In this issue:

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Translating Politics
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Don’t Miss ATA’s
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San Antonio, Texas
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“Let’s get this translated.”
That sounds easy enough, but clients unfamiliar with the challenges of rendering content in a foreign language successfully may find their search for an appropriate provider and the necessary steps involved harder than they imagined. How can those who are new to buying language services differentiate vendors among the usual claims of “high quality, in every language, delivered on time,” while getting a handle on our industry’s somewhat unusual metrics for charging? Which criteria matter for evaluating a vendor, and why is it a bad idea to run a corporate website through a machine translation program?

ATA’s Public Relations Committee has made enormous contributions toward improving the public’s perception of our industry. A few years ago, the members of the committee realized the need for better material to educate buyers of translation and interpreting services. The vastly successful Getting it Right booklets (www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right_trans.php), which are now available in a number of languages, opened the door to better client education by providing clear explanations of the essentials of translation and interpreting work and potential pitfalls.

Continuing the client education efforts, The ATA Compass was created as a concise electronic newsletter to supplement this client education campaign. Its purpose was to target buyers of translation and interpreting services with reports, interviews, and background material that would provide guidance on preparing for translation projects and help establish criteria for selecting providers.

In the years since, blogs, with their versatile comment functions and easy accessibility, have taken on much greater importance than conventional newsletters. Therefore, ATA Public Relations Committee Members Corinne McKay, Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo, Lucy Gunderson, and Paula Dieli spent the past few months revamping The ATA Compass as a blog. ATA is excited to announce the re-launch of The ATA Compass at http://theatacompass.org. The site will feature new posts targeting people who contract with ATA members for translation and interpreting services on a regular basis. We are hoping to use The ATA Compass to help members educate current and potential clients, as well as to attract new translation and interpreting clients by providing useful and practical information about our industry. Since the release of the new site, the blog has been getting over 200 views a day, not only from the U.S., but also from France, Cameroon, and the Czech Republic. Please help us spread the word and let your clients know about The ATA Compass.

As always, thank you for everything you do to promote our profession. Enjoy your summer! 

From the President
Dorothee Racette
dracette@hughes.net

Re-Launching The ATA Compass

ATA is excited to announce the re-launch of The ATA Compass at http://theatacompass.org.
With the session reviews for ATA’s 54th Annual Conference complete, the overall program is coming together, both in terms of educational and social offerings. Once again, we are stuffing more activities in every available corner; a Zumba class will join the morning “Stretch, Breathe, and Move” session to help you start the day, and we are working on an exciting interactive project in which every attendee will want to participate. All of these events and more will be in the Preliminary Program, which will be mailed with the July issue of The ATA Chronicle.

As sunshine and flowers burst out around us, autumn seems far away. But before you know it, back-to-school sales will be upon us. My advice is to save yourself the stress of last-minute scrambling and start making your plans to attend the conference now. You have already heard about the importance of staying deep in the heart of the (Texan) action by booking a room at the conference hotel. Do not forget that if you reserve your room at the Marriott Rivercenter by November 4, you will automatically be entered in a drawing to win a free night’s stay! So book your room now, and remember that early birds lock in great deals on flights as well.

The dog days of summer are also a great time to work through that checklist of things you will need: business cards, brochures, any promotional items you might want to have on hand. (Does anybody remember those yummy stroopwafels from last year?)

If you will be working with a professional photographer or web designer to prepare promotional material, remember that, just like you, they appreciate plenty of lead time for projects.

While you are looking at flights, consider adding on a couple of days to enjoy San Antonio. The city is a true delight that invites exploration: cool green spaces, exceptional eateries, and funky art installations await the curious visitor. The historic Alamo, which is right around the corner from our hotel, is a must-see, but there is also the Mercado, a traditional Mexican shopping area, and the historical arts and crafts community of La Villita. You will also find artisan brew pubs, making this the place where you can scratch drinking a prickly pear margarita off your bucket list (I highly recommend it!).

With so many excellent restaurants in easy striking distance (did I mention the Culinary Institute of America has one of its four international campuses here?), ATA’s divisions will be planning social events sure to satisfy your appetite for networking and fine cuisine. My annual admonition to break in your conference shoes applies more than ever this year, as you will find yourself looking for an excuse to stroll the Riverwalk—with a colleague, of course!

So, make your list and I will see you in San Antonio!

From the President-Elect
Caitilin Walsh
cwalth@nwlink.com

Making a (Bucket) List

Save yourself the stress of last-minute scrambling and start making your plans to attend the conference now.

Win a Free Night in the Conference Hotel

American Translators Association
54th Annual Conference
November 6-9, 2013 | San Antonio, TX

Five lucky winners will receive one free night at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, the venue for ATA’s 54th Annual Conference, November 6-9, 2013. Room reservations made before November 4th will automatically be entered to win. The winners will be announced at the Closing Session.

It is not unusual for ATA’s room block to be sold out before the Conference. Don’t wait! Book your room online now. You will find more details on the conference website at http://atanet.org/conf/2013.

Are You LinkedIn?

Sometimes it is a small world, and that is the point of LinkedIn.

E-Networking with ATA

The ATA group on LinkedIn provides an ideal starting point for online networking. It also offers you contacts for individuals outside ATA who are connected to your fellow ATA members. Joining the ATA group on LinkedIn is a fast track to building your e-network.

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a free e-networking service that helps you create an online community of links to new contacts, prospective clients, and great jobs. Through a LinkedIn network you can discover inside connections and reach the clients you need to meet through referrals from people you already know and trust. Your professional relationships are key to building your business.

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Jump Start Your Networking with ATA

Take advantage of your ATA membership. Joining LinkedIn through ATA gives you an instant community with opportunities to grow your network quickly. Don’t wait—get your online networking underway! To join, just visit www.atanet.org/linkedin.php.
The ATA Chronicle

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June 2013

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met April 27-28, 2013, in Alexandria, Virginia. The Board met in conjunction with the Certification Committee and Language Chairs Spring meetings. (In ATA’s Certification Program, each language combination and direction, such as German into English, has its own chair and graders.) Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

Presentation of Candidates: The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee presented the slate of candidates for this year’s election: President-elect: David Rumsey; Secretary: Boris Silversteyn; Treasurer: Ted Wozniak; and Director (three positions): Evelyn Yang Garland, Rudy Heller, Jonathan Hine, Jane Maier, Emily Tell, and Rosalie Wells. (Please see the box below for more information.)

Budget: The Board approved the working budget for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, and draft budgets for 2014-16. The $2.8-million working budget provides an interim financial framework. By using this interim budget, changes and revisions can be made based on the actual year-end figures. The final budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

Certification: Certification Committee Chair Geoff Koby, Deputy Chair David Stephenson, and Committee Member Gertrud Champe reviewed with the Board the changes in the Certification Program made over the past year and discussed plans for the coming year. The Board also discussed opening up the certification exam to non-members. The Board and ATA Headquarters staff will investigate the ramifications of opening the exam to non-members and discuss options at the next Board meeting.

