



French Style Guide

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1 About this style guide

This style guide is intended for the localization professional working on localized products that run on a Microsoft platform. It's not intended to be a comprehensive coverage of all localization practices, but to highlight areas where Microsoft has specific preferences or deviates from standard practices for French localization.

The primary goal of this guide is to help you understand and learn how to address all of the necessary linguistic and stylistic nuances of French during the localization of your products and services.

The style guide covers guidelines and recommendations for translating the Microsoft voice into French including words, grammatical structures, the needs of the audience, and the intent of the text that are to be considered. Each of these areas is supplemented with samples.

Other language considerations covered in this style guide are accessibility, trademarks, geopolitical concerns and specific software considerations.

We welcome your feedback, questions and concerns regarding the style guide. Please send your feedback via [Microsoft Language Portal](#).

1.1 Recommended style references

Unless this style guide or the [Microsoft Language Portal](#) provides alternative instructions, use the orthography, grammar, and terminology in the following publications:

Normative references

When more than one solution is possible, consult the other topics in this style guide for guidance.

1. Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé (<http://atilf.atilf.fr/>)
2. Le Petit Robert, ROBERT, Paul, Paris : Dictionnaire Le Robert
3. Le Petit Larousse, Éditions Larousse
4. Le bon usage, GREVISSE, Maurice, Paris-Gembloux : Duculot

Microsoft User interface reference

A helpful reference is the [Windows User Experience Interaction Guidelines](#).

2 Microsoft voice

Microsoft's brand personality comes through in our voice and tone—what we say and how we say it. The design of Microsoft products, services, and experiences hinges on crisp simplicity.

Three principles form the foundation of our voice:

- **Warm and relaxed:** We're natural. Less formal, more grounded in honest conversations. Occasionally, we're fun. (We know when to celebrate.)
- **Crisp and clear:** We're to the point. We write for scanning first, reading second. We make it simple above all.
- **Ready to lend a hand:** We show customers we're on their side. We anticipate their real needs and offer great information at just the right time.

The Microsoft voice targets a broad set of users from technology enthusiasts and casual computer users. Although content might be different for different audiences, the principles of Microsoft voice are the same. However, Microsoft voice also means keeping the audience in mind. Choose the right words for the audience: use technical terms for technical audiences, but for consumers use common words and phrases instead.

These key elements of Microsoft voice should extend across Microsoft content for all language locales. For each language, the specific choices in style and tone that produce Microsoft voice are different. The following guidelines are relevant for US English as well as many other languages. Throughout this guide, you'll find additional guidelines specific to applying Microsoft voice to French.

Guidelines

Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Write short, easy-to-read sentences.
- Avoid passive voice—it's difficult to read and understand quickly.
- Be pleasant and ensure that explanations appear individualized.
- Avoid slang and be careful with colloquialisms—it's acceptable to reassure and connect with customers in a conversational tone, but be professional in doing so.

2.1 Choices that reflect Microsoft voice

Translating French in a way that reflects Microsoft voice means choosing words and grammatical structures that reflect the same style as the source text. It also means considering the needs of the audience and the intent of the text.

The general style should be clear, friendly and concise. Use language that resembles conversation observed in everyday settings as opposed to the formal, technical language that's often used for technical and commercial content.

When you're localizing source text written in Microsoft voice, **feel free to choose words that aren't standard translations** if you think that's the best way to stay true to the intent of the source text.

Because Microsoft voice means a more conversational style, literally translating the source text may produce target text that's not relevant to customers. To guide your translation, consider the intent of the text and what the customer needs to know to successfully complete the task.

2.1.1 Flexibility

It's important for translators to modify or rewrite translated strings so that they are more appropriate and natural to French customers. Try to understand the whole intention of the sentences, paragraphs, and pages, and then rewrite as if you are writing the content yourself. It will make the content more perfect for French users. Sometimes, you may need to remove any unnecessary content.

English example	French example
Messenger: Full view in Messenger	Messenger : affichage normal
Multimedia status updates are just another way Messenger helps keep you connected with the people who matter most.	La mise à jour de vos statuts vous aide à garder le contact avec vos proches.

2.1.2 Word choice

Terminology

Use terminology from the [Microsoft Language Portal](#) where applicable, for example key terms, technical terms, and product names.

Short word forms and everyday words

Microsoft voice text written in US English prefers short, simple words spoken in everyday conversations. In English, shorter words are friendlier and less formal. Short words also save space on screen and are easier to read quickly. Precise, well-chosen words add clarity, but it's important to be intentional about using everyday words that customers are accustomed to.

In French, full forms are preferred and the use of shortened words is an exception.

The following table contains a non-exhaustive list of shortened words usages in en-US and fr-FR.

en-US word	en-US word usage	fr-FR word usage
App	Use <i>app</i> instead of <i>application</i> or <i>program</i> .	Don't use "app" in French even if used in the source. Use " application " instead as this is the approved translation. Note that when used in the source string and if space is limited, then the use of the short form "appli" is acceptable.
Pick, choose	Use <i>pick</i> in more fun, less formal or lightweight situations ("pick a color," not "choose a color") and <i>choose</i> for more formal situations (don't use <i>select</i> unless necessary for the UI).	
Drive	For general reference to any drive type (hard drive, CD drive, external hard drive, etc.). Use specific drive type if necessary.	
Get	Fine to use as a synonym for "obtain" or "come into possession of" but avoid for other general meanings.	
Info	Use in most situations unless " <i>information</i> " better fits the context. Use " <i>info</i> " when you point the reader elsewhere ("for more info, see <link>").	Try to avoid using "infos" in running text and use the full form instead. (" informations " or " information ") Note that when used in the source string and if space is limited, then the use of the short form is acceptable. Please use "infos"

		in the context of data related to a contact, personal details, more info, etc.
PC	Use for personal computing devices. Use <i>computer</i> for situations about PCs and Macs. Don't switch between <i>PC</i> and <i>computer</i> .	Use " PC " as per source as this is the approved translation.
You	Address the user as <i>you</i> , directly or indirectly through the use of first- and second-person pronouns like "you." Avoid third-person references, such as "user," as they sound formal and impersonal. For information on localizing <i>you</i> , see the section Pronoun .	
Sync		Don't use "sync" or "synchro," even if used in the source, and use the full form instead: synchronizer/synchronization .

Everyday words

For the French Microsoft voice, everyday words will also be used to convey the meaning in a more concise and direct way to the target audience.

Target audience is often reluctant to read and understand long text, especially when it contains obscure words. So, French Microsoft voice uses simple and short words to convey the meaning in an easier way.

