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The ATA Chronicle enthusiastically encourages members and nonmembers to submit articles of interest. For Submission Guidelines, visit www.atanet.org/chronicle. The ATA Chronicle is published 11 times per year, with a combined November/December issue. Submission deadlines are two months prior to publication date.

Advertising Directory

9 Administrative Office of the Courts—Judicial Council of California
www.courtnfo.ca.gov/interpreters

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2 National Security Agency
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Thank you for your past support and for renewing for 2011.
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I am here to tell you, both in my own voice as an experienced translator and with the combined voices of the American Translators Association, about some of the attitudes shared by this large and diverse group of language professionals. I will express frankly our concerns with regard to machine translation (MT), demonstrate that translators possess unique skills that we must keep exercising because our work is essential, and suggest ways in which our two communities can continue to work for our mutual benefit and in the service of human communication.

We have strong beliefs and principles, especially with regard to translation “quality” and linguistic integrity. Translators have a professional ethos that requires us never to oversell ourselves or our capabilities, or to accept work for which we know we are not qualified. We are highly sensitive not only to outright mistakes, but to inappropriate intonation or style. We take seriously our ethical and professional obligation to be true to the human authors and human audiences that are connected by any text, conveying authentic voices that not only transmit information, but also engage the reader.

We do not regard MT as a universal tool, despite the contention that such systems can be used with equal effectiveness by anyone. Like chainsaws and scalpels, MT systems and human translators can be optimally effective in the right context but inefficient or lethal in the wrong one.

We dispute the notion that when a source text exactly matches a previously translated passage, it can always be translated correctly into exactly the same target text the next time around, and consider this a violation of the basic principle that “past performance is no guarantee of future results.”

We assert, finally, that human perception of context and nuance and “rightness” is necessary not just for poetry and literature and advertising, but in every aspect of communication.

We also have expectations and desires with regard to MT. We are not technophobes: we are eager adopters of any machine-assisted translation technology that works for us. We want tools that make our job easier, not harder, and do not want to spend time getting poorly paid to correct the mistakes of an MT system. We want tools that are made for us, not for people without training in language. Only in the translation business is it assumed that new technology can and should be used largely by end users in order to bypass professionals. We also want to play a role in the development of new tools, applying our linguistic expertise to ensure that humans and technology function most effectively together.

Translators and MT developers must learn to work together, and must be honest about our respective areas of competence. We translators will continue to assert that we are uniquely able to produce real and individual communication, and we hope MT researchers will continue to create ways for us to do so more effectively. We must continue the process of education within and between our communities, and extend that mission to translation buyers and to society at large. Above all, we must keep talking to one another.

This is therefore not the beginning of the end for translators, but instead a particularly exciting time to enter this profession, because positive interaction with the MT community will create a much wider range of opportunities to interact with language and acquire new skills. We look forward to developing new ways to serve the cause of human communication, since we are all in the same business.

We do not regard MT as a universal tool, despite the contention that such systems can be used with equal effectiveness by anyone. Like chainsaws and scalpels, MT systems and human translators can be optimally effective in the right context but inefficient or lethal in the wrong one.
As we close out the year, it is time to renew your ATA membership.

ATA membership provides you with information and ideas to help you do your job better and faster. More importantly, this content is generated by fellow members who have the expertise and are willing to share it. They know what translators, interpreters, and company owners need and value.

A great example is ATA’s recent webinar, “How to Get the Most Out of Your ATA Membership,” given by ATA Board Director Naomi Sutcliffe de Moraes along with ATA Member Benefits and Project Development Manager Mary David. Naomi shared practical, easy-to-use tips to maximize the benefits of membership, from keeping your online profile up to date—of course, as she noted, you need to post your online profile first—to a doable networking approach that even the most introverted translator can follow. Please check out the complimentary recording of this webinar at www.atanet.org/webinars/membership/webinar_oct2010.wmv.

You are not going to get this kind of in-depth information anywhere else. Hundreds of ATA volunteers add to this invaluable content throughout the year.

This year, in addition to the launch of ATA webinars, in 2010:

• ATA established the Science & Technology Division (S&TD)—placing greater emphasis on this area of specialization regardless of language combination. Membership in S&TD and the 15 other ATA divisions is free and exclusive to Association members. For more information on divisions, go to www.atanet.org/divisions.

• ATA enhanced its client outreach efforts by debuting The ATA Compass enewsletter—featuring interviews with both the chief executive officer of Rosetta Stone and the past president of the American Medical Association. To learn more, go to www.atanet.org/compass.

ATA continues to offer members such benefits as The ATA Chronicle, ATA Newsbriefs, the Annual Conference, professional development seminars, and the Member-Provider Program. All provide different ways to learn and network.

If you would like to focus on your return on investment, ATA offers you opportunities to market your services through a 24/7 online directory listing in the Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services. One job will more than cover the cost of your ATA membership. You can also look to ATA to help you work smarter—learn about new resources, a program shortcut, or a new software program—thereby allowing you to generate more business, which translates into more money in your pocket.

Finally, by renewing your ATA membership, you are also doing your part to support the organization and its efforts to promote the profession and provide affordable professional development opportunities. ATA is your organization.

Thank you for being a part of ATA and for renewing your ATA membership.
The latest edition in the ATA Scholarly Monograph Series assesses the state of the art in cognitive translation and interpreting studies by examining three important trends: methodological innovation, the evolution of research design, and the continuing integration of translation process research results with the core findings of the cognitive sciences. This timely volume actively demonstrates that a new theoretical and methodological consensus in cognitive translation studies is emerging, promising to improve greatly the quality, verifiability, and generalizability of translation process research.

ATA members receive a 30% discount off the regular price of each hardcover copy in the collection. To order:

www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=ATA
Dr. James Rohack served as President of the American Medical Association from June 2009 to June 2010. He spoke with The ATA Compass, ATA’s new client outreach enewsletter, in early August 2010.

The ATA Compass: What’s the biggest misunderstanding people have about LEP patients and interpreting?

James Rohack: It’s the failure to recognize that good communication with the patient is the keystone to providing good medical care. By definition, a limited-English-proficient (LEP) patient falls into the category of low health literacy, and studies are clear that patients with low health literacy have higher costs because they don’t understand medical instructions and treatment recommendations. Cultural differences are also important: understanding the beliefs and social order of patients from other cultures can play a role in patient-physician communication as well. The medical profession sees this as important enough that communication skills are now part of the general competencies required of medical students.

Compass: How important is an adequate patient history, and how does the language barrier affect that?

Rohack: The physical examination and patient history define the tests that are needed. If I can’t communicate with the patient well enough to get an adequate history—if I have only the exam and no history—I’ll cast a wider net of tests to compensate, and every test has its weaknesses, such as false positives and negatives. A good history helps narrow the preliminary diagnosis and reduce the number of tests you need, so poor communication means more tests and higher costs. The most efficient use of resources comes when you can correlate the history and the exam with the appropriate tests.

Compass: What role does the language barrier play in defensive medicine?

Rohack: Look at the common thread in lawsuits: it’s that the patient feels the doctor didn’t adequately explain why he did what he did. For example, if the risks of a particular surgical procedure...
aren’t adequately explained, the patient is more likely to feel that the doctor is responsible, that the doctor didn’t tell him or her everything.

**Compass:** So it works both ways: the doctor needs to understand the patient, but the patient also needs to understand the doctor.

**Rohack:** That’s exactly right. Inadequate communication means more tests, but there’s also a higher risk of lawsuits.

**Compass:** What skills does a qualified interpreter need to have?

**Rohack:** The U.S. is a melting pot of many cultures and languages. You need three key components in an interpreter: linguistic competence, medical competence, and cultural competence. Cultural competence can be very important, because different cultures have different sensitivities. In some cultures, for example, it’s taboo to question an authority figure like a doctor. How do you get an informed consent under those circumstances? If you’re inadvertently violating cultural taboos, you may not get adequate communication.

Family members tend to do the interpreting, and while it’s important to have them there with the patient, a qualified interpreter is something different. In an emergency, you do what you have to do. But when you use family members as interpreters, you can put them in difficult situations, especially in sensitive areas like drug use, sexual history, and domestic abuse.

Appropriately trained interpreters are the ideal situation. Trained interpreters are part of the healthcare team, and what they say affects the patient. They also have a code of ethics: they aren’t just someone who knows the language and might put their own spin on what the patient has said.

**Compass:** How does the language barrier affect the physician’s approach to treatment?

**Rohack:** The AMA has recognized that communicating with the patient is extremely important, and using properly trained interpreters is very, very helpful. But right now the federal government requires doctors to provide interpreting services without any charge to the patient, and that’s problem-
What the Doctor Ordered: Skilled Interpreting for Better, Less Costly Healthcare Continued

If you have to hire an interpreter and pay them twice the reimbursement you’re getting from Medicare or the patient’s insurance company, you can’t afford to run your medical practice.