Public Relations: The Board was briefed by Director Corinne McKay on the recent re-launch of The ATA Compass, the blog for language services clients (http://theatacompass.org). The Board was also briefed on my work with the U.S. Bureau of Labor

Candidates Announced

ATA Election | 2013 Annual Conference | San Antonio, Texas

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2013 ATA Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, to elect a president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and three directors. Further nominations, supported by acceptance statements in writing by each additional nominee and a written petition signed by no fewer than 60 voting members, must be received by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee by July 20. Acceptance statements and petitions may be faxed to the chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, Jiri Stejskal, in care of ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6122. Candidate statements and photos of the candidates will appear in the September issue of The ATA Chronicle and on ATA’s website. The candidates proposed by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee are:

President-elect (two-year term):
David Rumsey

Secretary (two-year term):
Boris Silversteyn

Treasurer (two-year term):
Ted Wozniak

Director (three positions, three-year terms):
Evelyn Yang Garland
Rudy Heller
Jonathan Hine
Jane Maier
Emily Tell
Rosalie Wells
Statistics to revise the profile of interpreter/translator in the widely accessed Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/interpreters-and-translators. htm). (I am working with the Joint National Committee for Languages and the Globalization and Localization Association on this initiative.)

**Governance:** The Board discussed governance-related matters, including changes to online proxies, proposed bylaws revisions, and the ongoing review of ethics procedures. The Board consensus was not to make changes to the online proxies. The Board will look at proposed bylaws changes and revisit the progress on revising the ethics procedures at the next Board meeting. (For bylaws changes, the Board approves proposing any bylaws revisions before they are put before the membership for a vote. Bylaws revisions require a two-thirds vote of the voting members to pass.)

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes. php. The next Board meeting is set for July 27-28, 2013, in Houston, Texas. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.
Corinne McKay’s new book, *Thoughts on Translation*, is a wonderful addition to the freelance translator’s library. The book, which includes 100 articles from her blog by the same name (www.thoughtsontranslation.com), covers a variety of topics of interest to freelancers and others who work in the translation industry. As an avid reader of McKay’s blog, I expected to find information I had already seen before. To my pleasant surprise, the articles had been revised and updated for their publication in book form. Also, when reading the book, it struck me that even though I had seen many of the articles in blog post form before, there were times when I had not had a chance to read the articles carefully enough in order to digest and savor the helpful advice and gems of wisdom buried within them. In hard copy form, I found that I was able to enjoy the articles more thoroughly, underlining passages and flagging pages that I know I will want to return to again. Even though I often read books in digital form, I find that there is no replacement for reading a real book, and that was certainly true in the case of McKay’s work.

**Practical Advice for Newcomers and Seasoned Professionals**

*Thoughts on Translation* is a treasure trove of helpful articles written for translators in a style that is clear, accessible, and straightforward. What I love both about the book and the blog is that the information presented always veers away from the theoretical and centers squarely on the practical. While translation theory has an important role, advice with practical applications is something that I find many translators really need, especially if they have recently graduated from an academic program or course and have limited preparation for the very real aspects of self-employment and running a business. When it comes to these realities, many freelance translators do not know where to begin. That said, McKay’s book also includes countless tips that even veteran translators will find useful.

In the article “My Favorite Mistake,” McKay writes openly about her early days as a freelance translator and how her lack of knowledge of typical conventions nearly cost her a client. Not understanding that part of what a
client pays for is the reformatting of a document to make it look as close as possible to the original, McKay once typed her translation into the body of an e-mail message instead of a Word document, thinking she was saving the client the time involved in opening an attachment. A rational thought process, right? But, as McKay observes when reflecting back on her mistake, “Knowing how to translate and knowing how to run a freelance business are completely different things; to succeed as a freelancer, you need to know both.” Indeed, in my discussions with language services providers and buyers over many years, I have also noticed that this is a top complaint among those who work with freelancers—that they do not always understand business basics, including customer service and the importance of timely and transparent invoicing.

Another piece in McKay’s book, “Some Thoughts on Test Translations,” refers specifically to unpaid tests. One thing I love about McKay’s writing style is that she never condescends or lectures her audience, but simply shares her experience and the rationale behind her decisions, allowing readers to make their own decisions. In keeping with this style, she explains that she does not do unpaid tests solely for the purposes of being added to a translation agency’s roster of translators. However, she points out that she has also requested unpaid time from professionals—including a doctor and a financial planner, negotiating for free half-hour consultations prior to signing with them. Likewise, she shares that, for her, investing 30 minutes in a test that appears like it will lead to good opportunities seems to be worth the risk. However, she makes it clear that this is a personal decision that each translator must make individually.

I also greatly enjoyed the article “The Importance of Aiming Low.” The title of the article is partly in jest, because McKay’s real point is not that translators should shoot for goals that are easy, but that many people fail to achieve their goals because of unrealistic expectations. She provides common sense tips for translators pursuing their ambitions, such as breaking large tasks into smaller ones, avoiding waiting to be “completely ready” before starting something new, and acting in accordance with your personality. The examples she provides relate largely to marketing to direct clients, but this advice is applicable to other areas of translation—and life—as well. This article is not the only one in McKay’s book that deals with setting goals. Another piece, “Some Thoughts on...
Setting Goals,” discusses how to target more clients, and suggests ranking your clients by desirability so that you can profile them and locate more of them—a very simple but oft-overlooked pearl of wisdom when it comes to obtaining more direct clients.

Another helpful article in McKay’s book is called “Getting Things Done.” In this piece, she discusses procrastination and the barriers that freelancers often face, especially when working from home, where the workplace tends to bleed into one’s personal life. She offers time-tested advice, such as creating a prioritized to-do list and a schedule to give your workday a clear structure. McKay also provides a few unconventional tips, such as making time to exercise and, quite simply, enjoying what you do. As she points out, “This seems obvious, but when you look forward to your work, the temptation to avoid it in favor of other things decreases, and the reverse is true as well.” When one considers that large corporations devote plenty of time and money toward figuring out how best to motivate their employees, McKay’s attention to this topic is well-deserved for self-employed translators, who must play the role of both employer and employee and keep themselves motivated while making sure the work is done successfully. In this vein, McKay also shares a wealth of tips and insights on topics ranging from time management to motivating yourself and finding proper incentives.

The book devotes an entire section to articles on client service and client relations, covering such topics as what to give customers for holiday gifts to making translation easier instead of cheaper. McKay offers an important section on using objective data in order to set your rates, providing a step-by-step process to work backward from calculating what you want to earn in a given year and figuring out how much work you need to complete in order to reach that goal. In other articles, she discusses client dispute resolution, dealing with unhappy customers, and vetting prospective clients and jobs. Other important sections of the book include translation techniques and quality, the freelance mindset, translation technology and home office setup, and a refreshingly frank section on money matters.