The following table contains a non-exhaustive listing of formal target terms and their simpler alternatives.

fr-FR existing term	fr-FR Microsoft voice term
invariablement	toujours
il est (fort) probable que	sans doute, probablement
pléthore	trop, (excès is less-used, and depends on context)
diminution	baisse

afin de, dans le but de	pour
avoir la possibilité de, avoir l'opportunité de	pouvoir
réaliser	faire, effectuer
requérir, exiger	demander, nécessiter
faire une recommandation	recommander, conseiller

2.1.3 Word-to-word translation

For a more fluent translation, avoid word-to-word translation. If words are translated directly without overall understanding of the paragraph or the page, the content will not be natural and may even appear ridiculous, and our customers will not come again. Strict word-to-word translation makes the tone stiff and unnatural. Split the text into different sentences, if necessary, to simplify. Omit descriptors to make the text snappier.

English text	Incorrect French translation	Correct French translation
Connected with the Cloud	Connexion au Cloud	Cloud : la vie 100 % connectée
Take files with you	Emmenez les fichiers avec vous	Vos fichiers toujours avec vous
The efficient way to do email	Une façon efficace d'échanger des messages	Hotmail, bien plus qu'une adresse de messagerie
We'll keep stepping up security	Nous continuerons à renforcer la sécurité	Une boîte mail toujours plus sécurisée
A more secure Web	Un Web plus sécurisé	Un Web plus sûr
Connected to your people	Connexion à vos contacts	Connectez-vous à vos proches

2.1.4 Words and phrases to avoid

Microsoft voice avoids an unnecessarily formal tone. The following table lists US English words that add formality without adding meaning, along with more common equivalents.

en-US word/phrase to avoid	Preferred en-US word/phrase
Achieve	<i>Do</i>
As well as	<i>Also, too</i>
Attempt	<i>Try</i>
Configure	<i>Set up</i>
Encounter	<i>Meet</i>
Execute	<i>Run</i>
Halt	<i>Stop</i>
Have an opportunity	<i>Can</i>
However	<i>But</i>
Give/provide guidance, give/provide information	<i>Help</i>
In addition	<i>Also</i>
In conjunction with	<i>With</i>
Locate	<i>Find</i>
Make a recommendation	<i>Recommend</i>
Modify	<i>Change</i>
Navigate	<i>Go</i>
Obtain	<i>Get</i>
Perform	<i>Do</i>
Purchase	<i>Buy</i>
Refer to	<i>See</i>
Resolve	<i>Fix</i>

Subsequent	<i>Next</i>
Suitable	<i>Works well</i>
Terminate	<i>End</i>
Toggle	<i>Switch</i>
Utilize	<i>Use</i>

For French Microsoft voice, words and phrases not to use in Microsoft voice text have been identified as they express a very formal tone. Equivalent words more appropriate for the Microsoft voice are provided as well.

Here are some examples:

French old word/phrase	French new word/phrase
avoir la possibilité de, avoir l'opportunité de	pouvoir
requérir	demander
faire une recommandation	recommander, conseiller
nécessiter	devoir
Impossible de...	When source is using forms such as "We were unable to" or "We could not," try and avoid using impersonal forms such as "impossible de." Instead, match the source and use forms such as "Nous n'avons pas pu."

More generally, avoid words you wouldn't say to someone else in person. Avoid using impersonal forms like "on," or expressions such as "il y a," "il faut" or "c'est."

2.2 Sample Microsoft voice text

The source and target phrase samples in the following sections illustrate the intent of the Microsoft voice.

2.2.1 Address the user to take action

US English	French target	Explanation
The password isn't correct, so please try again. Passwords are case-sensitive.	Le mot de passe est incorrect, réessayez. Les mots de passe respectent la casse.	The user has entered an incorrect password so provide the user with a short and friendly message with the action to try again.
This product key didn't work. Please check it and try again.	Cette clé de produit ne fonctionne pas. Vérifiez-la et recommencez.	The user has entered incorrect product key. The message casually and politely asks the user to check it and try again.
All ready to go	Tout est prêt.	Casual and short message to inform user that setup has completed, ready to start using the system.
Give your PC a name—any name you want. If you want to change the background color, turn high contrast off in PC settings.	Donnez un nom à votre PC (celui que vous voulez). Pour modifier la couleur d'arrière-plan, désactivez le contraste élevé dans les paramètres du PC.	Address the user directly using second person pronoun to take the necessary action.

2.2.2 Promote a feature

US English	French target	Explanation
Picture password is a new way to help you protect your touchscreen PC. You choose the picture—and the gestures you use with it—to create a password that's uniquely yours.	Le mot de passe image est une nouvelle méthode de protection de votre PC à écran tactile. Vous choisissez l'image (ainsi que les mouvements nécessaires à sa réalisation) pour créer un mot de passe réellement personnalisé.	Promoting a specific feature with the use of em-dash to emphasis the specific requirements to enable the feature which in this situation is picture password.
Let apps give you personalized content based on your PC's location, name, account picture, and other domain info.	Permettre aux applications de vous donner du contenu personnalisé en fonction de l'emplacement, du nom et de l'avatar de compte de votre PC, ainsi que d'autres informations de domaine.	Promoting the use of apps. Depending on the context of the string you can add familiarity to the text by using everyday words for example, PC.

2.2.3 Provide how-to guidelines

US English	French target	Explanation
To go back and save your work, click Cancel and finish what you need to.	Pour revenir en arrière et enregistrer votre travail, cliquez sur Annuler et terminez vos tâches.	Short and clear action using the second person pronoun.
To confirm your current picture password, just watch the replay and trace the example gestures shown on your picture.	Pour confirmer votre mot de passe image actuel, regardez simplement la relecture de la séquence enregistrée et tracez les exemples de mouvements indiqués sur votre image.	Voice is simple and natural. The user isn't overloaded with information; we tell them only what they need to know to make a decision.