So it becomes an access issue: the doctor wants to care for the patient but can’t afford to do it, because he has to pay for the interpreter but can’t bill Medicare, the insurance company, or the patient to cover the cost. It’s a Catch-22.

Interpreters need to be compensated appropriately: they maintain not just language skills, but also medical knowledge and cultural knowledge, and they’ve often gone through a certification process. They can take the doctor’s information and interpret it in ways that are understandable to the patient.

The AMA argues that interpreting should be paid for appropriately by insurers because competent interpreting reduces costs. Again, if you can get a better history, you don’t need to order so many tests; you get better compliance; and the overall cost comes down. The interpreter’s fee is an appropriate medical expense.

Compass: What’s your view on interpreter certification?

Rohack: It’s hard for doctors to determine interpreter qualifications. The certification system is still very young, and most physicians are unaware of any national system. But if you have ongoing needs to make a large community healthier, it’s good to have a certification program for medical interpreting. When you know that the person you hire has met a standard, it gives you a confidence level.

One nidus for training could be community colleges—they’re already doing medical programs, their infrastructure costs are lower, and they already have health profession schools, with one- to two-year programs for basic competencies.

Appropriately trained interpreters are the ideal situation. They also have a code of ethics: they aren’t just someone who knows the language.

Reaching Out to Your Clients

Our interview with Dr. Rohack was originally conducted for the September 2010 issue of The ATA Compass, a periodic publication designed to help buyers of translation and interpreting get the most for their money. Each issue of The Compass contains practical, hands-on information for language services consumers. It appears four to six times a year, and at only one page, clients can read it in just a few minutes.

To get your name on a future issue of The ATA Compass, send us your ideas: hot topics, best practices, success stories, disasters and lessons learned are all welcome. Drop us a line at compass@atanet.org.

Visit the welcome page of The ATA Compass at www.atanet.org/compass, and be sure to check out the bonus materials, which include a link to this interview with Dr. Rohack (www.atanet.org/compass/Rohack.php).
I arrived at my first ATA Conference in New Orleans in 2006 with a great sense of excitement and anticipation. I was going to mingle with the experts! Not only would I, a former foreign language teacher and now fledgling translator, learn and be intellectually stimulated by the intriguingly-titled seminars, but even more important, I would garner information and tangible support for those of us involved in translating documents for school districts throughout the U.S. There would be a significant variety of material and discussions and like-minded colleagues devoted to the K-12 market, and I planned to take every advantage of the opportunity to network and acquire support material to take back to my school division in Virginia.

Fast-forward several days. While most of the seminars were indeed informative and thought provoking, to my dismay not one of them addressed the particular needs of the K-12 market. After much searching and inquiry, I also discovered that not even the book vendors had any reference material dedicated to the area of translating education documents. Perplexed and somewhat disillusioned, I hoped that I had merely overlooked something. The K-12 translation market had to be represented here in some capacity somewhere. But invariably, any participant or vendor to whom I explained that my field was K-12 education would respond with a vague nod and slightly confused look. I found myself wondering, “Do they even know that we exist? Don’t publishers, translation companies, and professional organizations understand the scope and significance of the K-12 market? Are we the elephant in the room that no one acknowledges?”

Publishers and companies that seek to expand their client base in the competitive market of translation services have traditionally focused on...
What Elephant in the Room? Translating Education Documents for U.S. School Districts

Continued

medicine, science, finance, law, business, and technology as a source of revenue. There are conferences, workshops, and even certification tests designed for translators in these areas of specialization. What they have largely overlooked until recently is the market of K-12 translation, that is, the translation of U.S. education documents relating to children from pre-kindergarten through high school.

Focusing on the K-12 market can benefit suppliers of translated materials and services by providing a predictable client base and source of revenue. At the same time, it can help meet the ongoing needs of the 13,908 school districts in the U.S., all of which are required by law to provide translations for limited-English-proficient (LEP) families when practicable. In my school division alone, Prince William County Public Schools in Virginia, there are currently over 15,000 LEP students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade. These students represent over 90 different home languages.

K-12 Translations and the Law

Those who wish to investigate and potentially capitalize on this market should consider the origins of parent outreach initiatives involving LEP families in the U.S. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, public entities, including school divisions, are legally prohibited from discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin. Title IV, Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act cautions against “the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States.” Similarly, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 mandates meaningful outreach to LEP parents. Section 3302, subsection (c) of the NCLB law states, “The information required to be provided under subsections (a) and (b) to a parent shall be provided in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent can understand.” Further, subsection (e) requires that “each eligible entity using funds provided under this title to provide a language instruction educational program shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of limited English proficient children.” These laws make explicit the legal obligation of each public school district in the U.S. to provide written key communications in translation for LEP families whose language group is significantly represented in the overall student population. (Note: While there is no specific legal definition of “significant,” our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program currently translates parent communications into not only Spanish, which represents approximately 80% of our LEP population, but also the next seven most represented languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Twi, Urdu, and Vietnamese.) Failure to comply with these laws can, and often does, result in investigation and resultant legal action by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The landmark case of Lau v. Nichols (1974), in which the San Francisco Unified School District faced charges of discrimination against its non-English speaking Chinese students, ultimately reached the Supreme Court. The court ruled in favor of the complainant, citing the prohibition of discrimination based on national origin. Since that date, the DOJ has conducted numerous investigations of school districts that have resulted in mandates to provide translations and/or interpreting services for LEP families. Recently, for example, the Somerville School District in Massachusetts (2008), the Worcester Public School District in Massachusetts (2009), and the Adams 12 Five Star School District in Colorado (2010) each agreed in out-of-court settlements with the DOJ to, among other things, provide translation services for parents and guardians. In each case, the agreement followed a review and finding by the DOJ that the school district was not in full compliance with the Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974, which requires provision of appropriate instruction and services to English-language learners. Currently, the DOJ audits each school division in the U.S. for compliance to applicable laws every three to five years.

What Translators and Publishers Need to Know

Understanding why there is a market for translations of key K-12...
documents is the first step. For publishers and translation companies to be successful in establishing themselves as reliable sources of services for educational institutions, they must understand and be prepared for the unique linguistic demands of the K-12 field. I can speak specifically to this need with examples from my own professional experience.

After retiring from 22 years of teaching high school Spanish in 2002, I continued my service to the school division by assisting my superior in her dual role as the supervisor of English for Speakers of Other Languages and World Languages. I knew my linguistic expertise would be useful, but I was surprised to discover how completely different the demands were from that of helping students muddle through conjugations of verbs or learning how to order *tapas*.

During the first year in my new role, I would receive an occasional request to translate a document or letter. One time a supervisor from another office approached me and asked if I could “just translate” a brochure when I had a little time. “Is this something you do?” she asked. “Only under the threat of bodily harm,” I answered half-jokingly.

I understood full well that my experience as a veteran foreign language teacher, while valuable, was no match for the complexities and difficulties involved in translating education documents. Only with time, lots of hands-on experience, and continued support of knowledgeable and dedicated bilingual staff have I reached a point of relative comfort and, yes, satisfaction in translating or editing the hundreds of documents that now come across my desk each year.

The primary challenge for any translator of documents or publisher of support or reference material for the K-12 market comes from the significant number of disparate areas in which the translator is required to be at least knowledgeable, if not an expert.

Requests range from the relatively ordinary—general letters, bulletins, brochures, or announcements—to the most specific, convoluted, and complex documents that may contain legal, financial, medical, or obscure academic terminology.

**Tips for Success in the K-12 Field**

From a client’s perspective, here are some tips for translators wishing to break into this field:

**Know your audience.** Many K-12 communications in translation will be read by parents who are unfamiliar with the linguistic eccentricities of American English and have had little exposure to American culture and customs. They may also have limited education and/or language skills in their native tongue.

**Ask questions.** As clients, we prefer to work with translators who ask for clarification about anything unfamiliar or confusing. Guessing leads to errors. Errors lead to a search for another translation source.

**Be accurate.** Verify context; check and double check before submitting a document to your client.

**Deliver on time.** Time constraints are often an issue. We in K-12 must send certain K-12 documents to limited-English-proficient families within a time frame determined by law. Ensure that you can deliver the translation within the requested period before you accept the assignment.

