



across: A Translation Environment Tool with an Attractive Price

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This review will introduce readers to the across Personal version for freelance translators. This is a relatively new tool, and it is clear from its features that the programmers looked carefully into what worked

works both as a stand-alone tool or in connection with the across Language Server version. The across Personal Edition is free for freelance translators (registration is required), but must be purchased by companies for their in-house translators. The across Language Server contains project management features that are beyond the scope of this article, but a freelance translator would probably not need this version, so only the Personal Edition is being reviewed here. Since across is similar to Déjà Vu X in many

run through the online tutorials to get up-to-speed on the main features. The *Step-by-Step Manual* has 209 pages, and is oriented toward the across Personal Edition. The *Overview* manual has 338 pages, but includes information for both the Language Server and Personal versions. The software interface and manuals are available in English, German, and French.

When you start across, the first screen you will see is a control panel called crossBoard (see Figure 1 on page 27). This screen guides you through creating projects, importing and exporting files, and opening tasks you wish to return to. Like similar tools, you must first create a project and import the files to be translated, and then open the file you want to work on (called a task). This interface provides all the information you will need to perform basic workflow tasks, but the manual provides further assistance.

Like other environment tools, across tells you how many words you have translated (and the total number of words) for both the file and project. This feature helps me keep track of time and meet deadlines.

It is clear from its features that the programmers looked carefully into what worked and what did not in other tools when designing this product.

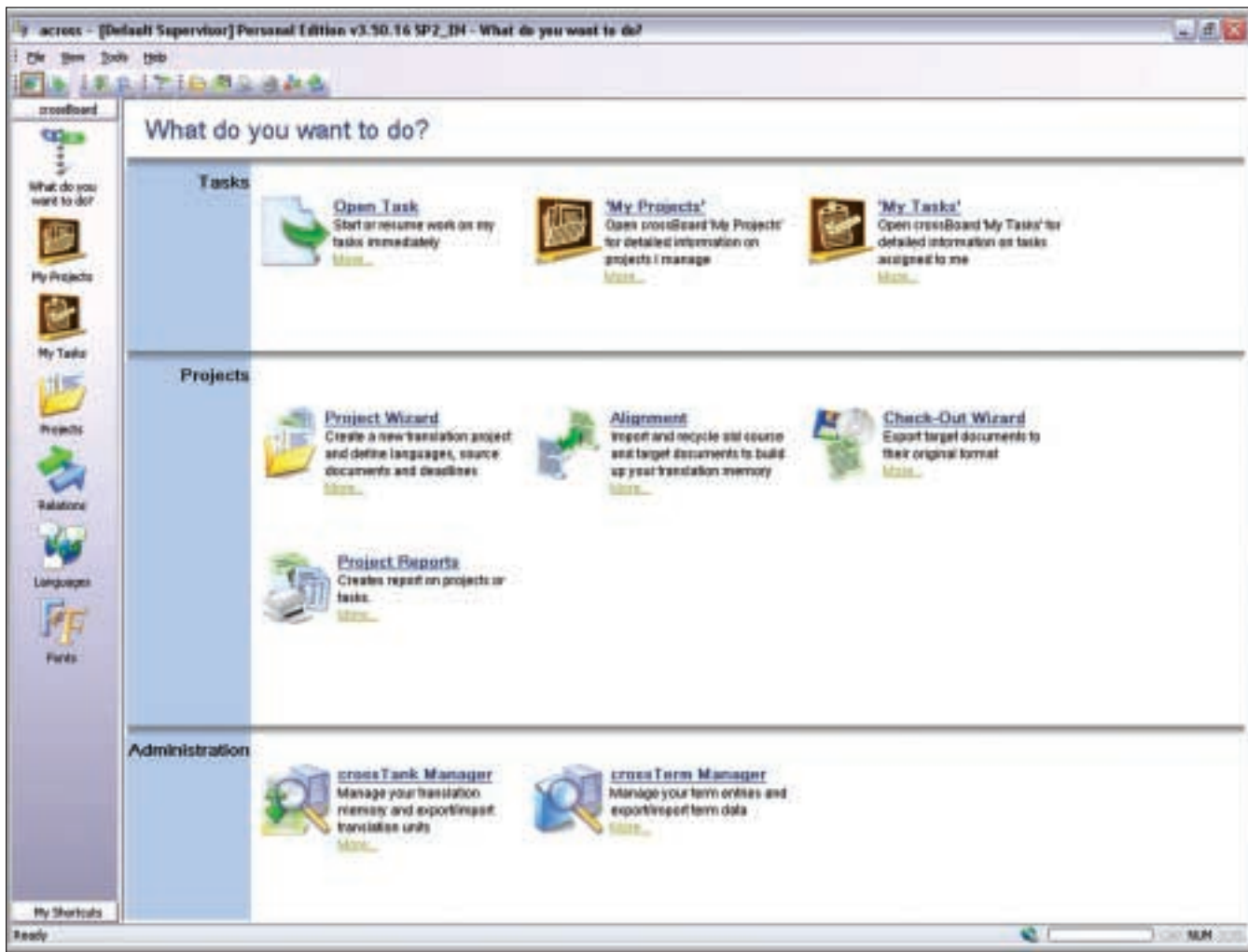
and what did not in other tools when designing the product.