Cross-Pollination of Ideas

Thoughts on Translation is filled to the brim with practical tips, advice, and lessons McKay has learned, along with insights gleaned from other industry veterans. One thing I especially appreciate is that McKay also cites many resources from outside the translation industry, where she finds a great deal of her inspiration. She brings advice from other areas, such as freelance writing, and makes it applicable to freelance translation. Doing this is so important because she is helping freelancers use some of the tried and tested techniques that have been used in other fields, making them relevant for her readers in the process. As someone who tries very hard to help people outside the translation industry reflect on the importance it holds, I greatly appreciate that McKay’s writing does something of equal importance. The cross-pollination of ideas that McKay espouses ultimately helps connect translation—and translators—to a larger world, whether the ideas are coming into or out of our field. Her latest book is a welcome installment in what is proving to be a sturdy chain of down-to-earth and no-nonsense writing.

Of all the goals that McKay has no doubt set, one that she certainly achieves through this book is helping translators learn how to enjoy their work, increase their income, display professionalism, and, perhaps most importantly, lead meaningful lives in the process.
Though our clients may sometimes seem unaware of what it takes to produce a good translation, as translators we know that no matter how much machine translation improves, one attribute it will never match is our very human ability to connect with the source and target audience, both intellectually and empathetically. This connection is precisely what allows us to adapt the original message to achieve the best results for the client. For instance, we understand that even if the author and the target audience live in the same geographic area, they could still be separated by vast social and cultural differences. As such, conveying the intended message successfully requires the translator to bridge these differences in the text. How? Through our in-depth knowledge of various aspects of the target readers, such as their sense of humor, register, professional practices, or even social sensitivities. This insight will go a long way toward avoiding disastrous results for the author/client by getting the message across as tactfully, eloquently, and clearly as possible. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this linguistic and cultural minefield that is our daily bread and butter is to be found in one of my own specialty areas: politics in Spain.

National Versus Regional

First, let me give a very brief description of the scenario in which I sometimes work, which can involve conveying the same message in a tactful manner to different political affiliations. As a translator from both Catalan and Spanish, my direct and indirect clients include both national Spanish and regional Catalan public and private bodies. As an example of the pitfalls this presents, many readers might well consider the previous sentence to be offensive. This is because I referred to Catalonia as a region, not a country. Such an apparently innocent statement may be perfectly acceptable to most readers living in another part of Spain. However, the same statement might seem quite offensive to those living in Catalonia, particularly if they work in the government and are sensitive to the political loyalties of potential voters and patriotic citizens. Such is the importance of knowing who is going to read the text eventually, as well as who is going to pay for the translation. If I say that Catalonia is simply a region of Spain, my Catalan client might not be at all happy. Nevertheless, if the target English-speaking reader

Ask yourself if it is really your job to be acting as a diplomat.
knows nothing of Spanish geography or politics, I must somehow explain what Catalonia is in the translation.

So, using the example above as a starting point, what is Catalonia exactly? Such an apparently simple question may provide a wide variety of answers depending on whom you ask (the client, the reader, the author, etc.). To a patriotic Catalan, it is without a doubt a country. To an equally patriotic Spaniard, it is without a doubt a region. Spain itself and the Spanish government are referred to by most politically correct Catalans as simply the “State.” Obviously, to a reader in the U.S., this word brings to mind one of 50 autonomous regions, which is generally what a typical non-Catalan Spaniard would understand Catalonia to be—an autonomous region. This leads us back to square one. I think by now you are beginning to see my daily quandary.

When Is a Language Not a Language?

The Catalan language is also spoken in the Valencia region on the eastern Levante coast of Spain and in the Balearic Islands, albeit with different dialects. Once again, here is another statement that might cause offense. If you ask the Valencians, they may well tell you that they actually speak a different language called Valencian, while the islanders may tell you they speak a language known as Majorcan. (Majorcan can itself be referred to by other names depending on the island.) In fact, such sensitivity has led some documents in Europe and Spain to refer to what is essentially the same language in politically correct yet linguistically clumsy terms, such as “Catalan, which is known as Valencian in the Valencia territory, and Majorcan in the Balearic Islands.” This kind of diplomatic chicanery should keep everybody happy but the reader, who simply wishes to get some concise, direct information.

So, when is a language not a language? The short answer is—when it is a dialect. And here we enter another political minefield. Ask a linguist what the difference is between Catalan and Valencian, and he or she will most likely tell you that they are essentially the same language with some minor differences—in other words, two dialects of the same language. But, as is usually the case in any country, when we ask a politician such a simple question, the answer may vary wildly. Many Catalan politicians will tell you that both Catalan and Valencian are one language (and they will call it Catalan). Many Valencians, however, will call the language they speak Valencian, and may even tell you it is a language separate from Catalan. Again, this will depend on their nationalistic and political tendencies (e.g., pro-Spanish, pro-Catalan, pro-Valencian, nationalist, anti-nationalist, or couldn’t-care-less).

While many Valencian politicians and public institutions consider their local tongue to be a separate language, they have not been successful in convincing linguists, official international bodies, and legal institutions that it is more than a dialect. For example, when Spain was required to have its constitution translated into all of the country’s official languages and deliver copies to the institutions of the European Union before holding its referendum on the EU constitution, some of the European delegates were baffled to find that the Valencian and Catalan versions were virtually identical.

You may be thinking that translations between Catalan and Valencian would lead to a large number of fuzzy matches due to the many similarities in both vocabulary and grammar, and you would be right. In fact, most linguists agree that Catalan and Valencian are indeed dialects of the same language. Unfortunately for translators and patriotic Valencians, the International Assigned Numbers Authority has decided that the two “languages” merit just one language code for translation memories, etc.: CA (which presumably stands for Catalán).1 Furthermore, in my own experience, the call for such translations is virtually nil. I have never heard of a translator being asked to “translate” from Catalan into Valencian or vice versa. Such a “translation” would more likely be considered a “correction” or “revision,” particularly by Catalans “correcting” from Valencian into Catalan.

One also has to consider that most Catalan speakers, and some purportedly politically correct Spaniards, generally refer to Spanish as Castellà (Castilian). This is a wide generalization that associates the Spanish language with its geographical roots in
Castile. This solution thereby avoids associating Spanish with the entire territory of Spain (which would include Catalonia), even though it is indeed the only official language covering the whole of Spain.

**Geographical Distinctions**

Geographical terminology can also vary depending on whom you ask. Catalans generally refer to their own territory as a country and to the Valencia area as the “Valencian country.” In fact, both the Valencia area and the islands are often known by Catalans as the “Catalan countries,” which many in said regions find offensive, as they may not want to consider their land to be a mere extension of Catalonia. They are mostly happy to call themselves Spanish and their country Spain. The Valencians themselves, on the other hand, mostly refer to their own region as an “autonomous community region” (the translation is overly literal). They refer to Catalonia in similar terms (an autonomous region of Spain), which the generally patriotic Catalans find equally offensive, as they consider their land to be a country in itself, not merely part of another.

