

STAR Group

Information at the Core – the Route to Success

Create • Translate • Publish



Your single-source partner for information services & tools

The STAR Group ...

Information is everything

Information is the driving force in all aspects of modern industry; it is the key to new design and construction, and to the manufacture, distribution and maintenance of almost any product.



STAR AG, Headquarters of the STAR Group in Ramsen (Switzerland)

The integrity and enhancement of technical information is paramount for the STAR Group. We help our customers create, maintain, translate and publish their information in the best possible way, by creating the conditions for successful communication of information.

STAR is the only information management provider offering a range of services and custom-made tools that covers the entire information process.

Our information management services and tools extend from the preliminary analysis phase prior to content creation to the storage and reliable retrieval of published information. In the field of technical information and targeted and competent global communication, STAR is the single-source partner that offers you everything from translation services to complete information processing solutions.

The STAR Group achieves those goals by following three basic principles:

- ▲ *The complete separation of information content and layout* – by handling those components separately, not only is it possible to produce highly differentiated, intelligent technical information data but also to

automatically generate customized technical documents for all types of media. This principle enhances the reusability of information and avoids redundancy throughout the information process.

- ▲ *The delta principle* – STAR ensures that companies only work with the material that really is new in order to avoid redundant information and the duplication of work.

- ▲ *Tools are just tools* – all our business activities are based on the professional expertise of the people involved – our own staff and our clients. Tools are important only because they assist the creative process by making text production more efficient and relieving authors of repetitive and routine tasks.

Information drives the process

To get the best results when creating, translating, publishing and storing information, layout must be separated from content. We concentrate on the content, the essence of the information. We peel away the illusions created by layout to make the true nature of the information visible and understandable to the people working with it.

To give the information real value, we distil it. The information is created, translated and stored in a way that is not document-specific – today a footnote, tomorrow a headline might be the appropriate expression of a sentence. In that way, information stays reusable. The layout does not obscure the real information content from the writer, editor or translator – the quality of the information is easier to enhance when it is not camouflaged.

By keeping the information pure, we reduce redundancy. It is easier to recognize that two things are the same when they actually look the same. We make a lasting contribution to containing the explosion of data by finding the smallest piece of information (self-contained information unit) and allocating it a clearly defined address within an intelligent information structure.



... Successfully Communicating Information

The difference between past and future is the present

Everything we do at STAR Group is guided by the delta principle. It helps us to identify what is required and sometimes we even use it to establish precisely how something should be done.

Delta (Δ), the fourth letter in the Greek alphabet, means "difference", sometimes interpreted as "change".

By comparing products at different stages of a process, for example the old version of a document with the new version, we identify the differences between them. By finding those differences we establish precisely which parts of the amended document are new and therefore need to be worked on.

The delta principle is used also by STAR Group in the area of information. We focus on what has changed, what is different, what is new.

Only what has changed between the old version of a product and the new version is what needs to be addressed by the technical editors.

And only what has altered between the old and the new documentation is what needs to be translated.

Of course, every project is new in some way or other. However, by applying the delta principle and comparing the new project with earlier ones, we can be certain that proven solutions are reused while also ensuring that areas that require work are correctly identified. In that way we make sure that no information is created, translated or stored more than once.

By working together with our customers to manage information using the delta principle, we can achieve substantial savings in overall costs and time to market.

The importance of the delta principle to STAR is underlined by the fact that it is an integral part of our logo.

People create information, technology makes it usable

At STAR we recognize that only dedicated, competent and motivated professionals can create, analyze and refine the information entrusted to us by our customers.

Tools are just tools and they must be our servants, not our masters. At STAR, tools are used to eliminate the drudgery of some tasks in order to liberate the time and energy of the professionals for creative, innovative and productive endeavors. We recognize that the implementation of systems and tools in the process must support the professionals in their work, not force them to adapt to machines.