There are basically two versions of across: across Personal Edition and across Language Server. The across Personal Edition is designed for freelance translators. It is meant to be run on a PC by the translator or editor, and

respects, this review will follow the same line of questioning used in the Déjà Vu X review published in the August and September issues.

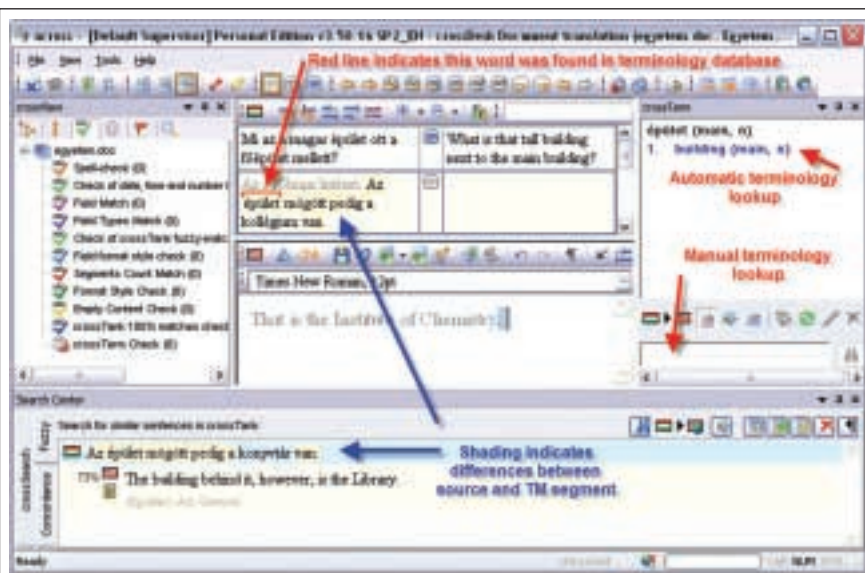
How easy is it to get started?

I found the program easy to download and install. Afterward, you can

Figure 1: crossBoard

Is the translating/editing environment easy to use?

The editing environment is basically button- and shortcut-oriented, with few options in the menus. Hovering the cursor over the button displays its name and its keyboard shortcut. (See Figure 2 for an overview of the across editing environment.) In this layout, the terminology window shows terminology matches on the right, the Search Center window shows translation memory (TM) matches below, and the crossView window provides quality assurance information on the left. The source and target texts are shown in two columns in the center, with the target paragraph editing window at the center of the screen.