In the end, since those who will be reading my translations reside both in and outside of Spain, I tend to follow a policy of simply getting the message across as succinctly and clearly as possible. Sometimes I might feel it is necessary to acknowledge my clients’ patriotic leanings by providing an explanation in parentheses the first time sensitive expressions appear. For example, if I am translating a text written by Catalans for an English-speaking audience unaware of Spanish geography and politics, the first time the text refers to Catalonia as a country I might write, “throughout the region [the country of ...
Catalonia," or "... throughout the country [region of Spain]." One can also resort to translator’s notes. As my backup in the face of potential client complaints, I may turn to official lists such as those from the European Union or UN (see the links in the box on page 15), or even to examples used previously (or noticeably omitted) in the past by the same organizations in official texts or laws. Another possibility is to make a note of the terms generally used in articles and reports in internationally renowned media such as the BBC, The Economist, or The New York Times.

A far simpler option, of course, is to omit the word “region” or “country” in the target text (e.g., simply put “Spain” or “Catalonia”). While the UN may officially refer to a country as the Democratic People’s Republic in order to avoid displeasing the country’s political representatives, depending on our target readers, we may simply decide to call it North Korea in a general text to avoid treading on anybody’s sensitive toes.

**Translating Politics**

When it comes to politics, there are times when it is not humanly possible to avoid offending someone—when cultural, religious, or political differences are simply too wide to bridge. It is a sad fact of life that some people can be generally offensive, while others can be easily offended. It may even be ethically wrong of us to attempt to soften a message, as this in itself is a manipulation of the source text (or voice). Ask yourself if it is really your job to be acting as a diplomat. If you are not sure, you should simply check that the client and the author are aware of the effect their text is going to have on end readers. This means consulting with them and offering possible alternatives to the original wording. Another option is to create a “political” glossary documenting each client’s preferences, including, for example, their preferred country/region/language names. You may even decide to refuse the job if the opinions and expressions used are offensive to you personally.

No doubt there are other intricate linguistic hotspots around the globe where the translator must go to great lengths to avoid stepping on the political toes of clients and readers. I would go so far as to say that the world’s greatest diplomats are indeed those who are reading this article—translators and interpreters. All of you in your different areas of specialization come across your own challenges in terms of bridging the cultural divide for your clients, who mostly remain blissfully unaware of the knowledge, thought, and imagination necessary to convey their messages smoothly from one language into another, and from one culture into another. It is precisely this human skill that makes your work so essential. Clients who ignore this fact do so at their peril.

**Notes**

1. The International Assigned Numbers Authority is responsible for coordinating some of the key elements that keep the Internet running smoothly. Specifically, it allocates and maintains unique codes and numbering systems that are used in the technical standards (“protocols”) that drive the Internet. For more information, see www.iana.org.

2. For example, see http://eur-lex.europa.eu.
I am an unusual Brazilian, for I hate coffee. Well, I do not particularly hate it, but for the most part I do not remember it exists. Until a friend buys me some, that is. I will then sit and sip it slowly enough to get me through a conversation without embarrassing my host. Half of my cup will be cream, anyway. And sugar. Lots of it (these days, the yellow stuff, actually). Yes, I like my coffee sweet.

For most Brazilians, myself included, coffee is an important part of civilized life. To be offered some is a welcome sign of appreciation, the opportunity for a well-deserved break, an invitation to chitchat, or a chance to close a deal. So, I never push the cup away, although I hate it. Then again, it is just coffee. Hot water put through some roasted ground beans. The options on how to have it done vary from strong to mild and from sweet to black. Period. There is not much else to it. Most Brazilians (and I bet even Colombians) would agree there should not be much more to it. Unless, of course, you are in America.

America is a different ball game. And the ball game is called Starbucks.

I used to go there a lot, usually to accompany my wife, who suffers from a severe case of coffee addiction. I have learned that depriving her of coffee is not the safest thing to do, and so I usually settle for some decaf. But I never get it right. Have not at least, so far. Not once.

Starbucks is as much a pleasant gourmet experience as it is an unpleasant language nightmare. Even for the coffee-savvy. Their communication strategy seems designed purposefully to mix you up. At Starbucks one is left to wonder how coffee can possibly be present in so many varieties and proceed from allegedly so many different sites. There is, for example, the Brazil Ipanema Bourbon, which is unheard of in Brazil—or in Ipanema, for that matter. You can also have the Joya del Día or the Ubora blend, and then Sumatra, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and a list of countries as long as the United Nations roster.

Once you have decided where you would like your taste buds to travel, you find yourself under pressure to nod or shake your head through a series of further yes-or-no questions: Strong roast? Venti or tall? Grande, maybe? Whipped cream? For here or to go? Not getting half of these queries, and too embarrassed to keep an angry line waiting through a tedious menu repetition, I rake my mind for quick ways out of that conundrum. I have tried many different strategies and abandoned just as many. Checking the giant menu board hanging from the ceiling does not work, trust me. Their signage, which should help you order quickly and comfortably, does the exact opposite. Starbucks uses a language of...
its own. Here tall means small, and grande—which is large in Spanish—means medium. The only option left as the probable opposite of small is venti, which is Italian for twenty. Now, why twenty? Why not mille (“thousand,” if we are sticking with Italian) or fifty? And what is with tall? What about short, or its Spanish equivalent: corto?

At the end of about 15 seconds of awkward silence, I choose to simply try my luck as the questions are repeated, and I alternate between yes, no, and random pointing, all the way through “next customer, please.” I then sit in resignation, waiting to see what the heck I have ordered this time, knowing full well that I still have one challenge ahead: recognizing my order when the barista shouts it at the far end of the counter, always badly butchering my name: “A grande pumpkin latte mocha frappuccino to go for Mr. Magorrailles.” Well, I guess that would be me!

Coffee in hand, I let my mind wander as I try to regain my balance. There must be a secret code here somewhere, and the Robert Langdon approach decaf, no whipped cream, for the company. It keeps customers on their toes, guessing in endless trial and error and coming back for more until they have tasted the entire menu. How else could they tell a frappuccino from a cappuccino, a chai from a chai latte? Despite similarities in spelling, some of those drinks taste and feel totally different. I had to order them separately, several days apart, to learn the difference the hard way. (I hate coffee, remember?)

So far I have gotten my decaf right only once. Then again, not quite. After much rehearsal I managed to put on a confident look and spit out the words in neat sequence: “A tall, plain decaf, no whipped cream, for here, please.” To make my plan completely foolproof—and to protect my privacy in case of another fiasco—I adopted the most conspicuous alias, Daniel. The young lady behind the counter was speechless, except for one last question that she insisted on asking—some unintelligible offer, which I charmingly declined.

Coffee was eventually served as it should be. Only the cup was inconveniently filled to the brim, forcing me to pour a third of it back into the trash container to accommodate some Half & Half. I ended up burning my hands and messing up big time. “Not a problem. Not a problem,” said one of the employees as she rushed to my aid, quickly adding, “Next time she asks if you want room for cream, you’d better say yes.”