2.2.4 Explanatory text and support

US English	French target	Explanation
The updates are installed, but Windows 10 Setup needs to restart for them to work. After it restarts, we'll keep going from where we left off.	Les mises à jour sont installées mais le programme d'installation de Windows 10 doit redémarrer pour qu'elles puissent fonctionner. Une fois le redémarrage effectué, l'installation pourra reprendre.	The language is natural, the way people talk. In this case voice is reassuring, letting the user know that we're doing the work. Use of "we" provides a more personal feel.
If you restart now, you and any other people using this PC could lose unsaved work.	Si vous redémarrez le PC maintenant, vous et les autres personnes en train d'utiliser ce PC risquez de perdre le travail non enregistré.	Voice is clear and natural informing the user what will happen if this action is taken.
This document will be automatically moved to the right library and folder after you correct invalid or missing properties.	Ce document sera automatiquement déplacé vers la bibliothèque et le dossier appropriés dès que vous aurez corrigé les propriétés non valides ou manquantes.	Voice talks to the user informatively and directly on the action that will be taken.
Something bad happened! Unable to locate downloaded files to create your bootable USB flash drive.	Il y a eu un problème : impossible de trouver les fichiers téléchargés pour créer votre lecteur flash USB de démarrage.	Without complexity and using short sentences inform the user what has happened.

3 Language-specific standards

Information about French-specific standards, such as phone number formats, date formats, currency formats, and measurement units are available from the [GoGlobal Developer Center](#).

3.1 Grammar, syntax and orthographic standards

This section includes information on how to apply the general language and syntax rules to Microsoft products, online content, and documentation.

3.1.1 Abbreviations

Common abbreviations

You might need to abbreviate some words in the UI (mainly buttons or options names) due to lack of space. This can be done in the following ways:

- Regular abbreviations shorten a word by three or more letters and end with periods (see below for exceptions). Abbreviate only after a consonant or cluster of consonants.

Example: supplement > suppl

- Plural abbreviations don't take an "s" in French.

Examples: des URL, 200 Mo

List of common abbreviations:

Expression	Acceptable abbreviation
premier, première	1 ^{er} , 1 ^{re}
deuxième, troisième	2 ^e , 3 ^e
article	art.
reportez-vous à	cf.
Chapitre	chap.

Et caetera	etc.
Exemple	ex.
gigaoctet	Go
heure	h
kilohertz	kHz
Madame	Mme
Mademoiselle	Mlle
Monsieur	M.
million	Mio
minute	min
numéro	n ^o
référence numéro	réf. n ^o

Note: If a sentence ends with an abbreviation that has its own period, there is no additional end-of-sentence period.

3.1.2 Acronyms

Acronyms are words made up of the initial letters of major parts of a compound term. Common examples are WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get), DNS (Domain Name Server), and HTML (Hypertext Markup Language).

Write acronyms in capital letters, without periods or spaces. Acronyms don't agree in number. In French, don't capitalize a spelled-out term beyond the first substantive. When the acronym can be pronounced as a proper name, it's permissible to write it in lower case with an initial capital (for example, Unesco, Opep). Some acronyms, having become common nouns, are treated as such (for example, ovni, laser).

Localized acronyms

When acronyms are localized, which does not happen often, they take the gender of the first substantive.

Examples:

en-US source	fr-FR target
DTP	la PAO (Publication assistée par ordinateur)
DBMS	le SGBD (Système de gestion de base de données)

Unlocalized acronyms

If an acronym must remain in English throughout a manual or other text, the first time it occurs, write its full name in French in normal style followed in parentheses by the acronym and its full spelling in English in italics, when applicable.

Example:

Si cette application gère l'échange dynamique de données (DDE, Dynamic Data Exchange) ou la liaison et l'incorporation d'objets (OLE, Object Linking and Embedding), vous pouvez également y coller avec liaison un document graphique. Les abonnements et le DDE ne sont disponibles que si vous utilisez la version 7.0.

3.1.3 Adjectives

In French, adjectives can take masculine/feminine and singular/plural forms, according to the name they are related to. They are commonly placed after this noun. Be careful not to use too many adjectives in a row.

Possessive adjectives

The frequent use of possessives is a feature of English language. However, in French, possessive adjectives have to be avoided whenever it's possible. Prefer using definite forms.

English example	French example
Contact your administrator	Contactez l' administrateur

3.1.4 Articles

General considerations

Definite articles are far more often used in French than in English. Avoid indefinite articles whenever it's possible.

Unlocalized feature names

Microsoft product names and non-translated feature names are used without definite or indefinite articles in the English language. We treat them in this way in this way in French as well.

Example:

en-US source	fr-FR target
Download Microsoft Office	Télécharger Microsoft Office

Localized feature names

Translated feature names are handled like any French name, that's, with the appropriate article.

Example:

en-US source	fr-FR target
Using Microsoft Download Manager	Utilisation du gestionnaire de téléchargement Microsoft

3.1.5 Capitalization

The English language tends to overuse capitals. This practice shouldn't be followed in French. As a general rule, only proper nouns and the first word of a sentence have to be capitalized. There are just a few exceptions (for example, legal terms in a contract).

en-US source phrase	French phrase
Note: You need to add a user as a contact to their details.	Remarque : vous devez ajouter un utilisateur à votre liste de contacts pour afficher les informations de ce dernier.
Note: You need to add a user as a contact to their details.	Remarque : Vous devez ajouter un utilisateur à votre liste de contacts pour afficher les informations de ce dernier.

3.1.6 Compounds

Compounds should be understandable and clear to the user. Avoid overly long or complex compounds. Keep in mind that unintuitive compounds can cause intelligibility and usability issues.

Be careful when using plural forms for compounds. Always check your dictionary if in doubt about the use of hyphen or about which word to put in plural form. You can also refer to the following guidelines:

1. When two nouns are in apposition, both nouns must be in plural.

Examples:

des lettres types
des fenêtres parentes/des fenêtres enfants
des applications clients
des fichiers sources/des fichiers cibles

2. If the 2 nouns are complements, only the first one is in plural:

Examples:

des serveurs passerelle
des tables système
des imprimantes couleur
des raccourcis clavier
des fichiers système
des fichiers texte
des connexions réseau
des installations réseau

3.1.7 Conjunctions

For en-US Microsoft voice, conjunctions can help convey a conversational tone. Starting a sentence with a conjunction can be used to convey an informal tone and style.

Starting a sentence with a conjunction can be used to convey an informal tone and style.

Some specific conjunctions in French Microsoft voice can be used rather than others in order to help convey a conversational tone. Some other conjunctions are a bit too formal, and should be avoided. Here are some examples:

French old use of conjunctions	French new use of conjunctions
de même que	comme
lors de	durant/pendant
auquel cas	<nothing> avoid using this conjunction
lorsque/une fois que	quand
de sorte que/de (telle) façon que	pour, afin de
sitôt que	dès que
par conséquent/d'où	ainsi
parce que/vu que/ à cause de	car
jusqu'au moment où	jusqu'à ce que
en dépit de	malgré
sauf que	sauf si
si jamais	si
après que/maintenant que	une fois..., une fois que
sans ça/sans cela	sinon

3.1.8 Gender

When addressing users, always use the masculine gender.

