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Registering for
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Hyatt Regency Hotel • Atlanta, Georgia
November 6 - 9, 2002
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American Translators Association
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Tel: (703) 683-6100 • Fax (703) 683-6122
E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org
**An Easy Reference To ATA Member Benefits**

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...And, of course, as an ATA member you receive discounts on the Annual Conference registration fees and ATA publications, and you are eligible to join ATA Divisions, participate in the online Translation Services Directory, and much more. For more information, contact ATA (703) 683-6100; fax (703) 683-6122; and e-mail: ata@atanet.org.
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46  All This, and Money, Too! 
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My friends at home always picture me sightseeing, taking day-trips to the mountains, 
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47  An Interview with Reinhold Werner 
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language influence, language policy, and translation.

ATA Chapter Seed Money Fund

Is your ATA chapter planning an event? Does that event have need for a distinguished, 
dynamic, industry-relevant speaker? If so, ATA's Professional Development Committee 
wants to help!

ATA's Professional Development Committee offers a seed money fund for speakers. Be sure 
to call ATA today for application guidelines and a list of fabulous speakers who could be a 
guest at your next meeting, workshop, or seminar.

ATA's chapters play a key role in the continuing education of their members. Since the 
chapters vary greatly in number and composition of members, it can be hard for some 
chapters to offer educational opportunities to everyone. As a service to all ATA members 
and as a benefit of chapterhood, ATA would like to support these educational efforts by 
subsidizing presentations that might otherwise prove to be a financial burden for 
individual chapters.

The fund was designed for ATA chapters, so don’t let the opportunity pass you by. 
Contact Mary@atanet.org at ATA Headquarters soon for all the details!
About Our Authors...

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Rudy Heller has been translating from English into Spanish for over 30 years. He is an ATA-accredited (English-Spanish) translator and a U.S. federal court certified interpreter. Along with his wife, Sarah, he operates out of bucolic and picturesque Brookfield, in central Massachusetts, where, after 20 years, he is still trying to figure out the change of seasons (so different from his native Cali, Colombia, where spring springs eternal). He is the administrator of ATA’s Spanish Language Division. Contact: rudy@goihls.com.

Jonathan Hine translated his first book, a medical text, in 1961. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (B.S.), the University of Oklahoma (MPA), and the University of Virginia (Ph.D.), he is ATA-accredited (Italian-English) and belongs to the ATA Italian and French divisions and the National Capital Area Translators Association. In addition to translating full-time, he conducts business and organization workshops throughout the U.S., and teaches technical translation at James Madison University (Harrisonburg, Virginia). He also writes self-help books and articles for freelancers. He is a frequent presenter at ATA conferences. Contact: hine@csstone.net or tradux@aol.com.

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Georgina McAvinchey joined RTI International as a language specialist in November 2000. She currently translates and edits printed survey materials, recruits participants, conducts cognitive interviews and training sessions, and administers Spanish-language skill assessments to field and telephone interviewers. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in computer science from DePaul University in Chicago. She has been translating and interpreting in Spanish since 1992. Contact: mcavinche@rti.org.

Maria McCollum-Rye, a native of Cadiz, Spain, is the owner and project manager of Spenworld, a language service company located in Tennessee. She has over 10 years of Spanish translation and interpreting experience. She teaches cultural awareness classes and works for nonprofit organizations and hospitals as an interpreter. She also leads a weekly Christian support group for native Spanish-speaking women, where she helps women to learn English and to cope with cultural shock and depression. She has studied nursing, insurance, and paralegal studies, and has an extended knowledge of computer software and editing. Contact: spenworld@msn.com.

Andre Moskowitz is a hispanist, lexicographer, dialectologist, Spanish and Portuguese into English translator, and a Spanish-English interpreter. He has published many articles on lexical dialectology and dialectological lexicography, and has given presentations on these subjects at the ATA Annual Conference every year since 1995. Born and raised in the U.S., he taught English in Colombia and Ecuador for four years. He holds a B.A. in humanities from Johns Hopkins University, an M.A. in translation studies from the City University of New York Graduate Center, and a second M.A. in Spanish (with a minor in Portuguese) from the University of Florida. He is an ATA-accredited translator (Portuguese>English and Spanish>English), a U.S. federal court certified interpreter (Spanish-English), and a California State court certified interpreter (Spanish-English). Contact: amoskow@aol.com.

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Kim Watts is a language specialist with RTI International, a nonprofit organization that conducts research in areas related to health and science. She translates questionnaires, transcripts, and other materials related to survey research into Spanish or English. She has a B.A. in Spanish from Berea College and previously worked as a translator for the Organic Crop Improvement Association, an organization that certifies organic crops and processes. Contact: watts@rti.org.

Steve Vlasta Vitek received his master's degree in Japanese and English studies from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1980. He worked as an in-house translator for the Czech News Agency in Prague from 1980-81 and for Japan Import Center in Tokyo, Japan, from 1985-86. He has been a freelance translator specializing mostly in the translation of Japanese and German patents and articles from technical journals for patent law firms in the U.S. since 1987. He recently moved from Northern California, where he spent almost two decades, to Chesapeake, Virginia. Contact: stevevitek@PatentTranslators.com.
My travels last month took me to Paris, where I represented ATA at the Sixth International Forum on Legal Translation and Court Interpreting, organized by the International Federation of Translators (FIT). The conference was co-sponsored by our sister organization, the Société Française des Traducteurs (SFT). Reading the SFT’s publication, Traduire, I was interested to discover a connection with Atlanta, the city where I live and work and where the ATA Annual Conference will be held this fall.

The SFT was founded by a man named Pierre-François Caillé. In 1939, Mr. Caillé translated Gone with the Wind, the famous novel by Atlanta author Margaret Mitchell, into French, and although it was highly unusual at the time, Mr. Caillé’s name appeared on the first page of the book. Even though the translated version was very expensive—it sold for 625 francs in 1939, when a daily newspaper cost 50 centimes—it sold like hotcakes and won the Prix de la Société des Gens de Lettres. After World War II, the movie version of Autant en emporte le vent (the French title of Gone with the Wind) appeared in French cinemas, and the translation of the screenplay was based on the book translation by Mr. Caillé, who dubbed parts of the movie himself. The movie resulted in additional sales of his translation, which boosted Mr. Caillé’s career even further. Around 1946, Mr. Caillé got the idea of establishing a translators’ association in France. It was the year of the Nuremberg trials, which brought translators and interpreters to the forefront in a way that they had never been before. The SFT was founded in 1947 with around 20 members. It now boasts around 750 members and serves not only as an association, but also as a labor union for translators and interpreters.

During the conference in Paris, I had the pleasure of having dinner with the current SFT president, Jacqueline Reuss, and we discussed ways in which ATA and SFT can work more closely together. We are hopeful that an SFT member who teaches legal translation at a French university will attend our Atlanta conference to share his expertise with us. You can read more about SFT at www.sft.fr.
Over the years, ATA has done a decent job of getting mentioned or featured in the press. However, I have done a less than adequate job of letting you know about this publicity…until now.

In response to a request by the Board of Directors, the ATA website now features “ATA in the News.” I have compiled excerpts from articles from the past few years that mention ATA. To give you an idea of the size of the file, the copy ran nine, single-spaced pages. Many major daily papers are included, such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and The Washington Post.

Of course, these listings do not include all the publications where ATA has been cited. I included the ones that featured a different angle, were from a major publication, or covered a particular industry or region.

You will notice in the articles that either the ATA president or I am frequently quoted. This is on purpose. ATA Board policy designates the president and the executive director as the official spokespersons for the association. This practice has allowed us to present a unified message.

The other thread, which may or may not be apparent from the excerpts, is that many of the references to ATA have been from articles profiling ATA member companies or individuals. We have given the national perspective on these local features. Of course, if you work with a reporter, please be sure to give him or her our contact information. In addition, I would like to thank those individuals who have provided reporters with our phone/e-mail address over the years, and for forwarding articles to me where ATA is mentioned. Related, I may not be aware of every article where ATA is mentioned because the trend is for reporters to work from our website and not make contact with us. Regardless of where writers are getting their information, ATA’s efforts to further promote the translation and interpreting professions are paying off.

Can we do more? Yes, and we will. ATA President Thomas L. West III appointed two experts in public relations, Chris Durban and Kevin Hendzel, to co-chair ATA’s Public Relations Committee. Their efforts are sure to increase ATA’s presence in the media. In addition, we have made the ATA website more user-friendly for the media by adding a “Media Inquiries” section on the homepage.

We all benefit from increased exposure of the professions and the association.

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

Attention
All Serbo-Croat, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian<>English Translators and Interpreters
Proposal for New Language Pair for ATA Accreditation

An effort is underway to investigate the possibility of establishing accreditation for the above language pairs. The first step is underway; that is, forming a “volunteer committee” to work on this project. Then we must demonstrate that there is a desire on the part of the membership to establish these language pairs. Therefore, we would like to hear from anyone who would take this accreditation exam if it were available, and especially anyone interested in participating in this long and arduous (and, in our case, perhaps a little more complicated than usual) process.
Please write to Paula Gordon—dbaPlanB@aol.com—if you would be willing to join this initial committee. Even if you are not, a message simply stating your language pairs and interest in accreditation would be greatly appreciated.
ATA Medical Translation and Interpreting Seminar

Continuing Education Credit Approved

Continuing Education Activity for Court Interpreters • Minimum Continuing Education Credit

For more information, please contact Teresa Kelly at ATA Headquarters (teresak@atanet.org).

Sessions Approved for California
Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts

Sessions Approved for Washington
Judicial Council of Washington
Administrative Office of the Courts

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Rimini, Italy
Federecentri
International Conference

October 11-13, 2002
Theme: The Translation Industry Today

Topics: Communication issues, technology updates, and market developments. For information, please contact: Susan West, (Tel: +39/051/6008831; Fax: +39/051/6008870; E-mail: federcentri.conf@libero.it.

Superior Court of Arizona in and for Maricopa County

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Interested in More Educational Opportunities?
Sign up for ATA's 43rd Annual Conference
Atlanta, Georgia • November 6-9, 2002

The ATA Chronicle | July 2002
We are already halfway through 2002, and I would like to take some time now to take stock of 2001, see what is happening this year, and to look ahead. I presented our budget for 2002 in the January issue. This time I will focus on the following three areas: 2001 results, our investment policy, and the accreditation program.

2001 Financial Statements
Our financial statements are audited every year in April. I am pleased to report that this year, again, we were commended by the auditors for our clean and well-maintained financial records. According to the audited statements for 2001, our total revenues equaled $1,860,487 as of December 31, 2001, with total expenses of $1,905,813, resulting in a deficit of $45,326. For comparison, the revenues and expenses were projected for 2001 at $1,825,436 for a balanced budget. Among the main causes contributing to the negative final figure was our investment loss and a number of cancelled registrations for the ATA Annual Conference, both repercussions of the September terrorist attack. The investment loss (both realized and unrealized) amounted to $24,599. The registration cancellations totaled $32,960 in refunds. Yet another contributing factor is the current financial structure of the ATA accreditation program. While there is nothing we can do about the attendance at last year’s conference, our investment policy and our accreditation program deserve a closer look.

New Investment Policy
At the very beginning of this year, I met with our current broker, Greg Johns of Merrill Lynch, ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak, and ATA Accounting Manager Orson Carter. Following this meeting, a new investment committee was established, chaired by myself, with the following voting members: Beatriz Bonnet (current ATA Board director), Marian Greenfield (current ATA Board director), and Eric McMillan (immediate past treasurer). With the assistance of the committee, I drafted a new investment policy which was approved at the March 2002 Board meeting. The full text is available upon request, but here are the main objectives:

- Preservation of capital;
- Achievement of optimum investment returns within the “preservation of capital” investment style;
- Protection of principal with emphasis on income over a three-to-five year period;
- Minimum risk of losses; and
- Liquidity needed for funding current operating expenses.

In accordance with the conservative allocation style of capital preservation, the following approximate percentage will apply to the allocation of ATA assets in our investment account:

- Cash and Equivalents: 25%
- Bonds and Equivalents: 60%
- Equity Allocation: 15%

Finally, the following investments are prohibited:
- Individual equities;
- Private placement;
- Letter stock;
- Options, except in mutual funds;
- Short selling; and
- Margin transactions.

This represents a departure from our previous policy of substantial investment in equities toward a more conservative investment in fixed income assets. The rationale for this move is our effort to minimize the risk of capital losses due to the volatility of the stock market.

ATA Accreditation Program
As I mentioned in my January report, our accreditation program is not exactly a moneymaker. This is fine, since it is not ATA’s intention to profit from the program, but I do not think that ATA should subsidize the program either. The reason is because, even though accreditation is arguably beneficial to the T&I industry in general, it is currently not available in languages of limited diffusion, and thus does not serve the entire ATA membership equally. In other words, our ambition should be to break even, so that the expenses incurred in connection with the accreditation program are covered by the fees charged to the applicants. To that end, I have prepared a mathematical model for a “sales mix” break-even analysis. “Mix” is the keyword here, because the accreditation program offers not only the accreditation test itself, but also a practice test, with a staggered fee structure for the graders. This fact makes a traditional break-even analysis difficult because of the allocation of variable expenses to two separate items.

I met with Walter Bacak and Terry Hanlen, ATA’s deputy executive director and accreditation program manager, in the second half of May to refine the model and to get it ready for
the June ATA Board meeting. As it stands right now, the contribution margin (the amount by which the revenues exceed total variable expenses) for both the actual and the practice test is too low to achieve the break-even point at the current level of applications. For illustration, in 2001 we collected $172,839 for both the actual and the practice tests, while the related expenditures amounted to $183,736, resulting in a deficit of $10,897. Because of the relatively high fixed expenses (a little over $100,000) and the low contribution margin, we would have had to collect about $195,000 in fees for accreditation to break even in 2001. (If you are curious as to how I arrived at this figure, please contact me.) I will present a more detailed report on the break-even analysis, and a proposal for a new fee structure, at a future date in cooperation with the Accreditation Committee, which is currently working on the program overhaul.

Looking Ahead

After two years in the red, we need to boost revenues and cut expenses. In addition, it is recommended that a nonprofit association such as ATA keep a surplus investment account corresponding to approximately one-half of its annual budget, i.e., about one million in our case. The average balance in our working capital investment account is less than two-thirds of the recommended amount, and I would like to see this figure increase to the desired six-month reserve so that our association can weather future ups and downs without plunging into financial hardship. Possible ways of achieving this goal will be presented at the next annual business meeting at our Atlanta conference.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to reassure all members that, in spite of the deficit, our association is in a sound financial position. I would also like to thank the ATA staff in general, and the executive director in particular, for their support, and the ATA Board for easing my transition into the office of the treasurer. As always, should you have any questions or desire more detailed information, feel free to contact me at jiri@cetra.com.

Attention Exhibitors
American Translators Association 43rd Annual Conference

Atlanta, Georgia • Hyatt Regency Hotel • November 6-9, 2002

Plan now to exhibit at the American Translators Association’s 43rd Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, November 6–9, 2002.

Exhibiting at the ATA Annual Conference offers the best opportunity to market your products and services face-to-face to more than 1,500 translators in one location.

Translators are consumers of computer hardware and software, technical publications and reference books, office products, and much more. Face-to-face selling, as you know, is the most effective and successful method of marketing. The ATA Annual Conference is the perfect venue, and you are assured of excellent visibility. Exhibit space is limited, so please reserve your space today. For additional information, please contact Brian Wallace, McNeill Group Inc.; bwallace@mcneill-group.com; (215) 321-9662, ext. 38; Fax: (215) 321-9636.
Conferences and Events

Washington, DC
Translators Discussion Group
Borders Books and Music
18th & L Streets, NW

Meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm at Borders. For more information, please contact Lily Liu at LilyLiu99@aol.com

Vancouver, British Columbia
XVI World Congress of the International Federation of Translators
Translation: New Ideas for a New Century
August 6-10, 2002

Canada is proud to welcome the XVI FIT Congress to Vancouver, British Columbia. It kicks off August 6, 2002, with the welcome reception and on-site registration, and the Congress itself runs three and a half days, August 7-10. This is the first time in over two decades that the Congress has taken place in North America, so we’re happy to continue the tradition of welcoming hundreds of delegates from all corners of the world. Recent Congresses have been held in Mons, Belgium (1999), Melbourne, Australia (1996), Brighton, England (1993), Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1990), and Maastricht, the Netherlands (1987). For more information, please visit www.fit-ift.org.htm.

Lincoln, Nebraska
Nebraska Association for Translators & Interpreters
Third Annual Regional Conference “Bringing Down Barriers”
Holiday Inn Downtown (Haymarket area)
August 15-17, 2002

Who Should Attend? Translators, interpreters, language professionals, students of foreign language and international trade, social services personnel, law enforcement personnel, administrators coordinating language access, compliance officers, freelance and staff bilingual service providers.
Several registration options are available. Check the website (www.natihq.org) for details. Discounted registration fees for NATI members and special hotel rates available. To be added to our mailing list, contact nati@cam-omaha.com.

Cambridge, England
18th Intensive Course in Simultaneous Conference Interpretation
August 18-31, 2002

Participants will interpret for guest speakers on a wide range of general and technical subjects under authentic conference conditions. In addition to the core curriculum, there will be specialized discussions in a variety of fields (for example, consecutive, on-site translation, use and preparation of texts, booth and stress management, marketing and negotiation, interpreting approaches to Shakespeare and the Bible, etc.), and briefings on the International Association of Conference Interpreters, the international institutions, and the profession.
The course languages are English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish. The language of general instruction is English. Early enrollment is recommended. For information, including a detailed course brochure and application forms, please contact: Christopher Guichot de Fortis; Tel: (+32-2) 654-2080; Fax: (+32-2) 652-5826; E-mail: defortis@belgacom.net.
(Note: This course is specifically designed for conference interpreters only.)

Slavonice, Czech Republic
Slavonice International Translators Conference 2002
September 19-22, 2002

For more information, please contact: Zuzana Kuhlankova
Jana Zizky 2, 378 81 Slavonice
Czech Republic
Tel: +420-332-493777
Fax: +420-332-493770
Mobil: +420-605-726432
E-mail: zuzana007@hotmail.com
www.scholaludus.cz

Cambridge, Massachusetts
6th Annual Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association Conference “Unheard Voices”
Cambridge College
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October 25-26, 2002

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International Certification Study: Norway

By Jiri Stejskal

In the last issue we reviewed the options of becoming a “traductor público” in Argentina. Norway, the country selected for this article, has a similar system for the certification of translators and interpreters. To become a “statsautorisert translatør” (government authorized translator), the linguist must pass a stringent examination administered by the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (Norges Handelshøyskole, or NHH), the leading Norwegian business school. Authorization is subsequently awarded by the Norwegian government. All those who pass the rigorous examination are then invited to join the Association of Government Authorized Translators (Statsautoriserte Translatørers Forening, or STF). This system is different from the Anglo-American system, which leaves certification to professional bodies. The Norwegian system of certification corresponds to the “continental” system of governmental certification that is practiced in other Nordic countries such as Finland and Sweden (discussed in detail in the February 2002 issue of the ATA Chronicle), as well as in Denmark, which will be introduced in the next issue in order to close our discussion of Scandinavia.

The information presented here was partially gleaned from the SFT and NHH websites, and from an interview with Bjørnulf Hinderaker (bjornulf.hinderaker@nhh.no), an NHH faculty member who is responsible for the examination of translators, and Sveinung Løkke (sveinung.lokke@chello.no), a government authorized translator and member of STF, who generously offered to translate a substantial part of the interview which was published in issue No. 4 (2002) of the Norwegian periodical Kapital. I am also indebted to Linda Sivesind (sivesin@online.no), vice-president of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), a government authorized translator, and a member of STF, for her thorough feedback and information on the Norwegian Association of Nonfiction Writers and Translators.

The history of government authorization for translators in Norway dates back to the pre-1800 period. Around 1800, the job of appointing translators passed from being a royal prerogative to the king’s council. In those days, the principal work of authorized translators was reportedly related to the collection of customs revenues (i.e., authorized translators were producing official translations of bills of lading). More historical information will be presented in the upcoming article on Denmark, as Norway was part of Denmark up until 1814, which is the year in which the Kiel Treaty brought about the end of the 434-year-long alliance of Denmark and Norway.

Government authorized translators in Norway are organized within STF, the above-mentioned Association of Government Authorized Translators. (The English name was changed from “Guild” to “Association” only recently.) The association was founded on November 14, 1913, and is one of the oldest translators’ associations in the world. It is organized and run as a nonprofit organization for the purpose of protecting the interests of its members in the widest sense by:

- Seeking greater recognition for government authorized translators as highly skilled professionals;
- Promoting good translation practices and supporting its members by providing guidance and information;
- Working for greater understanding of the importance of quality translations among the authorities and relevant user groups; and
- Strengthening the links among colleagues and promoting high professional standards and work ethics.

STF, a member of FIT, currently has around 200 members, almost half of them living in the Oslo area. They are authorized in 16 different languages—15 European languages and Chinese. Because of the difficulty of the examination, only a handful of members are authorized in more than one language pair. English dominates, but there are also a number of German translators. The majority of STF’s members are self-employed freelancers, but some work for translation companies as staff translators. Many STF members also have the outgoing nature and verbal skills that make them first-class interpreters, and a number of them are among Norway’s best conference and court interpreters.