**Be flexible.** K-12 clients can be a great source of future contacts and recommendations to other school divisions if your reputation is that of a qualified, reliable contractor willing to accommodate often variable and unpredictable client needs.
For example, the company might be asked to translate an entire high school course catalog, with descriptions of individual courses and requirements of anything from a road and range course to advanced computer science. Here is an actual excerpt from this year’s catalog:

*IB Computer Science High Level (HL)* continues with the topics developed in *IB CS SL* with the additional topics of computer mathematics and logic, abstract data structures and algorithms, further system fundamentals, and file organization...Topics in Java will include lists and iterators, stacks and queues, recursion, binary trees, lookup tables and hashing, priority queues, and analysis of algorithms.  

Hashing? Stacks and queues? Binary trees? Iterators? Without knowledge or experience in advanced mathematics or computer science, the translator might find these terms difficult, if not impossible, to translate.

Other challenges facing the K-12 translator include terminology and acronyms related to special education or other special groups, for example, ESOL, programs for the gifted and talented, or programs for disadvantaged students served under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which focuses on improving the academic achievement of children in high poverty schools.  

Each of these initiatives utilizes specialized vocabulary and lists of related acronyms.

In addition, there is language that I have dubbed “educationese.” It is unique to those trained as educators and contains both nationally identifiable and locally recognizable terms, titles, phrases, and, again, acronyms. FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), LEA (Local Education Agency), and ELL (English Language Learner) are just a few examples. While these could be deciphered from a search on the Internet, seemingly straightforward terms like “scaffolding,” “crosswalks,” or “bridging” take on a whole new meaning in the context of educationese.

**Bad News, Good News**

The above illustrate but a few types of documents and terminology common to translation needs in the K-12 market. There are myriad others. In short, requests from school divisions could involve communications referencing anything and everything related to the education and well-being of children from preschool age to the 12th grade—and sometimes even beyond. It is probably one of the most fluid and unpredictable markets that exists.

The good news is that the broad and complex needs of the K-12 market provide employment opportunities for translators from a range of disciplines and fields of expertise. Ideally, translation companies and publishers interested in the K-12 market would do well to contract individuals who are not only linguistic experts, but who also have a background as educators of young children or adolescents. Such individuals could provide an insider’s perspective, a valuable commodity for project managers. It would also benefit the industry if there were a certification test designed specifically for the field of K-12 education to identify qualified education translators.

At times it might be necessary for publishers and translation services companies to contract outside translators in specific fields such as law, finance, and technology to assist with terminology. Even with their expertise, however, project managers should make sure to consult frequently with the translation point of contact in the school division during any ongoing project. The project manager should ask questions, clarify, verify context, and check and double check the document before submitting it for publication. Quality and reliability are rewarded by repeat business.

Publishers interested in producing material specifically tailored to K-12 education will find that it is currently a vast, virtually untapped market. Quality bilingual reference materials designed for classroom teachers and administrators are extremely rare. Educators are hungry for translations of vocabulary pertinent to school dis-
districts, such as bilingual dictionaries of terms for K-12 general education classes, ESOL, and special education; bilingual computer and Internet vocabulary for school division webmasters; bilingual glossaries of terminology specific to such academic areas as math, science, art, music, and history; and translation guides for producing documents most frequently used in school settings, such as vaccination requirements, report card comments, or safety rules.

I predict that the K-12 market may soon be “discovered” to a greater extent than ever before. Competition among translation companies and publishers will increase. Those that have the foresight and ability to do what is necessary to establish themselves successfully in this market can be assured that their reputation as competent, respected producers of documents for LEP students and families will create for them a satisfied and loyal client base among school divisions throughout the country. Even more important, resultant increased competition and improved quantity and quality of K-12 translation market resources will help ensure that no school division and no child will be left behind. We will be glad we turned on the lights and discovered the elephant in the room.

NOTES


4. “Local Education Agency Universe Survey.”


7. High School Course Catalog (Prince William County Schools, 2010), 11, 72.


ATA Webinars

December 8, 2010 | 12 noon ET
Tax Tips for Translators
Presenter: John Matthews

January 18, 2011 | 12 noon ET
The Zen of TEnTs
Presenter: Jost Zetzsche

To register and for more information, please check out www.atanet.org/webinars.
I had been the traditional stay-at-home mom. For 10 years I changed endless diapers, pushed my daughter’s stroller through innumerable parks, and held her hand the first time she toddled through the petting zoo. When the time came, we walked to school every day, made orange iced cupcakes on Halloween, and went caroling with her Brownie troop.

Then I got divorced. Suddenly, I had to figure out how to support myself and my daughter, both financially and emotionally, with no family nearby and few friends. I had to start from zero and reinvent my life, and career, as I knew it.

It was scary. At that moment the obstacles seemed insurmountable. Who would want someone who had been out of the job market for so long? How could I literally “be there” for my daughter and work the hours expected of most professionals when her father was already traveling for his job and often unavailable when it came to spending time with her?

Clearly, I needed a plan, but did not have any idea where to start. I made a lot of mistakes. But through trial and error I also picked up, adapted, and developed a few tricks of my own along the way.

The purpose of this article is to offer tools to help you structure your journey of self-exploration. These initial steps are not limited to linguists or other translator or interpreter types, but can be used by all beginning the search for their own personal “holy grail.”

Like life, searching for a career is a journey.

It’s a Marathon, Not a Sprint

First, get yourself in the right frame of mind. Like life, searching for a career is a journey. As Archibald Joseph Cronin, the Scottish physician and novelist, wrote: “Life is no straight and easy corridor along which we travel free and unhampered, but a maze of passages, through which we must seek our way.”

Contrary to popular opinion, it has been my experience that you really cannot have it all, or do it all. At least not all at once. Most likely you will be reassessing, changing jobs, or even careers multiple times throughout your working life. Get used to it!
Unless, due to urgent economic need, you feel you have no choice, I implore you to resist the urge to pore frantically through online postings and then applying willy-nilly to virtually every position. This is a chaotic, often fruitless process. Trust me. I know from experience. If you take the time to assess yourself and your goals honestly, I promise the rest will eventually fall into place, and with a lot less angst in the end. So, as my yoga instructor would say, “take a deep, slow, cleansing breath,” and let’s get started.

Keep It Simple

Whether you are starting from scratch wondering what to do with your language skills or considering a midstream career change that will take advantage of your linguistic abilities in a field outside of direct translating or interpreting, the process of considering your career options can be overwhelming. If you attempt to consider all your options simultaneously, especially in this computer age where, with the click of a mouse, you can literally surf the Internet 24 hours a day, you can become so inundated with infor-
mation that you become immobilized. Again, you cannot do it all at once. The trick to getting started, and staying on track, is to break the process down into small, digestible bites.

Putting your plan in writing and posting it on the wall next to your computer can help. Using a tool such as the personal weekly action plan shown in Figure 1 on page 19 might be helpful. Buy a three-ring binder and put your plan in it at the end of each week. By dating and saving your plans you are creating a journal of your progress for review purposes.

No matter what your process, set out specific steps that are measurable and attainable. Do not beat yourself up if you do not always accomplish goals in the allotted time frame. Do the best you can and keep plugging away. As with dieting, do not give up completely if you stray off the path. Get back on the wagon and keep moving!

Don’t Panic!

Each time you go through this process you will inevitably experience moments of anxiety. Before getting started on your self-discovery, the first task should be to create a support system. If possible, find a buddy who is going through the same process. Studies have shown that having a workout buddy for an exercise program can radically improve your chances of sticking with it. The same theory applies to a career search. If you have someone to whom you are accountable, you are more likely to follow through with your plan.

It is important to reward yourself. Giving yourself specific incentives for achieving short-term goals will provide the needed fuel for you to keep chugging along. Also, keep a list of quick, doable stress reduction techniques on your refrigerator. I call it my “Panic List,” and it includes: call a friend; do 50 pushups and 50 sit-ups; take a walk; have a cup of tea (or glass of wine!); go to the gym; do a little yoga; read a trashy novel for thirty minutes. In short, do whatever works for you.

Once you have your support plan in place the remainder of this “Prequel” is really just composed of two steps: 1) assess yourself and 2) define your goals. Once you have accomplished these two steps you will then be prepared to delve more deeply into your career options.

Assessing Yourself

Simple Self-Assessment Tools

Reread your résumé, revisit your college transcripts, look through those old photo albums from your studies abroad. Sometimes we need to refresh our memories as to what we already know and have accomplished. Do not forget, in this day and age language skills are becoming virtually essential in every field. You are a hot commodity! The translating and interpreting skills you already possess are transferable and will open a lot of doors!