Example:

en-US source	fr-FR target
You're connected to the Internet.	Vous êtes connecté à Internet.

When the subject of a sentence is a product, a brand, etc., avoid using a specific gender.

en-US source	fr-FR source
Benefits for Microsoft?	(+) Quels seraient les avantages pour Microsoft ? (-) Quels avantages Microsoft pourrait-elle en tirer ?

3.1.9 Localizing colloquialism, idioms, and metaphors

The Microsoft voice allows for the use of culture-centric colloquialisms, idioms and metaphors (collectively referred to "colloquialism").

Choose from these options to express the intent of the source text appropriately.

- Don't attempt to replace the source colloquialism with a French colloquialism that fits the same meaning of the particular context unless it's a perfect and natural fit for that context.
- Translate the *intended* meaning of the colloquialism in the source text (not the literal translation of the original colloquialism in the source text), but only if the colloquialism's meaning is an integral part of the text that can't be omitted.
- If the colloquialism can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the text, omit it.

en-US source	fr-FR target
We've hit a snag...	<u>Not casual, and no slang</u> : Nous avons rencontré un problème...
Uploads are limited to 100MB. Got something smaller?	Les téléchargements étant limités à 100 Mo, merci d'utiliser une taille de fichier plus petite.

Bummer...	Don't translate and delete.
Working on it... Please bear with us. Note: This generic string is displayed when there is something happening on SharePoint that takes longer than a second. It could be any operation, so there may be no additional context	Cette tâche est presque terminée... Nous avons bientôt terminé... Merci de patienter.
Warm up your fingers—it's time to enter the product key.	Entrez maintenant la clé de produit.
Drum roll, please...	Fin de l'installation
Yay! The wait's over.	Vous pouvez passer à l'étape suivante.

3.1.10 Nouns

General considerations

French language tends to use more nouns than English language.

Example:

en-US source	fr-FR target
How to use Microsoft Office	Utilisation de Microsoft Office

Plural formation

- Unlike in English, adjectives in French can take plural forms, according to the noun they are related to.
- Be careful when dealing with compounds: there is no real rule about their plural form. Check your dictionary if in doubt. See examples in [Compounds](#) section.
- Acronyms and brand names don't bear an -s in plural (examples: des CD, des iPod).
- Avoid plural forms within brackets. Use "le ou les périphériques" instead of "le(s) périphérique(s)". However, plural forms within brackets shall however be accepted in UI when length restriction applies.

3.1.11 Number

This topic includes guidelines when to use numerals (symbol that represents a number. for example, 1, 2, 3, 234, etc.) and when to spell out numbers (one, two, three, two hundred and thirty-four) and other aspects for the particular language.

General rule for French is to spell out cardinal numbers from zero to nine unless we are expressing numbers as numbers.

For example, we will write "La mise à niveau vers la version 10.1 prendra cinq à dix minutes." but "Le temps de chargement est estimé à 11 secondes."

3.1.12 Prepositions

Be aware of proper preposition use in translations. Many translators, influenced by the English language, omit them or change the word order.

For the Microsoft voice, use of prepositions is another way to help convey a casual or conversational tone. Starting or ending a sentence with a preposition is acceptable practice in conveying Microsoft voice.

Source Text Expression	French Expression	Comment
Due to...	En raison de...	Using "Dû à" at the beginning of a sentence is incorrect.
Specific to	Propre à/Spécifique de	"Spécifique à" is incorrect.
Log in/Log out	Se connecter/Se déconnecter	Always pay attention to prepositions like "in" and "out," "to" and "from", because a misreading can lead to the opposite meaning.

3.1.13 Pronouns

When addressing users, avoid using "on" and always use the masculine singular form of "vous."

Example:

en-US source	fr-FR target
Do you want to delete this file?	Voulez-vous supprimer ce fichier ?

3.1.14 Punctuation

Punctuation plays a supportive role in voice; it isn't a substitute for good word choice.

In French, avoid using some punctuation, while following the following basic rules:

- Don't use semicolons. Two shorter sentences are better and easier to read.
- Don't systematically reuse exclamation marks as in the source. Use stronger words.
- Question marks? Like exclamation points, use them judiciously. They work well when a link is phrased as a customer question.
- Parentheses give a noticeable whisper.
- An en dash (not em dash) adds fluid emphasis—and it's more casual than a colon.

An em dash is used to demarcate an isolated element or to introduce an item that's not essential to the meaning of the sentence. In French, it's recommended to replace the em dash by a period, comma or parentheses.

Apostrophes

Follow the rules below whenever applicable:

- Check the type of apostrophes by viewing the translation files in a large font size.
- Use curly apostrophes [0146] < ' > in general.
- Use straight apostrophes when instructed by Developer or SPM.

Bulleted lists

Bulleted items in a list will follow the common style guide rules.

If the bulleted items are complete sentences, each begins with a capital and ends with a period.

Example 1:

Vous pouvez obtenir plus d'informations dans les chapitres suivants de cette deuxième partie.

- Le chapitre 6 traite des lettres types.
- Le chapitre 7 traite des étiquettes et autres documents à fusionner.

If the bulleted items continue an introductory clause, each begins with a capital and ends with no final punctuation.

Example 2:

Vous avez le choix entre les options suivantes :

- Alignement contre la marge gauche
- Alignement contre la marge droite
- Centrage entre les deux marges

Example 3:

Avant d'ouvrir un autre fichier, vous pouvez :

- Enregistrer le premier fichier et le fermer
- Fermer le premier fichier sans l'enregistrer
- Ne pas fermer le premier fichier

Also, consistency should always be maintained among bulleted items in a given list: use only nouns (see Example 2), only infinitives (see Example 3), only sentences (see Example 1), etc., whether English text is consistent or not.

Comma

In a series consisting of three or more elements with similar grammatical function, separate the elements with commas. When one of the conjunctions *et*, *ou*, or *ni* joins the last two elements in a series, don't use a comma before the conjunction.

Example: (+) Le chapitre 5 traite des fichiers, dossiers et répertoires.

If the elements don't have the same grammatical function, a comma precedes *et*, *ou*, or *ni*.

Example: (+) J'ai acheté un ordinateur, et un système d'exploitation y était déjà installé.

Use commas to set off explanatory clauses and appositives.

Example: (+) Vous devez ouvrir le fichier principal, c'est-à-dire le premier de la liste.