Figure 2: across Working Environment

across: A Translation Environment Tool with an Attractive Price Continued

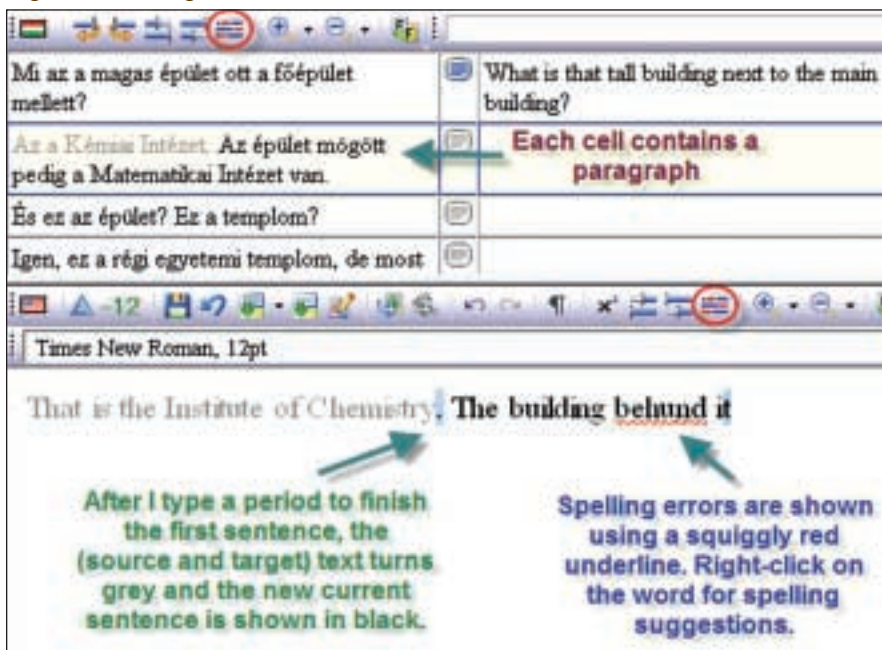
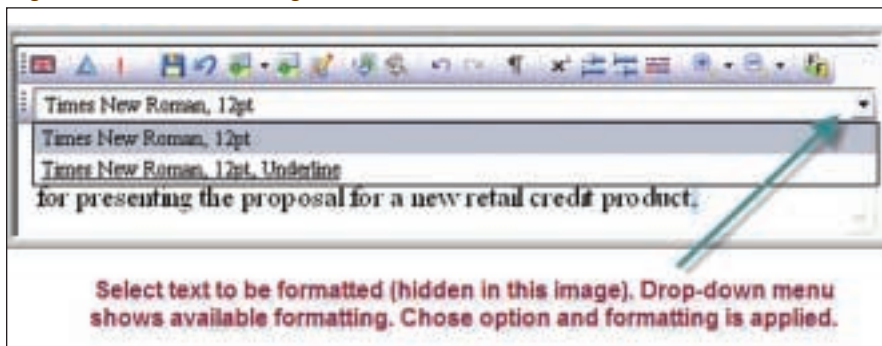
Figure 3: Editing Window**Figure 4: Text Formatting**

Figure 3 shows a larger version of the central area of the working environment. Each cell contains an entire paragraph, but only one sentence is shown in black characters in the editing window at a time. (Despite the two-column format, which is similar to Déjà Vu X and SDLX, you must type the translation into a third window below.) The tool automatically switches to the next sentence when you finish the previous sentence (I love this!). Typing Ctrl+Alt+Enter confirms

the paragraph translation and takes you to the next paragraph. (Unfortunately, this shortcut requires two hands.) I just wish the tool would switch to the next paragraph automatically.

Having one paragraph per cell provides more layout context than tools that provide just one sentence per cell. You can copy the source sentence or the entire paragraph to the target editing window with a button or keyboard shortcut—a nice feature. If you type an abbreviation and the program