Next, move on to brainstorming techniques. Take out a piece of paper and write at the top: “What am I good at?” Set a timer for five minutes, press the start button, and write down everything that comes to mind as fast as you can before that timer beeps. You can use this same brainstorming technique with other headings such as, “What do I like to do?” (for me, it is being around people); “What do I hate to do?” (e.g., sit in front of a computer all day); or “Everything About Me—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!” The trick to brainstorming successfully is not to over think things! Do not hold back. Put everything you wrote down into a binder, because when it comes time to delve more deeply into the career search, you will be returning to these points, refining them, and using them to help guide you through the next stage. At this point consider yourself as simply “priming the pump.”

Ask Friends and Family

Sometimes you do not recognize your own worth. Once, when the date for an important job interview was approaching, I asked my friend Cathy to do a practice interview with me. What I learned from this exercise is that you should never be shy about going to the people who know you best and asking for their input.

Community College Career Services

The career services centers at community colleges are an invaluable resource that can be found in virtually any area (if you live in the U.S., see the
Most offer career services to the community at large, not just enrolled students. These services include economical workshops, testing, counseling, and other opportunities to help you assess and define your goals. (Other techniques on defining goals will be addressed in the next section.)

I need to offer a few words of warning regarding career matching testing tools. Do not take the results too literally. Look for common threads. For instance, when my sister was 18, she took a test that recommended she become a “teaching nun.” My folks got a good chuckle out of that one, being that we are Jewish. Well, she eventually became a group therapist working at a Jewish nursing home, which, if you really think about it, is not that far off from being a teaching nun!

Also, you may be tempted to Google free online career-matching tests (been there, done that). In my experience, the majority of these tests are just thinly disguised sales pitches for online degree programs. So let the “buyer beware,” especially when it is free!

**Defining Your Goals**

**Go Back to the Beginning**

After a recent flood in my basement, I came across a box of items my mother had saved from my childhood. While sorting through the damp box I came across a document I did not recognize entitled “Open Door Student Exchange Application.” Apparently, I had filled the form out as a 17-year-old before my family hosted an exchange student from Chile.

When indicating my reasons for wishing to participate in the program, besides indicating my desire “to learn to speak conversational Spanish,” I scrawled, “I feel that youth will need to work together in the future to unite our separate countries and this program will help to bring us closer together.” When asked what I felt was the most important problem facing young people at the time, I responded, “lack of communication between… people of different cultures….”

Upon reading this I smiled, realizing I am not really all that different now from the person I was then. My goals and careers have all followed that same common thread: using my language and cultural competency skills in one way or another to improve cross-cultural communications.

**Expect to Reassess Goals as You Pass Through Different Life Stages**

When I divorced I was more concerned about providing a stable home for my daughter than rapidly advancing from my long dormant career. Because I was truly acting as a single mom in every sense of the word, flexibility was a priority.

Initially, I partnered with a colleague in order to start up an international adoption agency in an attempt to maintain control over my own hours and to have the ability to bring my daughter to work with me if necessary. It seemed to be a perfect
fit for me in the sense that I had the international marketing and legal training necessary in addition to connections and my own experience as an adoptive mother. However, due to a confluence of events out of my control I quickly had to make the difficult decision to withdraw from that venture. But that was okay. You cannot hit them all out of the park.

When contemplating my next move I realized that the ability to work around my daughter’s school hours was still a priority, but that I also needed to find a job with insurance. A friend had alerted me to a part-time position teaching English as a second language at a local church. From that experience I decided to pursue public school teaching. It was the perfect fit for me at the time. I was able to work around my daughter’s hours, had insurance, and could bring her with me to work on occasion.

Now that my daughter is older and has moved out on her own, I am once again at a crossroads and reassessing my goals. Changing careers or even relocating overseas are suddenly possibilities that were not on my personal “map” for many years. The question to you, then, is, what is on your current map?

Yes, Make Another List!

I recently happened upon one of my single friends intently scribbling what appeared to be a grocery list. I asked what she was doing and she showed me what turned out to be a list of traits for the perfect mate. Without going into detail about her past love life, let’s just say that her “picker” is clearly off. And she knows it. Even though she has been happy single for two years, she is considering jumping back into “the fray.”

Before doing so, however, she decided to take time to contemplate and create a list of characteristics she is looking for in a man. She unselfishly gave me a copy of her list to share with you. Some of the traits she is looking for include “intelligent,” “creative,” and “passionate.” Your task, if you choose to accept, is to create the same type of list for your career.

Think of it as an exercise that your writing teacher taught in journalism class. Your list, like a good article, should include the five “W’s” and then the “H’s”: “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” “Why,” and “How.”

For me, the “Who” includes identifying who the people are that I wish to serve and for whom I want to work. As to the latter, I want to work for a company and supervisor with certain characteristics that fit with my personality and work ethic. In my case, I must keep in mind that I thrive in an environment where creative, motivated self-starters are encouraged and appreciated and not micro-managed.

The “Where” at this point in my life is quite open, since I am not restricted to a certain area or even country. But I still need to keep in mind my likes and dislikes. Am I a “city mouse” or “country mouse?” Do I prefer to live somewhere with four distinct seasons or a more temperate climate year-round?

The “How” is often the trickiest part. If you are interested in going back to school, but have three children under the age of five, you will have to be creative, perhaps exploring options with “distance learning.” You might also want to consider postponing the “When” until your kids are older.

I encourage you to write down your “W’s” and “H’s” and file them in your binder to help keep you on track. Refer back to them as opportunities arise and reflect on your needs and desires so you resist the temptation to grab the first option that crosses your path.

Conclusion: There is No Right Answer

Fast-forward 10 years. I recently got a frantic phone call from my daughter, Lisa—now a typical college senior—in the midst an acute anxiety attack over what to do with her life. During our lengthy conversation my usually extremely independent “you-can’t-tell-me-anything-I-don’t-already-know” child took on an unprecedentedly serious tone. “Mom,” she implored, “when did you know what you wanted to do?”

Now it is not every day that my offspring seeks my words of wisdom, so I found myself pausing for a moment to consider my response. “Honey...” I paused, then, unable to contain myself, I burst out laughing, “I still don’t know what I want to be when I grow up!”

So I am telling you, as I told her, “And that’s okay. Enjoy the journey.”

NOTE

Having an interesting blog may be a good way to boost your presence online. How? Blogs that are updated frequently and attract readers score high in search engine rankings. To help increase your visibility (and your sales) as a translator, however, you have to plan carefully what to write to attract not only other translators but also clients and prospects. What follows is a simple introduction to help you take your first steps into the blogosphere. The information may also prove useful to people who have already started blogs.

Starting a Blog

Blogs are often considered personal diaries, but they also have other uses. They can serve as professional online brochures, dynamic websites, or even as tools for other purposes. (As an example of the latter, I know of a translator who uses his blog as a repository for glossaries.) Starting a blog is simple. You can just go to one of the various free blogging platforms, create an account, select a template, and start writing and posting. Maintaining your blog and making it interesting for you and for others, however, needs dedication. This can be quite a challenge, which might explain why the typical new blog lasts about three posts, which go something like:

1. “Here is my new blog, I’m very excited about it!”
2. “Here is something more about what I plan to write about.”
3. “Sorry for not writing more often.” [Silence often follows.]

Blog only if you like to write and are confident that you will be able to post on a regular basis. If you are bored by your blog—perhaps you have chosen topics not because they interest you, but only to attract more readers—it will be even more boring for your public.

Domains

You should get your own domain for your blog. There are various ways you can buy a domain, such as through your Internet provider or Web host, or even through some of the blogging platforms, such as WordPress. Even if you do not start hosting a blog on your own domain immediately, you should at least buy the domain name. You can use it later, and this way you prevent others...
from taking it. (For example, although my blog About Translation is still hosted on Blogger, I bought the www.abouttranslation.com domain.)

Redirects
Another suggestion about domains and blog names: if you can, also get names and domains that are similar to your own, and then redirect traffic from them to your main blog or website. For example, besides http://abouttranslation.blogspot.com, I have http://abouttranslation.blogspot.com (with two t’s). I created that blog with the sole purpose of redirecting traffic to About Translation.

Free Blogging Platforms
Blogger (owned by Google) and WordPress are two of the better known blogging platforms. Both are free, but you might have to pay for certain features in WordPress. There are other blogging platforms available, such as TypePad and TypePad Micro, but for some of them, you might have to pay.

Blogger
www.blogger.com/start

WordPress
http://wordpress.com

TypePad Micro
www.typepad.com/micro

If you already have a website, your host probably offers installable blogging software as part of the services included in your hosting package. Our company’s hosting service, for example, offers WordPress. If you plan to install blogging software on your website, the choice of free platforms is even wider, with WordPress, Movable Type, TextPattern, and Serendipity among the leading contenders.

Creating an Account
Using Blogger:
2. Sign in using your Google account login.
3. Click on “Create a Blog.”

Using WordPress:
2. Click on “Sign up now.”