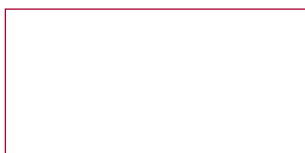
Although we are a global player in the language industry, (one of the largest vendors of translation services in the world) we are proud to have a flexible organization that allows us to be what our customers need us to be. We have the resources of a global player, coupled with the agility of the local entrepreneur. We can give our customers access to centralized services with a global reach, regional hubs, or local contacts as needed and in the combinations appropriate to the situation.

At STAR we realize that while each project is new, two things are constant: we work with information and the work is done by professionals.

Service – the basis of the relationship between STAR and its customers

STAR's global organization is built round the activities required to satisfy customers' needs to create and distribute information in any language, in any medium and at any time. The services are supported by a technical infrastructure of networks, computers, standard software packages and our own tools.

We constantly strive to optimize the interaction between the people and the tools to empower our work force and secure the quality and integrity of the data.



The STAR Group ...

STAR's range of services

The STAR Group gives you global access to high quality services.

Content creation

- ▲ Technical writing
- ▲ Illustration services (2D/3D and photorealistic illustrations)
- ▲ Internet/Multimedia (design, content, navigation, animation and programming)
- ▲ Knowledge communication and e-learning (storyboarding, content and programming)

Language services

- ▲ Technical translations (including all services before, during and after translation such as project management, quality assurance, etc.)
- ▲ Desktop publishing services in all languages (source and target language), on a variety of platforms and in all commonly used programs
- ▲ Software localization and related engineering services
- ▲ Multilingual publishing

Content management

- ▲ Information analysis and structuring
- ▲ Development of customized automatic layout descriptions (specific layout description language developed by STAR)
- ▲ SGML and XML consulting and development
- ▲ DSSSL, XSL, XSL-FO, XSL-T consulting and development (conversion between structures)

Software development services

- ▲ Custom software engineering
- ▲ Software internationalization consultancy

A global process with STAR

Wherever you contact STAR you encounter the same methods, the same tools, the same professionalism, the same infrastructure and the same idea: information is everything.

At the headquarters and hub offices you will encounter experienced project managers who lead your projects to success and know that your information needs to be communicated successfully in all languages. You will see production teams engaged in securing the data quality of incoming files before translation, in preparing files for translation, and in selecting the correct terminology database and reference material for your project.

At the other end of the production chain you will see the benefit of our commitment to data quality. The time and cost-efficiency of DTP, compiling, testing and all other forms of post processing are greatly enhanced because the data that is processed is of the highest possible quality. A problem solved at source will not come back to haunt you in 25 different target languages.

Working with STAR locally

For all work you contract to STAR, the local offices are available to discuss each project with your local representative, and of course, to carry out the project work.

Wherever you come in contact with a local STAR office you will find senior translators with extensive experience of working with our customers. You will find in-house translators and editors that ensure continuity and consistency in translations, even when freelance translators are used.

STAR's toolbox – our technical know-how

In our global production processes we – like our customers – come upon possibilities for optimization by the use of appropriate tools.

All our software solutions, old and new, are created when we and our customers identify a need. All those solutions are in daily use within the STAR Group – which means they are constantly being put through their paces by a truly global team of testers who contribute to the improvement of our products.

STAR does not implement technology for its own sake. We bring technology to our aid when it answers a question, solves a problem or adds something to the