Starbucks has done little to change the ordering anxiety their system inspires. Until they have put themselves in their customers’ shoes they will never know. Come to think of it, maybe they do not need to. Knowing you will keep trying their menu items at your own expense is a justification as good as any other. Something else I learned is that most of us—with the exception of my wife—do not really care that much about coffee anyway.

Language choices are more arbitrary than one would think. Starbucks is probably unaware of the mysterious code breakers believe it is just one cup away and keep reaching for that refill. Now, if you are still wondering what I really think about coffee after so many trips to Starbucks, review the preceding paragraph. The answer is shouting at you, encoded in acrostic encryption. Do you see it? Here is a tip: focus on capital letters. By now it should not surprise you.
Some of you may have already heard of Speechpool, a collaborative multilingual website where interpreters can exchange practice material (http://speechpool.net/en). Launched earlier this year with funding from the U.K.’s National Network for Interpreting (NNI), Speechpool is being developed by faculty at the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Leeds. When I first heard of this project in January, I got in touch with Sophie Llewellyn Smith, the founder, to find out more about the program. The following interview details what I learned.

But first, here is a little more background on Sophie Llewellyn Smith. She trained as a conference interpreter at the European Commission in 1994, with French, German, and Greek as her working languages. She served for two years as a temporary agent with the Directorate General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation, also known as SCIC), the European Commission’s interpreting service and conference organizer. She returned to the U.K. in 1996, combining freelance interpreting with interpreter training at the University of Leeds, where she also developed online material for conference interpreter training for NNI and Online Resources for Conference Interpreter Training (ORCIT) projects.

Sophie, you have just launched Speechpool, a speech-sharing website for interpreters. Could you tell me a little bit about what it has to offer?

Speechpool will offer interpreting students, graduates, and practicing interpreters a forum to upload practice speeches and view material other users have uploaded. The idea is to create something truly collaborative in the form of a multilingual website and a Facebook page.

Many students already give each other practice speeches in class or in groups outside of class. It would not be too much of a stretch to record these speeches on a laptop, video camera, or tablet computer and allow others to benefit from them. If everyone gets involved, we could build up a large and dynamic bank of video clips very quickly.

How did the project come about?

I spent several years as an interpreter trainer at the University of Leeds. Every year, students would ask for good sources of practice material. Our main message to them was that they should prepare well-structured speeches for each other and practice in groups outside of class. We gradually developed the idea of uploading audio files onto a file sharing website. We still had a problem with source languages, though; sometimes our students were looking for speeches in a particular C language, but there...
was no native speaker of that language in the course. It occurred to me that students around the world were probably doing exactly the same thing. Surely it would make sense to pool all of that material and make it freely available to everyone.

Since last summer, I have been working hard with a web developer to create a suitable website, and I have been very fortunate to receive financial backing from NNI in the U.K., along with a lot of help and goodwill from students and alumni of many interpreter training institutions. Now that the basics are in place, we are gradually working on adding more language versions to Speechpool and starting to build up our stock of speeches. The idea behind Speechpool is nothing new, but I hope the scale and ambition of the project and the features available on the website will make it a very useful and widely used resource.

What target group do you have in mind? Are there any prerequisites that have to be met by those who would like to become involved?

The website was designed with conference interpreting students in mind, but if the project is successful, I would expect that other groups might take an interest, such as graduates wanting to maintain their skills or prepare for a test, practicing interpreters trying to add a new language, or prepare for a test, practicing interpreters looking for material to use in class, or even language learners. It is also possible that the content of Speechpool might be of interest to public service interpreters, who make up a large proportion of the interpreting market in some countries and do not always have access to material (or even to training).

We have set some limits on users who would like to upload material. This is to try to ensure that the speeches are of an adequate standard. You will need to be an interpreting student, graduate, or practicing interpreter to upload content, and you will have to create a login account.

Walk me through the website. How does it work?

First of all, I should say that the interface is multilingual. Currently, there are parallel versions of Speechpool in English, French, Hungarian, German, Greek, Italian, and Japanese, and it is our hope that dozens of other languages will follow. If you want to watch a speech in Hungarian, for example, you simply go to the Hungarian version of the site (you can navigate from the home page).

To find a speech for interpreting practice, you will use a search function that allows you to search by topic (e.g., agriculture, finance, health, etc.) and/or keyword. We hope this will allow users to refine their searches and find the most relevant speeches.

To upload a speech, you will need to fill in an upload form with details concerning the topic, keywords, and links to background material. In order to avoid the site crashing under the weight of massive video files, we have set it up so that speeches are actually uploaded to YouTube, then embedded in the Speechpool site. This means users will have to create a YouTube account. For those who have concerns about privacy, YouTube allows you to adjust privacy settings to “unlisted,” so that the speech is only visible to those who have the link. It sounds rather complicated, but once you have a YouTube account, it is really very quick and easy. We have counted on the fact that the new generation of interpreters is very comfortable using social media and file sharing platforms such as YouTube and Facebook.

What features or functions does Speechpool offer users?

The website has a few interesting features. First, when you have watched a speech, you will be able to leave comments. You will also be able to leave a link to your own interpreting performance (on YouTube) and ask for feedback from other users.

One of the important features of the site is that the difficulty level of these speeches will not be rated by an outside authority. Instead, the users themselves will vote on the perceived difficulty of the speech (a bit like the TripAdvisor site where you can vote on hotels or restaurants). This cumulative assessment by users will give each speech a “star rating” for difficulty. When you search for a speech, not only will you be able to sort the results by star rating, but also based on whether the speech is recent or very popular.

We hope that users will upload high quality speeches, but to address any problems we have created a quality alert button. If you watch a speech and feel there is a significant problem with the sound or image quality, or with the quality of the speech itself (i.e., its content), you will be able to click on the

We see Speechpool as an interactive site where users can meet, chat, and ask for feedback or help.
quality alert button and send an e-mail to the site administrators to have the speech removed.

We see Speechpool as an interactive site where users can meet, chat, and ask for feedback or help. To encourage interaction among users, we have created a Speechpool page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/Speechpool). This is where users can ask for a particular speech. For example, you might post, “Could someone please prepare a speech about EU fisheries policies in Portuguese?”

To make the material uploaded to the site even more useful, we are asking users to include two links to relevant background material. We are also working on a way to allow uploads of transcripts and glossaries.

**What languages, topics, and interpreting modes will the speeches cover?**

I confess that I have taken a maximalist approach here. I cannot vouch in advance for what the speeches will cover, because it depends on who gets involved and uploads speeches. However, the website is designed to accommodate speeches suitable for consecutive or simultaneous, along with a wide range of topics and a truly vast number of languages. We are currently working on versions of the Speechpool site in the 23 official languages of the European Union, as well as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Russian, Croatian, Turkish, Icelandic, and Macedonian. After that, we will have to see what comes next!