All STF members have passed a very demanding translation examination, containing both a written...
and an oral component. Until 1999, examination candidates were required to translate into and from Norwegian and the foreign language concerned. Today it is possible to be authorized in a single direction. The “Translatøreksamen” represents the highest Norwegian qualification for written translation to and from Norwegian of specialized texts (economic, administrative, legal, commercial, and technical). As a result, successful candidates are authorized by the Norwegian government, currently represented by the Ministry of Education and Research, to place their stamp and signature on their work, along with the words “True Translation Certified.” The use of the official translator’s stamp is confined to government authorized translators. The certificate issued by the Ministry grants a license for the given language “pursuant to Regulation relating to the licensing of government authorized translators laid down by the Ministry of Education and Research on 15 August 2002, pursuant to Act No. 22, Section 57a, dated 12 May 1995, relating to universities and colleges,” and requires that “the office of translator be conducted conscientiously and to the best of one’s ability and in accordance with the oath or solemn pledge taken.” Like the licenses currently in use in Austria, the Norwegian licenses were, until quite recently, based on royal decrees dating back to the 19th century: “The license is given pursuant to the Royal Decree of 27 March 1887, cf. Royal Decrees of 9 September 1897, 11 July 1919, 15 September 1950, 11 March 1960 point IV, and 14 December 1962.” (Translated from Norwegian by Mr. Løkke from his own license.)

Translations that are signed and stamped by a government authorized translator are generally seen as having the status of original texts. A lot of people see this professional designation as the crowning achievement after many years of education.

It is of interest that the title “statssauitorisert translator” in Norway uses a similar wording and carries the same weight as that of “certified public accountant” (which is also the case in Argentina) and that, unlike in the U.S., authorized translators enjoy a certain social status. An anecdote shared by Ann Macfarlane, ATA’s immediate past president, comes to mind in this context. When interviewing Michael Hamm in an effort to evaluate the current ATA accreditation process and inquiring about how long it took to achieve the credibility of certification enjoyed by certified public accountants in the U.S., his reply was “About a hundred years.” The rationale for the appreciation of translators in Norway, as well as in other Scandinavian countries, stems from the fact that Norway has a small, very open economy, with exports amounting to 50% of the gross national product. Of course, this means that linguistic skills are essential for anyone wanting a career in almost any field. The school system continues to put tremendous effort into teaching modern foreign languages. Mr. Løkke reports that when he was entering college, the minimum entry requirement was seven years of English, three years of German, and three years of French.

The “Translatøreksamen” is administered by the Department of Languages of NHH. The Department of Languages was established in 1985 and offers courses in four languages: English, French, German, and Spanish. The principal activity of the department is the teaching of languages as elective subjects in NHH’s four-year degree program. The department also offers two-year programs at the postgraduate level, as well as one-year business language studies in English, French, and German. In 1986, the Ministry of Education conferred the responsibility for the administration of the national translators’ examination on NHH. The objective of this examination is to authorize candidates who are able to carry out translation work for the public and private sectors, as well as for private individuals. One staff member is specially assigned to the supervision and organization of the exam. This position is currently held by Bjørnulf Hinderaker, supervisor of the examinations and lecturer in German at NHH.

NHH is the only institution in Norway certified to offer the national examination for translators. Each year, 40 to 50 candidates sit for this exam. Mr. Hinderaker notes that a very high percentage of applicants fail the exam—about 80% (still an improvement from the 90%+ failure rate when candidates had to translate in both directions to be authorized). This figure is by no means unique, as the rate is quite similar for ATA and a number of other professional T&I organizations, including those in Sweden and Denmark, and is roughly the same for all languages. The requirements for passing the exam are the same irrespective of the language combination. Recently, eligibility requirements for the qualification of candidates for taking the test became more stringent and academically oriented. A minimum of three years of relevant university education, properly documented, is currently required. This requirement was introduced in order to comply with European Union regulations. This fact is of particular interest to the author of this article, who was
recently appointed chairman of the ATA ad-hoc committee for ATA accreditation eligibility requirements, a development which will be discussed in one of the future issues of this publication.

The National Translators’ Examination makes great demands on the candidates. It is necessary to be in full command of both Norwegian and the foreign language. The candidate must understand the differences and similarities between the language, and be able to translate either way with great accuracy. It is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of economic, administrative, legal, and technical subject matter in both the source and target cultures. Economists, engineers, lawyers, technical translators, and people with similar types of education, combining languages and factual knowledge, will have an advantage when sitting for the examination. Work experience is also a definite plus.

In principle, candidates can sit for the examination in any foreign language in combination with Norwegian, provided it is practically possible to employ qualified examiners in Norway or the other Nordic countries. The requirements are not supposed to vary significantly from one language to another. There is no educational program in Norway that fully prepares candidates for the examination. NHH provides guidance for candidates who are planning to take the examination in the following languages: English, French, Spanish, or German. Potential candidates are entitled to submit their translations of a set of previous examination texts and receive feedback on their performance. Samples of English-to-Norwegian tests for the past few years are available at the NHH website (www.nhh.no/stud/spr/trengelsk.html).

The written test takes eight hours. For those who pass, there is also an oral examination. Those who fail are allowed to try again up to three times. A pass means that the candidate has shown an excellent command of legal, financial, and technical subjects and that he or she is able to translate such texts. The written part of the examination consists of two independent tests:

1. Translation from Norwegian into the foreign language of:
   - A general text of about 350 words;
   - An economic/administrative text of about 250 words;
   - A legal text of about 250 words; and
   - A technical text of about 250 words.

2. Translation from the foreign language into Norwegian of the same subject matter and size as for Test 1.

Tests 1 and 2 take place on consecutive days. The candidates who pass the written part of the examination are invited to sit for the oral examination. The National Translators’ Examination is considered completed when a candidate has passed both the written and the oral parts of the examination.

Around 40% of candidates take the English test. The Norwegian text to be translated is the same for all foreign languages. Thai is an example of a language that NHH rarely organizes an exam in, but even if only one candidate comes forward, NHH is still obligated to organize an exam for that candidate. Languages of limited diffusion that have been requested in the past include Urdu, Slovenian, Slovak, and Czech. There have also been candidates in Arabic sporadically. At the very least, according to Mr. Hinderaker, NHH is able to find examiners in 20-25 languages.

It should be noted that we also received a reply to our initial query about certification abroad, mailed in November 2000, from Norsk Oversetterforening (NO), or the Norwegian Association of Literary Translators. While this 280-member association does not offer any certification, the eligibility requirements are quite stringent: two published books or two staged plays, scrutinized by NO’s Literary Council. The association conducts seminars and organizes trips abroad for its members to allow translators to better acquaint themselves with the cultures and languages they are specializing in.

Norway also has another association of book translators, Norsk Faglitterær forfatter- og oversetterforening (NFF), or the Norwegian Association of Nonfiction Writers and Translators. This association has 4,800 members, 420 of whom are translators of nonfiction books and articles. The vast majority of the members are academic/nonfiction writers. NFF has no quality-related criterion for membership, but requires applicants to hold the copyright on the translation of one work of nonfiction (at least 100 pages). Both NO and NFF are the recipients of photocopying remuneration and money derived from public lending rights, allowing the associations to generously finance annual project and travel grants to qualified translators, and to be very active in international affairs.

For the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that this nation, about the size of Minnesota, has two more groups of translators: NAVIO, the Norwegian Association of
Translation in the News: Terrorist Attacks Spotlight Need for Qualified Linguists

By Alexandra Russell-Bitting, ATA Public Relations Committee

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, a flurry of reports appeared in the press on the urgent need for real, live, qualified translators. The articles stress how woefully unprepared U.S. intelligence is to deal with the huge backlog of translation work for less common languages, and how the U.S. education system has failed to ensure that Americans achieve foreign-language proficiency.

ATA Sources Quoted

In October, the New York Times reported that translation companies were experiencing a surge in demand for translators of Arabic, Dari, Pashto, and Urdu from such clients as the federal government and manufacturers in the defense industry. In an article entitled “Do You Speak Uzbek? Translators Are in Demand,” Lynmley Browning interviewed several past and present ATA officials and members.

Noting that translation services for the over 40 “major languages” in the world are a $7-billion a year industry, he cited the ATA as the industry’s main professional association for translators and interpreters in this country. The ATA has 120 Arabic translators listed in its directory, but less than 25% of them have passed the association’s accreditation exam. “There are not enough good Arabic translators,” Walter Bacak, ATA’s executive director, told the Times. And as for more esoteric languages, forget it: the ATA has just 21 Farsi translators (one of whom also does Pashto) and six for Dari, but not a single one for Uzbek.

Requests for Arabic translation used to be relatively rare, since U.S. companies doing business in Arabic-speaking countries usually do so in English. The market for work in less common languages, like Pashto, barely existed before September 11, because the U.S. has had no commercial or political ties to Afghanistan for years. Translation businesses were unprepared for the demand prompted by the U.S. war on terrorism.

Shuckran Kamal, a freelance translator of Arabic and Farsi and past chair of the ATA Accreditation Committee, stressed that translators must be more than native speakers; they must also be good writers and researchers. Past ATA President Muriel Jérôme-O’Keeffe, the managing director of a Washington-area translation company, was also quoted in the article. “Simply calling for speakers is not going to help,” she cautioned. “How can you ask a native speaker with no other expertise to translate the chemical components of a bomb?”

Recruitment Efforts “Nothing Short of Pathetic”

“It Takes a Crisis to Raise Regard for Languages” reported The Washington Post in November. The author, local columnist Marc Fisher, bemoaned the spectacle of the FBI director going on television to beg for speakers of Arabic and the less common languages of Afghanistan. It was, observed the columnist, “nothing short of pathetic.” After attending a meeting of thousands of language teachers gathered in Washington, DC, for their annual meeting, Fisher was not optimistic about any sudden improvements.

According to National Foreign Language Center Director and University of Maryland Professor Richard Brecht, the problem is that our education is market-driven. And the market doesn’t work for less commonly taught languages. So whenever a world crisis occurs, we’re reduced to scouring the nation for translators and language instructors to help bridge the gap. Brecht notes chillingly, for instance, that: “when we discovered terrorist plans in Arabic after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, we didn’t process the information for months because we didn’t have the people.”

Intelligence Failures Linked to Shortage of Linguists

In a scathing piece entitled “English Only Spoken Here,” published in The Weekly Standard in December, Claire Berlinsky minced no words. “There is a desperate shortage of foreign-language speakers at our intelligence agencies,” she reported, citing several cases of “intelligence failures” linked not to a lack of evidence, but to the inability of analysts to understand it. For example, the entire CIA reportedly has only four or five “competent Arabic speakers,” just one lone speaker of Farsi, and not a single linguist with Pashto, Uzbek, or other languages spoken in and around Afghanistan.

“A critical shortage of linguists with security clearance has crippled American intelligence efforts for decades, and will take decades to remedy fully,” she concluded bleakly. Of the two possible solutions—getting intelligence officers to learn languages or getting linguists to
become intelligence officers—she was pessimistic. “Efforts to teach Americans to speak difficult languages, either in universities or government institutions, have generally failed,” she claimed, overstating the problem perhaps just a tad. Yet at the same time, “our government does not trust native speakers of foreign languages and makes it nearly impossible for such volunteers to obtain security clearances.”

Berlinsky suggested a two-pronged approach to resolving the language crisis. In the short term, hire and clear foreign-born linguists; in the long term, overhaul the structure of foreign-language education in the United States. Berlinsky wryly noted the “extraordinary disjunct in academia between professions of multiculturalism—exhortations to celebrate diversity—and any kind of serious commitment to learning about other cultures.” She advocated a radical change in foreign-language study: begin it in elementary school and include more study abroad, in Tunisia and universities in the U.S. made foreign-language study a graduation requirement, but now only 20% do.

The reasons Americans don’t study languages—geographic isolation, the assimilationist credo, and the widespread use of English—boil down to one: we don’t have to! …Or should we say didn’t used to? “Multiculturalism may not have prodded us to study cultures fundamentally different from our own,” Talbot concluded, “the war on terrorism will have to.”

English Is Not Enough

Across the pond, this “harsh cultural lesson” wasn’t lost on the British either. The December 2001 issue of the ITI Bulletin, the publication of the U.K.’s Institute of Translation & Interpreting, included articles from the British press on the question of foreign-language study. In an article entitled “Lost for Words,” originally published in The Guardian, Hilary Footitt noted that: “one of the cultural shocks of September 11 is, overwhelmingly, that English is simply not enough.” For the U.K., the attacks have led to “a visceral understanding that building globalisation necessarily entails participating in a multilingual world.”

As the U.K. gets ready to launch a new citizenship curriculum in schools nationwide, it has become clear that global citizenship is not English, but multilingual. This realization is no doubt squelching, once and for all, the “English is enough” mantra long intoned in influential circles in the United Kingdom.

The Times of London published an in-depth linguistic analysis by British academic Clive Holes, an expert Arabist who picked apart the vocabulary used by Osama bin Laden in his videotapes. Holes explained the “vivid language of popular Islamic preaching,” pointing out the linguistic blunders committed by western leaders in the wider “language war.” For instance, to Arabs and Muslims, George W. Bush’s notorious use of the term “crusade” apparently conjured up the image of “a raggle taggle army of barbarous, irreligious, pillaging mercenaries.” This western ignorance of Muslim languages, cultures, and history has led to what Holes calls “a dialogue of the deaf.”

In a letter to the editor subsequently published in The Times, ITI President Sir Rowland Whitehead echoed this view, noting that: “it is high time that the native English speakers addressed the languages of others.”

Uncle Sam Desperately Seeking Linguists

In March 2002, The Washington Post reported on a study by the General Accounting Office (GAO) on foreign-language needs in federal government agencies. Congress had asked the GAO to focus on the four agencies with the largest foreign-language programs: the Army, the FBI, the State Department, and the Commerce Department. The GAO found that staff shortages at the agencies: “have adversely affected agency operations and hindered U.S. military, law enforcement, intelligence, counterterrorism, and diplomatic efforts.”

The four agencies had not been able to fill all their jobs requiring expertise in Arabic, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Farsi, Russian, and Turkish. Among the difficulties they all faced was the “competitive job market” (read: low government salaries). For instance, the Army reported that it had trouble retaining qualified cryptologic linguists.
because their skills are in demand at colleges and in the private sector: more than 45% left the service after completing their initial four- to six-year enlistment.

The problems discussed in the GAO report are actually nothing new. According to a more recent Washington Post article, in 1979, a report commissioned by President Jimmy Carter declared that: “Americans’ incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous.” More than 20 years later—but a full year before September 11—Congress held hearings in September 2000 on “The State of Foreign Language Capabilities in National Security and the Federal Government.” Ellen Laipson, Vice Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, testified that: “CIA, DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency], INR [State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research], and various other agencies have identified their key shortfalls in Central Eurasian, East Asian, and Middle Eastern languages.” This lack of translating capacity, she said, “makes it hard to provide thorough analysis in a timely way for policy decisions.” But, once again, no steps were taken to remedy the situation.

Now that we have a war on terrorism to fight, however, the GAO reports that in recent months the agencies have stepped up recruitment and training of language specialists, paying bonuses and stipends in an effort to lure linguists away from the private sector. They have also been hiring contract workers, especially translators and interpreters, to keep up with their heavy workloads.

According to a Washington Post report published in April 2002, FBI Director Robert (Ain’t-Too-Proud-to-Beg) Mueller told Congress in March that the Bureau is reorganizing itself to prevent more attacks. That includes hiring translators and Arabic-speaking agents. Mueller said the FBI had hired a whopping 39 contract linguists, was processing security clearances for another 97, and doing background checks on 246. But compare these figures with the 4,000 agents working on counterterrorism alone, and it’s hard to get too excited just yet. In May 2002, the Post reported that the FBI is: “engaged in what it calls a ‘massive’ effort to hire 900 linguists, computer experts, engineers, and scientists over the next few months to improve intelligence gathering and analysis.”

Opportunity for ATA Knocking Down the Door

This rash of press reports highlighting the importance of our work and the need to remedy long-standing shortages of qualified linguists represents a huge opportunity for ATA. At this crucial juncture, our association is finding new recognition in the press, and we should grab this opportunity to be heard. We can proudly point to the enhancements being made to our accreditation program, which is setting the quality standards needed in the industry, and to our successfully launched programs for specialized conferences, mentoring and outreach to secondary schools, among other initiatives to enhance professional development and translator training.

What can individual ATA members do? For one thing, share information. If you hear of a vacancy announcement, post it on the ATA Job Bank Online (www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/181.html). Second, if you see an article in the press of interest to the association and the membership, please forward it to Public Relations Committee Co-Chairs Kevin Hendzel (KHendzel@asetquality.com) or Chris Durban (101327.35@compuserve.com), or to yours truly at alexandrarb@yahoo.com. And third, actively share your expertise with fellow members by giving a lecture at an annual conference or other professional development event or by becoming a mentor.

References


Continued on p.22
Setting Up a Translation Agency

By Mike Collins

The decision to set up a translation agency should only be made after careful planning, thought, and much preparation. Naturally, when we started our agency 10 years ago, we did nothing of the sort. As happens with most small business owners, my present partners and I were left scrambling to pay our mortgages and feed our children after losing our jobs rather unexpectedly. In spite of everything, we managed to get ourselves set up and successfully in business in less than 30 days. Along the way, and in the 10 years since, we have learned many valuable lessons, some of which may be of interest to anyone thinking of starting an agency, or any small/medium-sized business for that matter.

Many translators and interpreters may see establishing an agency as a natural step along the path of professional development. After all, isn’t it a normal progression to start using all those contacts you’ve made over the years to help process even more work? The answer is a resounding maybe.

Once you begin working as an agency, you become responsible for more than just translation. You must be ready to offer services above and beyond what freelancers normally offer. You will have to guarantee the work of others to your customers (work which you may not be able to provide value-added services like desktop publishing, say that, too. Now that you’ve defined what you want to do, the next step is to turn it into reality. There are a lot of people out there whose business it is to help you do just that.

Starting a company requires resources, both monetary and advisory. Some small percentage of people will have the business know-how and the bucks to get started without help, but the remaining 99% of us need some outside assistance. Even if you are starting small, chances are you will need help in all of these areas before you get too far.

In our case, desperate and short on time, we turned to a local university-supported small business development center. They were able to help us identify the key areas where we would need support: banking, legal, and accounting. They also helped us draft a business plan and produce financial projections. Most states and some cities will have similar organizations, and small business classes are offered at many community colleges and at the university level. The fact that one of us had taken such a course also saved us a lot of time in figuring out what needed to be done.

We turned to our attorney and accountant for advice on what type of business to set up. Because our mission was to serve corporate clients on a medium to large scale, both advised us to incorporate as a regular corporation (often called a C corp.). There are other options (the particulars of which may vary from state to state), including limited liability corporations (LLC) and Chapter S corporations. Generally speaking, the advantage of incorporating is that it separates the assets of the shareholders from the assets of the corporation, protecting the personal assets of the owners in the event of lawsuits against the corporation. Your lawyer and accountant can advise you on which option is best for your particular situation.

Aspiring small business owners might be tempted to try to avoid the hefty hourly fees charged by attorneys and accountants. Translators and interpreters, in particular, seem to belong to a special breed of do-it-yourselfers. However, this is no place to cut corners. You will find that a few hours with a good business attorney and a good accountant is well worth the expense. If you choose to incorporate, your attorney will take care of filing your articles of incorporation and will help you with corporate bylaws and learning the legal requirements to be met by businesses in your state.

It’s also important to consider what accounting method you
will use for your new business. There are even options for farming that area of your business out altogether. Whatever you choose, you will need to keep good records. It may have been enough as a freelancer to keep a simple ledger of invoices and expenses, but that will not suffice for a larger business, especially one that employs several people.

Two of the most common accounting methods are the cash and accrual methods. At the risk of oversimplifying, accrual accounting treats receivables as assets. Thus, you can be taxed on revenues you have not yet received. Cash accounting, on the other hand, does not count revenues until they actually come in, which, in some cases, will paint a more realistic picture of the state of your business at the end of your fiscal year. Your accountant will have good advice on this, and can probably also recommend a good accounting software package. Don’t forget to build in room to grow as you plan, in your accounting system as well as in all other things. Look beyond where you are to where you hope to be.

Another advantage of establishing relationships with business advisors right off the bat is that your consulting support base will already be in place when you need it later. Since we started our agency, we have often found ourselves in need of legal, banking, and accounting support. In each case, we were able to simply pick up the phone to get help from an advisor who knew us, understood what we did, and was ready to help, without having to go through the effort of establishing trust and understanding before getting down to business.

Now, what about funding? The whole point of business is to make money, and you need money to make money. Tapping relatives may be an option, but give that approach careful consideration. Well-meaning relatives who have invested in your business may find the temptation to get involved hard to resist.

Most of us don’t have that rich uncle, anyway, so it is very likely that you will have to borrow from a bank. You will need office space, equipment, furniture, money for salaries until the first checks arrive, and many other things depending on the scale of your effort. In our case, we were aware of a large opportunity and decided to go for broke. We needed to set up an office for 10 people, complete with equipment, furniture, software—the whole nine yards.

We decided to seek start-up money from the Small Business Administration through our bank. Our banker assisted us with the paperwork, helped us determine what we would need, and held our hands through the process. The application included our business plan, personal financial statements, and a lot of fine print. We made an important decision which has stood us in good stead ever since. We opted to have the payments automatically withdrawn every month. This reduced the chance that we would ever make a late payment, and, in fact, we never did. Because of that, the next time we needed a loan, we found the process to be much friendlier, and received the highest possible credit rating.

You may be faced with the decision of whether to go into business with partners, or with adding a partner at some time in the future. If so, there are a few extra things to think about. Having good partners can lighten the load for everyone and keep anyone from becoming chained to his or her desk. However, keep in mind that you will be spending about as much time with your partners as you do with your family. Make sure you are like-minded and able to communicate openly with one another.

Right at the beginning, while everyone still loves each other, draw up a stock buy-sell agreement that everyone can live with. This agreement should specify what a partner will receive for his or her shares if he or she decides to leave or is fired by the other partners, or if a partner dies. Translation agencies rarely have much in the way of fixed assets, but the business does have value. In our case, we drew up an agreement that based the payoff on a percentage of the revenues from the preceding couple of years. We also established a schedule of payments that would not place a burden on the business. Within a couple of years, one of the partners had to pull out for family reasons, and the agreement worked like a charm, keeping everyone happy.

