

Labels on Translation Output: A Triple Win



Chair of FIT North America

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FIT is the International Federation of Translators (www.fit-ift.org).

FIT North America is the North America regional center of FIT, covering Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

This presentation is based on a webinar I gave on August 23, 2024, for members of the American Translators Association (ATA), a member of FIT North America.

Roadmap

- ASTM F2575 and labels (a standards-based approach)
- Key distinction: Verified vs Un-Verified
- Labels: A Triple Win
- Labels breakdown, including possible icons
- What can YOU do?

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This Roadmap will give you an idea of what we will be discussing in this presentation.

There is widespread agreement that labels on various kinds of content are helpful. I aim to explain why translations, in particular, need their own labeling system, and that the proposed labels (currently, PVT and UVT, see below) are compatible with the label AIGC (AI-generated content).

Translation consumers need to be advised whether the correspondence between source and target language content has been verified by a qualified professional translator. The labels in this presentation can be viewed as a form of consumer protection.

I first introduced the notion of “consumer protection labels” for translations in a 2021 article for *Translatio*, FIT’s newsletter. You can find the article in their archives. (See the 2021 December issue <https://en.translatio.fit-ift.org/archive/>)

ASTM F2575-2023

Pre-production phase includes *what is a qualified professional translator and how to develop specs*

Labels are part of **post-production**. Updated labels were anticipated by a reference to the Tranquility GLO page at the end of F2575-2023

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F2575 is a comprehensive standard for both requesters and providers of translation services.

F2575 includes six areas of competence that determine whether a translator is a qualified professional. See <https://www.tranquility.info/whats-a-qualified-translator/> for a list of those six areas.

F2575-2023 is very comprehensive, but we want to focus on two main parts: how it divides the translation process into pre-production and post-production. Labels are introduced in the post-production phase as a means of risk mitigation for translation consumers.

It also makes publishers of translated content accountable for their output.

Labels are the most useful if they are standardized

You can learn more at the Tranquility website, specifically at the GLO

page cited in the November 2023 edition of the standard :

<https://www.tranquility.info/GLO/>

Verified vs Unverified

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What is at stake for consumers of translation output? It depends on the scenario. The consumer needs to ask themselves: Does it matter if there are gross errors not visible to me because I can't read the source text? Can I trust the translation, or should I exercise caution?

The key distinction provided by the translation consumer labels is whether the output has been checked for correspondence by a qualified professional translator. But why should that matter and who benefits from it?

The underlying assumption is that qualified human translators are best able to verify a translation. Here verification can be traditional translation, revision of a translation done by another human, or post-editing of raw machine output.

A Triple Win

1. **Consumers**, who are guided by the labels, especially in a high-stakes scenario
2. **Providers**, both individual translators and organizations, and **publishers** of translation output,
3. **System developers**, who can use the labels as metadata to select training data

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Here is the Triple Win:

Standardized labels are a win for consumers of translation output. The label PVT should inspire confidence. The label UVT (or a label indicating that the translation has been generated by AI) suggests that caution should be exercised before making a decision based on a translation.

Labels are a win for providers and publishers of translation because they allow for transparency. They justify pricing procedures. A professionally verified translation is more expensive, and it is worth it.

Indicating that the translation has not been verified is a type of disclaimer.

Overall, labels are a component of risk management.

Labels can also benefit developers of systems that translate automatically, based on training data. If the labels are part of the metadata associated with a translation, then professionally verified translation can be included when training a system and un-verified translations can be excluded. Obviously, that begs the question of what to do with un-labeled translations, but you have to start if you are ever going to get there.

Breaking down The Labels PVT and UVT

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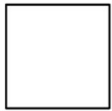

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At the end of Phase One of our survey to identify replacements for the 2023 acronyms, BRT and UMT, we came up with the updated acronyms PVT and UVT, based on the results gathered from the survey.

We will now present a possible pair of icons that represent the labels.

ICONS

Languages		Correspondence status	
Source		Check mark confirming correspondence has been verified	
Target		Warning triangle plus exclamation mark alerting to possible correspondence issues.	

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Each element of the icons has an intended meaning. And our main goal is to verify that correspondence between source and target language is optimum.

A broken line is intended to suggest that the source text is not visible to the end user (i.e. consumer). Or if it is visible, it is not comprehensible. If the consumer is proficient in the source language, they probably don't need a translation.

A solid line suggests that the target text is visible. The consumer can determine whether it is fluent, but generally cannot determine whether it corresponds appropriately to the source text.