I should add that I expect Speechpool will include speeches given in a range of accents, including non-native accents. Many interpreters are frequently called upon to interpret for speakers who use an unfamiliar accent or for someone who is not a native speaker. The Speechpool
site is designed to offer speeches of this type. There will be an indication of whether the author of the speech is a native speaker and what sort of accent he or she has. One of the exciting things about this project, to my mind, is that it could bring together interpreters from all over the world. For example, students from Ghana, Cameroon, and Mozambique have volunteered to prepare speeches.

There are already a few speech repositories available on the Internet. What added value does Speechpool offer?

There are pros and cons to every speech bank. They serve different purposes. In a sense, Speechpool is not groundbreaking: there are already speech banks on the Internet set up by students to practice together. They tend to be small-scale and use audio files. Some of them are short-lived; they grind to a halt when the founding students graduate. And, unfortunately, at least one has been taken over by pornographic spam posts. Speechpool can offer something on a much larger scale—wide language coverage, video clips, and it is our hope that the site will be more permanent.

Of the larger-scale speech banks, some offer “live” recordings of political debates or speeches only, while others are libraries of various speeches that were not prepared specifically as pedagogical material for interpreter training. For example, the SCIC/European Parliament repository [author’s note: access to this repository is restricted to selected users] offers a mixture of speeches, some of them recorded live in parliament and others prepared by trainers as pedagogical material.

The idea behind Speechpool is that it should largely contain speeches prepared by students for students (or at least by interpreters for interpreters), in video format. All the material will be original. There will not be any video recordings of political speeches or parliamentary debates. There will be minimal “policing” of the site, and users will be responsible for posting high quality content. If everyone joins in, it will be a very dynamic resource with a rapid turnover and a large number of speeches.

I see Speechpool as a more interactive site than many speech banks, and the Facebook page is a nice opportunity for users to chat and make requests. The fact that users will vote on the difficulty level of the speeches is another distinguishing feature.

All in all, I suppose the added value I see is that Speechpool will allow students to take responsibility for their own learning, but with a much wider pool of partners than might otherwise be possible. In an idealistic way, I see Speechpool as a way of bringing the different strands of the interpreting community together and creating something genuinely collaborative for the common good.

Is the Speechpool site already up and running? Can people use it to view and upload speeches?

The short answer to this is yes. We are still busy testing the site, but some speeches have already been uploaded. As I mentioned previously, the English, French, Hungarian, German, Greek, Italian, and Japanese versions of the site are available, and we will be rolling out other languages gradually. I expect the next few versions of the site will include Spanish and possibly Macedonian.

How can people get involved in Speechpool?

The most important message I want to get across is that Speechpool will be free to use (though not to run) and easy to access once you have created a login account, but, like any other collaborative project, its success will depend on the users. If you can help us translate the content into another language, please e-mail speechpool@gmail.com. More importantly, if you think this is a useful resource for interpreting students and you plan to view speeches and use them for interpreting practice, please upload a few speeches first. Speechpool is totally based on the principle of “scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours,” so get involved! Prepare a speech, upload it to YouTube, and register with a username and password. We will be happy to oblige!

Where can readers find out more?

Information on Speechpool can be found on a number of sites, including:

- I presented the project at the recent SCIC Universities Conference in
March, and my presentation is available in the archive (http://bit.ly/W1Gbmm).


- The project was featured in a recent video interview for the interpreting blog A Word in Your Ear (http://bit.ly/17OTsoU).

As I said earlier, Speechpool has a dedicated Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Speechpool). Click “like” to receive regular progress updates and to become part of the Speechpool community. You can also follow Speechpool on Twitter (@Speechpool). Most important of all, why not visit the site? You will find it at speechpool.net/en.

The website is designed to accommodate speeches suitable for consecutive or simultaneous, along with a wide range of topics and a truly vast number of languages.

ATA’s Online Directories
Six Tips to Help You Make Contact

1. Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

2. Update your contact information, especially your e-mail address and phone numbers.

3. Use the “Additional Information” field, noting education and career experiences, unusual specialties, and any dialects you can handle. By using a “keyword” search, clients can find your services based on a set of very specific skills and experience.

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.

A listing in ATA’s online Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services or the Directory of Language Services Companies can be one of your most valuable member benefits. With nearly four million hits a year, consumers and businesses have clearly learned to look at ATA’s directories first when shopping for professional translation and interpreting services.

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As a court-certified Spanish interpreter, I have all sorts of interpreting assignments in a wide variety of places, and not all are fancy and nice, even though some of them are (think well-appointed conference rooms at top law firms with expensive chairs and lovely espresso machines). Once in a while, I receive an assignment to go interpret in either a jail or prison. Even though I am far from an expert in this field, here are my tips for getting it right though I am far from an expert in this field, only court-certified interpreters are allowed to interpret in these settings, and that is a good thing because you really need in-depth training and a solid legal background. In terms of difficulty, these assignments can be quite challenging and usually involve a lot of sight translation.

Dress conservatively: This might be a no-brainer, but I see plenty of attorneys, social workers, clinical psychologists, and other professional women who wear low-cut blouses, high heels, and tight tops. Prison or jail is not a good place to show off your figure (if you are a woman). Most of the inmates will be male, and while I am not alleging anything, you should dress conservatively. Wear opaque pantyhose or tights if you are wearing a skirt. Choose a conservative jacket that fits you well, and if your blouse is a bit too low-cut, consider adding a scarf, which looks nice and can be taken off later. Avoid high heels: you might have to walk a bit, and the sound of high heels on concrete floors is much louder than you think. In general, avoid calling too much attention to yourself. I do not wear any long necklaces or earrings and keep jewelry to a minimum. I usually keep my watch, my only truly expensive item, in the car or leave it at home. Avoid zippers, as they will surely set off the metal detector. Do not use belts if you can avoid them.

Do not bring anything dangerous: Obviously, you do not want to go into the facility with a weapon, but most facilities also do not allow things that you might consider harmless. Inmates can make weapons out of, or simply misuse, all sorts of things, so you might have to sign a disclaimer that you are not bringing in paper clips, pencils, food, water (yes, it is just too bad if you are thirsty after talking for four hours), medications (leave them in the car), and, yes, cell phones. Prisons and jails are serious places, so if you do not like going through metal detectors, surrendering your ID at the front desk, and being searched, then consider declining these types of assignments.

Locked rooms: Unless you are doing a video/phone conference, you will be locked into an enclosed space with the inmate, who is traditionally not handcuffed. The other person(s) in the room might be an attorney, clinical psychologist, or a caseworker. Prison/jail guards will be outside the room, but many facilities are so understaffed that you might have to wait a while after you buzz the guard (via a button) after the meeting is over and you want to leave. In one city jail, the attorney and I waited in the room, with the inmate, for roughly an hour. Luckily, the city jail does not have anything against bringing in snacks, so I munched on a granola bar. I was not sure about food-sharing protocol with an inmate, so I ate the whole granola bar myself and felt bad, as I have good manners.