If one of the partners dies, the agreement should specify that the shares must be bought back by the corporation, with payment going to the deceased’s heirs. This prevents a situation where a grieving spouse suddenly finds himself or herself part owner of a small business. In our case, we took out a key personnel insurance policy designed to pay out enough to buy back the shares and leave enough to tide the company over until the missing partner’s skills could be replaced.

Now it’s time to look at who’s going to do the work and who’s going to buy the product. If you are thinking of creating an agency, you probably already have many contacts you hope to use as suppliers. Here are a few tips for when you start putting your list together:

- Have everyone sign a confidentiality agreement (here’s where having an attorney helps—have
them look over the text of your agreement before you finalize it).

- Have everyone sign a proprietary agreement. This is an agreement that states that any materials you provide to them for your projects will remain your property and are not to be used for anything else or given to anyone else.

- Find out up front what your suppliers charge and what their technical and linguistic capabilities are. Ask for any other pertinent information: rush rates, minimum fees, etc.

- Learn their strengths and weaknesses.

Keep all this information easily accessible: you never know when a customer will want proof that the people doing the work are sworn to confidentiality. As for the working information, start organizing a (preferably electronic) database of your suppliers as soon as possible. If you have the basic information at your fingertips, you will be able to quote jobs quickly and accurately, which will also impress your customers.

Speaking of customers, it’s a good idea to have a few. Decide what your customer base is going to be and market to that. You will find this situation to be a bit different from the status quo for freelancers, whose customer base may consist mainly of agencies. You will have to go after the customer base may consist mainly of agencies. You will have to go after the customer base is going to be and intend to offer on-site interpreting to end users themselves. So, if you intend to offer on-site interpreting to construction companies, that’s the place to start. If you have good hi-tech software localization skills, then your target market will be different.

Marketing is notoriously difficult in the translation industry. Most potential customers have no interest in us or what we do until they need us. And not many translation agencies have the financial resources to sustain an ongoing, in-your-face advertising campaign. A good Internet presence and advertising in the Yellow Pages are effective ways of having your name out there when someone goes looking for services.

By far, the best advertising seems to be to do a good job, to be responsive, and to keep your customers happy. In our case, we went from serving one department within a large corporation to serving more than 20 in the course of two years, all by word of mouth. New customers told us how they had heard we were easy to work with, did quality work, and often delivered ahead of schedule. Our own customers spread the word for us.

When approaching new customers and new projects, know your limitations. The world of translation is getting increasingly competitive, and the temptation to say “Yes” to any customer request, especially large ones, is great. On the one hand, agreeing to accept a type of work you’ve never done before can be a challenge and a learning experience. On the other hand, if you botch it, your client is not likely to forgive you. And if it’s a huge project and the client refuses to (or can’t) pay, it could ruin you. Make sure you have some expert support available if you need it, and consider financing options if the size of the job warrants.

Now, what are we going to charge for this work? Not nearly enough, I can tell you. Setting rates is always a work in progress. You will have to sit down and look at the level of service you are providing, the cost to you, whatever value you are adding, and your overhead and profit (don’t forget profit!). At the same time, you will have to look at what the competition is charging to see where you fit in. Don’t make the mistake of blindly assuming that your prices have to be the lowest. Although undercutting the competition may bring in work in the short term, it creates several problems: 1) it is simply impossible to produce high-quality work at cut rates; 2) your new customers will be unhappy when you raise your rates after a few jobs; and 3) you will not be able to use the better suppliers who (surprise, surprise!) charge more because they know their work is worth it. Instead, it may be wiser to market the extras that you offer and make a case as to why it’s worth paying for. For instance, if you have in-house translators for some languages, market the fact that you can give same-day or next-day service on certain types of small jobs. Many customers are willing to pay extra for that accessibility.

Wherever you decide to set your rates, you must track your profitability. For an agency, the work done outside the office is the easy part. You know what the supplier is charging and you know what you are charging, so no problem there. Depending on your level of staffing, it’s the internal costs that will be difficult to assess. There’s a wide variety of time-tracking software available on the market that can help with this.

Once you are up and running as an agency, your method of working will determine your effectiveness. If you are even moderately successful, you will soon be unable to personally supervise every aspect of every job. That’s why a method of organizing and tracking work is essential. Changing systems mid-stream can be messy, so design carefully and build in space for the future.
Develop a logical method for cataloguing clients and jobs. A three- or four-letter mnemonic for each customer and three or four digits for sequentially ordering jobs should be sufficient. The more transparent it is, the better. In 10 years, we have done more than 500 jobs for some of our clients, so it’s not out of the question that you will need those four digits. Another option might be to include the year in the naming scheme, allowing you to restart the sequential numbering each year. It’s also important to have a policy for how long you will archive work done.

A daily staff meeting is a must. This can be 5 minutes or 45, as needed. In our case, we run through our entire schedule daily, discussing all active jobs, everything that has been delivered in the last few days, and everything that is being quoted. The advantage of this is that everyone hears what is going on and can provide input or clear up misunderstandings. It also gives everyone a chance to brainstorm if a project manager needs help with a particular project.

Above all, don’t underestimate the importance of good communication. Freelancers working for themselves only have to remember to ask the questions that they personally need answers to. Agency owners and project managers, on the other hand, must try to anticipate every question from their customers’ and suppliers’ points of view, and pass on as much information as clearly as they can. In more than 15 total years of operation in the business of translation, virtually every major problem I have ever encountered has been caused by poor communication. It seems odd that we, as translators and interpreters, whose professions, by definition, consist of facilitating communication, could ever be less than perfect at it in our business relations, but we are human, after all.

Last, but far from least, as agency owners, we set the tone and personality for our businesses. Whether we like it or not, our staff, customers, and suppliers perceive us based on their interactions with us. If we allow ourselves to be seen as cynical, arrogant, and difficult, then we risk having those attitudes creep into how our company deals with the outside world. If we are open and communicative, fair and honest, this will be communicated through our staff to our customers and suppliers, and the result will be many rewarding relationships with suppliers, coworkers, and customers alike.

International Certification Study: Norway
Continued from p.15

Audio-Visual Translators, which has about 110 members who do subtitling for TV, films, and the opera, and Norsk Tolkeforening, the Norwegian Interpreters’ Association, which organizes sign language translators and interpreters. Additional information about STF is available in English at www.statsaut-translator.no/english.htm. The website of NHH is quite complex, with a limited amount of information available in English. The address of the NHH homepage is www.nhh.no. The address of the Norwegian Association of Literary Translators, also with limited information in English, is http://skrift.no/no/index.asp. The Norwegian Association of Nonfiction Writers and Translators website is at www.nffo.no/index.asp. It contains some information in English, and the “Find a translator” service has English options available. STF, NO, and NFF are members of FIT, and NO and NFF are represented on the FIT Council. In the next issue, we will examine the government authorization of translators and interpreters in Denmark, which, in 1966, introduced the allegedly first-ever law on the authorization of translators in the world. As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at jiri@cetra.com.

Translation in the News
Continued from p.18

the December 2001 issue of the ITI Bulletin.


The Biggest Myth of All About Your Independent Translation Business

By Nancy M. Snyder

The myths and realities of starting your own business was the subject of a presentation I gave at the 1994 ATA Annual Conference. It was also later presented as an article in the pages of the **ATA Chronicle**. That talk and article covered some of the most popular myths people have about self-employment (e.g., “It’s great to be your own boss.”). It then presented the realities (e.g., “When you are self-employed, you have a customer base full of people telling you what to do, instead of just one boss.”).

Basing my start-up business on realities instead of myths made it possible to develop a very satisfying, full-time freelance business.

But after the business had been in operation a couple of years, the biggest myth of all became evident. I had believed that after all the hard work of starting a business and developing a client base, that things would run smoothly. I soon found out that the biggest myth of all is: “Once your business is established, you will be set for life.”

The reality is that, over the years, there are certain events and forces that, if left unchecked, can erode the business you have worked so hard to build.

These forces can be divided into three categories:

1. There will be times when you don’t have enough work.
2. There will be times when you have too much work.
3. There will be times when you will not be able to accomplish your work.

“...There are certain events and forces that, if left unchecked, can erode the business you have worked so hard to build...”

Scary thought, isn’t it? If you worked at a company and got a salary, none of these would be a problem. Not enough work—you get to play video games on your office computer. Too much work—some pressure there, but you still get to go home relatively on time and leave work behind. Can’t accomplish your work—also not a problem, because there is sick leave, disability, and personal time that you can count on.

When you own the business, though, and especially if you are your only employee, it is important to consider each of these scenarios and have some idea about how you will handle them.

In some cases, I will be sharing things with you that I have tried in order to counter these problems. Some things worked well, some did not work very well at all. And no matter what I did, you will, no doubt, come up with better solutions for yourself by brainstorming with colleagues. The important thing is for you to recognize the negative forces that can affect your livelihood, and be prepared to take action against them.

Let’s go over these categories one by one.

**There will be times when you don’t have enough work.**

This was the first big surprise I got in business. I had assumed that after I had struggled to get a clientele, I would have a clientele. Naïve perhaps, but I remember the disappointment. I felt two years after getting started when the clients began slowly trickling away. Fearing that this was a problem with the quality of my work, I hesitatingly called some of the clients and asked if they were satisfied with my services. Although they were satisfied, they said they had no work to send me. Agencies find themselves having an ebb and flow of different languages and different subjects. And clients that you work for directly may send you huge amounts of work for several weeks or months, then not need you at all because the project they were working on is finished.

Sometimes clients need a gentle reminder that you are still there. Personnel at agencies and other companies change, and the project manager that left may not have told the new project manager about you. If you have not heard from an agency for a while, it may help to make a friendly call so that they will keep you in mind. While I do not advocate monthly updates of your résumé and your whereabouts, an occasional call may be a good idea when an agency you have been working for steadily isn’t calling any more.

Marketing your services is something you will need to do for the rest of your business life. When you are working alone, this can be...
tricky. Sometimes you are working too hard and may not feel like you have the time to work at getting new clients. But if a week comes when I do not work a full five days, I start to solicit more work.

One of the most successful ways I have found for getting work is through direct mail campaigns. You may want to find a directory of translation agencies (like Glenn’s Guide), or you can go to the library and ask for a business directory in the reference department. Directories are available with businesses listed by zip code, by SIC code (industrial classifications), or even according to ownership by foreign companies. They make it easy to find companies who may need your services. You can send your résumé to agencies, or a brochure or some other kind of mailer to companies. My experience has shown that 9 times out of 10, if you send a résumé to a company, they will think you want a job. Direct mail seems to be successful because companies tend to keep information on file. Whether they put you in a database or keep your résumé in a filing cabinet, the next time they need translations done, your information will be available. Personnel may change, but the information will still be there.

The other successful way to get business is good old-fashioned networking. The more people you get to know in the translation business, the more chances you will have to get referrals. People who work in your language combinations may send you their overflow. People who work in other language combinations are just as important to know. Let’s say you are a German translator and you get to know some French-speaking colleagues. One of their regular clients might form a new joint venture with a Germany company, and suddenly your colleague will be asked to find someone who can translate German documents.

Networking with colleagues can be a much more relaxing way to find work. The hard sell isn’t necessary with colleagues. They already know how hard your work is, and can make some judgment about your skill level and professionalism on the basis of a personal meeting. You may exchange business cards, but don’t concentrate on getting work so much that you give people the idea that the only reason you are interested in them is as a source of business. Some of the best collaborations I have enjoyed started on the basis of two colleagues just sharing common interests over lunch. Many of these conversations have ultimately become job opportunities without me making a conscious attempt to “get business.”

All right, what if your marketing and networking still aren’t enough? Suppose there is a recession? Unfortunately, translation may be one of the first things a company cuts as a money-saving measure. Usually, there is someone in the company that can be roped into doing the translation that is absolutely necessary. And if there is a recession, and companies are not starting new projects, there may be much less translation work to be completed. Or other unpredictable catastrophic situations may arise—like the bankruptcy of a major corporation or labor strikes in different countries. What are you going to do if a month goes by and you haven’t worked at all?

First of all, make sure that you separate your business money from your personal money. Instead of spending those checks as they come in from your clients, deposit all your business income in a business account. If your bank’s fees for business accounts are too high, you can open up a second account in your own name. If you use an assumed name, make sure the bank has a copy of your assumed name papers so you can deposit checks made out to your company into an account with your own name. Pay yourself a set amount regularly. I find it easier to pay myself once a month and write out all the bills at the same time, but weekly is fine if that suits your household management better. This business account will at least give you a small cushion against slow times.

Ideally, of course, you will have savings. With careful planning and saving, your goal could be to put away from two months’ to a year’s worth of income. With a buffer like this, a short-term layoff would be no problem for you. Many of us have not accomplished that goal, and have to look for another way to tide us over when times get really tough. It can be tricky to balance your own business with the demands of some other type of work. I have tried a couple things—I once worked lunches at a local deli. It was a nice place and kept the cash flowing, but I found that not being able to be on the phone for three hours in the middle of the day got in the way of lining up translation work. What I preferred, and would do again, was working for a temporary employment agency. With the typing, spelling, and computer skills that we use every day (not to mention our flexibility), it is easy to pass the tests necessary to sign up with a temp agency. I told the agency I only wanted one-day assignments. I did not tell them the reason—that I did not want to be tied down if more lucrative opportunities arose. As it turned out, they loved that. It seems that most people who work as temps
don’t want to hop from place to place every day. The pay may not be what you would make in your regular business, but when you compare the easy pace and lack of pressure of a day of temp work to the stress of meeting a translation deadline, it’s almost like getting paid for a day to sit and relax.

There will be times when you have too much work.

If you have had some scary slow periods, you may wonder why it would be a problem to have too much work. When you are newly in business, it is exciting to find that you have the possibility of making as much money as you are willing to work for. But as time goes on and you get busier and busier, you may start to notice that you are losing touch with your friends. Or you may notice the appearance of physical symptoms—backaches, shoulder problems, carpal tunnel symptoms, or even episodes of memory loss. While it was acceptable to work long hours at the beginning, you may begin to realize that if you are going to be doing this work throughout a long career, you will need to take better care of yourself, both physically and in your personal relationships.

Of course, you can always say “No” to work that is offered to you. But saying “No” too many times will allow your customers to get used to working with people other than you, and eventually you may find that some of them don’t call any more. You need to think about other ways to handle the periodic floods of work.

You can take work offered to you and find someone to help you with it. You may want to split a job with another translator or subcontract it to them altogether. Find colleagues you can work with and trust. No matter how well you know someone, it is important to remember that your name and reputation will be associated with the work you provide. I always proofread work done for me by others before sending it to my client.

At one point, my workflow was overwhelming, and I thought that voice-activated software might be the answer. It was an interesting experiment, and I know many people have used it successfully. However, I found that working in a number of different subject areas decreased the recognition accuracy, and the editing time required slowed me down. Besides that, I like working with people and was fortunate to find a typist who transcribes my translations from dictation. This working method makes it possible to almost double my production volume.

Dictation is a skill that seems impossible to some and comes quite naturally to others. To dictate a translation, you need to be able to read one thing (the source language) and speak something different (the target-language translation). It is like doing a sight translation. My theory is that I was able to develop this skill when I worked as a volunteer in college reading textbooks to a blind student. He told me to read as fast as I could, because a listener can comprehend faster than a reader can read and we could cover more material that way. The material involved was a physics textbook. I was committed to the volunteer job, but did not find the material interesting at the time. In the course of reading fast, but still being bored, I learned to let my mind wander to other thoughts while I was reading. It is this ability to read one thing and think about something else that makes dictation a possibility.

The most ambitious option, if you have excess work over a lasting period of time, is to take on an intern or hire an employee. I hired an employee once and, although the experience ended up badly, maybe you can learn from my mistake.

I found myself with mountains of work, much of it simple and repetitive. It looked like a good time to take on an employee. I consulted with a business counselor at SCORE (The Service Core of Retired Executives), a free counseling service of the Small Business Administration. He helped me work out the financial calculations. After considering the expenses for an additional computer, additional office space, and even considering how much time I would spend on management, training, and editing, the math was very promising. I could hire an entry-level employee, offer a good salary and benefits, and still make it worth my while financially. Hundreds of people responded to the position advertisement, and I found half a dozen qualified candidates. After interviewing and testing three candidates, I found the perfect employee. He had a degree in German, was a hard worker, was willing to learn from constructive criticism, and was thrilled to have the opportunity to make translation his career.

It was only a few weeks before the troubles started. My employee had done extremely well on his translation test and was a very good translator. That is, as long as the grammar was simple. As you probably know, German grammar is rarely simple. On longer sentences with several clauses, my employee often completely lost the meaning of the sentence because he could not analyze the grammar. When I discussed the situation with him, he could see the problem and was willing to do whatever was needed. However, what
was needed was to learn the complications of advanced German grammar—not an easy task. It became clear that by the time he could take enough German courses to become proficient, I would have lost too much money to keep the business afloat.

In spite of all my advance planning, it seems that I had made the test too easy. Or maybe I should have taken an employee on at lower pay to have more time to get the person up to speed. But with a small business, I believe it is hard to economically absorb the demands of an employee. No doubt, there are many small translation businesses that successfully employ people. If this seems like a good move for you, please do your research carefully and talk with people who have made a success of it. There are many factors to consider.

There will be times when you will not be able to accomplish your work.

Our last category covers those times when you are unable to complete your work. This could be due to a computer virus, a computer malfunction, or a personal reason (sickness, family problems, or bereavement).

A computer virus was the one thing that almost ruined my business entirely. I did not understand anything about viruses in the early days, and got a virus from a client’s files during a huge, important job for an important (direct) client. If you get a computer virus, you don’t always know it immediately. Sometimes a virus just starts making your computer do strange things. In my case, I kept getting messages that the computer was out of memory. I thought it was because of all the illustrations in the files, which were not common at the time (customers had just started to send Word files by e-mail for translation).

No matter what workarounds I tried (cutting out illustrations and pasting them back in when the translation was done, saving each file on a separate disk), the “out of memory” message kept appearing. I hired temporary help for word processing, subcontracted out as many files as I could, and continued to work long hours to correct the problems. By the time I found out what was going on, the job was way past deadline. I was losing money on it, the client was very unhappy, and I was completely demoralized.

Most of you have probably had the experience of not saving your work regularly and then losing a file you have been working on for a couple hours. If you picture that happening to not just one file, but to your whole computer, you will understand the absolute necessity of having, and using, a good virus protection software.

The other type of computer malfunction, when something goes wrong with your hardware and it has to be in the shop for several days (or you have to spend several days learning how to fix it yourself), can also bring your business to a standstill. Ever since that happened to me the first time and I found out how hard it was to try to rent a computer, I have kept a spare computer on hand. The spare is usually the last computer I used before the most recent upgrade.

Now, if you live near a fairly large city, there may be a Kinko’s nearby. In those emergency cases, you can use a computer there for a reasonable fee. Or you may be able to use a computer at your local library. Any of these solutions require you to back up your current jobs on disk at the end of each day. Having another computer handy won’t do you any good if you cannot access your files to work on them.

There may also be times when you are unable to complete your work due to illness, family problems, or even bereavement. We don’t really want to think about these situations, let alone plan for them. But they can, and do, happen to all of us. This is another good reason to keep close ties with colleagues that you trade work with. You can plan ahead for vacations, but when emergency situations come up, you need to have someone you can ask to fill in for you. If you work for agencies, they may be able to find someone else to take over the job, but make sure it’s really an emergency. Your reputation will suffer if you ask for special consideration for a reason that does not seem serious enough to warrant it.

As you can see, once the honeymoon is over with your new business, your relationship with your business will take on a life of its own. You will face challenges that you need to be aware of. It will be easier for you to take action if you realize that all self-employed people face these problems. Don’t be afraid to talk these things over with colleagues whose opinions you trust in order to see what solutions they have tried.

In spite of all the challenges, I have maintained my business for 14 years. Every time things have gotten very difficult and I thought about ending my freelance life and getting a “real” job, I found the motivation to meet the challenges. In spite of the weight of responsibility, when I see friends being laid off or having benefits cut, I know it is in my best interests to take care of my own business.
Jerry Wentworth looked up at his translation class from the pit of the amphitheatre. They hated this windowless room. The cramped chairs with folding writing surfaces gave the students nowhere to open dictionaries or to lay the source texts next to their translations. He was stuck behind a lectern because the rows of bolted-down chairs prevented his walking among the students, or circling the chairs for discussions. Normally, he might have a backache from not moving around, but today the class was different. These students were usually active and engaged, but now, as they discussed the practical side of setting up a translation business, the interest level was even higher. The first hour and a half had vanished, and it was almost time for a break.

"Now the article by Mr. Hine (Hine, 1998)," Jerry said. The students pulled out their photocopies of the reading assignment, but did not look at them. "What is it about?"

"It’s for freelancers," said Anita quickly. With only four students today, there was no need to raise hands. "How to budget. How to calculate prices."

"Does he say you can turn down jobs?"

"He says you can take a job if it fulfills specific needs."

"Yes, that is the key. How do you know? Have you had economics or accounting?" Jerry paused as the silence settled on the class. He was aware that they knew more than they realized. "Do you know what the break-even point is?" The lights came on in the faces.

"The break-even point is where you cover costs with no profit," Esther said. Marcia and Jed nodded.

"He gives you four principles in the article. What are they?"

Marcia jumped in this time. "You are in it for the money."

"We charge for expertise," said Jed. "That is why it is so difficult to put a price on what we do," said Jerry, writing their answers on the board. "Principle #3?"

"Selling time-based units," said Anita.

"What does that mean?"

"The only thing you can measure is your time, so you should be billing for it."

