Tamil Translation HowTo

Welcome to the team. We are translating KDE, a Linux graphical desktop, and other great Opensource applications to Tamil. The aim is to enable people who can read and write tamil only to use computer and to enjoy the benefits of Linux/opensource software. We have achieved a bit with the release of Mandrake 9.0, a distribution with almost full support for Tamil. Of course there are more things that needs to be done.

What you need?

Love for Tamil (you need tons of this)

Be a computer user :) (familiarity with the computer buzz words useful)

Exposure to Linux/Unix/KDE (only beneficial,)

What needs to be done?

Broadly speaking there are two things that needs to be translated, 1. Documentation 2. Applications

Documentation Translation:

The easiest thing to do and what we need most is Documentation translation. We need your help to translate English Documentation. The most commonly required are KDE Documentation/ Installation Guides for Linux distributions like Mandrake /Documentation for Applications like Openoffice.org, Mozilla, etc../Linux How To's.

All that is required is a utiltiy that allows you to type in Tamil. There is one simple choice, e-kalappai. This alows you to use tamil in every program in Windows. By default this comes with Anjal keyboard layout, with other popular ones like Mylai/Tamil Typewriter/Tamilnet99 Phonetic are also available.

Drop us an e-mail, and we will send you the Document to be translated, based on their importance and relevance. You can read a topic (paragraph), understand it and type it in tamil. As long as the correct message is conveyed there is no need for you translate every word literally. There is no need to type it in english again. Always use consistent terms while translating. Refer the section consistency in Translation for more details.

Applications Translation:

This involves translating strings used in the applications. This requires more effort. For Linux users in addition to the three requirements given above there are two more.

A good translation tool, like poedit or kbabel. (these makes translation a breeze.)

A proper working Tamil environment.

consistency in Translation

We are using Kalaichol Akarathi as the reference for our translations. You need to set your font to a TSCII font to view the kalaichol akarathi in tamil. Words from our past translations has been made available as custom_dictionary.xls . For program names, technical terms refer to custom_dictionary.xls first, if not found refer "dictionary.xls". If still you cannot find, feel free to use your tamil skills and create new simple and meaningful words.

We request every translator to constantly update new words in a seperate sheet, so that it can be merged regularly with our custom_dictionary.xls . This helps everyone to use consistent words and all of us to benefit from each others thinking. We suggest you to regularly download the updated version of custom_dictionary.xls.

How To do it?

Once you've met the above requirements, you should be able to proceed to the actual translation. There are currently three sources for translation. check the references section for URL.

Identify one or more programs that you want to translate. The messages to be translated for that program(s) (menus, dialog boxes etc. are contained in files named as **program_name.pot**. All you have to do is to edit the file and put the appropriate tamil messages there. When you use a good translation tool, it will show all the different components in a easy and userfriendly manner.

Before you begin the translation please update us which file you are translating, so that we can work on most important ones and will not repeat the work accidentally.

Download the .pot file to your computer. Once you accept responsibility for a particular file, and for some reason, you are unable to work on it, please submit whatever you had completed to us.

Translation using poedit(For Linux Users)

Begin by opening the **.pot** file you selected using the poedit. Now in the main window you will see three panes. The top pane shows the entire file with original string and translated string side by side. The middle pane shows a single 'msgid' , the string to be translated. The bottom pane shows the corresponding 'msgstr', the translated string. You can navigate/search from string string to other.

There are three colours used to indicate the status of a string.

Blue   - untransted string(you have to translate this)
Yellow - fuzzy string(you need verify the correctness of such strings)
white   - translated string.(nothing to do.. may be check for spelling mistakes)

Once you complete translating a file, please send the translated file back to us. Since most of the files are translated(atleast partialy) you will see mostly .po files . There is still a **lot** of translation remaining, so your support is crucial for the success of this project.

For Window Only users:

If you don't know much about/don't have access to Linux, but still want to contribute to this project, you can do so. The following steps might be helpful to you if you are a Windows user. Get e-kallapai as mentioned above.
Begin by opening the .pot file you selected using a Notepad and remember to set the default font to TSCII font. The text that is associated with the keyword 'msgid' is the english message that appear in menus and dialog boxes. Translate the message within the double quotes next to 'msgid' and put them in the double quotes next to 'msgstr'. For example, if **msgid** contains "Save" you'll translate this and type the tamil text "சேமி" (sEmi) into **msgstr**.

