right strategy for a customer—the presence of marketing specialists,

creatives, social media managers, industry experts, translators and native speakers who are fluent in the target market and culture creates an explosive atmosphere that is very difficult to recreate in other contexts.

I'll give you an example to clarify our method and to help you understand its value: imagine having to create a marketing campaign for a customer who wants to enter the German market. After the case analysis (SEO positioning of the website, competitor analysis, SWOT analysis and other standard preliminary actions), the creative team defines the strategy and marketing plan. The plan is analysed and examined together with native translators who are experts in igaming, esports, fintech and crypto. Practically speaking, our meeting room turns into an office in Berlin where we literally drop the idea into German culture, we test reactions, we check the plan and the success directly on the site. We validate the strategy even before we test it in the target market, because it's as if we've already tested it in a simulator. Having an internal team at your disposal together with a selected network of specialised native translators (who are also experts, testers, players, betting site users, true connoisseurs of the local market) gives you an advantage that's beyond comparison. The result and value of the marketing proposal are of a high level, and the probability that it will also be effective is very high.

And do you apply this method equally to all customers, whether they are SMBs, multinationals or start-ups?

Absolutely: for us there are no series A and series B customers. It's a matter of professional ethics. What's more, we believe that today's start-ups are tomorrow's multinationals, and we want to give them a big leg-up in taking that leap: that way, we grow together and strengthen our relationship of trust which, I'll never get tired of saying it, is our mission.

There's a lot of talk of Web3. What's your opinion and how can it change the gaming market?

We'd need a crystal ball, a palantir! (the seeing-stone from *The Lord of the Rings*—ed). I don't think we'll see a sudden transition to Web3 as we did for Web2. I see a more gradual and less detectable process that has in fact already begun. It's an innovative, revolutionary and disruptive phenomenon. The new generations are already immersed in the virtual world, just think of skins, digital goods such as NFTs or the Sandbox phenomenon. I believe the world of gaming needs to start getting ready because many things are about to change. Obviously here at 1ST we're ready to talk about it with our customers!