"Personal, Operating, and Growth and Capitalization," said Anita, without looking at her paper.

Jerry looked at the others. "You agree?"

"Yes, especially about the growth part," said Jed. "Customers do move, and if you want the business to grow, you need money."

"Then what?"

"Determine the rate," said Marcia. "How?"

Jed again, "See how many hours you have."

"Then divide your income requirement by the number of hours available to get the break-even point," said Esther.

"Yes." Jerry pulled the screen down in front of the blackboard and projected a transparency of Table 1 (see page 28). They discussed how a full-time availability of 2,080 hours in a year shrank to 1,255 hours after allowing for sickness, holidays, and overhead. "That is a key number to keep in mind: 1,255. Then if the customer wants a piece-rate, like cents per word, we convert that after figuring out how long the job will take." Jerry gestured to his head to indicate “keep this in mind.”

"The goal is to relate your piece-rate to your hourly rate. Once we know how long the job will take, we calculate what it should cost, and then divide the number of words or pages or whatever into that. Any questions?" He expected the silence.

"Okay, let’s break until 9:15, then meet in Room 222."

With some cheering over the move to a room with big tables, the students packed their book bags and left.

The article that Jerry Wentworth (a fictitious name) used in his class for translators first appeared in this magazine (Hine, 1998). The material...
in that article has been published as a small booklet (Hine, 1997/2001) and included in workshops for translators and interpreters. Additional material was added in an update (Hine, 2000). The basic principles remain the same. You have to find out how much money you need to earn, then figure out how much work it takes to earn it. In business, we call that the break-even point.

Calculating the break-even point is a crucial first step for any businessperson trying to determine how to price a service. When you know the break-even point, you know how low you can afford to go in negotiating a rate for your work.

This article covers four aspects of calculating the break-even point that the first article did not cover in depth. The first three appeared in the August 2000 update, and the fourth is brand-new:

1. Couples and freelancers with multiple sources of income.
2. Whether to use target or source text for basing the price.
3. Pricing additional services.

### Multiple Sources of Income

When more than one source of income is involved, the freelancer needs to pay special attention to the time available when calculating the break-even point. This would apply, for example, to working couples, whether they are both language mediators or working different jobs. It would apply to someone making a living from different part-time jobs. Of course, it applies to a freelancer who is combining freelance income with a part-time or full-time job.

Consider Table 2 on page 29 (Business Budget Worksheet).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Hours/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52 weeks @ 40 hours/week (full-time)</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Two-weeks vacation (80 hours)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less 11 holidays (8 hours/day)</td>
<td>1,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Allowance for sick time (10 hours/month)</td>
<td>1,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Overhead (indirect costs) (e.g., 30%)</td>
<td>1,255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There should be two kinds of entries in the row entitled “Portion coming from other sources”:

1. **Asset income:** money from stocks, bonds, investments, savings accounts, or allowances from relatives, trusts, etc. This is income that does not require your working time. For example, you could have purchased the asset(s) with working earnings earlier, or it could be an inheritance or a credit union account that is paying dividends. Royalties from past writing or literary translation could go here. A retirement or Social Security check would be considered asset income.

2. **Salary or wages:** income from a job other than the business for which you are calculating the break-even point. If the source of money requires that you devote time to it, it belongs in this row.

If the entry comes entirely from asset income (1. Asset income), then a single person should use 40 hours/week (2,080 hours/year) for the starting point in calculating the amount of time available to work on this business. If two people are completely free to work on the business (say, a husband-wife team or two siblings in business together), then the starting number is 80 hours/week, or 40 times the number of people working.

Do not include the hours of someone who is not actively working in whatever it is your business does. If a relative is giving you money regularly to help out, simply enter it in the “other sources” row. The contribution will lower the amount of money you need to earn. If someone is providing you services (like a bookkeeper, whether a relative or someone else), pay them for their services and budget for the expense (under “fees,” for example). The expense is the impact of their work on your budget.

If the entry comes partially or completely from another job (2. Salary or wages), subtract its weekly (or annual) hours from 40 (2,080) to get your starting point. Similarly, you need to subtract a proportionate amount of time from holidays, sick days, and vacation when calculating the time available for your business. For example, if you work 10 hours per week at something else, you would start with 30 hours available per week, or 1,560 hours per year. Now 30 hours is $\frac{3}{4}$ of 40 (or 75%), so in Table 1, the vacation time would be 60 hours ($\frac{3}{4}$ of 80), the holidays would be 66 hours, and the sick time would be 7.5 hours per month. The overhead stays the same because it is already a percentage. Thus, a freelancer with a 10-hour/week part-time job would have about 941 hours per year to devote to the freelance business. A two-person team would double these numbers (assuming each
had a 10-hour/week job), or you could calculate your individual available times separately and add the answers together. If only one partner had the 10-hour job, their hours would be 941 and 1,255, respectively, so the team would have 2,196 hours per year.

Source Text or Target Text
Since the 1998 article, the electronic transmission of source documents has become commonplace, but the general advice remains the same: count what the freelancer and the client can agree upon. Ideally, the client pays the translator to translate a certain amount of material (the source text). If the source text can be counted accurately, then both parties know exactly what the job will cost up front, and the translator is free to render the target document in the best style possible without considering the target-text word count.

However, often the source document is in portable document format (PDF), fax, or paper form. If the target document is going to be electronically delivered, then software held in common can only count the words in the target text. The condition of the source document (handwriting, illegible material, tables, sheer bulk, etc.) often allows only a rough estimate of the word count. Resetting tables and typing in numbers can take more time than replacing them in an electronic document. More often than not, I find myself insisting on a target-text word count when dealing with a paper or paper-like source text.

Pricing Additional Services
Once you gain an appreciation of the value of your time, the impact of non-language aspects of your work becomes more visible. Slowing down to read illegible faxes in small font sizes, or retyping tables, or manually replacing decimal points with commas—all these slow down the work and may invalidate the piece-rate (cents/word) on which you based the price of the job. Anything you can do to avoid underestimating a job can help. One of the best defenses is having data from your past work. Freelancers must keep decent records, but these need not be fancy. Table 3 on page 30 shows a section of a hypothetical translator’s sales record. It is based on an Excel® spreadsheet. The summary at the bottom includes rows not shown, so the bottom line does not add up.

In each row with a Job #, the Revenue cell is the product of the Rate and the Count. If the job were for hourly services, then Revenue would be the product of Rate...
and Hours. The $$$/hr and the Wph cells are the quotients of the Revenue divided by Hours and the Count divided by Hours, respectively. In the summary row, the Count, Revenue, and Hours entries are the sums of the columns above them, but the summary $$$/hr and Wph are created by dividing the summary Revenue and Count by the summary Hours.

You might quote a total price for a really large job. Then you enter the Revenue as a number, and change the Rate cell to be the quotient of the Revenue divided by the Count.

The Remarks should help you recall what kind of work was involved, especially if something about the job caused you to adjust the piece-rate you quoted the customer. Armed with this information, you will be able to quote a rate or a price quickly the next time you see a job like it. After a while, you will be able to guess the “price” of a job just by looking at it. What you will be doing is recognizing something you already recorded in your spreadsheet.

Using Accounting Software

Freelancers must be careful not to mix their personal and business finances. It not only makes it difficult to determine if the business is paying its own way, but it can lead to serious mistakes on taxes. This problem applies particularly to sole proprietors in the U.S. and other countries where sole proprietors and certain professionals report their business income on an attachment to their personal income tax return (Form 1040 Schedule C in the U.S.).

Since the original article appeared, software aimed at helping individuals and small business people cope with their own bookkeeping has continued to develop. Two of the better-known brands are Quicken® and Microsoft Money®. They allow you to set up two different files, one for the business and one for the home. This would be the normal setup for a partnership or a corporation. However, for individuals or households (sole proprietors), these programs work best if all the bookkeeping is kept in the same file. This means making an extra effort not to mix your personal and business finances.

Traditional accounting programs require a balancing account for every entry in any account (the heart of double-entry bookkeeping). The convenient personal programs, however, appear to allow you to move money all over the place without requiring that a posting to one account be balanced by a withdrawal from another account. Instead, they tap a default account like “Net Worth Transfer.” To the user, the accounting appears as simple as maintaining a checkbook register.

To keep things straight, you need to define the accounts, categories, and classes carefully. The default list of accounts and categories is designed for personal bookkeeping and a stereotypical small business, so a freelancer has to create additional headings. I make sure that each of my business categories begins with a unique string. This way, business telephone expenses (e.g., “b-Telephone”) are not confused with the home telephone expenses already in the software (“Telephone”). I still maintain separate business and personal bank accounts and credit cards, and the software incorporates that easily. Also, the categories “Owner’s Draw/Contribution” (business file) and “Investment/Income in business” (personal file) become superfluous, because the software will track (and report) transfers between personal and business accounts.

When setting up the accounts and categories, you need to pay attention to the properties of each. The software instructions do not make it obvious that you can put your business headings in a particular group. Tax properties are especially important. The properties of each account and category can be set to feed Schedule C or the other forms required for taxes. If you do not set these properties up when you first begin using the software, you may
The expenses in the right place when it comes to do your taxes. This would not be fatal, but it could make tax time even more tedious than it was before.

Personally, I find these tax properties crucial in using the software to track the health of my business. At regular intervals during the year, the software prepares financial statements for me. This is the sort of data I will need later on for my tax return. The profit/loss format of Schedule C is also a convenient way to look at the data. If you live outside the U.S., you can set up the software to produce financial statements and reports you can use to prepare your taxes.

Though I have supervised accountants in different day jobs, I have never used a separate bookkeeper for my freelancing. Shifting accounting programs was a serious step for me. I had been very happy with my traditional double-entry accounting program (MoneyCounts® by Parsons Technologies) for many years when I was forced to shift to Quicken®. I maintained both programs for a full quarter before discontinuing the old program. I maintained two Quicken® files (business and personal) for six years until it became clear that the newer versions of Quicken® could support separate business functions in a single file. I merged the two files in preparation for last year’s taxes, and did not archive the old files until I was satisfied that the new combined file was clean and working properly.

Before moving all your books to one of the new software programs, you would do well to set up some accounts and categories and test the program thoroughly with a small amount of data. Also, if you already use a bookkeeper or accountant, you might want to discuss the switch with them, depending on your relationship.

Also, I would strongly recommend a tax preparation program or a tax accountant to prepare tax returns. Most of the popular tax preparation programs will read your accounting data into the tax file and allow you to change the automatic entries as you work your way through the forms. But more important, the tax preparation software is updated at the end of the year with the latest tax code changes, while the accounting software is not. That is why the tax preparation software comes with stronger warranties against mistakes.

You Write “The Rest of the Story”

The scene from Jerry Wentworth’s class comes from a real class at James Madison University, called Introduction to Translation. Also, there are workshops at ATA conferences and at meetings of ATA-affiliated chapters. The material in these presentations is continually changing to meet the needs of the attendees. If you have questions about freelancing or organizing your business, please send them to the author at hine@cstone.net. We will try to answer them in the pages of this magazine or in the conference presentations.

Note: Reprints of the original article as well as the presentations in the Proceedings of the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st ATA Annual Conferences are available from ATA Headquarters. The booklet is available from Scriptor Services (contact the author).

References

A Jog Through the Juniper: A Translator’s Unhappy Excursion into the Copyright Thicket

By Anne Milano Appel and Carol J. Marshall

“Un bel ginepraio!” Giovanni wrote in one of the last e-mails we traded before we finally stopped communicating altogether and fell into a hostile, wounded silence. “Ginepraio” is one of those fine Italian words that have both a literal and a figurative meaning. Multitasking on a linguistic level. Taken literally, it refers to a juniper thicket, a dense growth of evergreen shrubs which is characteristically thick, prickly, and impenetrable. Figuratively speaking, it signifies a “fix.” A fine predicament. A tight spot. Take your pick. Any way you look at it, not a pleasant place to be. By the time Giovanni used the term to express his exasperation with our situation, we had been through a lengthy exchange in which each of us grew increasingly frustrated and more and more irritated with one another. An electronic altercation which I think took both of us by surprise. How did it start? Innocently enough and with the best intentions.

Setting Off on an Innocent Ramble

A year ago, Giovanni found me through my website and contacted me about translating a novel he had written. Since he was living in a remote part of Italy, I felt I should be very realistic (read: painfully truthful) about the possibility of him ever being able to get his novel published in the U.S. market, but he was determined to break onto the American scene. We finally got down to talking about my rates. I told him about a few of my usual terms and conditions, namely my specifications regarding methods of payment, and the fact that I required my name to appear on the work in its published form. We went on along this path and he took his time deliberating. Finally, he came to a decision and announced that he was ready to embark on his “American adventure.” I sent an e-mail back recapitulating what we had already discussed in terms of fees and conditions, and that was it. Deed done. Die cast. Innocents that we were, we were off on what, at first, promised to be an uneventful journey.

Months went by as I completed two other books I was working on at the time. Once the translation process began, Giovanni and I kept in touch. He was always available to answer questions and provide clarification on points that were unclear to me. The translation was delivered in due time, and payment made promptly (or as promptly as possible considering the vagaries of international bank transfers). I turned to my next project, while Giovanni carefully read the translation. He knows English fairly well, but it still took a while for him to read and evaluate the work. Months later, he declared himself quite satisfied and started talking about publishing. It was only then that we each, in our own way, became aware of the prickly foliage that seemed to have somehow sprung up all around us. We had inadvertently entered the thicket of copyright law. Getting out again would be. By the time Giovanni used the term to express his exasperation with our situation, we had been through a lengthy exchange in which each of us grew increasingly frustrated and more and more irritated with one another. An electronic altercation which I think took both of us by surprise. How did it start? Innocently enough and with the best intentions.

Trapped in the Thicket

Giovanni wanted to begin sending the translation around to publishers. Would it be safe to do so? The translation had not been copyrighted. Ah, the “c” word! When he asked me if it was standard practice in the U.S. for the author of the original work to register the copyright, we were off and running, each of us conducting our own research on the issue of copyright.

My first response was that the situation between the two of us was a little different, in that in my previous experience, it was the publisher who registered the copyright in the name of the translator. The translator, in turn, assigned the rights to the publisher until the book went out of print (or until the other agreed-upon terms occurred). I sent him a clause from a recent contract of mine with a publisher stating pretty much the same thing. Since, in our case, there was no publisher involved (at least not yet), I proposed the following: I would allow him to register the copyright in my name while ceding the rights back to him so as not to hinder his efforts to attract a publisher. I suggested assigning the rights to him until such time as the book was declared out of print, or for a period of 10 years if it was never published.

Giovanni wrote back that he had also looked into the matter, that there was “a way” of registering the work without resorting to a written document ceding the rights, and that he would be the owner of the copyright. With typical Italian “ambiguità,” he was not clear about what this “way of registering the work without a written document” might be. I asked him for an explanation, stating that I was fairly sure there had to be some formal agreement in order to transfer the rights from me to him. Giovanni’s next e-mail contained an attachment: Form TX, which the Library of Congress (LOC) Copyright Office requires in order to register a copyright. He had filled out the form...
listing himself as the claimant and checking the box that indicated the translation was a “work made for hire.” Moreover, he told me that in order to effect a transfer of copyright, it was necessary to go through the LOC, and that a “scrittura privata,” a formal agreement between the two of us, was not sufficient.

At this point, it was all too obvious to me that our innocent ramble had lead us into a tangle, and that we might not be able to find a clear path out of there.

I called for reinforcements.

The Lawyer’s Perspective

Anne’s predicament reminded me that all authors, including translators, should have a basic awareness of certain important aspects of U.S. copyright law. Anne mentioned that her situation with Giovanni was unusual, in that she was dealing with an individual writer, not a publisher. When it comes to knowing your rights, however, I don’t think it really matters whether you are dealing with an individual or a corporation. Knowing as much as you can about your legal rights is always better than knowing less. Although an author may not be in the greatest bargaining position when it comes to negotiating with a publisher, since he may be willing to sign away whatever rights the publisher demands in order to get the book published, it seems to me that any individual should be clearly aware of his rights, even if he ultimately decides to contract them away to achieve other goals. A publisher might surprise you by agreeing to some other arrangement, and it never hurts to ask for what you want.

An Aerial View

Here, then, are a few things you should know about U.S. copyright law. This brief overview is by no means a complete discussion of this complex area of the law. I urge you to consult with your own attorney about any issue mentioned here, especially as concerns your own particular situation. Intellectual property rights can be economically and emotionally valuable to their owners. The consequences of a haphazard and ill-informed approach to copyright protection can be costly. If you are concerned about the expense associated with legal services, your lawyer may direct you to many fine publications, websites, and arts organizations where you can begin to educate yourself about your legal rights with your lawyer’s guidance. The following will start you off with an aerial view of that juniper thicket in which Anne and Giovanni found themselves:

- The United States Copyright Act protects “original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression.” It does not protect disembodied ideas.
- A copyright is actually a bundle of individual rights, such as the right to reproduce the work, the right to perform the work, and so forth.
- The entire bundle of rights or any one right from an author’s bundle of copyrights can be transferred to another. An author may even grant another person permission to use one of his rights in a nonexclusive or limited way if he does not want to fully transfer that right.
- The right to create a derivative work is one of the bundle of rights, or any one right, held by the original author. Therefore, permission of the underlying author is required to create a derivative work.
- A “derivative work” is the term the Copyright Act gives to a work based on one or more pre-existing works.
- A translation is a derivative work. This is clearly stated in the Copyright Act.
- The creation of a derivative work (here, the translation), if that work satisfies the requirement of originality and is not itself an infringing work, will result in a separate copyright.
- Because of the nature of translation, every sizeable translation is entitled to its own copyright.
- The copyright in any derivative work covers only those elements original to the derivative work. In translation, because the underlying work is pervasive in the derivative work, and the original matter cannot be easily separated from the pre-existing matter, this can be a tricky principle to apply.
- A transfer of copyright ownership (not including nonexclusive licenses), other than by operation of law, whether by the original author to the translator or by the translator back to original author or publisher, requires a writing signed by the owner of the copyright for the transfer to have validity under copyright law.
- If the contract between the original author and translator specifies that the derivative work is a work-for-hire in exchange for a fee, the original author owns the copyright in the translation.
- Otherwise, absent a writing to the contrary, the translator owns
the copyright in what is original to the translation.

- Where the translator owns the copyright, rights extend only to the translation and not to the original work.

- Just as copyrights in original works have a lifespan, so do transfers. The law provides that the transferor can terminate the rights of the transferee after a specified period of time.

Armed with this information, Anne attempted to forge with Giovanni the tools with which they might hack their way out of the thicket.

The Translator’s Tale Continued

Equipped with information I had not had at the outset, I took several days to deliberate before writing back to Giovanni. Citing from the appropriate sources, I told him that my understanding of the material I had read indicated that a translation is a “derivative work,” that the “author” of the “derivative work” is the creator of the translation (me), and that he was the author of the original work, but not of the “derivative work” (the translation). I also pointed out that my translation of his novel was not a “work made for hire,” since we had not executed a signed agreement specifically defining it as such, nor had either of us ever mentioned the term. If such an agreement had been executed, Giovanni, not I, would be considered the author of the translation. Clearly, I would never have agreed to such a condition had we discussed it. I concluded that since the translation was not a “work made for hire,” I, as its author, should register the copyright in my name.

In an effort to salvage what appeared to be a rapidly degenerating situation, I admitted that in researching the issue of copyright, I had learned a great deal that I did not know before, and that perhaps there was something we could both learn from the experience. I reiterated to Giovanni that I did not want to get in his way or complicate his attempts to get the translation published, and proposed the following course of action. I would register the copyright in my name as the author of the translation, and that at the same time we would execute an agreement whereby I would transfer to him all the copyrights for the translation to enable its eventual publication.

No Way Out?

It was at this point that Giovanni came out with the exclamation “E’ davvero un bel ginepraio!” While admitting that he might have made a mistake, and that I was the author of the translation and had the right to call myself such, he wanted me to give his name as the “Claimant” of the copyright and to state “Transfer” as the reason for it, implying that there had been a prior agreement between us. He also mentioned my ceding the copyrights to him “definitivamente,” that is, for good. I replied that I was prepared to go ahead and register the copyright in my name, but that I would not claim that there had been a “Transfer” when, in fact, there had been no prior accord between us. Instead, I sent him a draft M.O.A. (Memorandum of Agreement) that would assign the rights from me to him, explaining that he should feel free to modify the proposed conditions.

Giovanni’s next communication stated again that a private agreement would not be sufficient to effect a transfer of copyright. He suggested we contact the LOC on this point. I repeated that the Copyright Office of the LOC did not effect transfers, but only recorded them. I referred him to Circular 1 which states:

Transfers of copyright are normally made by contract. The Copyright Office does not have any forms for such transfers. The law does provide for the recordation in the Copyright Office of transfers of copyright ownership. Although recordation is not required to make a valid transfer between the parties, it does provide certain legal advantages and may be required to validate the transfer as against third parties.

Deeper into the Dark Wood

In Giovanni’s final e-mail, it was clear that all prior attempts to extricate ourselves from the juniper thicket had failed: the copse was apparently impenetrable and held us fast. Sent in duplicate from two different e-mail addresses and signed with both a first and last name, the letter was strewn with angry exclamation points and numerous phrases in capital letters (known as shouting in e-mail parlance). In it, Giovanni stated that it was only right that he should be the owner of the copyright since he had paid for the translation, alleged that I was playing games with him, accused me of “concealing” the issue of copyright from the beginning, and charged me with being “unprofessional” and not the lovely person he had thought I was.