Colon

Use colons to introduce lists and explanations. You may use a colon at the end of an introductory phrase even if it's not a complete sentence.

Don't capitalize the word following a colon unless (1) the colon is at the end of a heading, (2) the text following the colon is a complete quotation or (3) after terms like "Remarque", "Note", "Avertissement", "Attention" or "Exemple" as a new sentence is started.

Example: (+) Vous avez ouvert deux fichiers : le fichier source et le fichier cible.

(+) Remarque : Cliquez sur OK pour actualiser.

(+) Microsoft déclare : « Le succès est au rendez-vous ! ».

Don't use colons to introduce only one idea.

Example:

US English	French target
Click on: File	(+) Cliquez sur Fichier. (-) Cliquez sur : Fichier.

Dashes and hyphens

Three different dash characters are used in English.

Hyphen

The hyphen (trait d'union) is used to divide words between syllables, to link parts of a compound word, and to connect the parts of an inverted or imperative verb form.

Example: des fonctionnalités-clés, voulez-vous...

When a hyphenated compound should not be divided between lines (for example, MS-DOS), use a nonbreaking hyphen (CTRL+SHIFT+HYPHEN). Both parts of the compound will be kept together on the same line.

En dash

The en dash (tiret demi-cadratin, ANSI 0150) is used as a minus sign, usually with spaces before and after.

Example: Salaire – 1 000 = 2 000

The en dash is also used in number ranges, such as those specifying page numbers. No spaces are used around the en dash in this case.

Em dash

The em dash (tiret cadratin, ANSI 0151) should only be used to emphasize an isolated element or introduce an element that's not essential to the meaning conveyed by the sentence. In most cases where the English uses dashes, commas, colons or parentheses can be used in the French.

Examples:

US English	French target
Each table in your database should store facts about a single subject—about customers, for example, or products.	Chacune des tables de votre base de données devrait se limiter à un seul sujet, tel que clients ou produits, par exemple.
Bold —Applies bold formatting.	Gras : met le texte en gras.

However, in very long sentences, the em dash can be used in French for better look and feel: Le mot de passe image est une nouvelle méthode de protection de votre PC à écran tactile. Vous choisissez l'image — ainsi que les mouvements nécessaires à sa réalisation — pour créer un mot de passe réellement personnalisé.

Ellipses (suspension points)

Don't use three periods for suspension points in printed documentation. Instead use the ellipsis character ... (ANSI 0133).

Keep in mind the following when using ellipses/suspension points:

When indicating an omitted word, use spaces before and after the ellipsis:

Example: Je vous présente Monsieur ... qui est agent secret.

When indicating an omitted string of words, enclose the ellipsis in square brackets:

Example: Il n'est pas nécessaire de lire tous les chapitres, [...] pour comprendre le système.

At the beginning of a sentence, use one space before the first word:

Example: ... PowerPoint aura tout fait pour vous.

At the end of a word within a sentence with no words deleted (rare in documentation, more common in tutorials and callouts), no space before the points, one space after:

Example: Cliquez maintenant sur Suivant...

... pour voir la suite de l'exercice.

At the end of a sentence or paragraph, they also serve as the final period:

Example: Dans la leçon suivante, vous apprendrez à fusionner. Ce sera pour un autre jour...

Don't use suspension points after the word "etc."

Period

Insert only one space after a period.

Use a period in all complete sentences, i.e. sentences with a conjugated verb. Don't use a period in a string of the software without a conjugated verb.

Example:

US English	French target
Deleting files.	Suppression de fichiers

Note that when a whole sentence is between parentheses, quotes or brackets, the period is placed inside. If only part of the sentence is between parentheses or quotes, the period is placed outside.

Examples:

Le document s'imprime à l'envers. (Ne le sauvegardez pas.)

Le fichier est sauvegardé dans le format ASCII (ou le format par défaut).

Quotation marks

Quotation marks are used when referring to chapters, sections and topics.

Parentheses

In English as in French, there is no space between the parentheses and the text inside them.

Nonbreaking spaces

Remember that in French, a nonbreaking space is required before the following punctuation: ; ! : ?

Also use nonbreaking spaces in the following instances:

- Between chapitre or annexe and its number or letter.
- As a thousand separator.
- Between a unit of measure or currency and the number that goes with it.
- Between any items that should not be divided onto separate lines.
- Before the "%" sign

N.B. Nonbreaking spaces sometimes cause problems for Table of Contents generation if they are used in online help topic titles. Before using nonbreaking spaces in online help titles, check with your Microsoft Project Team. Nonbreaking spaces can be used everywhere else in online help topics.

Example: (+) Chapitre 1 : Installation (nbsp before "1" and before ":")

(+) 5 000 € (nbsp after "5" and before "€")

Semi-colon

English tends to make a wider use of semi-colons than French. Most of the time, a comma will suffice in French.

Use them only for long enumerations, and to separate two independent propositions.

Symbols

Whenever there is a symbol in English, keep it in French, particularly when dealing with statements.

Example: Tapez un signe moins (–) après la parenthèse.

3.1.15 Split infinitive

Be careful not to translate split infinitives literally. You can use periphrases or explicit verbs to express the meaning of split infinitives.

Example:

US English	French target
We expect our output to more than double this year.	Cette année, nos résultats devraient doubler, au minimum.

3.1.16 Subjunctive

Subjunctive constructions in French are quite complicated. Avoid using them as much as possible. Use active voice and indicative or imperative instead. Sentences will be clearer this way.

Example:

US English	French target
Click here so that you can view this page.	Cliquez ici pour visualiser cette page

3.1.17 Syntax

English sentence structures that can't be used in French

Anacoluthon

This is when the structure of a sentence is broken in such a way that the sentence begins with a subject and unexpectedly ends with another. In standard French, it's considered a grammar mistake. However, it's more common in English. So the translator will have to adjust the structure in French.

en-US source phrase	French phrase
Please install the latest Skype version on your computer. Once installed, the user will have access to the newly added features.	Veuillez installer la dernière version de Skype sur votre ordinateur. Une fois cette dernière installée, l'utilisateur peut accéder aux nouvelles fonctions. (Note that we had to introduce a subject in the second sentence to show the past participle is not related to the second subject, "l'utilisateur.")

According to/Depending on

A common mistake is also translating “according to/depending on” as “selon” at the beginning of a sentence and keeping the same sentence structure afterwards. In French, when a sentence is introduced by “selon”, you expect at least two choices.

en-US source phrase	Incorrect French phrase	Correct French phrase
According to/Depending on your user rights, you might be able to access those files	Selon vos droits d'accès, vous pouvez accéder à ces fichiers	Si vous disposez des droits d'accès adéquats, vous pourrez accéder à ces fichiers If we want to keep “selon,” we might say “Selon vos droits d'accès, vous pouvez accéder ou non à ces fichiers.” But the first solution flows better.