Selecting a Template
Using Blogger: Once you have created your blog, you have access to a dashboard for all your blogs (see Figure 1).

TextPattern
www.textpattern.com

Movable Type
www.movabletype.org

Serendipity
www.s9y.org

Blog only if you like to write and are confident that you will be able to post on a regular basis.
How to Customize Your Blog

All blogging platforms offer many templates from which to choose. At first you might want to select a template and use it “as is.” You can always decide to customize it later. Customizing an existing template may vary from easy to difficult.

**Blog feed:** You can (and should) add an RSS/Atom feed to your blog, so people can subscribe and follow your posts with newsreaders such as Google Reader.

**Handling comments:** Decide how to handle comments from your readers—allow them or not, moderate them or not, or moderate only those that are older than a certain number of days. Beware of blog spam, comprised of comments left on blog posts with the sole purpose of attracting visitors to some other website or landing page.

**Tabs and information about your blog:** If your blogging platform features them, use tabs or separate pages. This will allow you to have one page for posts and other pages for more permanent information (about you, your blog, links to your best articles, and so on).

**Statistics:** Use a hit counter on your blog and activate it as soon as possible. Not only will it tell you how many hits (or visits) the blog received on a given day, but also which pages attracted the most visitors, where your readers came from, and technical information such as the operating system and browser used by visitors. Some blogging platforms (WordPress, and now also Blogger, for example) include tools to track statistics. In other blogging platforms, you have to add them yourself. I use the free version of Site Meter, but you can also use Google Analytics or other services.
I keep a folder with ideas for posts, articles in various stages of development, and even pieces already written, to be published at the most suitable moment, or when I do not have other topics to write about.

**Audience:** You should decide on a target audience as early as possible (e.g., other translators, prospects, a specialization, etc.). Once you have decided, write with this audience in mind. If you do not pick an audience, you might end up addressing readers different from those you wanted, for example, attracting novice translators instead of the prospects you were hoping to reach.

**Style:** Try to write in a simple and interesting manner. If it bores you, it is going to bore your readers even more.

**Posts:** How long should a blog post run? Decide on the typical length for your posts. Not all of them have to be the same length, but bear in mind that for blog posts a good length is usually about one screen (people do not want to scroll down too much when reading online).

**Language:** Another important decision is in what language to write your blog—your native language, your source language, or a combination of both. If, like me, you are going to write in a foreign language, how do you ensure that it is well written? I blog in English. It is not my native language, but I find it easier to write in English than to translate into it. This is because translations have more constraints, since you have to follow an already fixed path. English lets me speak to a wider audience. If you can have the posts edited or at least read in advance, this could help you catch errors or unclear passages. For some of my posts, I show an early version of them to my partner, then, if necessary, I change the posts to incorporate any suggestions.

**Tools:** I usually write short blog posts in Blogger’s built-in editor. For longer articles I use a dedicated blogging text editor (Windows Live Writer) that displays them as they will appear in the blog. Often, however, I start writing more important articles in longhand, then edit and change them until I am satisfied. Only then do I paste them in Windows Live Writer for the final layout touches. To edit my posts and other writing I do in English, I often use Style Writer, a program that helps me find sentences that are too long, correct excessive use of the passive voice, and remove clichés and jargon.

**Windows Live Writer**  
http://explore.live.com/windows-live-writer

**Style Writer**  
www.editorsoftware.com
How to Make Your Blog Known

There are several ways to help make sure your blog is noticed, including:
• Comment on other people’s blogs.
• Offer to exchange links.
• Offer to write a guest blog post.
• Invite other people to write a guest blog post.
• Most important: write interesting articles.

Make sure your blog is public and freely accessible by search engines. In this, I suspect that using Blogger might be advantageous, as it belongs to Google.

Short List of Interesting Blogs

In closing, the box below contains a brief list of some translation and terminology blogs. There are, of course, many other excellent translation blogs. A good place to start to find good language blogs (including translation blogs) is LexioPhiles Top 100 Language Blogs 2010. ATA also maintains a list of blogs on its website and profiles one each month in this magazine in the “Blog Trekker” column.

Interesting Blogs

About Translation
http://abouttranslation.blogspot.com
My own blog: information, news, advice and opinions about professional translation.

Alex Eames’ blog
http://alexeames.com/blog
Alex Eames: a translation blog by the editor of Transfree and author of “How to Earn $80,000+ Per Year as a Freelance Translator.”

ATA Blog Trekker
www.atanet.org/careers/blog_trekker.php
A comprehensive listing of blogs related to translation, interpreting, and language in general.

BIK Terminology
http://bikterminology.com
Barbara Inge Karsch: an excellent new blog on terminology.

LexioPhiles Top 100 Language Blogs 2010
www.lexiophiles.com/featured-articles/the-top-100-language-blogs-2010-the-results-are-in
Listing of the results of The Top 100 Language Blogs 2010 survey.

Localization Industry 411
http://renatobeninatto.blogspot.com
Renato Beninatto: globalization, localization, translation, internationalization.

Musings from an Overworked Translator
http://translationmusings.com
Jill Sommer: interesting thoughts on the translation industry and more.

Thoughts On Translation
http://thoughtsontranslation.com
Corinne McKay: an always interesting and useful blog by the author of How to Succeed as a Freelance Translator.

Translation Times
http://translationtimes.blogspot.com
Judy and Dagmar Jenner: a translation business blog by the authors of The Entrepreneurial Linguist: The Business-School Approach to Freelance. Judy also writes the monthly “Entrepreneurial Linguist” column for The ATA Chronicle.

Translation Tribulations
www.translationtribulations.com
Kevin Lossner: an exploration of translation technologies, marketing strategies, workflow optimization, resource reviews, controversies, and more.
New and now online! Take a look at the latest issue of The ATA Compass, a new periodic enewsletter designed to help buyers of translation and interpreting get the most for their money. Each issue of The Compass contains practical, hands-on information for language services consumers. It appears four to six times a year, and at only one page, clients can read it in just a few minutes.

Consider sending a PDF copy of The Compass to current and prospective clients, political representatives, academics, your chamber of commerce, nearby business organizations, and even to your local media. Not only will the enewsletter help make our profession more visible, but your business will also benefit from a better educated clientele.

To get your name on a future issue of The Compass, send us your ideas: hot topics, best practices, success stories, disasters and lessons learned are all welcome. Drop us a line at compass@atanet.org.

Visit the welcome page of The ATA Compass at www.atanet.org/compass, and be sure to check out the bonus material. We hope you’ll enjoy The ATA Compass, and we welcome your feedback!

The ATA Compass
Your guide to translation in the global market

Organization of American States Staff Federal Credit Union

Individual ATA members can now join the OAS Staff Federal Credit Union and benefit from a wide range of banking services, typically with lower fees and better interest rates.

Services Include:

- Interest-bearing checking accounts
- More than 25,000 worldwide surcharge-free ATMs
- Discounted wire transfer fees
- Auto, mortgage, and personal loans
- Home equity line of credit
- Free identity theft protection
- Bilingual customer service

To learn more about this ATA membership benefit, go to www.oasfcu.org/en/ata.
A few weeks ago, an honorable judge in the District Court of Clark County, Nevada, called me a chicken, and the court reporter dutifully recorded his comment. I respectfully dissent.

I was neither a defendant nor a plaintiff in a trial or any other court procedure. Until that week, my contact with the Clark County court system had been limited to paying a lone parking ticket online and my swearing-in ceremony as an American citizen at the federal courthouse. I was doing my court observation hours in preparation for the oral exam that is part of the court interpreter certification process of the Supreme Court of Nevada. I had passed the written exam, and in spite of my limited simultaneous interpreting experience and a 5% first-time pass rate (lower than the Nevada Bar exam), I was about to attempt the notoriously difficult Spanish-language exam.

Let me elaborate on how the affable judge came to call me a chicken. I had formally introduced myself and explained my reason for being in his courtroom, to which he, with a smirk, said: “Actually, we don’t believe in interpreters here.” And then he burst out laughing, which proved infectious to his bailiffs, the court recorder, and three clerks. I was not quite sure if he was pulling my leg, so I merely smiled politely while the bailiff reached for the tissues usually reserved for relatives of defendants in criminal cases (yes, he was laughing that hard). I was relieved to see that judges and their staff have a sense of humor.

Next, just after the certified interpreter stepped out of the courtroom, a new defendant was called. The judge looked in my direction and asked, “Want to take a stab at it?” At this point, after a mere 10 minutes in the courtroom, I was not even sure if the judge was hearing exclusively civil or criminal matters, or both—it is not in anyone’s interest to use an interpreter who was neither certified, nor prepared, nor familiar with the case before her. That is when, from the bench, the judge, with a smile on his face, called me a chicken. Luckily, he also called the certified interpreter back into the courtroom.