I was stunned. The tone of the e-mail was chilling. How had we ended up in this Dantean selva oscura, this dark place? Did Giovanni really see himself as the injured party, innocently caught up and manipulated...
by the “americana?” Or had he been playing games himself, counting on my ingenuousness? If he had been angling to obtain the copyright from the beginning, perhaps he never mentioned it in an attempt to avoid confrontation through obfuscation. Such speculation was pointless, however. The more important question was this: What had I learned from the situation that might help me (and you, my colleagues) steer clear of such juniper thickets in the future?

**The Lawyer’s Summation**

I’m not certain how or when Anne and Giovanni will emerge from their juniper prison. Clearly, the most important lesson to be learned from their ramble into what quickly became a dark and unfriendly place, is that it is easier to map a clear path through any thicket from a vantage point above and beyond it all.

**A Better Map**

A clearly written contract between the original author and the translator can provide a detailed map and well-defined path. Indeed, with enough foresight, the parties can plan their own detour around any potential pitfalls.

A few things to keep in mind:

- The rights and obligations of the author of the underlying work and the author of the translation may best be determined by a clearly written contract between them.

- No matter what your personal feelings might be about lawyers, think about consulting one before the fact, rather than after. The task of drafting a contract which clearly expresses the intentions of the parties and covers all the important points should ideally be handled by a legal professional.

- If it is the intention of the parties that the translator own the copyright in the translation, the agreement should specify what use the original author may make of the translation, if any. Because the translation and the original work are so inextricably entwined, the contract should also spell out in detail the translator’s rights.

- A potential publisher will probably expect to see a clear chain of ownership of the rights in which it has interest and may seek to establish, among other things: that the pre-existing work was original and fixed in tangible form, and that the author of the underlying work truly owned the copyright to the original work; that he had the right to transfer all or a portion of his rights to others; that no previous transfers of the subject right occurred; and that the transfer of the right to create a derivative work to the translator was clear and exclusive (or, that it was documented as a work-for-hire).

- While not absolutely necessary, it would be wise to follow formalities: original signatures on real paper rather than electronic contracts (although the law now covers that possibility), notarized transfer documents, and Copyright Office registrations and records of transfers. At the very least, creating a clear record puts third parties on notice.

- Other legal requirements and conflict of law issues may come into play where citizens of different nations or U.S. states are involved (contract law and statutory writing requirements, for instance, may differ from state to state). There may also be issues with regard to jurisdiction and venue should a problem arise between parties in different locations. Parties may be able to agree up front to such things as choice of law, proper jurisdiction, appropriate venue, and alternative dispute resolution procedures (such as mediation) to reduce the likelihood of additional hassles should they come into conflict in the future over the subject matter of their written contract.

The joint objective of the parties should be to clearly document a fair, legal, and workable arrangement at the outset. Each deal is different, involving parties with unique motivations and agendas. That is why the written contract is important...to avoid misunderstandings, lawsuits, bruised egos, economic losses...all lurking in that juniper thicket and ready to ensnare some unsuspecting author or translator.

*Disclaimer: This article is not intended to constitute legal advice to the reader. While the authors have attempted to offer quality information, they make no guarantees concerning the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information or views presented. The content of this article should not, therefore, be relied upon or used as a substitute for the advice of competent counsel. Readers are urged to consult their own lawyers with regard to any matter discussed herein or any particular legal question they may have.*
Language Services in Survey Research

By Kim Watts, Georgina McAvinchey, and Rosanna Quiroz

Nestled among the green lawns and beautiful maples, tall pines, and Bradford pear trees typical of North Carolina, is a 180-acre campus where a culturally diverse, professional research staff from more than 125 different fields merge into a not-for-profit research organization of laboratories and other facilities. RTI International is among the world’s leaders in conducting research and providing technical services to support government policy and business practice decisions in areas such as health research, public services, public health, education research, and governance. RTI’s Survey Research Division has provided survey data collection services for more than 40 years to government, industry, academia, and public service agencies throughout the U.S. and abroad. In the midst of the researchers and survey operations staff who make up the Survey Research Division, is the Language Specialist Group. We are a group of three translators with very different backgrounds who have been hired over the last three years to assist RTI in developing and fielding Spanish-language data collection instruments.

None of us began our career planning to be a translator, but we have each found within ourselves many of the elements that characterize the profession. Pride in quality and a deep and abiding interest in language have become a commitment to the vocation and provided the inspiration to acquire, update, and refine terminology for the purpose of a specific translation assignment and ongoing professional development.

Like most translators, we utilize our creativity and inventiveness to locate potential resources, and then add discernment and intuition to our knowledge of the relevant languages in order to produce an accurate translation. When a freelance translator decides to specialize or takes a position with a company that has a constant need for translation, the learning process takes on a more focused direction and has some attendant benefits. One of the most significant benefits of working as an in-house translator is having access to varied and often otherwise unavailable resources. Internet access and a budget for carefully selected books and journal articles are part of these benefits, but the most important resources are often other people. These individuals are usually translators or other professionals who have expertise or experience that is relevant to our translation work.

Tools of the Trade

Our team at RTI has achieved cohesiveness as a group, and we take advantage of each other’s skills and efforts, using such knowledge as a valuable resource. In addition to the security and accountability involved in having every document or recording edited by another member of the team, we have a number of non-translation tasks that we have taken on as a group. We have created a glossary of terms and phrases that commonly appear in survey-related documents, covering areas such as informed consent, government titles and abbreviations, common terms for drugs and diseases, education systems, and public assistance. We also share links to Internet resources we find particularly useful, such as U.S. government sites that offer documents or information in Spanish, or health-related sites in English or Spanish.

We have also engaged in efforts to market ourselves to other parts of the Institute. As the largest unit of RTI, and as the major generator of translation assignments, the Survey Research Division has knit us into their administrative structure. However, we often work for other RTI units that have an occasional need for bilingual services. Our marketing efforts have resulted in the creation of a website targeted to RTI research staff who want to know more about the range of services we offer, the translation process, and quality control. We have also given two training presentations to RTI staff members in the last year, and we were featured in an article for RTI’s internal newsletter, the RTI News Connection. As a result, we have become more aware of other bilinguals at RTI, who we will be able to use as resources if necessary. Our bilingual colleagues do not work as translators, but are often experts in a particular area or aspect of research. They can be immensely helpful in finding correct terminology and ascertaining the effectiveness of our translations when they are implemented in research studies.

Our specific assignments bring us into contact with another resource: the RTI project staff with whom we work on each individual assignment. Our assignment is usually to serve as a collaborator on all Spanish-language aspects of the project, rather than simply to translate a particular
document. We work closely with research staff for the duration of the project, and develop an extensive knowledge of, and commitment to, that particular data collection effort. We almost always have access to the individuals who developed the original questionnaire and corresponding forms, to those who programmed the text as a computerized instrument or formatted the paper instrument, and to the project staff and interviewers who will administer the instrument.

The project staff often clarify terms in the original document, the intent of a particular question, how the questions will be presented to the respondent, and if a question will only be asked of a subset of respondents (such as teenage respondents or female respondents).

Nonbilingual RTI staff members are also included in our arsenal of resources because they are often experts in a field directly related to our translations. All translators who specialize know that it is important to develop a general familiarity with the topic or activity that is the subject of the bulk of their assignments. Because we are part of the Survey Research Division, we are included in RTI’s ongoing professional training activities. Each year, we attend dozens of meetings, seminars, and workshops to learn more about survey research and operations. Through these activities, we often meet other research staff members who may not be able to speak a word of Spanish, but who have extensive knowledge of topics such as public health systems, demographic characteristics of the U.S., and obtaining the informed consent of study participants.

The Fruit of the Labor
As members of the RTI team, we take all the necessary steps toward accomplishing the company’s mission to improve the human condition, and we adhere to the values that have been the foundation of RTI throughout its history: integrity, excellence, innovation, respect for the individual, fiscal responsibility, and respect for the Institute.

As translators working for a survey research organization, we dedicate ourselves to providing our clients with superior quality products that meet the highest standards of professional performance, satisfy client requirements, and deliver exceptional value. We achieve this by:

- Working closely with project management to define requirements and clarify expectations, including cost and time constraints;
- Assuring that our products and services comply with requirements and meet or exceed client expectations; and
- Striving to continuously improve our products and services.

It is rewarding to be part of an established organization like RTI. As permanent staff members, we have a larger role in the development of Spanish-language data collection instruments than we would if we were not in-house translators. We see value in multilingual research, and we enjoy seeing the fruit of our investment. It’s important to the scientific validity of the study to ensure that large portions of the sample are not made de facto ineligible due to a language barrier. Scientific data collection has become an increasingly important element in American culture and life, permeating our well-developed systems of information and affecting decision making all the way from Congress to the individual consumer. Multilingual research not only gives decision makers access to the experiences and values of non-English-speaking people, but it affords non-English speakers the opportunity to participate in this aspect of American life.

Looking for a freelance job or a full-time position?
Need help finding a translator or interpreter for a freelance job or a full-time position?

Check out ATA’s online Job Bank in the Members Only section of the ATA website at www.atanet.org/membersonly
I became an interpreter when I started to work in the customer service department of an insurance company, where I was given the title “bilingual customer service representative.” They gave me that position because I had very good computer experience and knew how to speak two languages. The first time I received a “Spanish call” I thought, “There is more going on here than I can possibly imagine.” I was bilingual and knew enough about life and accident insurance, but that didn’t make me an interpreter.

As time went on, and without even knowing it, I learned about phone interpretation and sight translation, Spanish regionalisms and colloquialisms, triadic and nontriadic interpreting, and consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. I became a conduit, clarifier, cultural broker, and an advocate for the language profession.

I grew up as an only child and had always enjoyed solitude. After my experience as a phone interpreter, I learned that if I was looking for privacy or quiet time, then interpreting was not the job for me. Six months later, I applied for another position and became a computer tester.

Interpreting: Art and Vocation

Working with computers was quiet, but I never forgot those service department calls, or the sense of fulfilment when I could help clients understand their insurance policies, collect their claims, or help ease the grief of the loss of a loved one. I never encountered that feeling by working with computer software. It takes someone with a heart for people to be a good interpreter, and my experiences working with people made me start to realize my true professional calling.

The corporation I worked for offered me many opportunities for professional development and personal growth. I took many online classes and attended seminars. I took every opportunity I could to teach language classes to other employees and to volunteer for different organizations. I built upon my interpreting skills by learning the power of communication and polished my listening skills through the help of Toastmasters International. However, I knew it was time to move on, so I left the corporate world and became a full-time interpreter.

Interpreting is the art of bringing peace in a world overflowing with communication turmoil and cultural uncertainty.

Being positive will help communication.

Today, when I’m contracted by a client for an interpreting assignment, I smile and I say to myself: “Congratulations on being at the right place at the right time.” I’m not only given money for what I love to do, but can also touch lives and help people that are separated by a cultural gap. With a little help, it is amazing to see my clients flourish in their communication and understanding. Appreciating this will help you walk into your interpreting session with a positive attitude. Your enthusiasm will help the communication process and your smile will speak a thousand words—words that will be understood in any language.

Do your best to follow the Golden Rule.

Businesses and people still need, and will always need, interpreting services. The value placed on a good interpreter appears to be increasing. This demand creates a wealth of opportunities for our industry and for the dedicated professionals, like you, who serve it. Try to do your best to provide good service. You are not only acting for yourself, but are providing an image of our profession to others. Be available to answer questions. If you do not know the answer, find someone that can and direct the client to that person.

Professional interpreting services should be your hallmark.

Our industry has improved, allowing interpreters to do a better job. With the right knowledge, you can excel at your profession. With the right heart, you can experience the satisfaction of helping those in need. Pay attention at seminars, and learn as much as you can about how you can improve upon your communication and interpreting skills. Never stop learning.

Talk to your clients in the halls, and find opportunities to give them a quick class on culture and diversity. Engage your fellow professionals, help them, give them ideas—in short, be an ambassador to our profession. Also, don’t ever think that you are the only interpreter in your area. The fact is there are many interpreters out there. If you don’t provide quality work, your clients will seek someone who can.
It is important to take good notes and learn regionalisms and cultural differences. I carry a microcassette recorder with me. After an interpreting session, I tape new words or reflect upon new experiences. I also keep a journal. You will be amazed at how handy your journal can be when you need to write an article or prepare a class or presentation.

In addition to the above, it is equally important to consider how you present yourself to others. Take your interpreting business to new levels of success and prosperity by looking successful. Remember, the first impression lasts forever.

Quality interpreting requires preparation.

Like translators, we interpreters also have a “moral obligation” to our clients. What I mean by this is that if you do not know the language or dialect of the non-native speaker, or if you are not familiar with the subject matter, you should not accept the assignment. In this situation, you should direct the client to the correct interpreter who is qualified for the job. For this reason, it is a good idea to have a list of professional interpreters that specialize in different subjects or languages. The client will appreciate your help, and will not soon forget your honesty and professionalism.

When the client contacts you for an interpreting session, be prepared to ask the following questions and make annotations. I have developed my own forms and questions to help me collect the information I need to decide whether to accept an assignment or pass it along to one of my colleagues. The following list may help you to develop your own list of criteria to evaluate a perspective job:

- Language of the non-native speaker/client and information about dialect or region of origin;
- The subject matter of the case (legal, commercial, medical, etc.);
- Date/time/approximate duration of the session;
- Address/phone number/contact name/map of location;
- Type of interpretation (triadic, nontriadic, conference/simultaneous, sight translation); and
- Supporting documentation. This is especially important if it is a simultaneous interpretation (for example, in a conference setting), or if a prepared speech is given in advance for synchronization.

If you decide that the assignment fits your expertise, ask the client for their fax number or e-mail so you can send them a contract (make sure you ask which mode they prefer). The client will usually ask for your rates. If you want, you can tell the client right away before sending a contract. If the client hesitates, I normally fax or e-mail a contract with a “thank you for your business” note. This will give the client time to think about it, and even if the client doesn’t use your services, he or she will remember your professionalism. Be sure to include all your contact information with the contract you give to clients.

Teach your client how to work with an interpreter.

We all have experienced interpreting sessions where the speaker did not pause after a few sentences, causing us to become lost in the middle of the communication process. We also know how difficult it can be to find the correct words to tell the speaker to slow down.

Spending a few minutes before your interpreting session educating your client on how to work with an interpreter will make a world of difference, and will benefit you and our profession. Not only will it ease the communication process, but the client will also gain respect and understanding for our profession. The following is a list of things I like to tell my clients prior to an interpreting session. You can use this list to help customize your own.

- My “principal” role as an interpreter (conduit) is to render in one language exactly what has been said in the other.
- If I notice a clear potential for misunderstanding, I (clarifier) will, when necessary, make word pictures of certain terms to facilitate understanding in situations where a linguistic equivalent is not understood by the client.
- I (cultural broker) will provide the necessary cultural background when cultural differences are leading to a misunderstanding.
- My most important code of ethics is total confidentiality. I will not disclose anything without approval.
- Sometimes I may need to intervene if someone uses language that I do not understand or does not pause to allow me to interpret.
- Please do not ask me for my opinions; ask the client directly.
- Focus your attention on the client, not me (the interpreter).
Speak directly to the non-native speaker. Avoid using phrases such as “tell him” or “ask her.”

- Try to speak only to one person at a time.

- My main concern is with the quality of communication, but I will help (advocate) the best way I can with information.

This last statement in the list above is very important. As an interpreter, you should have a resource list with the names and phone numbers of advocates, churches, and religious organizations; counselors, therapists and psychiatrists; departments of state organizations (such as domestic violence, legal services, and education); and numerous nonprofit organizations. Having this information will allow you to put your client in touch with those professionals whose job it is to resolve their problems.

Effective Language Assistance Program
Whenever I find an opportunity, I teach my clients about the importance of having an effective language assistance program. Many interpreters are afraid to do this because they think they will be losing their clients if they give them such ideas. However, I can tell you from experience that giving clients a design for an effective language program has given me more business, referrals, and respect than a thousand business cards. Doing so has provided me with several opportunities, such as training bilingual staff and volunteers, conducting presentations and employee training sessions, recording voice-overs, as well as being assigned transcription and translation work. Most importantly, I know that I’m helping other colleagues and competent interpreters in all languages.

The following are some ideas and a model plan I’ve provided to my clients:

- Hiring bilingual staff who are trained interpreters.
- Contracting with outside interpreting services for trained interpreters.
- Hiring trained voluntary community interpreters.
- Contracting for the use of telephone language interpreter services.
- Translating written material that is provided in English for applicants, clients, and the public.
- Working out methods for providing notice to people who have limited English proficiency. (For example, language identification cards or “I speak” cards).
- Training staff.

It Takes Time
To have the success, prosperity, respect, and recognition you deserve, you need to be a competent interpreter. Being a competent interpreter does not necessarily mean formal certification as an interpreter, though certification is helpful. As I wrote at the beginning of this article, to be an interpreter requires more than self-identification as a bilingual. You should be proficient in both English and your second language, and have training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting (e.g., issues of confidentiality).

Don’t think that just because business is not good at the moment that you need to move away from your area to be successful. If you feel called to the profession of interpreting and are willing to learn and educate yourself, there is no better time to start down this career path.

Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame Accepting 2002 Nominations
The Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame (TIHOF) is now accepting nominations for 2002. The TIHOF was founded September 30, 2000, to recognize the achievements of, and pay tribute to, the men and women who have helped penetrate cultural and linguistic barriers between the world’s peoples. Language specialists the world over observe International Translators Day every year on September 30, the Feast Day of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators and the TIHOF’s first honoree. Each year on this date the TIHOF will honor additional outstanding practitioners of the art of translating and interpreting.

Nominations for historical or contemporary figures should include a biography and/or an essay on the nominee (700 words or longer) with optional illustrations. Please send entries to nominate@tihof.org by August 1, 2002. Nominations will be judged by a panel drawn from various translator and interpreter associations. New honorees will be announced on International Translators Day, September 30, 2002, and published on the TIHOF website (www.tihof.org), with proper credit given to essay authors and translators. Submissions will become the property of the TIHOF. Nominees not inducted at the 2002 ceremony may be considered for future years.
Internet Resources for the Translation of Patents into English

By Steve Vlasta Vitek

“You lose 100% of the shots you never make.”
Wayne Gretzky, a famous Canadian hockey player, happily retired in his mid-30s.

Translators of patents from various languages into English can spend many hours looking for the right translation of an obscure and/or illegible character, word, or technical term. Increasingly, correct answers can be found and verified quickly, and with precision, on the Internet. The key is knowing where to look. This article is an attempt at an introduction to some of the most important sites that I’ve found invaluable in my work as a translator of patents from Japanese, German, French, and other languages over the last 15 years. I hope the following will prove to be of some help, especially to relative beginners in this fascinating field.

Thousands of patents are translated every year from many languages into English. If we were to classify the languages from which these patents are translated by the number of patents for translation into English per language (language frequency), Japanese would lead by a big margin, followed by German, with French as a distant third. Therefore, this article will concentrate on websites that publish the text of patents in the original language. It will also provide the reader with other information, mostly as it relates to these three languages (namely, Japanese, German, and French) that are so important to technical communication.

The European Patent Office Website

Whether you translate patents from Japanese, German, or French, the most important website, containing an incredible wealth of technical terms and life-saving context, that can probably answer most of your questions is bound to be the website of the European Patent Office (EPO) at http://ep.espacenet.com. This is because, to my knowledge, the EPO website is the only site to list some 30 million patent applications from a number of countries, including Japan, on a single website, not only in English, but also in Japanese, German, and French. Most of the unexamined Japanese (Kokai) patent applications listed here are provided with an English summary. As such, they can be found and displayed by running a search in English on the EPO search page. If you translate from more languages than simply Japanese, you can use the EPO website to look at translations of certain Japanese technical terms done by other people, usually patent lawyers in their respective countries, not only into English, but also into other languages in a number of countries that are members of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). Your search for a technical term in English may also display translations of patents containing this term in languages such as Czech, Polish, or Russian. Unfortunately, for now, usually only foreign (U.S., Japanese, German, etc.) patents that have been translated into various national languages and filed in their respective countries can be found in this manner. Only the first 500 patents containing the terms in your query will be displayed, but that is usually more than enough to enable you to find the answer to your question (provided that your query is well formulated).

The disadvantage of the EPO website is that if the foreign patent in question does not have an English summary, even if you have its correct number, the website will usually not be able to find it. This can be remedied by going to the Japanese, German, or French Patent Office websites and running a search in the language in question or by entering the patent number in the search field. Another disadvantage of the EPO site is that searching is possible only in English, while the Japanese, German, and French Patent Office sites can, obviously, be searched in the relevant national languages. The websites of the Japanese and German Patent Offices can also be searched in English, although the coverage of abstracts in English is somewhat limited. The text of English summaries is in HTML format, while the text in foreign languages is displayed in PDF format. I usually save and print the English summary in MS Word. Because the PDF file must be saved and printed page by page, I usually just print instead of saving it to a file. Since the same patent that was originally published in Japanese, German, or French may have been previously translated and filed in another language in another country, you can type in the name of the inventor or the patent applicant (usually the name of the company) to display a translation of the term you are looking for. You can also type in context from a similar patent to help you answer your questions.

You may even sometimes discover, to your dismay, that the
A patent translator who does not thoroughly research his or her patents on the Internet by comparing two versions of “the same patent” (which is not really the same patent), is at a distinct disadvantage compared to a translator who is willing and able to spend some time researching the patents first on the Internet. The instructions on the EPO website can be displayed in English, German, or French, but the website can be searched only in English. However, you can search the German or French Patent Offices in German or French and find a relevant patent number or the names of inventors in this manner. You can then come back to the EPO site armed with the patent number that was invisible when the search was conducted in English. I also use the EPO website for research involving U.S. patents, instead of the United States Patent Office (USPTO) website, because the USPTO website displays only U.S. patents in English, which is usually not enough to satisfy my curiosity.