3.1.18 Verbs

For US English Microsoft voice, verb tense helps to convey the clarity of Microsoft voice. Simple tenses are used. The easiest tense to understand is the simple present, like we use in this guide. Avoid future tense unless you’re describing something that will really happen in the future and the simple present tense is inapplicable. Use simple past tense when you describe events that have already happened.

Use simple past tense (passé composé) when you describe events that already happened, and only use complex tenses (for example plus-que-parfait or futur antérieur) when required by basic grammar rules.

Avoid using tenses which can sound too formal, such as passé simple or past subjunctive tenses, etc. Use verb tenses you would use in normal conversation, while still applying the basic rules of concordance des temps.

Transitive/Intransitive verbs

“Démarrer” and “cliquer” are intransitive. “Quitter” is transitive.

Some verbs are transitive in English, but intransitive in French, so the translator should be careful to reflect French grammar rules.

Example:

English = Collect and access the data

French = Recueillir les données et y accéder (“access” is transitive in English, but intransitive in French)

4 Localization considerations

Localization means that the translated text needs to be adapted to the local language, customs and standards.

The language in Microsoft products should have the "look and feel" of a product originally written in French, using idiomatic syntax and terminology, while at the same time maintaining a high level of terminological consistency, so as to guarantee the maximum user experience and usability for our customers.

4.1 Accessibility

Accessibility options and programs are designed to make the computer usable by people with cognitive, hearing, physical, or visual disabilities.

Hardware and software components engage a flexible, customizable user interface, alternative input and output methods, and greater exposure of screen elements.

General accessibility information can be found at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility/>.

4.2 Applications, products, and features

Product and application names are often trademarked or may be trademarked in the future and are therefore rarely translated. Occasionally, feature names are trademarked, too (for example, IntelliSense™). Before translating any application, product, or feature name, verify that it's in fact translatable and not protected in any way. This information can be obtained [here](#).

When shipping to France, for app titles, anything that's "informational" in nature must be translated into French, based on LCA guidance to ensure compliance with the French Language Law. This would generally include designations like "Camera" and "Selfie" in titles such as "Lumia Camera" and "Lumia Selfie". In no instance should something we claim as a trademark be localized (Andrea Sander, LCA, April 10, 2015).

Version numbers

Version numbers always contain a period (for example, Version 4.2).

Version numbers are usually also a part of version strings, but technically they are not the same.

4.3 Trademarks

Trademarked names and the name Microsoft Corporation shouldn't be localized unless local laws require translation and an approved translated form of the trademark is available. A list of Microsoft trademarks is [here](#).

4.4 Geopolitical concerns

Part of the cultural adaptation of the US-product to a specific market is the resolution of geopolitical issues. While the US-product is designed and developed with neutrality and a global audience in mind, the localized product should respond to the particular situation that applies within the target country/region.

Sensitive issues or issues that might potentially be offensive to the users in the target country/region may occur in any of the following:

- Maps
- Flags
- Country/region, city and language names
- Art and graphics
- Cultural content, such as encyclopedia content and other text where historical or political references are present

Some issues are easy to verify and resolve. The localizer should have the most current information available. Maps and other graphical representations of countries/regions should be checked for accuracy and existing political restrictions. Country/region, city, and language names change on a regular basis and should be checked, even if previously approved.

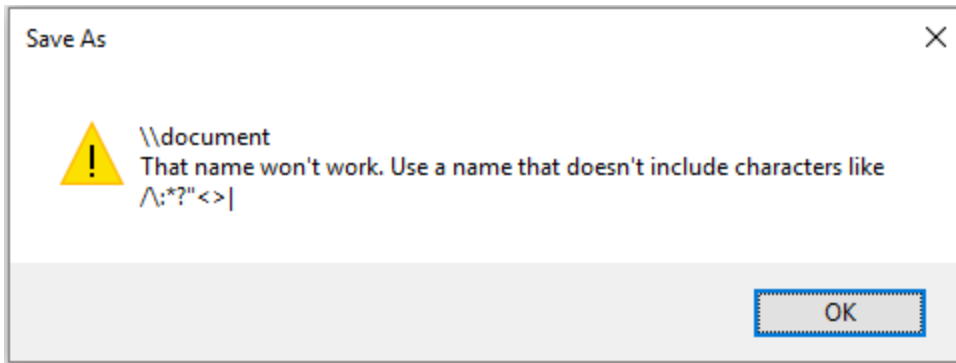
A thorough understanding of the culture of the target market is required for checking the appropriateness of cultural content, clip art and other visual representations of religious symbols, and body and hand gestures.

4.5 Software considerations

This section refers to all menus, menu items, commands, buttons, check boxes, and other UI elements that should be consistently translated in the localized product.

4.5.1 Error messages

Here is an example:



Error messages are messages sent by the system or a program, informing the user of an error that must be corrected in order for the program to keep running. The messages can prompt the user to take action or inform the user of an error that requires restarting the computer.

Considering the underlying principles of Microsoft voice, translators are encouraged to apply them to ensure target translation is more natural, empathetic and not robot-like.

English term	Correct French translation
Oops! You already responded from somewhere else.	Oups ! Vous avez déjà répondu d'ailleurs.
Not enough memory to process this command.	Mémoire insuffisante pour traiter cette commande.

French style in error messages

Use consistent terminology and language style in the localized error messages, and not just translate them as they appear in the US product.

Always use a period after an error message, no matter if it's a sentence with a conjugated verb or a sentence without a conjugated verb. Exception: In strings ending with a placeholder, follow US punctuation if you don't know what the placeholder will be replaced with at runtime.

Try to avoid parentheses as much as possible.

Standard phrases in error messages

These phrases commonly occur in error messages. When you translate them, try to use the provided target phrases. However, feel free to use other ways to express the source meaning if they work better in the context. When translating standard phrases,

standardize. Note that sometimes the US uses different forms to express the same thing. Use the simplest translation.