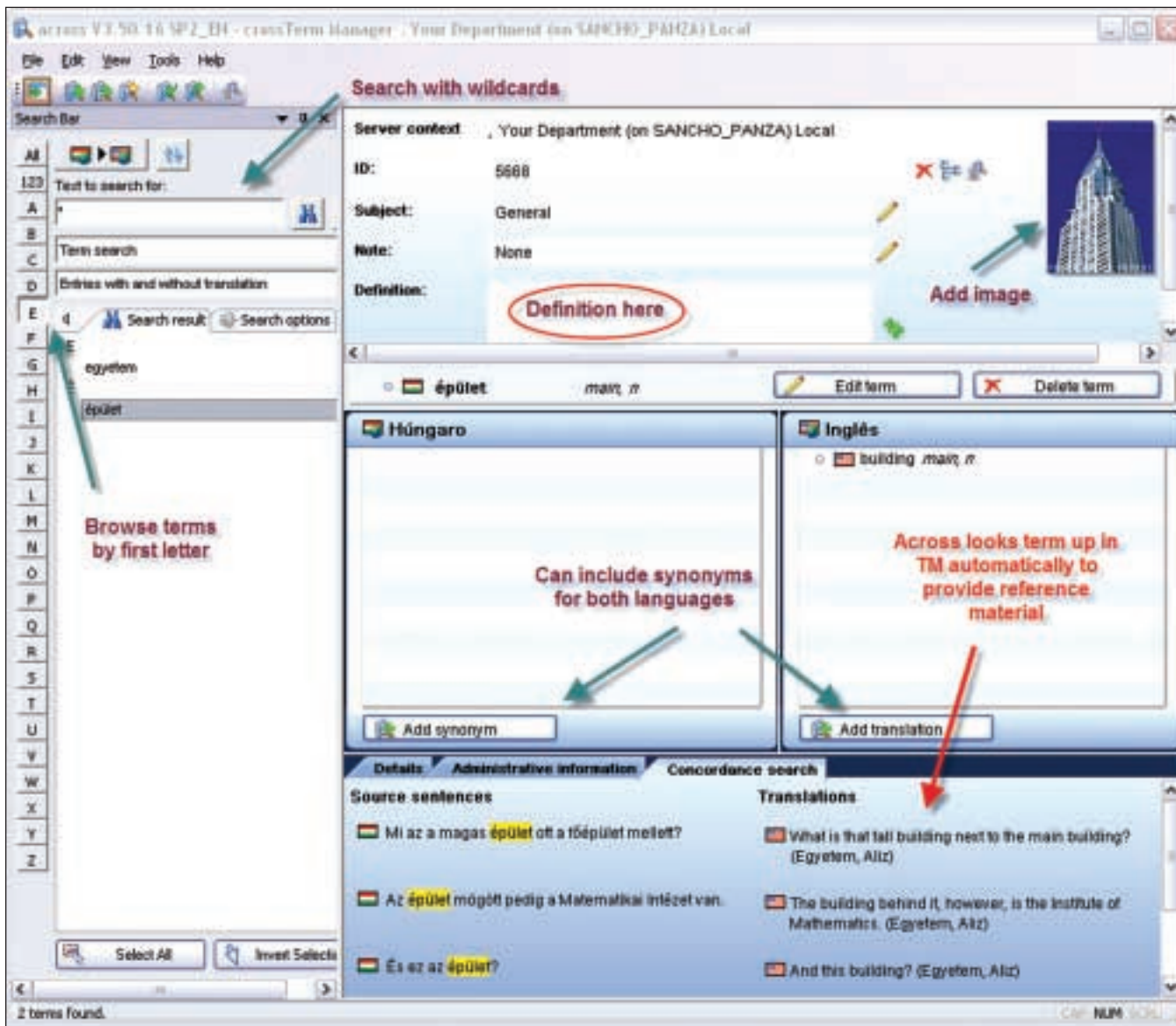
thinks you have started a new sentence, there is a convenient button on the editing toolbar (circled in red in Figure 3) that allows you to register an abbreviation so across will recognize it in the future. There is a similar button for defining sentence breaks in the source text (also circled in red in Figure 3).

As shown in Figure 3, the program underlines misspelled words as you type, just like in MS Word. Right-clicking provides spelling suggestions. This will probably be one of the most favorite features among users. There is also an AutoText feature.

All formatting styles in the source sentence are available when translating via a drop-down menu (see Figure 4). Select the text to be formatted, and then select the formatting. In the two-column source/translation window and in the editing window, bold appears as bold, italic appears as italic, etc. Most of the examples in this review do not show this because my sample text has no formatting. I would prefer buttons for simple things like underline and bold, but the system is simple and clear enough. While you cannot insert formatting that is not present in the original sentence, you can apply any available formatting styles to any word in the translated sentence.

Other interesting features are across' two search tools. The "simple" search tool does not step through the file occurrence by occurrence. Instead, it opens a separate window showing all occurrences of the search text (target language only). You can then mark/unmark the checkbox next to each occurrence before applying a replace function. Clicking on an occurrence skips to that line in the main window. The window opened by the "Find All" function in MS Excel is similar. A second search tool can search in source or target text, but does not allow replacement. It also shows a

Figure 5: Main crossTerm Window



list of occurrences rather than stepping through the text.

Can I use across even when I will work with others who do not have it?

The program is based on the client/server concept, and a company owning the across Language Server can take your translation and send it to an editor in an across format. If you want to work with an editor outside this relationship, you can export the file to its native format, but it cannot be imported back into across to update the database (which both SDL Trados and Déjà Vu X can do if the

editor is careful to respect the codes and formatting). Aligning the edited file, deleting the original translation, and running pre-translation could be a work-around, but I have not tried it.

You can export a partially translated file, which is a feature I wish Déjà Vu X had. The program exports the translated paragraphs and automatically fills in the source where no translation was provided. This is also how you can back up your translation.