I am a chicken, but I think that is a good thing. As linguists, we have a moral and professional obligation to accept only projects for which we are fully qualified. Everything else would be unprofessional and a disservice not only to the client, but also to the entire translation and interpreting community. We have to be ethical enough to resist the temptation to translate a dissertation about photosynthesis of epi- phytes in the Costa Rican cloud rain forest if biology is not one of your specializations. Instead of accepting a project for which you are unskilled, consider recommending a qualified colleague. This also gets us back to basic customer service: no client likes to hear “Sorry, I can’t help you.” without being offered any solutions. The better answer is, “This area is not within my expertise, but let me recommend my friend, Vera Almanza, who holds a Ph.D. in biology, has worked as a biologist in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, and is a well-known English-Spanish translator.” This way, everyone wins: the client, because she will get a qualified linguist; your colleague, because she will get a project referred by you; the industry, because resources have been allocated in the most efficient and beneficial way; and you, because your colleague will most likely be grateful and will try to reciprocate.

So, call it what you will: being a chicken is a good thing. Instead of chicken, I would like to propose using “healthy respect for what we can and cannot do.” I will make sure I get a copy of this column to the judge. Hopefully, he will see me in his courtroom as a certified court interpreter in the near future.

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This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com.
Blog Trekker

Is There a Translator in the House?


Translators are required to make hundreds of judgments every day. Some of these are analytical judgments, which call on the translator to come to conclusions based on limited evidence. That means answering questions:

• What is the author trying to get across?

• What does this term mean in this particular context?

• Does this adjective modify the whole noun phrase or just the noun in that phrase that is closest to it?

• What is the implied agent in this passive construction?

Other judgments are prescriptive, which is to say that they concern the conventions of the target language, and include questions like:

• What is the best term to express this concept in this context?

• In what tense should this be written? (When there are tenses that exist in the source language but not the target language or vice-versa.)

• Should I use plural markers, singular markers, or no number markers at all? (Again, not all languages have the same options.)

These sorts of questions are of particular importance in cases where the wording of the translation is likely to be scrutinized. Legal translations are an obvious example, but translators of poetry or advertising copy may spend even more time struggling with these decisions.

Most of the time, the answers are obvious or can be determined with a bit of research, but there also exist cases of genuine ambiguity in the source language or lack of consensus in the target language. In such cases it may almost seem that there is nothing to do but flip a coin, but a professional translator is obviously obliged to come to a reasoned decision.

This situation is, in fact, analogous to that faced by doctors on a regular basis. Just as a translator may encounter a sentence that he or she cannot understand, even after consulting all of the dictionaries and Google, a doctor may encounter a patient with symptoms that are not clearly indicative of any one particular illness, even after various diagnostic tests. Or, just as a translator may understand a phrase but be unsure of the best way to render it in the target language, a doctor may know exactly what is wrong with a patient but hesitate when it comes to the best treatment.

In such situations the doctor will seek a second opinion, and the translator’s best course of action is to do exactly the same. At Patent Translations Inc., we are fortunate enough to work in teams, so there is always a native speaker, or a technical specialist, or a legal expert to consult. It is not uncommon for us to have three or four people discussing one particular term or phrase. But many freelance translators do not have this support. Fortunately, it is possible for freelancers to build their own support network.

Related Links

Honyaku English<>Japanese Translation List
http://groups.google.com/group/honyaku?pli=1

Patent Translators List
http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Patent_translators

ProZ
www.proz.com

Japanese Patent Translation List
http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/patent_translation/
There are many places where translators routinely support each other in this way, such as the Honyaku list for Japanese-English translations, the Japanese Patent Translation List, and the Patent Translators list, which is for all languages, but tends to deal with a lot of German. ProZ is also a good place to ask questions and get answers. Keep in mind that, whichever forum you use, your question is likely to get the most attention if you have a reputation for answering other people’s questions.

It is also possible to go to non-translators for an opinion, but just as the doctor will be reluctant to ask the advice of a non-doctor, there is good reason to seek the advice of another translator first. The trouble with muggles is that they are likely to tell you that it does not matter which word you choose (engineers are particularly guilty of linguistic indifference) or to suggest a radically different phrasing, or even a different technical solution to the one described. In short, they rarely “get” what the job of a translator is.

One last source of counsel, which should not be overlooked, is the person or company ordering the translation, particularly if this is a translation agency.

Wherever you turn for your second opinion, remember that asking is a sign of strength, not weakness, and that small-group consensus is the mainstay of almost every profession that relies on judgment.

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The XIX World Congress of the International Federation of Translators (FIT), to be held in San Francisco, California, on August 1-4, 2011, will bring together translators, interpreters, terminologists, and other professionals from all over the world to discuss topical issues. Over 75 educational sessions will be offered in a variety of categories.

Presentation proposals are now being accepted in the following categories: Audiovisual Translation; Community Interpreting; Copyright; Human Rights; Language Standards; Legal Translation and Interpreting; Literary Translation; New Trends; Terminology; Training and Education; Translation and Culture; Translation Technology; Varia.

Proposals will be selected through a competitive peer-review process. Presentations may be offered in English and French only.

**Deadline: December 10, 2010**

The FIT XIX World Congress will be hosted by ATA in cooperation with FIT. For more information, including the proposal form, visit www.fit2011.org/proposals.htm.
Member News

- **Nataly Kelly** is now the chief research officer at Common Sense Advisory.

- **Sharon Neeman** released her music CD “5000 Words” in October. The title song is about the translator/client experience and has been featured on many translation blogs worldwide. Of the 13 songs on the CD, 11 are originals with words and music by Sharon.

- **Jeannette Ørsted** has been appointed the new executive director of the International Federation of Translators (FIT). Based in Denmark, she is a professional translator who has worked in the field for many years. She served two terms on the FIT Council and also served as chair of FIT Europe for six years. She is a member of The Union of Communication and Language Professionals, Denmark.

- **Joanna Pires-O’Brien** launched PortVitoria, an online culture and general affairs magazine aimed at Spanish, Portuguese, and English speakers worldwide. She invites ATA members to submit articles and reviews. See www.portvitoria.com.

- **Bruce D. Popp** is now a registered U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Patent Agent.

- **Vicky Santibéz** is the new Spanish editor at Syntes Language Group.

- **U.S. Translation Company** has been named to MountainWest Capital Network’s list of 100 Fastest Growing companies in Utah.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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<td>2. Paid In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541</td>
<td>10 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mail Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS*</td>
<td>1,722 (1,727)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)*</td>
<td>—0— (—0—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)</td>
<td>10,365 (10,443)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,365 (10,443)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541</td>
<td>—0— (—0—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541</td>
<td>—0— (—0—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Made at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)</td>
<td>64 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means)</td>
<td>172 (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15c (1), (2), (3), and (4)</td>
<td>236 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,601 (10,526)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)</td>
<td>10,732 (10,900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97.8% (99.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Copies Not Distributed 131</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. Total (Sum of 15f and g)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Percent Paid (15f divided by 15f times 100) 97.8%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. (Signed) Walter Bacak, Publisher and Executive Director

Send your news to Jeff Sanfacon at jeff@atanet.org or American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314.
I had a number of interesting on- and off-line conversations about machine translation (MT) post-editing this past week. For the uninitiated, MT post-editing refers to the editing of MT output (and possibly helping the MT engine do a better job next time around). This can be done on your own volition (because you might feel that it increases your productivity if you do—and according to a good number of responses that I received, many are doing this) or at the wish of a client. The MT engine can be a generic program (such as Google Translate or Microsoft Translator) or one that your client has customized. The nature of the underlying engine can also differ. It could be a statistically based MT engine (such as Asia Online or an engine based on the open-source Moses project) or it could be a rules-based MT engine (such as ProMT or Systran).

But despite the fact that there are so many variables, we tend to be very categorical. Whenever we encounter something that has the potential of relevance to us, we seem to feel the need to place it into categories of good or bad. Crowdsourcing? Terrible. Machine translation? Pathetic. Riding lawn-mowers? Evil.

Now, how many of you have been directly and negatively affected by either MT or crowdsourcing? And I do not mean as a consumer—most of us have been affected on that level—but as a professional translator. I would be surprised if we are talking about more than a couple percent, if that. Still, we feel very strongly about it. Case in point: Last week I talked to a friend, a very experienced and successful translator, who told me that he is thinking about opening a completely different business just to make sure that once MT takes over he still has a leg to stand on. And he was not even kidding!

These past few days I have been talking with various colleagues about what, if anything, needs to be done to train MT post-editors. And those conversations have made me understand a great deal more.