ICONS



PVT



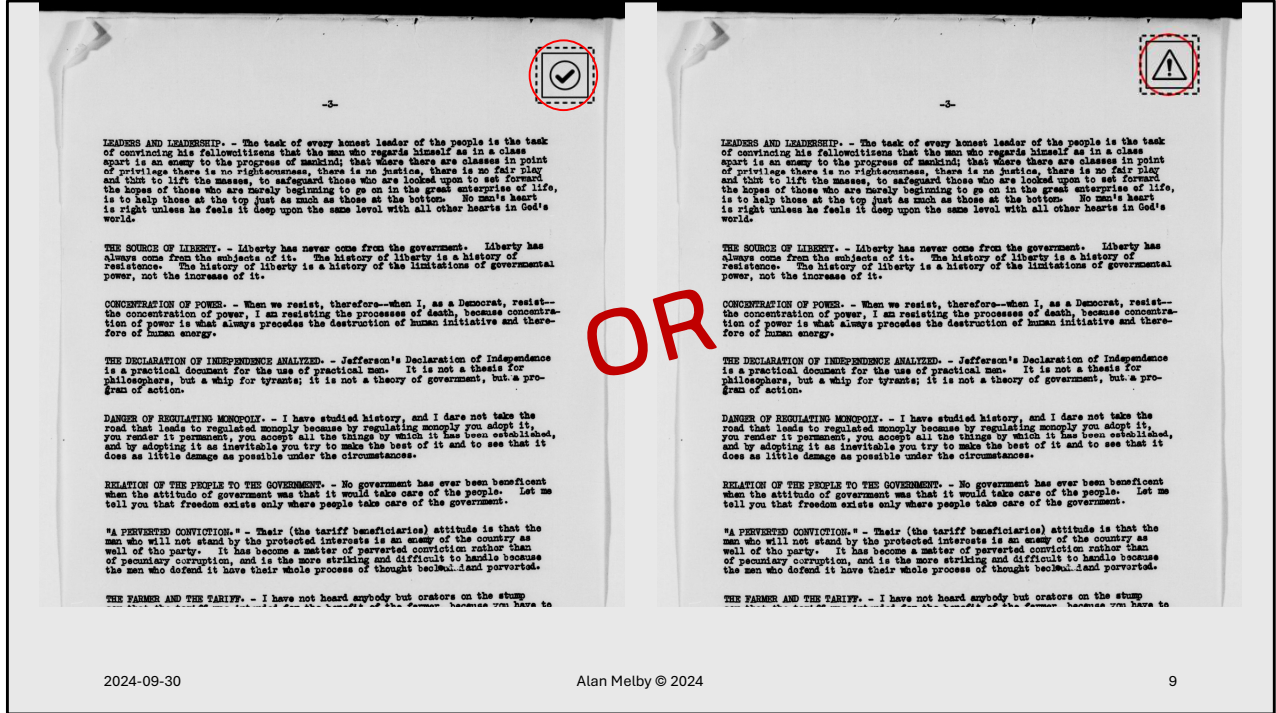
UVT

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The icons shown here were preferred by those who participated in phase two of the survey. Only source language (dashed line) and target (solid line) are represented, with the check or exclamation marks inside to indicate verified or unverified correspondence.



The labels would be visible, but not too conspicuous, and a link to a website explaining their meanings can be added as a footnote. A label can also be linked to the source text and the person or organization taking ownership, that is, responsibility for the translation output.

Diving into
The Factors behind the
Labels

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There are three factors in an ASTM F2575 label.