Points to Remember:-

1. Message Format: The messages to be translated are contained in text files with the .po extension. They have the following format:

    # Comment "_: Context information"

    msgid: "english message"

    msgstr: ""

    The tamil translation (in TSCII encoding) should be placed within the quotes following msgstr. Note that the context string followed by _: is only meant to give you, the translator, additional information about the message. It need not be translated.

  Remember: DO NOT translate the comment strings or context information

2. Fuzzy strings: A message beginning with   #,fuzzy msgid "Print to File" msgstr "" is called a fuzzy message.   It means that although the message had been translated in the previous version, the actual message in the msgid part has changed since the last translation. It means that you have to re-translate d the message.   After translating the fuzzy string you MUST delete the ",fuzzy comment" as it no longer appies to that messge. (ie. it is no longer fuzzy)   Remember: Re-translate all fuzzy strings and delete the .fuzzy comment.

(Note that if you use Kbabel/Poedit like translation tools to do the tranlations, it will auto-detect the fuzzy messages and automatically delete the ,fuzzy comment line when you are done.)

3. Special Characters   The msgid string may contain some special symbols like % and & that need to be handled correctly. Here are some common types of symbols that you are most likely to see.

    3.1 Variables: Consider the message   msgid "%1 of %2 files copied" msgstr "" Here %1 and %2 are variables that will be filled in by the system when KDE is running. In this case, they represent the number of files copied and the number of files to be copied respectively.   In your translation, sometimes you may have to re-order the variable terms correctly the translation to make sese.   Here the correct translation is:

    msgid "%1 of %2 files copied"

    msgstr "%2 கோப்புக்களில் %1 நகல் செய்¬ப்பட்டன"

    3.2Singular/Plural Forms: If you see a message like this:

    msgid "" "_n: %n directory\n"

    "%n directories"

    you have to translate both lines but OMIT the "_n:" part that is in the singular form. So the correct translation here will be

    msgstr "" "%d அடைவு\n"

    "%d அடைவுகள்"

    3.3 Menu accelarators: msgid "&View" msgstr ""   Here the letter following

& will be used a a keyboard short cuts for the Menu item. It is really not very useful in the tamil KDE environment. So you can omit the & symbol it in the tamil msgstr all cases. Then, the correct tamil translation is:

 msgid "&View"

msgstr "பார்"

3.4 C-Format strings: msgid "Your time: %02d:%02d:%02d" msgstr ""   If you are familiar with the C-language printf() function this will be very clear to you. If you see a group of letters/digits after a % sign in the msgid, just copy it unchanged into the msgstr.   Here the correct translation is:

msgid "Your time: %02d:%02d:%02d"

msgstr "உங்கள் நேÃம்: %02d:%02d:%02d"

This also applies to \t, \n and HTML markup. Just copy them verbatim into the msgstr.

If you need any clarifications, or would like to send comments/ideas, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you are technically inclined it is a good idea to join the **kde-i18n-doc** mailing list.

Have fun!!!

Some useful Links:

Tools Required:

e-kalappai: http://www.tamil.net/newtamil/ekalappai_1.html
More Keybaords: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/e-uthavi/files/eKalappaiKeyboards
For "Help with eKalappai" mail to: e-Uthavi@yahoogroups.com
Kalaichol Akarathi : http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tamilinix/files/dictionary.xls
Custom Dictionary: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tamilinix/files/custom_dictionary.xls
Poedit Translation Tool: http://poedit.sourceforge.net/download.html

Translation Sources:

KDE Translation Tamil Status Page: http://i18n.kde.org/stats/gui/HEAD/ta/index.php
Mandrake Translation Tamil Status: http://www.linux-mandrake.com/l10n/ta.php3
Gnome Translation Page: http://developer.gnome.org/projects/gtp/status/gnome-2.0-fifth-toe/ta.html

Some Additional Help:

Getting Mandrake 9.0 for Tamil: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tamilinix/files/FAQ.pdf
For a instructions to setup Tamil environment in RedHat Linux7.1 onwards...
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tamilinix/files/doc/tamilredhat.pdf

Translation Team Current Leads:

KDE - Vasee e-mail: t_vasee@yahoo.com

Gnome - Dinesh e-mail: n_dinesh@yahoo.com

Mandrake- prabu e-mail: prabu_anand2000@yahoo.com

Originally written By: Sivakumar Shanmugasundaram   e-mail: sshanmu@yahoo.com
Points to Remember, section is based on Vasee's Message in tamilinix mailing list
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tamilinix/message/842
Updated by :Prabu e-mail: prabu_anand2000@yahoo.com
For feedback write to us: tamilinix@yahoogroups.com

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