There is a lot of hype. Yes, commercial, productive use of MT is happening in some very specific areas: companies with a need for VERY large amounts of translated data that would likely not be translated otherwise, such as Microsoft or Symantec; companies that try to make a point (like the non-English, machine-translated help for Google Translator Toolkit); the military, which probably acts more as a financier than an actual power user (but if it is true, you and I will never know about it...); and a good number of companies and organizations that are gearing up for a greater use of MT. (The member list of the TAUS Data Association (TDA) might give you a good starting point to see who is interested, at least in statistically based MT.) Eventually, there will also be a greater number of language services providers (LSPs) offering customized MT services (many of those already doing so are also on TDA’s member list), especially those that work for large clients with a lot of existing data. And all this will grow.

Now, I might have written almost the same statement four or five years ago. Clearly things are moving a lot slower than many anticipated, despite the huge amount of coverage devoted to MT in the news media and the very widespread private use of services like Google Translate, etc. Still, for some of us, post-editing might become a field in which we could choose to work if it matches our interest and expertise.

It is sometimes said that post-editing MT is like editing fuzzy matches from translation memory (TM). I do not think that is quite true. The fuzzy matches you receive from a traditional TM are terminologically and syntactically “correct” (if not, it is time to clean your or the client’s TM), but they are just not quite the right matches for the current source segment. You do not have any problem understanding the fuzzy match on its own merit (after all, you or a colleague authored it) and can decide relatively quickly whether it makes sense to correct the match or start from scratch.

It is also different from the assembly process that some translation environment tools (TEnTs) provide, in which your translation is pieced together from subsegments in the terminology database or TM. Assembled segments follow the syntax of the source segment and are very helpful as reliable sources for terminology, but relatively rarely as likely sources for a finished translation.

What is also very different—and maybe this is the most important point—is the goal of the translation, the usability factor. Often, if there is MT involved, especially when dictated by the client, the famous triangle of quality versus cost versus turnaround time is shifted toward cost and turnaround time, making a selective edit the primary goal for the post-editor.

In a talk with Mike Dillinger of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA), who has been involved with training post-editors, he stressed the prioritization factor he tries to teach his students. The critical question is “How much editing is enough?” What is the acceptable level of usability for this to be a “successful” translation?

Now, is it a translator who needs to do this or are we talking about a completely new profession here? I think there will be a new profession at some point, but that point depends on...
the quality of the MT output. The more unreliable the output, the greater the need for translation skills. But again, those skills differ from what we are used to in our TEnT-driven lives, and we will need to acquire those skills.

I think it is intriguing to see who will jump into this future opening of providing MT post-editing training. It will be up to conferences like the AMTA this year in Denver or LSPs that work on MT projects to train their translators. But there is no doubt that at some point there will be more formalized training.

One area in which training will play an important role in honing translators’ skills further is in enhancing the quality of the existing MT. This is especially relevant with rules-based MT engines or, for that matter, any MT system that can more or less directly handle input. (For example, with Asia Online, a statistically based MT engine, the changes will not be visible immediately, but they will be visible after a weekly scheduled update.) The goal for MT developers in this case must be to gratify the post-editor with immediate or very quick learning by the MT engine so that errors have to be corrected only once.

If you are just not interested in an opportunity like that then you are firmly aligned with the vast majority of professional translators. Some might be swayed at some point, many will not, but do you know what? There will be plenty of work for both groups. And my friend who thought about starting a new business? Nothing against opening a new business, but MT will not make it a necessity. I am confident that he and most of us with the necessary translation skills will be around doing what we are trained to do for a long time to come.
The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English

Dictionary of English is the third revised and expanded edition of this dictionary. BBI in the title refers to the last names of the three original authors, Morton Benson, Evelyn Benson, and Robert Ilson. The title was changed slightly for this edition, and its subtitle, “Your guide to collocations and grammar,” indicates one of the book’s goals. The editor states that the present edition is more than 20% larger than the previous one; the number of pages has been increased from 386 to 462. The quality of the paper still seems excellent, and the spacing between lines and words has been reduced slightly but noticeably. A workbook, Using the BBI: A Workbook with Exercises, is now available online instead of in paperback (see www.benjamins.com).

The BBI distinguishes between American English (AE) and British English (BE), and not just in spelling, as in the following (partial) entry:

tyre (BE) see tire n.
to deflate; inflate, pump up a… USAGE NOTE: AE has “change a tire”; BE, “change a wheel”

The dictionary is very useful in offering alternatives. For example, the entry for the noun “hospitality” suggests a variety of verbs and adjectives:

hospitality n. 1. To extend, offer, show; 2. To enjoy; repay smb.’s; 3. To abuse smb.’s; 4. Cordial, warm; lavish.
In an excerpt from the long entry for the verb “get,” the meanings of the collocations (shown in quotation marks) again offer alternatives:

(“to deliver”) I have to ~ a message to her;
(“to obtain”) she got a newspaper for me;
(“to cross”) to ~ across;
(“to evade”) we cannot ~ around the regulations;
(esp. AE) (“to support”) to ~ behind (we must get behind her campaign);
(“to overcome”) to ~ over (you’ll have to get over your fear of speaking in public).

Despite the complexity of the entries, it is easy to find the various meanings of the compound verb “come out.” A quick glance at the reference page shows that the shaded letters indicate various verb patterns, but the user can easily ignore them.

**come out** v. 1. (d: intr.) to~ out against (“to oppose”) (to ~ against a proposal); 2. (d: intr.) to ~ for, in favor of (“to support”); 3. (d: intr.) to ~ with (“to make known; to publish”) (to ~ with a new book; to ~ with the truth); 5. (L) it came out that he had cheated; 6. (P; intr.) (“to end up, result”) to ~ on top (“to be victorious”); 7. (s) the pictures came out fine; 8. (misc.) to ~ in spots (“to be covered with spots as a result of illness”); they came out from behind the bushes; she meant it as a compliment, but it came out as an insult; she finally came out openly as a liberal.

The entry for “come out” seems quite complete until we notice that one of the most used contemporary meanings of this verb is missing: to declare openly that one is homosexual.

It is not always clear why some expressions are included or excluded, and many choices of collocations seem idiosyncratic. There are many other omissions, but the dictionary does not aim for completeness. For instance, the entry for “flag” gives only the meaning for “white flag” (“symbol of surrender”), but omits the meanings of “red” and “black flag.” The BBI is incomplete in giving definitions, and perhaps we should not really expect that since it is a specialized dictionary. At times it is incomplete and not really up to date, as in the following: "blowout n. ["flat tire"] 1. To have a ~; 2. To fix a ~.” Other meanings of this term are omitted, such as “feast!” (they had a real blowout), “easy victory” (the game was a blowout), and “oil well blowout.” In addition, “Fish fry n. to have a ~” is included, and the expression “deep water n. ["trouble"] (colloq.) in ~” is not as colloquial as the authors think it is! That being said, the dictionary does include very good usage notes throughout, ranging from a succinct explanation about using “different from” to a quick note indicating that “conducive” cannot stand alone.

The editor seems very pleased that he has included many original quotes as illustrations in the new edition: “Such authentic attributed examples help to motivate language learners—as they would most certainly motivate me!” I am not so sure of this. These quotes contribute to the increased size of the dictionary without adding much value. For example, to the entry “begin” the author has added: “To ~ at the beginning—Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood, 1954*.” Then, four lines down, under the entry for “beginning,” the same quote from Dylan Thomas is repeated and the quote “In the ~ God created the heaven(s) and the earth—*The Bible: Genesis* 1:1” has also been added.

**Overall Evaluation**

The dictionary’s back cover suggests that it will help you to “Speak and write perfect English!” A lofty aim indeed! I have reviewed the book from the point of view of a translator whose target language is English. As translators, we are constantly in a zone between two languages, and this often creates uncertainty and doubts. I agree with the reviewer who wrote that the dictionary “helps you find that elusive word that goes with another and answers questions about which preposition to use.” The BBI *Combinatory Dictionary of English* is very useful in resolving many of these doubts and in suggesting a variety of expressions. I highly recommend this dictionary despite some negatives. Since it does not aim to be completely up to date, I feel that the 1997 revised edition would be equally adequate with a better binding and slightly larger print.
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“Reach a flag” is the New Queries
The Translation Inquirer pur-
A quick check with a friend regarding
wide range of language pair options.
For the first time, he is being exposed to opportunities
for machine translation over a very
home and student version for his new
Netbook computer. For the first time,
bought the Microsoft Office 2010
which states on its site that it is not responsible for the
By the late humorist Jean
unintentional
natural!