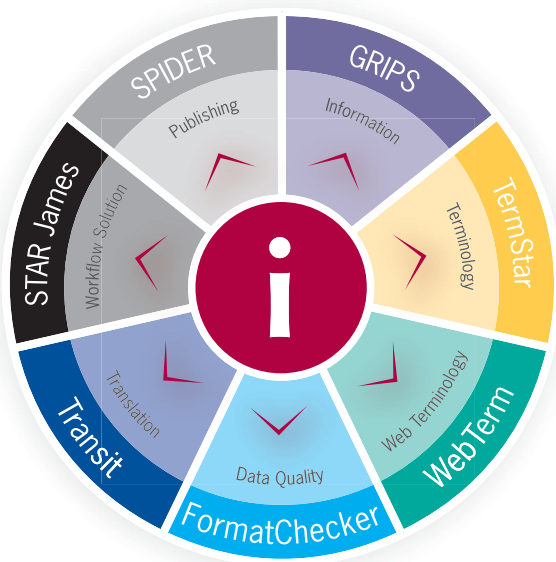


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workflow. The end result is a toolbox that seamlessly covers the information process from content creation to publishing and storage, and gives the people who are doing the creative work more time to concentrate on the right thing.

We share the common ground of questions, needs and problems with our customers and many other companies. That's why we make solutions available to you as software products. All STAR tools are, of course, compatible with each other. Due to their intelligent interface management they are also compatible with the software systems that you are already using.

We depend on our tools – so you can trust them, too!



STAR Software Product Portfolio

How can we get to grips with the deluge of information?

GRIPS is probably the most innovative information management system currently available. It enables information to be presented in its purest and most intelligent form.

GRIPS will help you to reduce information to its smallest significant elements and to structure them. At the same time, GRIPS lends intelligence to the information so that every information unit "knows" where it comes from, where it is saved, where it is going and what its

status is. This also prevents the creation of redundant information.

GRIPS makes the task of the technical writer easier and continues to aid the information manager right through the project, not only through the processes of translation and publication but also in information storage and retrieval. If you need the precise version of a manual that was published on the 2nd of May 1995 for a specific variant of a machine. GRIPS will find it for you!

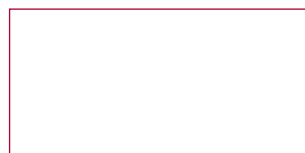
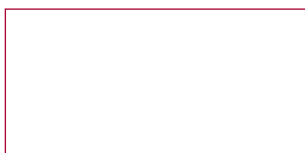
GRIPS brings document management to the level we call information management. The separation between information and layout is total. That means that all information is stored in a way that is not document-specific and can be reused in any possible context. The information exists only once and can be produced in any publication form you want – in brochures as well as in instruction manuals, maintenance guides or spare parts catalogs – and in the required language, as the specified document revision and for the product version you want. It also means that you never need to store the published document, since you can easily publish it again.

Use SPIDER to publish information at the press of a button!

In SPIDER we have the fastest pagination engine around – one that is capable of publishing single-source information with automatic layout at an incredible speed – whenever you want.

GRIPS can identify not only superficial but also structural differences and thus gives a new meaning to the delta principle. Even elements which are suddenly placed in another part of the structure can be recognized by GRIPS. So you neither have to search for them nor create them again.

GRIPS is interactive in a special new way – it can communicate with our clients' systems. Too good to be true? Certainly not! It is already a reality for many clients who manage all their information with GRIPS.



The STAR Group ...

How do we protect the structure of the text?

This was the original question that initiated the development of Transit more than 15 years ago. How can we make sure that the structure of the document is the same after translation?

Our goal was to ensure that the translator only works on text that has been changed or is new.

By using the delta principle, duplication of work can be prevented. The aim was to protect existing text (for example from older versions of a document) which has already been translated as well as the text layout and structure.

Today, Transit is a fully-featured translation tool with all the facilities and functions that our internal and external users have been asking for. It reuses previous translations, takes fuzzy matches into consideration, gives you concordance search functionality, dynamic linking for contextual terminology, reference-based spell checking, inherited project parameters etc.

However, Transit is also an expression of our commitment to keeping the information pure. The layout of the source is completely separated and protected. The ability to build one project on the next with inherited parameters makes managing a project easier and more economical. The built-in quality assurance (QA) functions help to ensure that data quality has not been compromised, that correct terminology has been used, etc.

How can we ensure terminology is correct?

Terminology is obviously an important part of the translation process. The terms must be clear and correct and sometimes they must also be customer-specific.