Depressing: Going to jail or to prison is not for the faint of heart, so you must be prepared for a mentally draining and emotionally challenging situation. In federal prison, people are usually locked up for quite a while, but county and/or city jails tend to house those with shorter sentences. I would say 99% of the inmates for whom I have interpreted (all male) have been very well-behaved and very polite, but you can sense their desperation and anger, which can be heartbreaking. In terms of shaking hands, I usually observe what the other people do and then follow suit.

I hope you found this short list of tips helpful.

Yahoo! Business Discussion Group

ATA members can discuss business issues online at the following Yahoo! group:
http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices. You will need to register with Yahoo! (at no charge) if you have not already done so, and provide your full name and ATA member number in order to join the group.

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It was only when the plane’s wheels hit the tarmac that I was jarred awake from the fitful slumber I had fallen into shortly after takeoff. I was very tired from a trial that had taken much longer than expected, leaving me very little time to prepare for this assignment, which I knew was going to be a bear. It was a very sensitive case involving alleged malfeasance by government officials in the host country during the construction of a power plant. As if to confirm my as yet unfounded suspicions, our party was met at the jet bridge by two armed uniformed guards with a military jeep to take us to our destination. I forced my mind to stop racing despite the memories that came flooding back of when I left my homeland under similar circumstances at the age of nine.

The colleague who had been chosen to work with me, because I refused to submit to full days of interpreting by myself, especially in these circumstances, looked good on paper. He was a government interpreter seemingly with a lot of experience. The following morning, after the advocates for both sides set the tone for the proceedings by arguing about everything under the sun before even starting to take testimony, we finally settled into a rigorous working pace—that is, after the other interpreter showed up, almost an hour late. My colleague, whom I will call Raúl, did not exhibit any sign of camaraderie whatsoever during the several days we worked together. He was shifty-eyed, had a loud, raspy voice and a pretty thick accent, but he did his job briskly and efficiently, supported by unwieldy stacks of documents that I had never laid eyes on and which he explicitly refused to share. If he wanted a break, he would just stop talking, notwithstanding the juncture where we were, get up, and walk out of the room to smoke. After his turn was over, he would settle back in his chair, a notebook on his lap and his eyes fixed solemnly on me, waiting for me to make any mistake he could report to his handlers.

While he interpreted, I took copious notes of hitherto unheard terms, and I was able to appreciate that this man had all the “required” interpreter traits. He was very fluent, focused, able to manipulate the registers, and seldom had to ask the court reporter to repeat questions, which spoke to his good memory.

Nonetheless, it brought to mind a long-held conviction of mine that in order to be successful, interpreters must embody not only these “hard” skills, but also the “soft” skills that are seldom mentioned. Raúl had no intuition of which to speak. He could not tell that the attorneys, even his employers, resented his unwarranted interruptions to take a break, which could happen during key testimony. He had no empathy for the witnesses. They were very nervous and would ramble on, to which he responded by brusquely shoving his open palm two inches from their face. He did not have any empathy for me, either, knowing that I was handicapped by not having many of the documents he was hoarding. He was disrespectful to the entire group, arriving late more than once. In short, he did not have the people skills we need to interact successfully in society.

As an employer of interpreters, I have often had bilingual clients who are familiar with language nuances and prefer to work with less linguistically talented interpreters. Some of these interpreters are personable to the pros, but do not have the ability to deal positively with others. Food for thought: I think it is easier to perfect language skills than emotional skills that have been unconsciously ingrained over a lifetime.
Sometimes, words just do not cut it. As interpreters, we often have to rely on facial expressions, body language, voice tones, quality of speech—aspects of communication that we can easily take for granted. Of course, life usually gives us the experience we need to understand the unspoken, and we can “see” what somebody is trying to communicate pretty innately. When I reflect on my ability to read people, I have to acknowledge that I was blessed to have had a relative with a communication disorder. She was my paternal grandmother, and when I was about 10, she was struck with a brain disease. Although her illness severely limited her ability to speak, she made sure her voice was heard loud and clear for the rest of her years.

Grandma’s ability to communicate was amazing. I remember she would suddenly get inspired to tell us a story about a photograph on the coffee table or would pull out an album to share and “talk” about. She would point a lot, and would sometimes try to write words in the air (that was never helpful, but we smiled and nodded a lot). Then she would say one of the few words she knew. Her limited vocabulary included words such as “mother,” “love,” family names, and a few deeply ingrained expletives. What truly told the story were her expressions and her voice. When she was trying to express affection or something happy, her eyes would light up and her words would be deep and slow … like a long embrace. When she described something that infuriated her (and boy, did she know how to express that!), she would become especially animated, and sometimes fall into her own language of gibberish. These, along with writing a word or two in impeccable handwriting, were the ways we would hear the stories of her youth, events in her life, her joys, her sorrows. When she felt there was more to say that she just could not express, she would take us by both hands, shake her head, and smile. Hugs always followed.

The tragedy that the older generation of the family felt when she became ill turned into a blessing for all of the grandkids. We are all pretty sensitive people, many working in public service and other areas requiring good communication and people skills. Could it be that our personalities were shaped by this one incredible woman? Could it be that we learned much of our patience and kindness at Grandma’s house? I think she influenced us more than we may realize, to be frank.

When I think of my task as an interpreter, although I am often expected to simply interpret what is actually said, there are ethical principles that allow me to take non-verbal expression into account. I wonder how much of my interpreter intuition is attributable to Grandma. Sometimes, when I find myself interpreting for an attorney-client interview (a less restrictive environment than the witness stand, needless to say), there are times when I simply have to stop and “read” what they are trying to get across. Could it be that I would lack some of the patience and intuition had it not been for Grandma? I choose to believe that were it not for Grandma’s illness, I might have a greater tendency to become impatient and dismissive when the non-English speaker cannot, or will not, communicate clearly. I am so thankful for her blessing us and not letting a lack of verbal communication rob us of such a sweet and loving soul. Thank you, Grandma, for all you were and all you taught us from the heart.

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Simply e-mail the recipient’s name and address to ATA Headquarters—ata@atanet.org—and we will send the magazine with a note indicating that the copy is being sent with your compliments. Help spread the word about ATA!
Arguably, the most important utility you need in your tool box is a compression program.

Its primary use, of course, is to enable you to receive and send files properly. Nothing will frustrate a client more than receiving a file of several megabytes that could have been a tenth of the size or even less if it had been sent in a compressed format.

Some file formats—such as text-based files or bitmaps—are particularly well suited for compression because they can be minimized significantly; others—such as JPG, GIF, or PDF—shrink very little because they are already compressed. An Internet search reveals that there may very well be as many different programs in existence as there are word combinations containing the word “zip”—ZipMagic, PowerZip, Quick Zip, ZipGenius, BitZipper, ALZip, and TurboZip form only the tip of the iceberg. Add to that PKZIP from the “inventor” of the zip format, and the market leader WinZip, which is now owned by Corel. And, yes, there is still a plethora of compression programs that do not contain the word “zip.”