(1) The Process

(2) The Qualifications

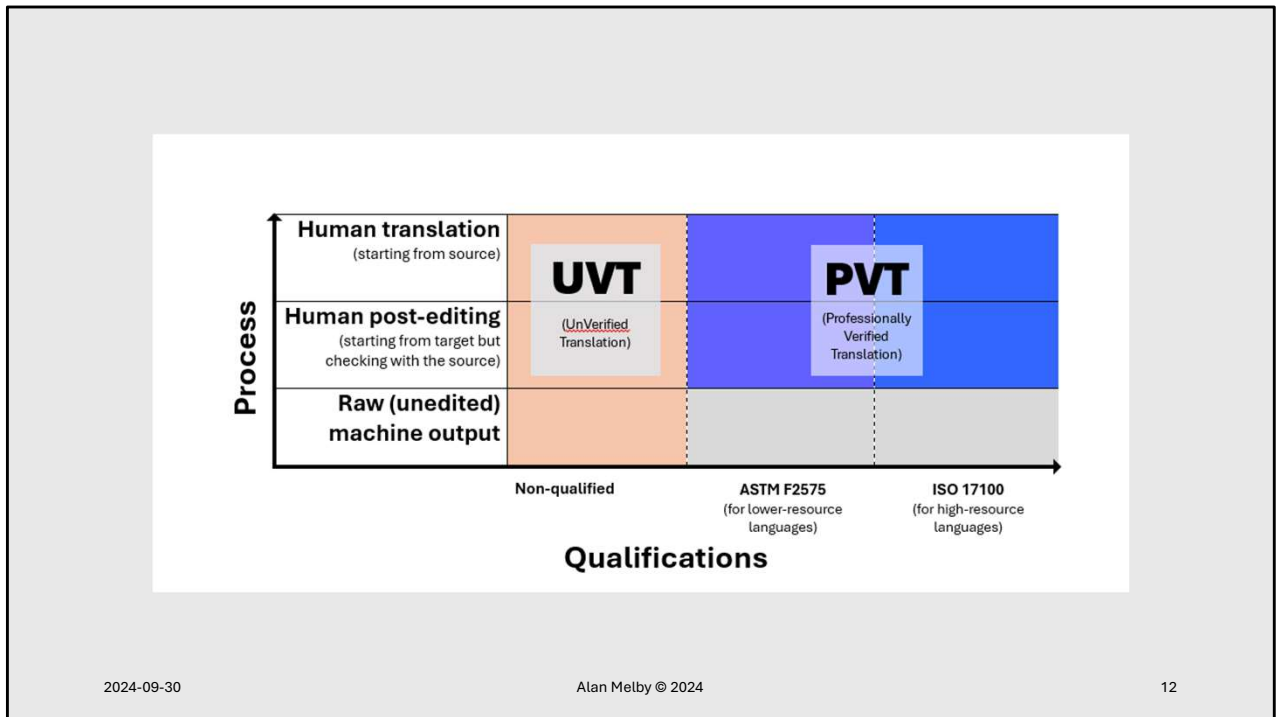
(3) Accountability

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Two of them are presented visually in the following chart originally created by Arle Lommel.



There are three main processes, each with possible variations, and three situations regarding a professional’s qualification: not verified by a human or verified by a non-qualified human, meets ASTM’s or meets ISO’s criteria.

Accountability

Who takes *ownership of* the translation?

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The third factor, **accountability** ensures that the publisher, whether an individual or an organization, has taken ownership of the work and its correspondence with the source language content, according to the agreed on specifications. Correspondence focuses on how well the solutions found in the translation reflect the intended message within the situation for which the content will be used, i.e., the use case.

In the case of AI, such as GenAI, raw machine translation, and translations performed by non-qualified individuals, who takes ownership of any issues that may arise? Probably no one, but that must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

What can YOU do?

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There are three stakeholder groups, consumers, providers & publishers, and developers.

The stakeholder group that has not yet been sufficiently consulted is consumers of translation output.

Survey

- ✓ Confirm PVT and UVT (where UVT is a superset of AIGC)
- ✓ Submit scenarios where UVT is low risk
- ✓ Submit scenarios where PVT is needed because correspondence errors could result in harm

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Let's collaborate so we begin to see PVT and UVT on translation output! Raw machine output can be labeled AIGC (AI Generated Content: see the AMTA 2024 presentation by my colleague Michel Simard). The label AIGC implies UVT. However, UVT applies to both AIGC and non-qualified human produced or edited content.

This is your invitation to participate in Phase III of our survey, which is somewhat specific to the AMTA community.

Your group

Please reveal your stakeholder group

- 1) Publisher
- 2) Provider of translation services
- 3) System developer (using NM, GenAI, or any new technology that produces a translation)

With which stakeholder group do you most closely identify?

[www.tranquility.info/
amta2024-survey](http://www.tranquility.info/amta2024-survey)



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Please, please take the survey!

Labels on Translation Output:

A Triple Win



by

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You are welcome to send comments directly to me:

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especially if you are willing to get involved in the Labels project. It will take many dedicated people to get the labels PVT and UVT implemented, so that they start to appear on translation output.

Full disclosure: As of September 2024, the label acronyms PVT and UVT are preferred by the ASTM F2575 team but have not yet officially replaced BRT and UMT. A new ASTM working group is being formed that will draft a narrow amendment to ASTM F2575-2023. This proposed amendment will be voted on, hopefully very soon, through the usual ASTM balloting procedure.

The effort to get PVT and UVT implemented is compatible with an effort to get raw machine output labeled as AIGC (AI generated content), since the label AIGC is a special case of the UVT. Thus, if the label AIGC appears on a translation, the label UVT is implied.

The label UVT is not completely equivalent to the label AIGC, since human translation

by a non-qualified person is UVT but not AIGC.

The focus of the Labels project is getting PVT used. There is even some discussion of making PVT into a certification mark, so that it can only be used appropriately.

It is not accidental that the presentation by Michel Simard is scheduled to be in the same session at AMTA 2024 as this presentation. The two presenters have interacted and consider their efforts as complementary.