Betawiki: A case of software localisation for underresourced languages

MediaWiki made accessible in 120 languages

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Introduction

- Siebrand Mazeland
- Freelance IT consultant, mainly active in publishing business
- Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, OmegaWiki, Betawiki sysop/contributor
- MediaWiki bot operator
- Betawiki staff member

What is Betawiki?

- MediaWiki environment at http://translatewiki.net
- Started 2005 by Niklas Laxström
- Facilitate and support software localisation in all classified languages (ISO 639-3 thousands, 180 in practice)
- Platform for software localisation communities
- Currently support for MediaWiki, Freecol and Word2MediaWiki Plus

Why localisation?

- English language proficiency cannot be taken for granted
- Easier access and understanding
- Larger audience / wider adoption possibilities
- Enables focus on content without UI distractions
- Software is no longer developed by people thinking in English

Where is MediaWiki used?

- MediaWiki 1.12 and 'current'
- Wikimedia Foundation (Wikipedia, Wikibooks, …)
- Wikia (thousands)
- Wikitravel
- WikiHow
- OmegaWiki
- Corporate wikis (thousands)
- NGO-in-a-box
- Thousands of other wikis (personal, …)

What are Betawiki's goals?

- Be the best online localisation platform available for Open Sourced software
- Have translators in the the largest number of languages online
- Always have a challenge for translators (never be completely done)
- Technical excellence

What is
the current status of Betawiki?

- Localisations in 180 languages
- Over 250,000 messages translated in its history
- About 1,000 new messages in 15-20 languages every day
- MediaWiki has a minimal localisation in 111 languages (up from 48 end of 2007)

How does Betawiki do it?

- Crowd sourcing (all MediaWiki wikis, in sw, blog, ...)
- Assume good faith (give access liberally)
- Develop to the user's needs
- Focus translator effort ('most used first')
- Community building in a wiki
- Few formal processes (do-ocracy)
- Translation hints
- Multiple contribution methods

What are we going to change in Betawiki?

- Full support for any gettext (.po) application
- Statistics for all supported products
- AJAX support for translation UI
- Automatic export to review engine (transifex)
- Easy commits from review engine
- Many more new supported products

How can you help your language using Betawiki?

- Come to http://translatewiki.net
- Create a user
- Create a user page
- Request translator rights
- Start translating user interface messages or download a gettext file and translate offline
- You need to know how MediaWiki works a little