Transit has a companion product – TermStar, which is also available as a standalone product. Used in conjunction with Transit, TermStar puts terminology at the translator's fingertips. TermStar ensures consistency with previous and new versions of product documentation and helps maintain corporate style. Used alone,

TermStar helps its users create glossaries for external and internal use to facilitate the consistent use of language at all levels and locations within an organization.

And now it is web-compatible as well! WebTerm gives companies and organizations global access to corporate wording. All the user needs is a browser, and depending on the access rights, the user can then use, discuss or print the terminology. Location is no longer an issue.

How can we publish faster?

Writing, translating and managing information are closely related operations and best done when the information is free from layout. Only when it is time to introduce the information to its audience does the layout become part of the message.

SPIDER technology from STAR makes the publishing of rapidly changing information on CD, the web or in printed form dramatically faster.

Many of our customers are major companies who use SPIDER in order to distribute technical information rapidly, with pictures, in many languages, on the same CD, as often as they wish, and without storing a single document.

How do we cut out problems before translation?

All too often projects are delayed because problems in the source files are discovered when the translated files go into postproduction. We are not talking about the original 100 pages in one language. We are talking about 100 pages in 25 languages all of which need to be finished tomorrow.

At STAR, we have spent many years developing a comprehensive knowledge of the errors that produce problems in postproduction and previously had to be corrected manually. Now, as part of our commitment to maintaining the integrity of the information through improved data quality, we have incorporated those checks in our FormatChecker software for Microsoft® Word® and Adobe® FrameMaker® so that all our customers can benefit from our decades of experience.



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FormatChecker reveals the data quality of documents before the errors can be multiplied during subsequent text processing.

How can we eliminate routine and error-prone tasks?

The management of large translation projects involves a lot of repetitive tasks like moving and copying files, preparing files for translation, collecting relevant material and forwarding it to the next link in the chain. The jobs before and after translation are particularly cost and time-intensive.

All of those operations are error-prone. We are asking intelligent, skilled and highly motivated professionals to undertake often repetitive and routine tasks. Why not get a robot to do this for us?

Enter STAR James, the workflow manager for translation projects from STAR. James operates at the core of your workflows, interfaces with all stages and automates the project phases where it is useful and effective to do so. STAR James prepares data, sends and receives it and informs you promptly if tasks are not completed on time. Project managers always have full control and a complete overview of the workflow. Each step or phase can also be carried out manually if needed. In addition to this flexibility, STAR James is the solution that guarantees a high level of security through QA services and user-rights management.

James is a machine that works 24/7 without food, drink or thought. You are a human and should work reasonable hours with stimulating tasks and time off for a break and reflection.

The implementation of systems and tools in process automation should support the professionals. It should never be the other way round.

STAR – your single-source partner for information services and tools

STAR is not the new kid on the block. In fact, we have been around for twenty years and throughout that time we have consistently built our business on the delta principle and the understanding that:

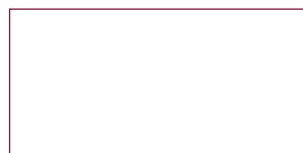
- ▲ Information is everything
- ▲ Information is created, modified and used by people

Today the STAR Group is an international network of more than 30 companies in 25 countries with more than 750 employees and even more freelance translators world wide. The headquarters are still situated in Europe in the German-speaking region of Switzerland where the Group has its origin.

Our growth has been organic and based on the continued cooperation with our customers. We strive to establish a long-term relationship with each customer, creating a working partnership. We are deeply conscious of the need to learn from each other and of the fact that we can grow together with our clients, opening up new markets and areas of operation as needed by the customer.

Our philosophy – placing information at the center and remaining local to our clients – has made the STAR Group one of the five largest providers of language services in the world. However, as a privately owned and financed company, we are accountable only to ourselves and to our customers – not to other forces unrelated to our business activities.

The next twenty years will see us continuing in this direction, taking the steps and measures that our customers need and our team of professionals want.





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