Examples:

English	Translation	Example	Comment
Can't ... Could not ...	Impossible de...	Impossible de télécharger le fichier.	Avoid « Le fichier ne peut pas être téléchargé. »
Failed to ... Failure of ...	Échec de	Échec du téléchargement du fichier.	Avoid « Le téléchargement du fichier a échoué. »
Can't find ... Could not find ... Unable to find ... Unable to locateintrouvable	Fichier introuvable.	Avoid « Impossible de trouver le fichier. »
Not enough memory Insufficient memory There is not enough memory There is not enough memory available	Mémoire insuffisante	Mémoire insuffisante.	Avoid « Pas assez de mémoire disponible. »
... is not available ... is unavailable	n'est pas disponible	Le fichier n'est pas disponible.	Avoid « Le fichier est indisponible. »

Error messages containing placeholders

When localizing error messages containing placeholders, try to anticipate what will replace the placeholder. This is necessary for the sentence to be grammatically correct when the placeholder is replaced with a word or phrase. Note that the letters used in placeholders convey a specific meaning.

Examples:

%d, %ld, %u, and %lu means <number>

%c means <letter>

%s means <string>

Examples of error messages containing placeholders:

"Checking Web %1!d! of %2!d!" means "Checking Web <number> of <number>."

"INI file "%1!-.200s!" section" means "INI file "<string>" section."

4.5.2 Keys

In English, references to key names, like arrow keys, function keys and numeric keys, appear in normal text (not in small caps).

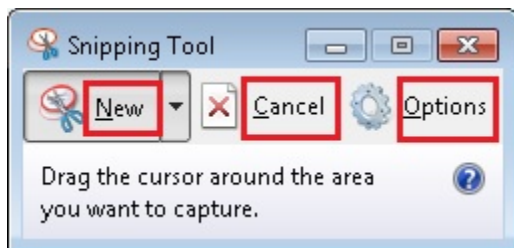
Key names

English key name	French key name
Alt	Alt
Backspace	Retour arrière
Break	Attn
Caps Lock	Verr maj
Ctrl	Control
Delete	Suppr
Down Arrow	Bas
End	Fin
Enter	Entrée
Esc	Échap
Home	Origine
Insert	Inser

Left Arrow	Gauche
Num Lock	Verr Num
Page Down	Pg suiv
Page Up	Pg préc
Pause	Pause
Right Arrow	Droite
Scroll Lock	Arrêt défil
Shift	Maj
Spacebar	Barre d'espace
Tab	Tab
Up Arrow	Haut
Windows key	Touche Windows
Print screen	Impr. Écran
Menu key	Touche de menu

4.5.3 Keyboard shortcuts

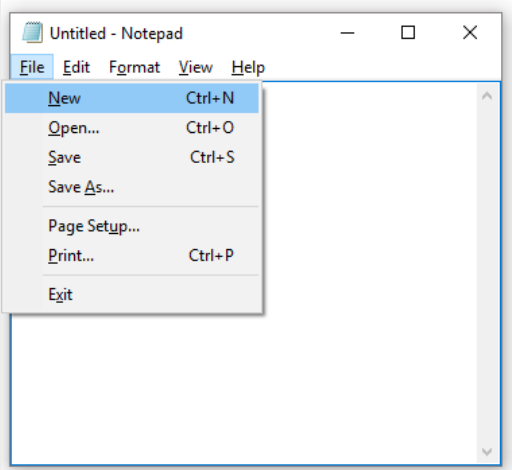
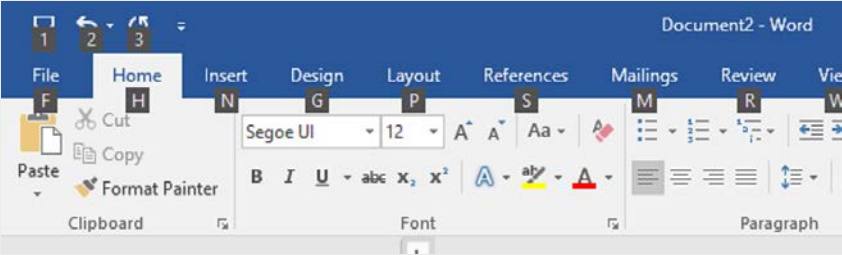
Sometimes, there are underlined or highlighted letters in menu options, commands or dialog boxes. These letters refer to keyboard shortcuts, which help the user to perform tasks more quickly.



Keyboard shortcuts special options	Usage: Is It Allowed?	Notes
"Slim characters," such as I, l, t, r, f can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes	n/a
Characters with downstrokes, such as g, j, y, p and q can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes	Please avoid setting keyboard shortcuts on letters with downstrokes like q and g. Only use them if no other letter is available.
Extended characters can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes	Please avoid setting keyboard shortcuts on letters with accents like é é ë ê à â and î. Only use them if no other letter is available.
An additional letter, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes	n/a
A number, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes	n/a
A punctuation sign, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes	n/a
Duplicate keyboard shortcuts are allowed when no other character is available	yes	This may need to be checked with SPM.
No keyboard shortcut is assigned when no more characters are available (minor options only)	yes	This may need to be checked with SPM.

Content writers usually just refer to “keyboard shortcuts” in content for a general audience. In localization, however, we distinguish the following terms:

Term	Usage
access key	A subtype of keyboard shortcut. A letter or number that the user types to access UI controls that have text labels. Access keys are assigned to

	<p>top-level controls so that the user can use the keyboard to move through the UI quickly.</p> <p>Example: F in Alt+F</p> <p>Example in UI localization: H&ome</p>  <p>In keyboard shortcuts, most access keys are used with the Alt key.</p>
<p>key tip</p>	<p>The letter or number that appears in the ribbon when the Alt key is pressed.</p> <p>In UI localization, the key tip is the last character present in the strings after the “&” character.</p> <p>Example: In UI localization Home`H</p> 
<p>shortcut key</p>	<p>A subtype of keyboard shortcut. A key that the user types to perform a common action without having to go through the UI. Shortcut keys are not available for every command.</p> <p>Example: Ctrl+N, Ctrl+V</p> <p>In keyboard shortcuts, most shortcut keys are used with the Ctrl key. Ctrl+letter combinations and function keys (F1 through F12) are usually the best choices for shortcut keys.</p>

Additional note: MILS recommend allowing duplicate keyboard shortcuts to avoid accessibility issues. However, Microsoft teams may need to double-check duplicate issues with local SPMs for confirmation.

4.5.4 Numeric keypad

Avoid distinguishing numeric keypad keys from the other keys, unless it's required by a given application. If it's not obvious which keys need to be pressed, provide necessary explanations.

4.5.5 Shortcut keys

Shortcut keys are keystrokes or combinations of keystrokes that perform defined functions in a software application. Shortcut keys replace menu commands and are sometimes given next to the command they represent. While access keys can be used only when available on the screen, shortcut keys can be used even when they are not accessible on the screen.