The Japanese Patent Office Website

The Japanese Patent Office (JPO) website (www.ipdl.jpo.go.jp/Kokai/tjsogodb.ipdl?N0000=101) is well known among, and often used by, experienced Japanese patent translators. Most U.S. patent lawyers I talked to seem to be unaware of the English search page of the JPO website (www1.ipdl.jpo.go.jp/PA1/cgi-bin/PA1INIT?101862252070), as they usually search for Japanese patents from the EPO site. The Japanese part of the JPO site (www.ipdl.jpo.go.jp/Kokujitu/tjsogodb.ipdl?N0000=101) has a more comprehensive collection of Japanese patents than the EPO site.

Unlike the EPO website, which only displays unexamined Japanese (Kokai) patents, the Japanese part of the JPO site also displays examined (Kokoku) Japanese patents, as well as utility models and granted patents. The English part of the site lists only Kokai patents, which can be discovered through a search for an English term thanks to their English summaries. However, utility models, examined patents, and granted patents will not be displayed in the English part of the site. You have to specify PDF format if you want a legible copy of the Japanese text (the default resolution loads faster, but, at 90 dpi, it is very hard to read). The Japanese part of the JPO website can be searched for terms in Japanese, but not in English. Similarly, the English part of the site can be searched only in English. You can display the Japanese text in HTML or PDF format. You can then copy text in Japanese in HTML format and use it to search for patents in the Japanese part of the site. The only patent or utility model texts that will not be displayed in the comprehensive Japanese part of the site are those that are too recent, and thus have not yet been stored.

When new texts are stored, access to the site may not be available for an extended period, which happens often in the morning (U.S. time). Kokai patent applications are provided with an English summary, which also lists the title of the patent and the names of all of the inventors. I usually defer to the spelling of the Japanese names as they are listed on the JPO website, because Japanese
names can only be guessed at anyway, and I hate guessing. Unless I strongly disagree with the terms, I try to use the title of the patent and the terms provided in the summary in my translation as much as possible, since I know my clients will also be using them. It should be noted that the English summaries are usually written by native Japanese speakers, whose English is frequently not terribly good and often difficult to understand.

Although the technical terms are usually correct and often helpful to me, especially when I deal with a field that I translate from only occasionally (such as a medical patent dealing with body parts, muscles, ligaments, bones, and cartilages that I never even knew existed), I can usually understand the English text of these summaries only after I have had a chance to compare them to the Japanese original, sometime several times. This is mostly because the writers of these summaries are not professional translators into English, but rather (Japanese) specialists in their particular fields who frequently make just about every mistake a native Japanese speaker can make when translating into English. A big problem is that the sentences in English basically slavishly imitate the word order in Japanese. The problem is that the word order in English is fixed and very different from the typical order in Japanese. Moreover, unlike English sentences, Japanese sentences often have no object, singular or plural, tense, and the verb is always at the very end of the sentence, etc. Because the choice of the English words is often poor and words are frequently misspelled, the result can be quite hilarious. However, since whoever approves these summaries must be a Japanese native who lives in Japan, none of the above apparently matters. As all foreigners who have lived and worked in Japan know, the “kacho” (“section chief”) always knows best, especially when it comes to translation into English.

In spite of the drawback of the JPO website mentioned above, it should also be noted that unlike, for instance, the Germans, and especially the French, the Japanese make a great effort and spend a lot of money to provide access to technical information via the JPO website to technical specialists who do not speak their beautiful but complicated language. Only the JPO provides Japanese and English interfaces, as well as summaries for most Japanese patent applications in English. The German Patent Office (GPO) website provides an English interface for navigation, but relatively few English summaries of German patents when compared to the JPO. The interface on the French Patent Office (FPO) website is only in French, and very few English summaries are available. Other patent offices of smaller countries sometime “piggyback” on the EPO website to make information available to their monolingual readers. For instance, the patent office of the Czech Republic provides an interface in Czech to make it easier for Czech patent lawyers and inventors to research patents on the EPO website in different languages. I read somewhere online that a proposal has been put forward by U.S. patent lawyers to require the JPO to allow filing of patents in Japan and related court proceedings in English. This is due to the difficulty foreigners have with the Japanese language. The JPO answered that Japan will consider this, provided that the same courtesy be extended to Japanese patent lawyers in America, especially given how difficult it is for the Japanese to master foreign languages.

Another unique feature that clearly distinguishes the JPO website from the websites of all other countries is the fact that the JPO makes machine translations (MT) available of all Japanese patent applications going back to about 1994. This feature can be accessed and navigated from the English part of the JPO site quite easily, even if you do not read Japanese. As I have already described my experience with MT and my thoughts on the technology in general in two other articles, available on the Internet and listed at the end of this article, I will only say that MT is, in my opinion, very useful to patent translators and their clients. I wish that patent offices in other countries would follow suit with the JPO, although I do not think it likely in the foreseeable future.

The MT feature of the JPO site is a logical result of the fact that Japan is very interested in overcoming “the Japanese language problem.” That is, that relatively few foreigners can read and write Japanese, and relatively few Japanese are fluent in English or another language (unlike the Dutch, or even the French or Germans). This is why many Japanese search engines also have the MT function, which is probably used much more frequently in Japan than in any other country. Although the results of translations by machines will not really provide a real translation, they will give the reader some idea about the original text. To test MT on one of my favorite subjects (my wife), I used the MT feature of one of the Japanese search engines to translate one of my articles posted on the Internet into Japanese, and asked for her esteemed opinion of the translation. At first, she was impressed that somebody would...
bother to translate what her husband wrote into Japanese. However, as she continued reading, she become rather agitated and declared categorically that I have to stop writing this kind of nonsense because I sound like a total idiot in Japanese. Even when I explained to her that I am not really a complete moron, and that the problem is related to MT, she nevertheless insisted that, “I should not let them translate what I write into Japanese like this, because people will think that I am an idiot anyway if I let them do that.” Well, she has a point, although I am not sure how to stop search engines in Japan from doing their job.

**The German Patent Office (DEPATISnet) Website**

The German Patent Office (GPO) website (www.dpma.de/suche/patentdatenbanken.html) has more complete coverage of patents and utility models in the German language than the EPO website. Both the German and English interfaces are supported, and both can be searched, by using English or German terms. A major advantage of the search page on this site is the fact that one can search for terms both in English and in German, while the EPO site can be searched only in English. You can specify whether to search for an item only within the title of a patent or in the full text, or both. Up to five items can be specified, including the number of the patent publication, the name of the inventor, and the name of the patent applicant. You can also search for patent titles and for words in the full text of patents. You can transcribe umlauts with two vowels, a sharp “ś” with two “ss” letters, etc., which is a very handy feature if you normally don’t type in German every day. For instance, you can type “Extrusionbeschichten von Polymerfolien” to search for patents containing the terms and context you need in German, which will often be displayed together with Patent Cooperation Treaty (PTC) patents in English or French. Or you can type “extrusion coating of polymer films” to find a patent in German in the same manner as on the EPO website. You can sometime find a translation of the same patent from German into English and vice versa by searching for the name of the inventor or the patent applicant to research your technical terms and relevant context. You can also doublecheck the correct terms in French, if you also translate from French, when you see Canadian patents listed for the same subject. This is because all Canadian patents are provided with a French summary, and Canada has a lot of patents in many technical fields.

**The French Patent Office Website**

The main advantage of the FPO website (Institute National de la Propriété Industrielle; www.inpi.fr/brevet/html/titre/index.htm) is that it allows searches in French. Only the French interface is supported, and searching can be done only in French. Unlike the Germans and Japanese, the French will not bother speaking to you if you don’t know their language. If you don’t speak French, tant pis pour toi. The default display is in HTML format, which is handy for copying, cutting, and pasting when you are searching for technical terms. You can scroll down to the end of the file and click on the PDF icon to display the entire document in the PDF format (again, only a page at a time). You can also click on “Déposants et Inventeurs” to search for names of French companies and inventors. You can then often find their patents on the EPO website translated into English or German, or provided with an English summary. You can search patents in three categories directly from the search page of the FPO: French (FR), European (EP), and International PCT patents (WO). The FPO search page also has a link to the quick search page of the EPO. Hélas, only the interface is supported in French, and you can only search in English on the EPO site.

**Patent Offices of Other Countries**

Although the websites of the patent offices of most countries can be found on the Internet easily by running a search in Google or another search engine or from links on my website (www.patenttranslators.com), many of them require registration and/or payment before they let you search, and I never register or pay unless I absolutely have to. However, translators can use the interfaces in a number of languages provided by the national offices of countries cooperating with the EPO to access the servers of the national offices in various languages. You can also access the EPO database to ascertain the correct translation of technical terms in a number of languages. The table on page 45 lists the countries and supported languages cooperating with the EPO. The URLs will take you to the search page of the EPO with interfaces in the respective languages, and you can click your way to the main page of the respective national patent offices from this search page. For example, it is easy, after clicking on a few links, to run a search in Czech. You can then display a patent filed by a major U.S., German, or French company in Czech translation in the Czech Republic in order to compare Czech translations of technical terms to English technical terms.
The fact that the text of patents in foreign languages can often be found easily on the Internet means that translators of patents from foreign languages into English no longer have to guess when faced with technical terms that may be new, complicated, company-specific, misspelled, etc. Unlike translators in other fields, we can’t usually call the writer in question and ask him or her to clarify the meaning. But we can do the next best thing, which is to compare important patent terms to other patents in the same field or by the same inventors, which can often be found quite easily on the Internet in several languages. Thus, the Internet brings to intrepid patent translators an unparalleled joy: we can have most of our questions answered, usually within a few minutes. We no longer have to ask anybody any questions, which most of us are loath to do, as we don’t like to bother other people and/or don’t want to let other people know that there are still things out there that we don’t know much about yet.

References


Looking for a freelance job or a full-time position? Need help finding a translator or interpreter for a freelance job or a full-time position?

Check out ATA’s online Job Bank in the Members Only section of the ATA website at www.atanet.org/membersonly
All This, and Money, Too!

By Tony Beckwith

(Note: The following was originally published in the May issue of the AATIA Letter, the newsletter of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association.)

It was late, and hot, and we were all tired. We’d put in a full day of interpreting at the conference and breakout sessions, and then we were asked if we’d mind helping out at an after-hours meeting, “just for a little while.” Always glad to oblige, of course, but now it was nearly eight o’clock and we were starting to wilt.

Five of us had come to interpret at a conference in Albuquerque for a week. As usual, friends at home said, “You’ll love it out there! Albuquerque is a really nice town.” They always picture me sightseeing, taking day-trips to the mountains, and acting like a tourist. But what usually happens is that by the time I’ve finished interpreting for the day, all I want to do is order room service and lie on my bed, staring at the ceiling in blissful silence. I have spent several days in some cities and never actually left the hotel.

As interpreters know all too well, conference work can be extremely demanding. At the first orientation meeting, you are given a program in which you highlight the sessions to which you are assigned, usually two in the morning and two in the afternoon, with coffee and lunch breaks in between. At a large conference, with several hundred people in attendance, the first few breaks can be spent frantically scurrying around trying to find the Sweetwater Room, or the Water-Room Suite, which aren’t always exactly where they are shown on the hotel’s floor plan.

A conference will, of course, have an overall theme, but each individual session can be on almost any topic imaginable. You might start off in a workshop discussing criteria for reciprocal acceptance of academic credentials, for example, and then go straight into a lecture on the legal rights of low-income minorities in border regions. After lunch there could be a presentation on children with asthma, followed by an interactive session on nongovernmental organizations. All of which is interpreted simultaneously from one language to another—and sometimes in both directions at once. That’s what I’d been doing all day when I was asked if I minded helping out at that after-hours meeting for a while. I looked at my four wilting colleagues and thought, “I guess this is our payback for Saturday!”

Saturday was the flip side of the picture I’ve painted so far—it was an interpreter’s fantasy come true…A free afternoon!…"

...It was an interpreter's fantasy come true...A free afternoon!...

"...It was an interpreter's fantasy come true...A free afternoon!..."

1706 as a farming village and military outpost along the Camino Real between Chihuahua and Santa Fe, and was named in honor of the Viceroys of New Spain, the Duke of Alburquerque. (The first “r” was dropped later on.) We browsed the shops and galleries and roamed the streets laid out in the classic Spanish grid, with a central plaza surrounded by the vintage colonial church, old single-story homes, and official buildings. The sound of music drew us to an open courtyard where four young musicians from Ecuador were playing the quena, the charango, and other traditional instruments of the Andes. We made our way to the Casa de Ruiz for a late lunch. Fortunately, it was so crowded inside that we were seated in the delightfully rustic backyard, where ancient farm machinery leaned against thick adobe walls that have stood for 300 years. The air was warm in the sunshine and cool in the shade, and we had a perfect view of the mountains etching a crisp horizon against a flawless blue sky. We played show-and-tell with our souvenirs: Ecuadorian music CDs, special treats for infant relatives, postcards of the legendary Route 66, and a Navajo-English dictionary (because you just never know).

The food was good and the conversation excellent. Fascinating shoptalk of the kind you might imagine when five kindred spirits are fortunate enough to relax together in such a setting. Thinking of the assignment that had brought us there, I sighed, “All this, and money, too!” Ben smiled and said, “That would make a good title for a story.”

See page 61 for registration information for ATA’s 43rd Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.
In November 2001, Rudy Heller, administrator of ATA’s Spanish Language Division, interviewed Reinhold Werner, professor of applied linguistics at the University of Augsburg, Germany. They discussed various linguistic issues, including language variation, language influence, language policy, and translation. Professor Werner has authored and co-authored numerous regional Spanish dictionaries, and his contributions to Spanish lexicography are recognized worldwide.

Professor Werner and his charming wife attended the ATA conference in Los Angeles, where he was the SPD’s special guest speaker. His breadth of knowledge, love of language, and the generosity with which he shared his wisdom have left us with wonderful memories. The interview, a part of which appears below, was conducted in Spanish, and has been translated into English by Andre Moskowitz. Anyone who would like an electronic copy of the documents that were distributed at the two talks Professor Werner gave can request it at virginiasps@usa.net. You can also contact Professor Werner directly at reinhold.werner@phil.uni-augsburg.de.

RH: At the first talk you gave in Los Angeles, no answer was given to the title of the presentation: Into What Variety of Spanish Should One Translate in the United States? Does this question have an answer?

There may also be more complicated situations in which you have different target audiences with different levels of understanding. For example, people from different countries with different educational levels. In these cases, you have to find a solution that may entail using language that is more neutral. Of course, one must ask what does “neutral” mean?

“…In choosing the language I use in my message, I must take into consideration how important the target audience is versus how important the client is…”

RH: You mentioned language that is neutral. How do you define this neutrality?

One is never completely neutral. By neutral, I mean the ability to find common denominators, to avoid language that is very specific to one variety or another, and to always try to use language that is common to a majority of the target audience. Thus, it is not a neutral style or a neutral register, but rather the broadest common denominator.

RH: What role can “Spanglish” play?

I think we need to be very careful with that term because it is not very clearly defined. Spanglish was originally conceived as a battle cry and was criticized. Lately, the trend has been just the opposite—to promote its use. One shouldn’t be afraid of creating a variety of Spanish that is specific to the United States. I believe it is inevitable, and even necessary, to create a vocabulary for the U.S.’s own realities and concepts. Of course, the first denominations for these objects, for these realities, and for these concepts were created in English. It would be very artificial to avoid using loanwords or calques from English. This must be accepted.

The other issue associated with “Spanglish” is that it is a very restricted and poor code, stemming from the mixture of English and Spanish elements in particular social situations. Thus, a reduced language is created with few elements of expression. It is both a reduced Spanish and a reduced English. That shouldn’t be the goal. So, creating a U.S. variety of Spanish makes sense to a certain extent. One also shouldn’t be afraid of English-language influence when it is necessary to name concepts that...
are particular to this country. But language shouldn’t be reduced by whittling away its vocabulary just to make it easier. The mixture of languages should contribute to their enrichment through mutual influence, not to their impoverishment.

RH: Impoverishment...for example, by creating terms that already exist. A rather humorous case is by introducing terms that already exist. A rather humorous case is through mutual influence, not to their enrichment. People understand this idea of the “weekend,” which is a rather recent concept. It includes having Saturday off, was a gift. This is something that comes from the North American world.

RH: Are there other places, other areas of the world, where something similar takes place?

Yes, to a certain extent it happens all over the world. English is omnipresent. We have a strong English-language influence in German, also in Peninsular Spanish, and in French. Spanglish has developed parallel to the Franglais of the French. To an even greater extent, we also have this problem in many societies of the so-called developing world. This is the case in societies that are not bilingual but multilingual (such as India and the Philippines), in places where the languages spoken are much less similar and have different historical backgrounds, and where the use of one language or another is much more closely related to one’s membership in a particular social group.

What occurs here in the U.S. with Spanish is more serious than in other societies where Spanish is the primary language or the prestige language. But there are cases that are much more difficult in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

RH: But saying le weekend in French is quite different from saying vacunar la carpeta in Spanish. In le weekend, at least the full English word was adopted...but in Spanglish, what is often done is to invent a word, to “Spanishize” an English word when there is already a proper term or phrase for it.

The concept of a weekend did not exist. It was new. Because, in theory, there is an end to the week. Everything has an end. Here you can really see how one language has influenced another. In the background is another ideological world, another worldview, because the weekend is Saturday plus Sunday, which is a rather recent concept. It used to be that one was only assured of being able to rest on Sundays; and this idea of the “weekend,” which includes having Saturday off, was a gift. This is something that comes from the North American world.

RH: It even includes Friday night...
there’s really no way of entirely getting around it. Many try to avoid using loanwords, but end up using a calque instead. In my view, this outside linguistic influence is not bad in and of itself. After all, if there had been no such influence, Spaniards would still be speaking Latin.

RH: You addressed a topic in your presentation that I would like you to expand on a little. Please begin with the definition of “isogloss.”

“Isogloss” is a term that comes from traditional dialectology, in which the goal is to delimit dialectal regions. One asks the question, where does one dialect start and another end? Linguistic atlases, generally based on different types of surveys, are drawn up. You find out how people say something in Town A or Town B. There is an entire network of points in a region, and at each point (location) you find out how people speak in terms of phonology, syntax, and lexicon. Then a comparison is made, and often the entire region can be divided up into different subregions. A subregion is where people speak a certain way, for example, using a certain word for something that is referred to by a different word in another part of the same region. The line that can be drawn between the two subregions is called the isogloss. On one side, for example, people pronounce the Spanish letter ll like the lli in “million,” and on the other side, they pronounce it another way (for example, like the y in “canyon” or the g in “prestige”). The lines that separate the areas where the letter ll is pronounced two different ways are called isoglosses. Similarly, in Colombia, for example, there are areas where people still use the word aguacate for “avocado,” and other areas of the country, such as in Pasto, where people now use the word palta. And there are other areas, for instance, a small region where the word cura is used in this sense. It seems that Colombia is the only place where cura is used that way. The lines, the borders, that divide one region from another are the isoglosses.

RH: In other words, the “isogloss” is always a geographic designation.

The term comes from linguistic geography, from dialectology.

RH: In discussing this subject, you also spoke about diastrophic differences...

Yes, I discussed the terms diatopical, diastrophic, diachronic, and diaphasic. These terms come from structural linguistics, which was first developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and other European linguists and later by North American linguists. Saussure distinguished between diachronic and synchronic linguistics. Before Saussure, people mostly did diachronic linguistic studies, which focused on linguistic changes over time. Saussure introduced synchronic linguistics on a large scale, so it no longer compared different periods in the history of a language, but focused on the way a language worked at a particular moment in time. Thus, when you consider a language at a particular moment in time, you are doing a synchronic study; that is, of the same time. When you compare different periods, you are doing a diachronic study.

Later, following the diachronic and synchronic models, other terms were introduced. For example, when a linguistic comparison is made among different varieties or different dialects (dialects in the sense of linguistic geography), you use the term “diatopical.” A diatopical study is one in which you examine and compare data from different parts of a linguistic region. For example, in Spain, comparing the Spanish of Andalucía to that of Castilla or, in Colombia, comparing the speech of Pasto to that of Bogotá. This would be a diatopical study. And you can do the same thing by focusing on social criteria. For example, a diastrophic study would be when data from the speech of one social group is compared to the speech of another. And finally, the term diaphasic was introduced. This refers to different registers and different styles, but, in this case, it may be the same person who speaks in different registers. In other words, one speaks differently depending on the situation. When I speak to my friends, I speak differently than when I speak in an official situation. The register I use also varies depending on the form or medium. For example, the language I use when writing a letter is different from the way I write an e-mail message. This type of comparison is called diaphasic.

RH: So would “diaphasic” be equivalent to “register”?

Well, the term register is more traditional and always assumes a clear-cut hierarchy (starting from the top at the high register, then going down to a normal or neutral register, and from there down to registers such as familiar, slang, and vulgar). When you talk about diaphasic, you can focus on a whole range of factors. Who am I talking to, in what situation, and in what medium am I speaking or writing? It is a combination of factors and has no hierarchy. When you talk about registers you are immediately placing them...
into a hierarchy. That is, a neutral register is better than a vulgar register, although, of course, a low or vulgar register may be very appropriate in certain situations, much more so than a neutral register. If you want to insult someone, you often use a vulgar register. But when you talk about registers you are always making an assumption that one register is better than another, and you also somewhat confuse diastatic and diaphasic factors.

RH: I am asking you about this precisely because translators face this a lot here. We are often required to use a register (at least that’s how it’s called here within the translation industry), and are told to “keep the register at a very low educational level.” There is this notion out there that the reader has a very low level of knowledge. We see that people often write in an English that lacks formality. Writing is reduced to the lowest level, much lower—many of us believe—that what we feel Spanish should be written in.

There you have it. One must also distinguish between social factors and situational factors...

RH: And educational factors...

