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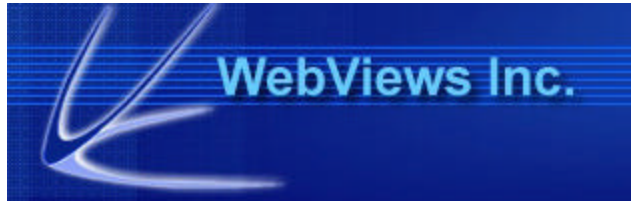
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One to watch: WebViews Inc.

5/30/2003 5:00:00 PM - An Internet translation firm explains why English gave way to "the language of the people." Also: When to use blonde or brunette models on your site



by Paul Fruitman

One to watch is a series that profiles young technology companies. It is not an endorsement but an exploration of the firm's potential.

When Richmond Hill, Ont.-based **WebViews Inc.** launched its Globalization and Localization Services package three years ago, it was a technology in search of a market.

The proprietary software, which allows for not only the translation but also the localization of Web pages came at a time when people thought going global simply meant English, according to WebViews' president and CEO.

"Earlier in the process, we had to use HTML, which is in English," says Manoo Missaghi, a 25-year veteran of the IT industry who has worked with IBM Europe and Nortel Networks. "Now we have publishing where you don't need to know any language. You have the tool and you can publish in any language you want."

In late 2002 as the Web developed, the market "started to wake up," Missaghi says. "We moved from the brochure-ware environment to mission-critical application. Once it moves to the operational environment, the environment needs to be delivered in the language of the people."



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A 2002 study by think tank Allied Business Intelligence Inc. predicts the market for translating Web Sites into multiple languages will grow to a \$1.7 billion by 2007. Five-year-old WebViews claims to have realized a near tripling of revenue and customer growth in the past year alone.

One of those customers, **SourceCan**, an Industry Canada e-marketplace matching Canadian products and services with business opportunities at home and abroad, says WebViews' technology has made a serious dent in both the time and money required to translate information it hosts about Canadian companies and their capabilities. SourceCan program manager David Chase says what used to take a week or two using human translators can be accomplished with WebViews in 24 or 36 hours and at about half the cost.

Steve Coulter, director of business development for WebViews, says a recent year-long United States government project to translate material for a Farsi-language Web site could have been completed by WebViews in days.

WebViews' origins can be traced to the early 1990s when parent company Manco Technologies Inc. a provider of e-business consulting and systems integration services, designed a solution that allowed different police systems across Ontario to talk with one another. Missaghi says Manco saw a similar need for companies to converse with global partners in their own languages.

But Missaghi stresses WebViews is a total localization service that goes beyond text to encompass local links and prices as well. For example, an English-language Web site designed for the United States market might feature a blonde model, with prices in dollars and links to other American Web sites. When localized for the Japanese market, the site would feature a Japanese model with prices in yen and links to other Japanese sites. Text is only five to eight per cent of the process. Coulter adds one of the biggest challenges facing WebViews is to educate the marketplace about its services because, in spite of the plethora of localization services on the market, WebViews is unique in its breadth and its on-demand utility model.

"You plug in and you get the end service," Missaghi says, adding WebViews' Inter Language Paradigm technology can translate into multiple languages simultaneously, rather than just a one-to-one basis. "We equip you first and we serve you. You are always connected and if you want to use long distance, you do."

What Missaghi means is that customers can purchase WebViews services as a full business solution or on an a la carte basis. The idea, he says, is to globalize business without changing the way people do it today. The end-2-end Localization e-Service captures current Web site content and localizes it, incorporating human intervention to ensure the translation is, according to Coulter, "letter perfect."

Another service automatically translates messages between business partners so "you're talking in your own language and that person is talking in their language," says Missaghi. WebViews concedes here that the odd word might get lost in the translation.

"Traditionally," he says, "the way the world worked is that you create a piece of text and someone translates it back to you." This process, Missaghi adds, depends on the expertise of the translator and is, at any rate, too labour intensive.

Old machine translation technology, he adds, was not useful because it operated only at a Grade 3 or 4 reading level.

The third paradigm, employed by WebViews, approaches translation from a concept rather than a word standpoint, creating different knowledge warehouses for different industries. Missaghi says the first industries using WebViews are, not surprisingly, business and technology, and the development of other knowledge

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warehouses would depend on the adoption of the technology by other industries.

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