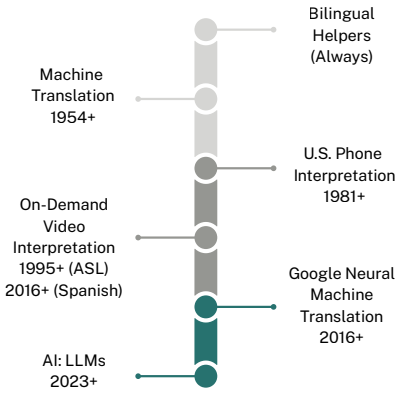
TECHNOLOGY AND LANGUAGE ACCESS

Cost reduction is only responsible when equity, quality, and meaningful access are preserved.

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Language access affects safety, civil rights, quality of service, trust, and program outcomes.
- Technology can reduce turnaround time, costs, and extend reach, but can also introduce errors, privacy and security concerns, false confidence, and dangers.
- Technology can only facilitate accessibility if the tools used are appropriate for the task and the community being served.

MODES OF LANGUAGE ACCESS AND EVOLUTION



LANGUAGE ACCESS TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE



Automated Translation Tools for Text-Based Translation

Video and Phone Remote Interpretation Platforms

Hybrid Workflows That Combine Technology With Human Linguists

RISK VS. REWARD



Errors in meaning, terminology, tone, or cultural nuance.

Over-reliance on AI output without human validation.

Confidentiality, data retention, and **security concerns.**

Unequal access if the platform is difficult to use on low-bandwidth devices or by users with disabilities.

Misuse of remote interpreting when audio quality, connection stability, or setup makes the interaction unreliable.

Faster turnaround for routine or high-volume content.

Broader reach for multilingual service delivery.

Lower per-unit costs for repetitive or low-risk content.

Better triage and prioritization of work through workflow automation.

More options for extending access when human resources are limited, including remote interpreting availability.

WHEN TECHNOLOGY IS APPROPRIATE

Routine Correspondence
Internal Drafts
"High-Volume, Low-Risk" Content
First-Pass Triage

Public-Facing Content
Health/Legal Communication
Consent Language
General Information

WHEN TECHNOLOGY IS NOT APPROPRIATE

Critical or High-Stakes Documents and Conversations
Emotionally Sensitive Documents or Interactions
Complex or Technical Material
Benefits-Related Documents/Interactions

HOW TO SELECT A TOOL RESPONSIBLY

1. **Start:** with the purpose of the communication, not with the tool.
2. **Ask:** What is the risk if the message is wrong?
3. **Ask:** Who is the audience, and what language, dialect, literacy, and accessibility needs do they have?
4. **Ask:** Does the language vendor provide audit trails, security controls, human review options, and language coverage?
5. **Ask:** Will the tool actually improve access for the people who need it, or mainly reduce internal costs?

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

1. Classify content by risk.
2. Determine whether human review is required.
3. Choose the delivery channel or workflow.
4. Test and monitor the results.

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RESPONSIBLE LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY SHOULD EXPAND ACCESS WHILE PROTECTING QUALITY.

Choose by risk, review by rule, and measure real access.

RESPONSIBLE DEPLOYMENT



- Pilot before scaling.
- Use approved terminology, style guides, and glossaries.
- Establish escalation rules for human review.
- Train staff on what the tool can and cannot do.
- Define who is accountable for final output, especially when AI is used in the workflow.

EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE



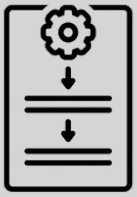
- Measure accuracy, turnaround time, user satisfaction, and complaint rates.
- Track whether technology improves access for hard-to-serve languages and the community.
- Review samples regularly, not just when something goes wrong.
- Compare the cost of technology against the cost of rework, complaints, risk exposure, and service failures.
- Include community or end-user feedback in evaluation whenever possible.

EQUITY AND ETHICS



- Ensure the tool does not create a two-tier system where some groups get full human support and others get only automation.
- Consider dialect variation, plain language, disability access, and digital divide issues at all times.
- Protect privacy and informed consent when using vendors and platforms.
- Avoid claiming that a tool is “equivalent” to professional language services if it is not.
- Build policies that prioritize fairness, not just efficiency.

EQUITY AND ETHICS



- Create written rules for approved uses, prohibited uses, and review thresholds.
- Assign ownership for procurement, training, monitoring, and incident response.
- Require documentation for exceptions and high-risk use cases.
- Align internal policy with legal obligations and funding requirements.
- Revisit policy regularly as tools and standards evolve.

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