Standard shortcut keys

US command	US English shortcut key	French command	French shortcut key
General Windows shortcut keys			
Help window	F	Afficher la fenêtre d'aide	F1
Context-sensitive Help	Shift+F1	Aide contextuelle	Maj+F1
Display pop-up menu	Shift+F10	Afficher le menu contextuel	Maj+F10
Cancel	Esc	Annuler	Échap
Activate\Deactivate menu bar mode	F10	Activer/Désactiver l'accès au menu	Alt
Switch to the next primary application	Alt+Tab	Basculer vers l'application ouverte suivante	Alt+Tab
Display next window	Alt+Esc	Afficher la fenêtre d'application suivante	Alt+Échap

US command	US English shortcut key	French command	French shortcut key
Display pop-up menu for the window	Alt+Spacebar	Afficher le menu système de la fenêtre de l'application	Alt+Espace
Display pop-up menu for the active child window	Alt+-	Afficher le menu système de la fenêtre enfant active	Alt+-
Display property sheet for current selection	Alt+Enter	Appliquer la dernière commande utilisée à la sélection actuelle	Alt+Entrée
Close active application window	Alt+F4	Quitter la fenêtre de l'application active	Alt+F4
Switch to next window within (modeless-compliant) application	Alt+F6	Basculer vers la fenêtre suivante au sein de l'application	Alt+F6
Capture active window image to the Clipboard	Alt+Prnt Scrn	Capturer la fenêtre de l'application active dans le Presse-Papiers	Alt+Impr.écran
Capture desktop image to the Clipboard	Prnt Scrn	Capturer le bureau dans le Presse-Papiers	Impr.écran
Access Start button in taskbar	Ctrl+Esc	Accéder au bouton Démarrer dans la barre de tâches	Ctrl+Échap
Display next child window	Ctrl+F6	Afficher la fenêtre enfant suivante	Ctrl+F6
Display next tabbed pane	Ctrl+Tab	Afficher l'onglet suivant	Ctrl+Tab
Launch Task Manager and system initialization	Ctrl+Shift+Esc	Exécuter le Gestionnaire des tâches et initialiser le système	Ctrl+Maj+Suppr
File menu			

US command	US English shortcut key	French command	French shortcut key
File New	Ctrl+N	Fichier Nouveau	Ctrl+N
File Open	Ctrl+O	Fichier Ouvrir	Ctrl+O
File Close	Ctrl+F4	Fichier Fermer	Ctrl+F4
File Save	Ctrl+S	Fichier Enregistrer	Ctrl+S
File Save as	F12	Fichier Enregistrer sous	F12
File Print Preview	Ctrl+F2	Fichier Aperçu avant impression	Ctrl+F2
File Print	Ctrl+P	Fichier Imprimer	Ctrl+P
File Exit	Alt+F4	Fichier Quitter	Alt+F4
Edit menu			
Edit Undo	Ctrl+Z	Edition Annuler	Ctrl+Z
Edit Repeat	Ctrl+Y	Edition Répéter	Ctrl+Y
Edit Cut	Ctrl+X	Edition Couper	Ctrl+X
Edit Copy	Ctrl+C	Edition Copier	Ctrl+C
Edit Paste	Ctrl+V	Edition Coller	Ctrl+V
Edit Delete	Ctrl+Backspace	Edition Effacer	Suppr
Edit Select All	Ctrl+A	Edition Sélectionner tout	Ctrl+A
Edit Find	Ctrl+F	Edition Rechercher	Ctrl+F
Edit Replace	Ctrl+H	Edition Remplacer	Ctrl+H
Edit Go To	Ctrl+G	Edition Atteindre	Ctrl+B
Help menu			
Hel	F1	Aide	F1

US command	US English shortcut key	French command	French shortcut key
Font format			
Italic	Ctrl+I	Italique	Ctrl+I
Bold	Ctrl+B	Gras	Ctrl+G
Underlined\Word underline	Ctrl+U	Souligné/Mot souligné	Ctrl+U
Large caps	Ctrl+Shift+A	Majuscules	Ctrl+Maj+A
Small caps	Ctrl+Shift+K	Petites majuscules	Ctrl+Maj+K
Paragraph format			
Centered	Ctrl+E	Centré	Ctrl+E
Left aligned	Ctrl+L	Aligné à gauche	Ctrl+Maj+G
Right aligned	Ctrl+R	Aligné à droite	Ctrl+Maj+D
Justified	Ctrl+J	Justifié	Ctrl+J

4.5.6 Pronunciation of English terms and acronyms

General rules

Generally speaking, English terms and product names left unlocalized in target material should be pronounced the English way. For instance, "Microsoft" must be pronounced the English way. However, if your language has an established pronunciation for a common term (such as "server"), use the local pronunciation. Pronunciation can be adapted to the French phonetic system if the original pronunciation sounds very awkward in French.

If numbers are involved, pronounce them in French, for example, Windows 8 is pronounced *Quindôze huit*.

Example	Phonetics	Comment
SecurID	[sɪ'kjuəɾ aɪ di:]	
.NET	[dot net]	Don't say "point net"; considered a product name

Skype	[skaip]	English names are usually pronounced as in English in French CA
-------	---------	---

Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronyms are pronounced like real words, adapted to the French pronunciation:

Example	Phonetics	Comment
RADIUS	radiusse	
RAS	raze	
ISA	iza	Don't say aïza
LAN	lanne	
WAN	ouane	
WAP	ouape	
MAPI	mapi	
POP	pop	Pronounce the final "p," as in "pape"

Other abbreviations are pronounced letter by letter.

Example	Phonetics
ICMP	i cé aime pé
IP	i pé
TCP/IP	té cé pé i pé
XML	ix aime elle
HTML	hache té aime elle
OWA	o doublevé a
SQL	esse q elle

URLS

"http://" should be omitted; the rest of the URL should be read entirely.

"www" should be pronounced as double vé double vé double vé.

The "dot" should be omitted, but can also be read out. If you read it out, then it must be pronounced the French way, as "point."

Example	Phonetics
http://www.microsoft.com/france	double vé double vé double vé point microsoft point com barre oblique france

Punctuation marks

Most punctuation marks are naturally implied by the sound of voice, for example, ? ! : ; ,

En dashes (–) are used to emphasize an isolated element. It should be pronounced as a comma, i.e. as a short pause.

Special characters

- Pronounce special characters such as / \ ~ < > + - using the approved French translations.

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