And educational factors, and many others. Because, of course, it may be fine for you to use the language of a particular social group to make yourself understood, but that does not automatically mean you have to speak in a less formal style, although you can. In any case, it may not be a style that your target audience uses. When all is said and done, it depends on what you’re writing. There are also standards for different types of texts. We write certain things in a particular style and that helps us recognize immediately what type of message it is. For example, a business letter is written in a particular style, and if we change its register, it is no longer a business letter and we do not achieve our objective. Thus, with every type of text there is always a tradition in the way things are formulated. If I don’t follow that tradition, I may also cause comprehension problems because the person I am addressing will say, what the heck is this? They won’t identify the type of message. There is almost always a struggle between a desire for ease of comprehension and a desire for accuracy. If I lower the register, I may also reduce the accuracy. There is a certain vocabulary that is appropriate for speaking accurately about certain realities: scientific terminology, technical terminology, legal, or administrative terminology. If I change the vocabulary used for a more common one simply because I am afraid someone won’t understand me, then I run the risk of not calling things by their name. As a result, the message becomes more vague.

The translator has a great responsibility that also includes the task of trying to transmit a message that, to the extent possible, will be understood at the target audience’s comprehension level. On the other hand, the target audience also has a job. Your reader or listener will sometimes have to make an effort to understand the message. For example, I must write legal texts using legal language, even though legal terminology causes problems. But if I eliminate the legal terms and replace them with terms from everyday language, they are no longer precise. As a result, I may create legal problems, because the terms are not unambiguous. I must maintain the legal language even though the other person may not understand it right away. In this case, the target audience has the task of trying to decipher it. It depends a lot on the situation, but there are cases where I cannot lower the degree of precision, and therefore must write using difficult language.

RH: Tell me about the people you were able to talk to at the ATA conference. What impressions have you come away with?

Several impressions. The group there was very heterogenous: different ages, different countries, and different professional levels. I met people who were completely bilingual, who spoke two languages with a rich vocabulary. I also met people who clearly had problems in both languages. They came from different professional environments. There were legal translators, commercial translators, and interpreters, who, of course, have different experiences, focuses, and different concepts and ways of working. I noticed that people showed a lot of interest, especially during my second talk. There was a lot of feedback and reaction, and many people came up to ask questions.

I learned quite a bit about the world of North American translators and about their working conditions. The other experience was just being here in this country, a place I’ve traveled very little in. This is my second visit, and it is quite different from both Europe and other countries I’ve been to. So it’s been useful for getting rid of some prejudices, both positive and negative. Also, American hospitality is tremendous. The way people interact is very pleasant. In short, I really enjoyed the conference.
It was very well organized. And also the way you and ATA President Tom West have treated me has been phenomenal. A very friendly atmosphere, both down-to-earth and upbeat. It’s a lot less formal than in Germany, and so people get to know each other on a much more personal level, which makes one’s stay enjoyable. Also, the experience of talking to people of different origins, all working here, and having the same interests. It was a great experience....

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Notes
1. The original Spanish-language version of this interview was transcribed by Stella Acelas Chao and published in the February 2002 issue of Intercambios, the quarterly newsletter of ATA’s Spanish Language Division.

2. While Sunday is the traditional day of rest in the Christian world, Friday is the day of rest and prayer for Muslims (the Juma’a), and the Jewish sabbath is on Saturday. Note that the words for Saturday in Italian and Spanish are sábado and sábado, respectively, which derive from the Hebrew word šabbāt.
Beijing’s Forbidden City ranks high on the list of must-sees for tourists in the People’s Republic of China, attracting some 10 million visitors a year. Restoration of this huge site, with its unique historical and cultural treasures, is still under way, funded in part by generous corporate donors from around the world.

One such sponsor is the American Express Foundation, an active partner since 1987. Grants from the foundation have been used for restoration proper, as well as for the erection of over 150 plaques and maps in several languages (invaluable aids for visitors seeking background and context).

Yet at least one English-language panel at the Ti Shun Tang (“Hall of State Satisfaction”) raises as many questions as it answers. The Empress Dowager Cian lived here and concubines were relegated to the east side room, but out in the courtyard stands “a giant crystal stone that is pregnant with the open and aboveboard meaning”—a sure sign of a non-native speaker at work. When we contacted the American Express Foundation, a spokeswoman assured us that this was the first time anyone had pointed out the problem. Ten million visitors a year? mused The Onionskin—although, of course, most domestic visitors would not be fluent in English. After all, how many European and North American visitors to world heritage sites would be capable of judging signs in Chinese, assuming this was available?

Signs at restored sites are usually translated locally, said our contact, then reviewed by “someone who speaks that language; who understands the nuances involved.” This was obviously not the case at the Hall of State Satisfaction. The foundation appeared genuinely grateful for the feedback and assured us that corrective action would be taken.

In 2001, the American Express Foundation made grants totaling $29.7 million in 33 countries. By ensuring that signs displayed at all restored sites convey clear, easily understandable messages, it will reinforce the impact of these outlays and link the company’s name and logo to a quality product in all ways.

Japanese Police Spell It Out for Hooligans

As Japan and Korea readied for an onslaught of foreign soccer fans at the FIFA World Cup, a BBC World Service report indicated that local police were honing crowd management skills with a particular eye on rowdy U.K. hooligans. If things got really rough, martial arts would be used, reported the BBC journalist. But police officers had also been equipped with giant signs reading (in English) “We are the police. Stop that immediately.”

While the signs were, by all accounts, correctly spelled and punctuated, the concept is said to have triggered “derision” among foreigners who saw the panels in the run-up to the games. Another cross-cultural divide?

Austrian Supreme Court Upholds Nairobi Principles

A recent ruling by the Austrian Supreme Court upholds translators’ rights to be considered authors of the texts they produce, as provided under the 1976 Nairobi Convention. The ruling makes it unlawful to quote from literary translations without naming the translator, and will have repercussions for translated literature across all media, at least in Austria. In the past, literary reviews and feature articles about authors whose work appears in translation have frequently neglected to credit translators who make the texts accessible to new readers.

The case began in 1999, when translator Werner Richter tuned into a literary program on Austria’s then state-owned broadcasting company ORF. The show featured “his” author, U.S. writer T. Coraghessan Boyle.

The broadcast lasted 44 minutes and included several longish musical interludes, says Richter, but also “12 minutes of readings from two of my translations.” Yet the radio station neglected to cite his name in the final credits listing narrators, producers, technicians, and other contributors. When challenged, it added insult to injury by denying any obligation to do so.

With the backing of the Austrian Association of Literary Translators (Uebersetzergemeinschaft) and, subsequently, the Austrian Collection Society and German Media Workers’ Union, Mr. Richter filed a suit against ORF. The case then proceeded through the courts, ending with a Supreme Court ruling (GzOGH 29.1.2002, 4Ob293/01v) rejecting all objections made by the ORF lawyers over the course of the lawsuit, and confirming that Werner Richter should indeed have been named as an author/copyright holder in the broadcast. Mr. Richter is delighted, as is the Austrian Association of Literary Translators. “We are confident that the respect it expresses for our creative work will have a long-awaited positive effect on journalists and authors writing or reporting about translated literature in the Austrian media,” said the association.
The ruling has only national value at present, since copyright law is different in every country. Indeed, the text of the decision (available from UeG at ueg@literaturhaus.at, fax +43-1-524 6435) refers explicitly to the relevant German law under which the case would have had a different outcome. German translators and their lawyers have, however, already challenged this assessment. In any case, it is viewed by many as a positive development for the status of the translation profession worldwide.

**Turkish Judge Throws the Book at Acar**

On May 16, an Istanbul judge upheld a fine of €1,700 on Nermin Acar for her translation of Serge Bramly’s *La terreur dans le boudoir*. Acar expressed surprise and dismay at the ruling. “I have lost faith in justice,” she told The Onionskin.

The novel was originally published in French by Editions Grasset. Inspired loosely by the life of the Marquis de Sade, it was confiscated by the Turkish authorities on the grounds that it “arouses sexual desire in readers.”

As this Onionskin went to press, Nermin Acar and her lawyer were considering an appeal. Yet, even if they win this case, they are not out of the woods. On the same day, the court postponed another hearing, this time for charges regarding Acar’s translation of Alina Reyes’ *Lilith*. Once again, a fine was to be imposed for her production of what it deems a similarly racy text. When the publisher failed to show up in court, a new hearing was scheduled for September 10.

At Editions Grasset, Foreign Rights Manager Marie-Hélène d’Ovidio reiterated her support for Acar (nermin_acar@hotmail.com), noting that in countries where censorship is an issue, it is generally the commissioning publisher’s responsibility to ensure that texts comply with restrictive legislation before ordering a translation (and certainly before publishing it).

**Bumpy Brochure for Airport Link**

Some skewed translations are incomprehensible, others silly, and still others simply awkward: a reminder that whoever produced the text was not up to the job.

Autobus Oberbayern’s brochure for travelers taking the Lufthansa Airport Bus to and from Munich’s city center is a case in point.

Printed in the airline’s trademark orange and blue, this well-designed leaflet pitches an extension of the bus company’s offering: service now starts at 5:10 a.m. and runs through to 9:45 p.m.

Unfortunately, the translation, purchased from an unidentified agency in Munich, reveals far less attention to detail.

A bold heading on the front page announces “Now longer available.” (Jetzt noch länger für Sie da). Inside, awkward phrasing is compounded by decidedly shaky verb tenses: “For years the airport bus is the most comfortable way to reach the airport.”

A company spokeswoman claims the translation was produced by an American who has been living in Germany for two years. His services were purchased through a local translation agency, whose name she declined to give. This initial text was then run past a British tour guide for a second opinion before printing. Our contact insisted that non-natives in her company had not introduced any changes on their own. “With two

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**Callow Cowboy, Lusty Briton**

On May 30 an opinion piece in the *Financial Times*, the U.K.’s leading financial daily, took U.S. President George W. Bush to task for his insensitivity in matters cross-cultural.

As part of a whirlwind tour of Europe to rally support for U.S. policies among allies, President Bush visited Paris and WWII landing beaches in Normandy in May. He also joined newly re-elected French President Jacques Chirac for a joint news conference, only to stumble into a pesky exchange with an American reporter who had the temerity (some might say courtesy) to ask Mr. Chirac a question in French.

“He memorizes four words and plays like he’s all intercontinental,” Mr. Bush sneered to the assembled press corps. “Reporters shuffled their notebooks and looked at their feet,” noted Gerard Barber, “embarrassed by this spectacle of an American president jeering at a fellow American for speaking their host’s language.” The notoriously language-sensitive French press picked up on the gaffe and gave Mr. Bush a rougher ride than, say,
Dictionary Reviews  Compiled by Boris Silversteyn

Silversteyn is chair of the ATA Dictionary Review Committee.

Elsevier's Dictionary of Agriculture
Authors: T. Tosheva, M. Djarova, and B. Delijska
Publisher: Elsevier Science B.V.
            (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Publication Date: January 1, 2000
ISBN: 0-444-50005-7
Price: $181.50 in the U.S.
Available from: Local bookstores or online
Number of pages: 777, hardcover
Number of entries: 9,389 terms with 4,000+ cross-references
Presentation: High-quality, semi-glossy paper, Times Roman and Times Cyrillic fonts

Reviewed by: Ted Crump

This dictionary follows the usual Elsevier format, with the first part, the Basic Table, listing English terms alphabetically in bold type and numbered consecutively, followed by their German, French, and Russian equivalents. The names of plants, animals, epizootic diseases, and pests are also given in Latin. Chemical formulas are mentioned with compounds that are used in fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides. English synonyms appear as cross-references to the main entries in their proper alphabetical order. The second part of the dictionary, the indices, contains separate alphabetical indices of the German, French, and Russian terms, with the number(s) following the term referring to the number(s) of the English equivalent(s) in the basic table.

Special signs and abbreviations are limited to the italics d, f, r, and l in the Basic Table for the German, French, and Russian equivalents, respectively, of the English terms: f (feminine), m (masculine), n (neuter), fpl (feminine plural), mpl (masculine plural), and npl (neuter plural) to indicate gender of nouns; v to indicate a verb; and US to indicate American usage (sometimes the entries basically consist of British spelling and usage, and, in most cases, the U.S. equivalent is not given). Adjectives are indicated by adj (although, there are many that are not). I did not see any adverbs. Synonyms and abbreviations are separated by semicolons, and two kinds of brackets are used: [...] indicates that the information can be included or left out, and (…) indicates that the information does not form an integral part of the expression, but helps to clarify it.

The dictionary attempts to cover all “fields relating to agriculture: agronomy, zootechnics, veterinary medicine, phytobiology, microbiology, botany, soil chemistry, forestry, mechanization, agricultural hydromechanics, melioration, organization and economics of agricultural production, mathematical statistics, meteorology, etc.”

It becomes immediately obvious when one opens up the dictionary, which would more properly be called a glossary because it only lists equivalents and has no explanatory material, that the authors’ command of English leaves something to be desired: “after-ripening (of a grains)”; “apple-tree” and “snowstorm” (many English words are hyphenated when they shouldn’t be, and not hyphenated when they should be); “apprentice ship” (two words); and “escale r” (= to climb [a ladder]. Do the Brits say “escale a ladder?” I don’t think so.); “desintoxication” is neither U.S. nor British; “draw-bar horse power” instead of “drawbar horsepower”; “drive shaft” instead of “driveshaft.”

Then there are examples of just pure sloppiness: “alcaline earth metal,” but “alkaline metal”; “disc rider,” but “disk drill”; “sheferd’s purse”; “allelopathic, d Allelopathie f, f allelopathie f, r “АЛЛЕЛОПАТИЯ” (the headword is an adjective [not labeled as such], and the “equivalents” are nouns); “balance; equilib-rium, d Saldo n; Bilanz f, f solde m; balance f, r сальдо n; баланс m” (the concept of the headword “equilibrium” is not reflected in the equivalents, but only in the economic meaning of “balance”). No distinction is made between Russian “е” and “и”; hence, “caw calf” (cow calf); “heifer,” r “телка,” not “тёлка,” and “череюм,” not “черёмух.”

Some words that one might expect to find, such as “wether” (castrated male sheep), “shoat,” “mare,” “shear” as a verb, and “side-delivery rake” are absent, while “black,” “bottle,” “round,” “west,” and others are just taking up space.

Assuming one could live with these deficiencies, does the dictionary fill a gap and provide words not found elsewhere, and does it have enough useful entries to justify shelling out two bills? For an article in German on the importance of location, fertilization, and irrigation in berry farming, it actually performed quite well. It has about 180 entries beginning with “Boden...,” but only...
Elsevier's new legal dictionary follows the same format that is familiar to users of other Elsevier dictionaries. A list of English words is translated into several other languages (in this case, French, German, Dutch, and Spanish). Each entry is preceded by a number. At the back of the book is an alphabetical list of terms in French, another in German, another in Dutch, and another in Spanish, again with each term preceded by a number. To translate from German into English, for example, you look up a term in the German list at the back of the book, find its number, and then look for that number in the English list.

In addition to being unwieldy for translators who primarily use the book to translate into English, this format also strikes me as not very well suited for a law dictionary. Car parts, for example, are pretty much the same in France and the U.S.; they simply have French names in France and English names in America. Law, on the other hand, is not the same in France (or Spain or Germany, or Holland or Belgium) as in the United States. The European countries are civil law countries, whereas the U.S. (and the U.K., for that matter) are common law countries. This means that there are all sorts of legal terms (and legal concepts) that appear in one system, but not the other. For example, there are no “grand juries” in civil law countries. Because the Elsevier dictionary uses English as the starting point, it includes “grand jury,” and translates it into German as Geschworene, die als Anklagekammer fungieren, which can, in turn, be found in the list of German terms at the back of the book. This is a little silly, however, since Geschworene, die als Anklagekammer fungieren is not really a German legal term and would never appear in a German legal text. It is simply an attempt to translate a U.S. concept into a language where it does not exist. The flip side of this problem is that a term such as befreiter Vorsteher, a concept which exists only in German law, is not included in the dictionary at all.

Given the basic problem with the format of the dictionary, how does it fare with the terms it does include? First of all, it is important to note that although the book includes 15,164 terms (they are numbered so that it is easy to tell exactly how many there are), this number is somewhat misleading because the dictionary includes quite a few basic terms that are not specific to legal language. Examples include “zero,” “house,” “to be,” “bed,” “word,” “life,” “woman,” “size,” “Christmas,” and on and on. Filler words like these have no place in an expensive, specialized reference work. Another quare! I have with the English terms is that articles are consistently omitted from phrases. Thus, for example, we find “in name of law,” when what they mean is “in the name of the law,” and “capacity to make will,” when the correct phrase is “capacity to make a will.” This limits the dictionary’s usefulness to a non-native speaker of English who might use it to translate into English.

These problems aside, the translations proposed for the English terms are generally quite good. For...
example, the phrase “circumstances beyond control” (it should read: “circumstances beyond one’s control”) is translated into authentic French legalese as *circonstances indépendantes de la volonté* (and not the calquéd *circumstances au-delà du contrôle*) and into authentic Spanish as *circunstancias ajenas a la voluntad*, although in German one would have preferred to see *aus nicht zu vertretenden Gründen*. Likewise, “court of competent jurisdiction” is accurately translated as *zuständiges Gericht*, *tribunal compétent*, *bevoegde rechtbank*, *tribunal competente*, and not as erroneous calquéd phrases such as *Gericht von kompetenter Zuständigkeit* or *tribunal de jurisdicción competente*. On the other hand, there are a few cases where accurate foreign terms are translated into faulty English. For example, the *Gegenstand, objet, objeto, voorwerp* of a contract appears as “object” of the contract, when it is actually called the “subject” or the “subject matter” of the contract. Similarly, *la partie la plus diligente*, or the *meest gerede partij*, is translated as the “most diligent party,” when in fact, the correct translation is “the first party to take action.”

The dictionary’s real weak spot is its translation of English terms into Spanish. For example, “go-slow strike” is translated into Spanish both correctly (*operación tortuga*) and incorrectly (*huelga de brazos caídos*, which is actually a “sit-down strike” and not the same thing as a “go-slow strike”). Similarly, “case law” is translated correctly into Spanish as *jurisprudencia*, but the Spanish entry also contains the incorrect translation *derecho común* (the latter meaning “civil law”). “Strict liability” is translated into Spanish as *responsabilidad por hechos ajenos*, but that phrase means “vicarious liability.” Interestingly enough, the word-forward French equivalent of *responsabilité por hechos ajenos*, which appears in French as *responsabilité du fait d’autrui*, is correctly translated as “vicarious liability” in the book. One wonders if the Spanish translations were not as carefully checked as those for the other languages.

One final point about the dictionary will be of interest to Dutch translators. They should note that unlike the Dutch-English legal dictionary that most of them use (*Juridisch lexicon*, by Aard van den End), which states in its preface that it intentionally omits all Dutch legal terminology that is specific to Belgium, the Elsevier dictionary was written by Belgians, and as such, distinguishes between Dutch and Belgian usage. For example, if we look up the term “court of first instance,” the Elsevier tells us that it is called *arrondissemensrechtbank* in the Netherlands, but *rechtbank van eerste aanleg* in Belgium. Similarly, the entry for “labour court” indicates that the Dutch say *raad van de arbeid*, while the Belgians say *arbeidsrechtbank*. “Postal giro account” is *postrekening* in Belgium and *giorekening* in the Netherlands.

The bottom line is that this dictionary contains many excellent entries. However, it is very expensive (over $200), contains only around 15,000 entries, some of which are filler, and does include some mistakes. Unless money is no concern, I would stick to using this dictionary at your local law library.

**Dictionary Reviews Continued**

**Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations**

**Author:** Mary Miles Prince

**Publisher:** William S. Hein & Co., Inc.

**Publication Date:** 1993

**ISBN:** 0-89941-847-3

**Price:** $45

**Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations Reversed**

**Author:** Igor I. Kavass

**Publisher:** William S. Hein & Co., Inc.

**Publication Date:** 1994

**ISBN:** 0-89941-874-0

**Reviewed by:** Tom West

The first of the two books reviewed here is called *Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations*, and it does just what the title suggests it will do. If you come across an abbreviation in an English-language legal document, you can look it up in here and find out what it stands for. Thus, for example, the dictionary reveals that “Pa. W.C. Bd. Dec.” stands for “Pennsylvania Workmen’s Compensation Board Decisions.” The terms being abbreviated need not be English—the book includes Latin abbreviations used in legal writing, such as “d.v.p.” (*decessit vita patris*), which it translates as “died during his father’s life;” and “et ux.” (*et uxor*), translated as “and wife.” Nor do the terms need to be from the U.S. For example, we find “E.R.P.N.” (Eastern Region Public Notice), an abbreviation from...
The ATA Chronicle | July 2002

U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair, who is known to “speak French” and has gone so far as to address the French legislature in their language. Yet even the Francophile Mr. Blair would appear to fare better with prepared speeches than with off-the-cuff comments. When former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin was riding high in opinion polls, Mr. Blair went on the record with a cheerful “j’ai envie de Lionel dans tous les façons.” The U.K. prime minister was seeking to express friendly “envy” of his Gallic counterpart’s performance on the economic front. Unfortunately, his (mis)choice of words made for a slightly ungrammatical “I lust after Lionel, in all ways.” But French TV commentators gave him the benefit of the doubt. At least he tried.

Also be helpful because abbreviations are not always logical and therefore cannot always be guessed; for example, the dictionary reveals that “L.A.B.” stands for “Los Angeles Bar Bulletin,” when one would have expected “L.A.B.B.”