New Queries
(E-D 11-10.1) “Reach a flag” is the problematical idea in the operating instructions for an IVR system in a clinical trial. Here is the context: “The system returns to the main menu at the end of each function and when a project or site flag has been reached
unless otherwise specified.”

(E-Gr 11-10.2) In the world of geo-
topology, when discussing a network of Data Net reporting stations, a dist-
tinction is made between the one master station and outlying slave sta-
tions having no ability to initiate mes-
sages on their own. The exception is
data transmission protocols that allow
slave station to originate a message
using a “report by exception (RBE)
 mode.” What is a good rendering into
Greek for the problem phrase in quotes?

(E-Po 11-10.3) “Over-hung moments” obviously occur in mechanical en-
gineering, and so it is that this became a query for a Polish equivalent. I will not quote all of the context material, but the following should do: “Split series couplings are used when application
requirements cannot be met with a single series coupling (i.e., envelope
limitations, over-hung moment require-
ments, etc.).”

(F-E 11-10.4) Okay, we might be getting pretty intimate here. Les régions
périmamelonnaïres sont normales is mentioned in a mammography report. What does the phrase in bold mean?

(G-E 11-10.5) In power plant design,
tenuto al rendiconto is the head-
scratcher here: Il docente è tenuto,
anche in corso d’opera, al rendiconto
dei risultati conseguiti in relazione a
quelli prefissati nella “program-
azione didattica ed è inoltre tenuto a
rispettare il calendario di avvicenda-
mento delle lezioni predisposto dalla
Direzione. What is it?

(I-E 11-10.6) In a text about education,
tenuto al rendiconto is the head-
scratcher here: Il docente è tenuto,
anche in corso d’opera, al rendiconto
dei risultati conseguiti in relazione a
quelli prefissati nella “program-
azione didattica ed è inoltre tenuto a
rispettare il calendario di avvicenda-
mento delle lezioni predisposto dalla
Direzione. What is it?

(N-E 11-10.7) In the world of trans-
portation, what are kryssleie? Har
iverksatt kontroll av transport og
kryssleie is mentioned in the text.
Shipping in particular is the context.

(Po-Sp [E] 11-10.8) We never seem to be able to get through a month without problems with abbreviations. In this case, it is “p.o. i p.b.” in a text about railways. Here is the context sentence: modernizacja układów torowych... p.o. i p.b. Zajączkowo Lub. km
189.504. What are these?

(Pt-E 11-10.9) This is a degree name in
engineering: Engenharia de Refrigeração.
Again, if you can solve this one you
deserve extra kudos, especially since
no other information is available.

(R-E 11-10.10) The word вольтинизм
is an obvious neologism made from воля and альпинизм, so therefore this
is a rare case of no wrong answer. What
kind of mountain climbing is it, and
what would work in English?

(Sp-F [E] 11-10.11) What is juices de
adscripcion territorial? It is remotely
possible that this legal query can be
solved by somebody even without
context for assistance? English is
acceptable as an answer.

Replies to Old Queries
(E-I 8-10.3) (upstream and down-
stream ports): In the world of drug
infusion pumps, a monte and a valle
appear safe to use in Italian for this,
says Peter Christensen. He found reliable-looking Italian medical websites
that used these terms.

(Sp-E 8-10.10) (tueste torrefacto): In
the process used to make this, the
roasted coffee bean looks as if it is
sugar-glazed. This type of roasting
helps reduce the coffee’s acidity and
the bitter taste.
sites call it “torrefacto roasting.” Héctor Beltrán learned from various websites that this roasting process is common in Spain, France, Portugal, Costa Rica, and Argentina. He also notes that torrefacto-roasted beans are mixed with normally roasted beans at the end of the process. Alan Clarke offers a translation of the entire context paragraph as found on page 43 of the August issue: “For the preparation of this product, we have utilized coffees submitted to different roasting processes. Fifty percent coffees with natural roasting and fifty percent coffees with dark roasting. This mixture endows the cup of coffee with a stronger and more bitter taste, giving it body and character.” Gerardo García Ramis says that beans are more brittle when roasted at controlled high temperatures, and this facilitates grinding. As for using torrefaction in English, he cautions that this term is also applied to a different process to cook biomass in an anoxic environment to make it more energy-efficient. Peter Christensen found that his Oxford Spanish dictionary calls it “dark roast.”

(8-10.11) (torta de palmiste): Mercedes Guhl laments that a query this easy came into the column, since the answer was found quickly on the Internet. The term refers to a byproduct of the process of extracting oil from palm kernels. It is a “palm kernel cake,” used to feed cattle, and results from milling palm kernels to extract the oil. Gerardo García Ramis agrees with the English version above by Mercedes. Carlos Gancedo’s translation of it is “palm seed cake.” Sharon Neeman likes “palm oil cake.” Palm oil is the only vegetable oil to have a low fatty-acid content. Fatty acids have a toxic effect on cow rumens, and therefore palm oil is a beneficial food.

(7-10.10) (brindis especial): In Argentina, says Graciela Daichman, it simply means “a special toast.” She believes there is no other connotation to it than that.

The Translation Inquirer looks out the window as he writes this at a scene of baking pseudo-summer heat and cannot get into the Thanksgiving/Christmas mood, but realizes that it will be the holiday season for many readers when this issue reaches them. Enjoy and see you in 2011! Thank you for the

Tips

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4. List your areas of specialization.
5. Review your listing monthly to experiment with different wording or add new information that may set you apart from others.
6. List non-English-to-non-English language combinations, such as Portuguese into Spanish and French into Italian.

Make those updates online at www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories/update_profile.php.
This is the second of two columns based on material in Born to Kvetch: Yiddish Language and Culture in All of Its Moods, by Michael Wex (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2005; paperback reprint HarperCollins, 2006).

In the January 2008 column I explained the possible ways in which “brydegome” was turned into “bridegroom” when “gome” (meaning “man”) disappeared from the English language. “Bridegroom” is accepted as a perfectly natural word today, though “brydegome” simply meant the bride’s male counterpart, while “bridegroom” can mean an inferior male servant who tends the bride as he would a horse.

English is not the only language where things like this happen.

Consider the Yiddish word “bobe-mayse,” transliterated with the “ay” pronounced the same way as in “papaya,” except the “e” is not silent. “Bobe” means “grandmother” and “mayse” means story, and the compound word means “cock-and-bull story,” similar to the English “old wives’ tale.” Everything seems so neat. But it isn’t.

The word was originally “bove-mayse,” from the Italian “Buovo,” from the Anglo-Norman “Bevys,” as in Sir Bevys of Hampton, a medieval legendary knight along the lines of Sir Lancelot and Robin Hood. One of his claims to fame is his killing of 32,000 citizens of London at a time when the entire population of London was about 5,000, aided only by his twin sons and his horse.

In 1507-08, Elijah Levita translated (or rather adapted) Bevys’s adventures from Italian into Yiddish, and in 1541 the translation became the first nonreligious Yiddish book to be printed. According to Michael Wex, the story runs, in Yiddish, like a version of Hamlet gone amok:

Bove’s mother arranges to murder his father, the king of Antona, and then marries the killer. Fearing that Bove will grow up to avenge his father, mom and her new husband try to kill him, too [by poisoning a piece of chicken]…Bove escapes, gets sold into slavery in Flanders, saves Flanders from invasion by…the Babylonians, jumps onto a magic horse…and goes off to free the Flemish king from captivity…. [Before] it all works out in the end[,] Bove kills mom’s boyfriend, shuts his mother up in a convent, and lives happily ever after with [the girl he loves, the Flemish Princess] Druziana and their twins.

The story was a smash hit among Yiddish speakers, and modernized versions began to be published under the title Bove Mayse toward the end of the 18th century. The last edition was published in 1909-10.

Nonetheless, despite editions still in print, the story and its hero gradually faded from the Yiddish imagination over the centuries. But the phrase “Bove mayse” was entrenched in the language, and so “Bove” was replaced by “bobe,” a word of Slavic origin that had barely entered the Yiddish language when Levita wrote his adaptation. As Wex puts it:

To go from a hero on horseback to a toothless old lady, to make Errol Flynn into Granny from The Beverly Hillbillies, requires a trip from Venice to Vilna.

Martin Jacobs sent the following comment about Max Weinreich (1894-1969), whom I identified as a Yiddish “humorist” and whose name was unfortunately misspelled in “Going, Going, Gone!” in the October 2009 column:

Max Weinreich was not a Yiddish “humorist,” but a Yiddish linguistic scholar, probably the most important student of the Yiddish language ever, and author of the monumental History of the Yiddish Language. In one of his papers he mentions that a student who frequented his lectures once remarked, A shprakh iz a dialekt mit an armey un flot (“A language is a dialect with an army and a navy”), but he could not recall who the student was.
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