Is the terminology database well-integrated with the translating environment?

The terminology tool, designed for

corporations, is far more complete than many translators might need. However, the default setting only includes a few of the possible fields. It even has a “quick term entry” option for when you are in a hurry and only want to link term A to term B. (See Figure 5 for the features available in crossTerm.)

There is just one terminology database for each language pair, and it is concept-based, allowing for more than a one-to-one relationship between terms. You can add an image, a definition, and synonyms for terms in both languages, in addition to other fields (not shown in Figure 5 because they are displayed on the Details

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tab). You can search the database with wildcards or browse by the first letter of the term. The crossTerm window even shows you TM matches as a reference for concordance information (see the bottom of Figure 5).

One of my favorite features of crossTerm is that you can look up words in it from within the editing environment without opening a separate application. As shown in Figure 2 on page 27, there is a search field at the bottom of the crossTerm window in the editing environment, and you can type any word (in either language) and search for it in crossTerm. To add terms to crossTerm while translating, select a term in the source cell and in the editing window, then type Shift+Alt+I (or click on a button) to send the term and translation to crossTerm. You can add additional information, such as gender, part of speech, and usage, or leave these fields blank.

According to across, terminology lookup is language-specific for English, Danish, Dutch, Finnish,

as shown at the bottom of Figure 2. I have no complaints, compared to the other tools I have used. Just click on the translation in the Search Center to insert the segment in the edit window. According to across, you will be able to select among the different possible translations with a key combination in the next release. If the only difference between segments is a number, crossTank changes the number automatically to match the source text when the translation is inserted. It does not, however, have an assemble function similar to the one in Déjà Vu X. CrossTalk does a good job of showing the differences between the original text and the found segment, shading the text in both the source cell and the Search Center window (see Figure 2). You can also search crossTank manually on the concordance tab in the

includes an alignment tool, which I did not try. It can import MS Office (including MS Office 2007), XML, HTML, FrameMaker files, and some software interfaces. The company says a future version will be compatible with Windows Vista. Please refer to the company website for more details on compatible file formats.

One interesting feature is across' ability to search specific websites from within the tool using the Search Center. You can configure which sites it searches, and they are opened in an external browser, showing the result. The program can also be integrated with Babylon, which provides electronic monolingual and bilingual dictionaries for a limited number of languages.

Quality Assurance

The across Personal Edition has many quality assurance features built into the editing environment, and displayed in the crossView window on the left in Figure 2. It keeps track of spelling errors, missing formatting, and other possible errors as you work. When the translation is done, the program displays a window with a summary of possible problems to remind you to check them. You can also configure it to complain about mismatched numbers as you translate.

Another nice time-saving feature is the update function. This can be used when a source document is changed after all or part of it has been translated. The program compares the original and updated document and erases the translations for the changed paragraphs. (These translations remain in

References

References

across: Version reviewed: Personal Edition v. 3.50.16 SP2_EN

www.across.net

Babylon

www.babylon.com

I was impressed by the responsiveness of across' technical support.

German, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The lookup function also considers the morphology of the source language when searching crossTerm, based on word stems.

Is the TM database well-integrated with the translating environment?

The across Personal Edition finds segments in the TM (called crossTank) that are similar to the source segment,

Search Center.

There is one master TM database for each language pair, which many translators prefer. There is also just one terminology database for each language pair. Information on client, project name, and area are added automatically.

Compatible File Formats and Tools

The across Personal Edition can import TMs and terminology databases from external formats. It also

the TM.) You can then skip through the document and update the translation using TM matches where appropriate. When I have tried translating an updated document with Déjà Vu X or SDL Trados, neither program has ever made the process as easy as this function does.

Stability

I have only used across to translate five small jobs, so I cannot comment on its ability to import large files or

files with many figures. In any case, never try out a new environment tool on a project with a tight deadline, because there is always a learning curve. If anything goes wrong, you could miss your deadline.

Miscellaneous

I was impressed by the responsiveness of across' technical support. I used the product for three months, and they always answered my questions quickly. Considering that they did not

know I was writing a review and that I was contacting them regarding a free product, their response seems nothing short of amazing.

If you do not yet use a tool because of the cost or because you are not yet accustomed to using tools other than MS Word, e-mail, and an Internet browser, this is your chance! If you use another tool, but are interested in the specific features described here, give across a try. I think I am hooked already!

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