The book appears to be overwhelmingly complete, but I did notice one odd thing. The book includes “LAFTA” (Latin American Free Trade Association), which I have never heard of, but does not include “NAFTA” (North American Free Trade Association), which presumably most people doing business with Latin America are familiar with. Otherwise, however, all of the standard legal abbreviations I spot-checked were included: U.S.C.A. (United States Code Annotated), Am. Jur. (American Jurisprudence), F.2d (Federal Reporter, Second Series), and so on. The other book, Bieber’s Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations Reversed, tells you how to abbreviate legal publications. For example, the International Bar Journal can be abbreviated as Int. Bar. J., Int’l Bar J., or Int’l B.J. Because translators are not called upon to abbreviate terms like this, but only to recognize abbreviations when they see them, translators will not be interested in this dictionary. The “forward” dictionary of abbreviations is the one for them, not the “reverse” one.

Thomas L. West, the president of ATA, is an attorney and translator in Atlanta, Georgia. After practicing corporate and international law for five years, he founded Intermark Language Services Corporation, a translation company specializing in legal translation. He has a bachelor’s degree in French, a master’s degree in German, and a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law. He has taught courses on French legal translation at Georgia State University, as well as courses on German legal translation for the German Translators Forum in Chicago, and Spanish legal translation at the Centro de Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada in Mexico City and the Colegio de Traductores Públicos in Buenos Aires. He is ATA-accredited (French-, Spanish-, and German-into-English). Contact: tom@intermark-languages.com.
lexander Maliarevsky, writing for the Planeta Internet online newspaper of May 27, 2002, put his finger on a translation problem that goes a long way toward explaining the tensions that dominated much of the late 20th century. Even if you’re not a Russian translator or interpreter, you’ll instantly see the significance of this one: the lack of a Russian word for privacy. Sometimes, Maliarevsky writes, the word-combination of частная жизнь (private life) is used. But it goes beyond that. The English word applies неприкосновенная частная жизнь (inviolable private life), something that was not allowed either in the Age of Empire or the Age of Ideology in Russian history. Even today, says Maliarevsky, if you’re Russian, your e-mails and behavior while in the office are not subject to anything remotely resembling privacy. If you deal professionally with Russian, be aware that you’re not alone when you sweat over this word (Elizabeth Wilson gives уединение [solitude] in her Modern Russian Dictionary for English Speakers). Even if Russian is not your thing, this translation problem can long be food for thought when you consider the origins of the Cold War.

[Abbreviations used in this column: Ct–Catalan; E–English; F–French; G–German; I–Italian; N–Norwegian; Pt–Portuguese; R–Russian; Sp–Spanish; Sw–Swedish.]

New Queries

(Ct-E 7-02/1) Not an everyday query, but an interesting one. A member of ProZ needs to know about three troublesome words, “lloc de destí,” in the following business quotation: “Aquestes inversions foranes s’han de veure emparades per una aplicació correcta de la legislació, especialment la tributaria, del seu lloc de destí i requerixen el nomenament d’un representant fiscal.” Catalan people, arise! Here’s bait for you at last!

(E-F 7-02/2) Good French is needed for Agony Aunt, a term that arose on ProZ, and which, it was commonly agreed, meant a correspondent in a journal who deals with personal problems.

(E-Pt 7-02/3) The English text reported that so-and-so was a Fulbright senior fellow and guest scholar at a certain prestigious institution. A ProZ asker would like to know what would be good continental Portuguese for these terms.

(F-E 7-02/4) Here, evidently, is a case where the kids know more than their elders. The phrase needing clarification and translation is “rhombe-oiseau,” and the outlet which the youngsters enjoyed is described thus: “Après avoir visité le Musée, les enfants fabriquent en atelier leur propre kazoo, rhombe-oiseau ou flûte de Pan qu’ils emportent à l’issue de la séance.” A Lantra-L member would like to know.

(G-E 7-02/5) This ProZ correspondent provided optimal surrounding contextual material for his query about “verauslagte umlagefähige Betriebskosten.” Here’s the other overall quote: “Die unter dieser Position ausgewiesenen ‘Forderungen aus der Grundstücksbewirtschaftung’ umfassen verauslagte umlagefähige Betriebskosten in Höhe von 43,5 Mio. EUR und Mietforderungen über 7,2 Mio. EUR. Vorauszahlungen der Mieter auf Betriebskosten mit 41,7 Mio EURsind in Position V.3 ‘Verbindlichkeiten aus Grundstücksbewirtschaftung’ erfasst.”

(G-E 7-02/6) A little common word can trip you up horribly if it is used regionally in a manner that presents confusion. In this case, it is the nickel-and-dime word “nach,” as the Austrians use it. An interview was being transcribed, and the sentence ran thus: “Alles mitgeholfen, alles hat zusammen geholfen, die Tochter und ich haben mit ihm nach alles getan, dass er wieder gesund worden ist.” Is it to be understood that this is an equivalent to “damn?”

(I-E 7-02/7) The following list of kitchen equipment included “fuochi” and “bollitori,” which this ProZ translator found troublesome to visualize. The full list: “strumenti di cucina: -fuochi, bollitori, strumenti di disossatura.”

(N-E 7-02/8) In a user manual for medial files software, a Lantra-L talker found the manual stating that a search result is presented as thumbnail images of eight of the objects or items found in the database. This is known as a “lysbord” in Norwegian. What’s the English?

(R-E 7-02/9) Beach Bum reappears at last, with a query about how the architectural features of a building, however humble, can take on human characteristics (in this case, blindness). The trouble word in this sentence is поисковый, and he finds it hard to apply, especially in English translation, to an inanimate object, as in this sentence: Каменные дома с большими застекленными окнами, а не поисковые деревянные избушки. There has to be a concise way to express what the difference was between the rural and urban buildings’ fenestration.

(Sp-E 7-02/10) In a translation referring to “edificios catalogadas pos las Naciones Unidas,” a Lantra-L
member wondered whether they were listed or catalogued. No further references followed that had to do with cultural heritage, etc., and in any case, the listing of such buildings is UNESCO’s responsibility. What is involved here, and what would the English be?

Replies to Old Queries

(E-G 5-02/2) (p-well): Maybe, says Zippy, the p might not refer to p-type semiconductors, but rather for potential. A potential well in this solid-state context is “Potentialtopf” in German. Google revealed neither p-well nor “p-Topf,” but both spellings are fairly common.

(E-Sp 4-02/7) (chapter, as in of an organization): Selma Benjamin thinks that “sección” or “subgrupo” work well for this, along with “división.”

Paul Sadur is puzzled that there should be any reticence about using “capítulo” to indicate a subdivision of an organization. He saw it in relation to “cooperativas de ahorro y crédito” (credit unions) in Peru. As a trial, he typed in “capítulos de la asociación” on www.google.com, and found numerous usages in several nations on both sides of the Atlantic. “Capítulo” is widely accepted, he believes.

Randi Sanders notes that “sucursal” implies a separate location from the main branch or home office, particularly in banking. Other words that might fit just as well: “unidad, delegación, oficina, departamento, o grupo.”

(E-Sp 4-02/8) (outreach): This is difficult, agrees Paul Sadur, but in his work with microfinance organizations, the word most often encountered is “extensión” and “extensiónista.” The latter could refer to a person, such as a university extension agent, but Google provides us with both when used as outreach. Eurodicautom provides “programa de contacto” for street outreach program.

(G-E 5-02/3) (“Wangentisch”): Nancy Thiele calls it a trestle table. This is a table with two wide centered pedestals, one at either end. The pedestals consist in part of thin yet very broad boards, consistent with the notion of “Wange” as side wall.

Zippy agrees with the above rendering of trestle table. The way to search for equivalency, he says, is to use Google to search for “Wangentisch” with trestle table in quotation marks. Photos are displayed by furniture dealers and auction houses and, from the pictures, appear to be precisely the same.

(G-E 5-02/4) (Putzbauweise): Roger Elmore can’t take it to the final step into Spanish, but can say that rendered structure is off the mark. While living in Germany, he was able to learn a lot about German construction from a “Gipsermeister,” for whom “Putz” was something to be dealt with daily. Roger found this definition of “Putz” in Langenscheidt Großwörterbuch: “eine Mischung aus Sand, Wasser, Gips oder Ähnlichem, mit der man die Ziegel einer Mauer bedeckt (besonders um der Mauer eine glatte Oberfläche zu geben).” English needs a paraphrased rendition, says Roger, something like: streetcar stations built in today’s standard way, i.e., cement blocks covered with a stucco-like mixture of sand, water, and plaster.

Nancy Thiele suggests roughcasting or roughcast building style for “Putzbauweise.” Architect Otto Wagner typically left the steel uncovered along with the overall cleaner lines of his building designs. They were relatively lacking in ornamentation compared with what came before, which was earlier in the 19th century. The result was an innovative overall appearance. To actually see the 1899 design of the Karlsplatz streetcar station depicted, one can go to www.wokalamps.com/infos/index.asp?go=english/designer/wagner.asp.

Now, what to do about the Spanish?

(Sp-E 10-01/7) (“subdiario”): In Paul Sadur’s opinion, a “diario” is a journal or daybook. Robb’s Dictionary of Modern Business defines “subdiario” as a subsidiary journal or special journal. This does not involve a second set of books.

It was a pretty good month for the participation of readers. You helped others, so if your contribution was included, pat yourself on the back.

For Long-Term Planners

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Humor and Translation  
By Mark Herman

Herman is a librettist and translator. Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@earthlink.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 5748 W Brooks Rd., Shepherd, MI 48883-9202. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.

So Sorry!

Among the miseries of modern life are the error messages inflicted on the public by computer programmers. There is the message erroneous: “There has been an error in connecting to your printer. Shut down and restart.” Translation: “Your printer is out of paper.” There is the message impolite: “The application has committed a terminal error and your computer will be shut down.” Translation: “You’ve discovered another bug in our operating system, you smart aleck, and for that you are going to lose all your unsaved data.” And, finally, the message polite: “The application has committed a terminal error and your computer will be shut down. OK?” Translation: “Not only will you lose all your unsaved data, you will acquiesce to it, and to every other humiliation that we, the Lords of Microsoft, devise.”

When living under absolute dictatorships, people often relieve their stress with humor, which, in this case, takes the form of alternative error messages. One type, reputedly from Japan, follows the Japanese haiku form of three lines with five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. The most complete collection was submitted to me by Sally Lou Eaton and reads as follows:

Your file was so big. 
First snow, then silence. 
Three things are certain:
It might be very useful. 
This thousand-dollar screen dies 
Death, taxes, and lost data.
But now it is gone. 
So beautifully. 
Guess which has occurred.
The Web site you seek 
With searching comes loss 
You step in the stream, 
Cannot be located, but 
And the presence of absence: 
But the water has moved on.
Countless more exist. 
“My Novel” not found. 
This thousand-dollar screen dies 
And the presence of absence: 
So beautifully.
Chaos reigns within. 
The Tao that is seen 
Out of memory. 
Reflect, repent, and reboot. 
Is not the true Tao until 
We wish to hold the whole sky,
Order shall return. 
You bring fresh toner. 
But we never will.
Program aborting: 
The network is down. 
Having been erased,
Close all that you have worked on. 
Stay the patient course. 
The document you’re seeking
You ask far too much. 
Of little worth is your ire. 
Must now be retyped.
Windows NT crashed. 
A crash reduces 
Serious error.
I am the Blue Screen of Death. 
Your expensive computer 
All shortcuts have disappeared.
No one hears your screams. 
To a simple stone.
This page is not here.
Yesterday it worked. 
Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working. 
The network is down. 
Windows is like that.

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- Much more!

The Registration Form and Preliminary Program will be mailed in July to all ATA members. The conference rates are listed below. As always, ATA members receive significant discounts.

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Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings.

All speakers must register for the conference.

Hotel Accommodations

The Hyatt Regency Hotel, the host hotel, is conveniently located in downtown Atlanta at 265 Peachtree Street, NE. The hotel is 20 minutes from Atlanta’s Hartsfield International Airport.

Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $160 single, $165 double, $175 triple, and $185 quadruple plus tax per night. (Regency Club accommodations are offered at an additional charge of $35 per room based on availability.) This rate is good until October 15, 2002. The availability of guest rooms or the group rate cannot be guaranteed after that date.

To make your hotel reservations, contact the Hyatt Regency at 1-866-333-8880 or 404-577-1234. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

Travel Arrangements

ATA once again offers the services of Stellar Access to help you with your travel arrangements. Through Stellar Access conference attendees are eligible for discounted air travel and rental cars.

Call Stellar Access at 1-800-929-4242, and ask for ATA Group #505. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call 858-805-6109; fax: 858-547-1711. A $30 ($35 from outside the U.S. and Canada) transaction fee will be applied to all tickets purchased by phone. Reservation hours: Monday-Friday 6:30am-5:00pm Pacific Time.

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Courtney Searls-Ridge

The Translation Company Unveiled
Leah Ruggiero

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Beatriz Bonnet

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Todd Burrell

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Eta Trabing

Abstracts and speaker biographies can be found at www.atanet.org/business/abstracts.htm.

Early-Bird Registration Fees: ATA Members $165 Nonmembers $255
After August 2 and On-site: ATA Members $235 Nonmembers $330

Space is limited. For more information, contact ATA Headquarters at 703-683-6100 or visit the ATA website at www.atanet.org and click on the Business Seminar link on the homepage. (Direct link is www.atanet.org/business.)

A small block of rooms has been reserved at $169 single/double a night (plus tax) at the Wyndham Boston Hotel, located at 89 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02110. To reserve your hotel room, contact the Wyndham at (617) 556-0006. Be sure to mention that you are attending The ATA Business of Translating and Interpreting Seminar.

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Please contact ATA or visit the ATA website for a membership application.

TOTAL PAYMENT: $__________

Cancellations received in writing by August 2, 2002, are eligible for a refund. Refunds will not be honored after August 2.
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For more information about The Business of T&I Seminar or ATA membership, please visit the ATA website at www.atanet.org or contact ATA at (703) 683-6100 or ata@atanet.org.

An accreditation exam sitting will be held on Sunday, August 11. This will be a standard exam, not business-specific. To register, please visit the ATA website to obtain the Accreditation Examination Registration Form.

~An ATA Professional Development Seminar~
## ATA Accreditation Exam Information

### Upcoming Exams

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Please direct all inquiries regarding general accreditation information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100. Registration for all accreditation exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from the ATA website or from Headquarters.

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  - Ann H. Willeford
  - Atlanta, GA

- **Portuguese into English**
  - Christiana H. Aguilar
  - New York, NY

- **Spanish into English**
  - Ivan Gutierrez
  - Tampa, FL

- **English into Japanese**
  - Yoshiko Yamazaki
  - Kenmore, WA

- **English into Portuguese**
  - Maria L. Alves
  - Kearny, NJ

- **English into Russian**
  - Irina N. Dyatlovskaya
  - Port Costa, CA

- **English into Spanish**
  - Cristina Estrada
  - Madrid, Spain

- **English into Japanese**
  - Juan A. Iglesias
  - Barcelona, Spain

- **English into French**
  - Francisco M. Guimaraes
  - Lisbon, Portugal

- **English into Russian**
  - Joaquin Moya
  - Madrid, Spain

- **English into Spanish**
  - Blanca Olivié
  - Madrid, Spain

- **English into Russian**
  - Ricardo García Pérez
  - Madrid, Spain

- **English into Spanish**
  - Arturo Porras
  - Chicago, IL

The Active Member Review Committee is pleased to grant active or corresponding member status to:

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  - Kevin S. Hendzel
  - Arlington, VA
  - Debra Kramasz
  - Coon Rapids, MN
  - Georganne Weller
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ATA Chapters, Affiliated Groups, and Other Groups

ATA Chapters
Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT)
P.O. Box 12172
Atlanta, GA 30355
Tel: (770) 587-4884
aaitinfo@aait.org • www.aait.org

Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI)
318 Bandock Drive
Durham, NC 27703
Tel: (919) 577-0840 • Fax: (775) 244-2746
C.A.T.I.@pobox.com • www.catiweb.org

Florida Chapter of ATA (FLATA)
P.O. Box 14-1057
Coral Gables, FL 33114-1057
Tel/Voice: (305) 274-3434
Fax: (305) 387-6712
info@atafl.com • www.atafl.com

Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA)
6600 NW Sweetbriar Lane
Kansas City, MO 64151
Attn.: Meeri Yule
Tel: (816) 741-9441 • Fax: (816) 741-9482
translate@kc.rr.com • www.ata-micata.org

National Capital Area Chapter of ATA (NCATA)
P.O. Box 65200
Washington, DC 20035-5200
Tel: (202) 255-9290 • Fax (202) 234-5656
johnvazquez@msn.com • www.ncata.org

• The Professional Services Directory of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association (NCATA) has gone online. It lists NCATA members and the services they offer, together with additional information that enables translation and interpretation users to find just the right language specialist for their projects. Bookmark www.ncata.org and check out the NCATA directory. If you maintain language-related webpages, you may want to include a link to the directory. NCATA is always interested in comments and suggestions.

New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051
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Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)
1963 E Sprague Road
Seven Hills, OH 44131
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mooti1@ameritech.net
www.ohiotranslators.org

Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)
P.O. Box 14015
Berkeley, CA 94712-5015
Tel: (510) 845-8712 • Fax: (510) 883-1355
ncta@ncta.org • www.ncta.org
• Telephone/online referral service. See searchable translator database on website.
• NCTA Directory of Translators and Interpreters available on CD-ROM or diskette for $15. Accept MasterCard/Visa.

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS)
P.O. Box 25301
Seattle, WA 98125-2201
Tel: (206) 382-5642
info@notisnet.org • www.notisnet.org

Southern California Area Translators and Interpreters Association (SCATIA)
P.O. Box 34310
Los Angeles, CA 90034
Tel: (818) 725-3899 • Fax: (818) 340-9177
info@scatia.org • www.scatia.org

Affiliated Groups
Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MITIN)
P.O. Box 852
Novi, MI 48376
Tel: (248) 344-0909 • Fax: (248) 344-0092
izumi.suzuki@suzukimyers.com
www.mitinweb.org

Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA)
Coordinator,
Minnesota Translation Laboratory
218 Nolte Center
315 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Tel: (612) 625-3096 • Fax: (612) 624-4579
Laurence.h.bogoslaw-1@tc.umn.edu

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
3617 S 1400 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
Tel: (801) 973-0912 • Fax: (208) 441-5390
ellingge@qwest.net • www.utia.org

Other Groups
This list gives contact information for translation and interpretation groups as a service to ATA members. Inclusion does not imply affiliation with or endorsement by ATA.

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)
The University of Texas at Dallas
MC35, P.O. Box 830688
Richardson, TX 75083-0688
Tel: (972) 883-2093 • Fax: (972) 883-6303
ert@utdallas.edu
www.literarytranslators.org

Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA)
P.O. Box 13331
Austin, TX 78711-3331
Tel: (512) 707-3900
president@aatia.org • www.aatia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804565
Chicago, IL 60680-4107
Tel: (312) 836-0961
webmaster@chicata.org • www.chicata.org

The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
345 S Hwy 101, Suite D
Encinitas, CA 92024
Tel: (760) 635-0273 • Fax: (760) 635-0276
ccia345@earthlink.net • www.ccia.org

The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
345 S Hwy 101, Suite D
Encinitas, CA 92024
Tel: (760) 635-0273 • Fax: (760) 635-0276
ccia345@earthlink.net • www.ccia.org

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
P.O. Box 804565
Chicago, IL 60680-4107
Tel: (312) 836-0961
webmaster@chicata.org • www.chicata.org
Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
3054 S Xanthia Street
Denver, CO 80025
Tel: (303) 743-7719
presidentcta@cs.com
• For more information about the online directory, newsletter, accreditation exams, and professional seminars, please visit www.cta-web.org.

Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)
606 John Anthony Drive
West Chester, PA 19382-7191
Tel: (215) 222-0955
cytran@compuserve.com

El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA)
1003 Alethea Place
El Paso, TX 79902
Tel: (915) 532-8566 • Fax: (915) 544-8354
grdelgado@aol.com

Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA)
P.O. Box 61285
Houston, TX 77208-1285
Tel: (713) 935-2123

The Kentucky Translators and Interpreters Association (KTIA)
P.O. Box 7468
Louisville, KY 40202
Tel: (502) 548-3988
E-mail: vapues@insightbb.com

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
712 Cornfield Drive
Arlington, TX 76017
Tel: (817) 417-4747
www.dfw-mita.com

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3025
New York, NY 10175
Tel: (212) 682-9581 • Fax: (212) 687-4016
headquarters@najit.org • www.najit.org

New England Translators Association (NETA)
27 Wachusett Avenue
Arington, MA 02476
Tel: (781) 648-1731 • neta@coetrans.com • www.netaweb.org

New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association (NMTIA)
P.O. Box 36263
Albuquerque, NM 87176
Tel: (505) 352-9258 • Fax: (505) 352-9372
uweschroeter@prodigy.net
www.cybermesa.com/~nmtia
• Membership Directory available for $5. Please make check payable to NMTIA and mail your request to the address listed here, or contact us by e-mail.

The Translators and Interpreters Guild (TTIG)
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Tel: (301) 563-6450 • (800) 992-0367
Fax: (301) 563-6020
info@ttig.org • www.ttig.org

Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society (WITS)
P.O. Box 1012
Seattle, WA 98111-1012
Tel: (206) 382-5690
www.witsnet.org

International Groups
FIT
Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT)
2021 Avenue Union, Bureau 1108
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2S9
Tel: (514) 845-0413 • Fax: (514) 845-9903
secretariat@fit-ift.org
www.fit-ift.org

AUSTRALIA
Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, Inc. (AUSIT)
P.O. Box A202
Sydney South, NSW 1235 Australia
Tel/Fax: +61 (02) 9626 7046
national@ausit.org • www.ausit.org

Note: All announcements must be received by the first of the month prior to the month of publication (For example, September 1 for October issue). For more information on chapters or to start a chapter, please contact ATA Headquarters. Send updates to Mary David, ATA Chronicle, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; Tel: (703) 683-6100; Fax: (703) 683-6122; Mary@atanet.org.
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