I recently replaced my long-time personal choice, ZipGenius, with the powerful 7-Zip (see www.7-zip.org), a utility that works with a much larger number of compressed file formats and has other advanced features that I like (along with the price tag—it is free!). As with most other programs of its kind, it is closely integrated with Windows/File Explorer: a right-click on any file, group of files, or folder(s) gives you access to the program. (Both Windows and Mac computers also come with a compression program, but in each case it is very limited, so you should not rely on it completely.)

Other important reasons for using compression programs? They allow you to send one file instead of many (this also makes it easier for your clients). Compressed files can be sent as password-protected files for safety reasons. And you can split large ZIP files into smaller chunks so they fit in an e-mail, on a CD, or a USB stick. (When you want to use the file(s), the tools allow you to reassemble them into the original file[s] again.)

Of course, all of this is old news. But here is the bonus if you have made it this far without turning the page or falling asleep: tools such as WinRAR, ZipGenius, and 7-Zip are particularly helpful for translators because they can help you “crack” certain files and get to translatable content. This enables you to process the file more easily in translation environment tools (TEnTs) without the need to purchase the often expensive program in which the file was originally created.

The compressed format that follows the commonly used ZIP algorithms is widely used by a broad range of file formats, including files in Office 2007 and above (DOCX, XLSX, etc.), the OpenOffice/LibreOffice formats, Flash FLA files, InfoPath files, and many, many more. These compressed files often contain complex folder structures with files that are easily translated.

Simply rename the originating file to a *.zip file and unzip it (leaving the folder structure intact), locate the *.xml files (they could also have other extensions) with the translatable text, and translate them (in a text editor or, even better, in a translation environment tool). Then place the translated *.xml files into their original folder, zip the whole folder structure up again, rename it from *.zip to whatever the original extension was, and you are done.

Even more interesting is the fact that many of the TEnT-specific packages (files that contain the translation files, the translation memory, and the termbases) that you receive from your clients may also be ZIP files, even though their extensions do not indicate that.

Tools such as Trados (2007 and Studio), Transit, Déjà Vu, memoQ, and others can produce these files. Obviously, the tool vendors would like you to stay in their environments, but you can circumvent this by following the same process I described above. Naturally you will need to know which are translatable files and what you should be doing with the other files, but, hey, if you can translate rocket science manuals, you can surely figure this out as well.

How do you know whether a file is a ZIP file? With one of my favorite tricks—open any file in a text editor (such as Notepad) to see the underlying code. If the first two characters in the code are “PK” (standing for Philip Katz, who developed the zip format), it is a ZIP file. Now, please do not save that file in your text editor. Instead, exit without saving, rename the extension to ZIP, unzip it, and you will see what I mean.

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Jost is the co-author of Found in Translation: How Language Shapes Our Lives and Transforms the World, a perfect source for replenishing your arsenal of information on how human translation and machine translation each play important parts in the broader world of translation.
Make a School Outreach presentation this year, and you could win free registration to ATA’s 54th Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, November 6-9, 2013. Here’s how to enter.


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3. Speak on translation and/or interpreting careers at a school or university anywhere in the world between August 1, 2012 and July 18, 2013.

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5. E-mail your photo to Meghan McCallum (meghanraymccallum@gmail.com) with the subject line “School Outreach Contest,” or mail your entry to 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include: your name and contact information; the date of your presentation; the school’s name and location; and a brief description of the class. You may submit multiple entries.

The deadline for submissions is midnight on July 18, 2013.

The winner will be contacted no later than August 20, 2013. You must be a member of ATA or an ATA-affiliated organization to enter.
• Eugene Alper’s translation of a memoir about Anton Chekhov was published in *The Toronto Slavic Quarterly*. This is the first English translation of *In Melikhovo*, written by Chekhov’s older brother Aleksandr in 1911. For more information, visit www.utoronto.ca/tsq.

• CETRA Language Solutions, of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, has been named by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as one of the 2013 DREAM BIG Small Business of the Year Blue Ribbon Award winners.


• McElroy Translation Company, based in Austin, Texas, has been acquired by London-based language services provider TranslateMedia.

• Corinne McKay has published *Thoughts on Translation* (Two Rat Press, 2013). The book is a 150-page compilation of many of the entries that have appeared on her blog, also named *Thoughts on Translation*, from February 2008 to January 2012. For more details, see http://bit.ly/VhlmYj.

• Catherine Manning Muir’s Malay>English translation of the classic 1910 pre-Indonesian novel *Hikaya Siti Mariah* has been published as *The Saga of Siti Mariah* (Lontar, 2013).

• TermNet, of Vienna, Austria, celebrated its 25th anniversary. TermNet is an international cooperation forum for companies, universities, institutions, and associations who engage in the further development of the global terminology market.

• Jost Zetzsche has published *The Translator’s Tool Box: A Computer Primer for Translators, Version 10*, an update to his e-book. The book contains advice on which software tools you will need to save time (and make more money), the best way to use these tools, and which popular tools you can do without. The book is published by International Writers’ Group and is available exclusively as a PDF file plus an accompanying HTML Help file for quicker access to the information. For more information, visit www.internationalwriters.com/toolbox.

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Let me state right off the bat that I like this dictionary, despite the shortcomings discussed later. It provides a lot of valuable information in a small package.

Intended for use by language learners at the intermediate and advanced levels, the Russian-English Dictionary of Verbal Collocations (REDVC) states that its goal is to help English-speaking learners master Russian, to help Russian-speaking learners master English, and to help translators of both languages. I think that it accomplishes this as far as translators are concerned, although the absence of an index of English verbs makes the search harder for English-Russian translators.

Usefulness

In the preface, the authors note that while all languages are characterized by regular co-occurrences (the recurrent combination or collocation) of certain words, “the knowledge of one’s own language does not facilitate [one’s] ability to form collocations in a second language” due to “striking collocational differences between any two languages.”

This is where the REDVC comes in. It provides Russian verbal collocations translated into English, as well as miscellaneous Russian verbal phrases, including selected idioms and figurative expressions. Most of the listed collocations are grammatical (consisting of a verb + preposition, or a verb + specific case(s), or a verb + infinitive, or a verb + subordinate clause). There are also lexical collocations (a verb + adverb). For more information about grammatical and lexical connotations, the dictionary refers readers to the BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English and the Lexico-Graphical Description of English, one of over two dozen sources listed in the REDVC’s bibliography.

The authors made “every effort to describe contemporary Russian” [however, note the publication date], while also trying “to provide an adequate description of the Russian used during the Soviet era” by including “some obsolete political expressions.” This latter part is helpful because Soviet-era vocabulary is still used occasionally in various Russian publications and in documents coming in for translation.

The dictionary has the usual two-column page arrangement, showing the first entry of the page above the left column on even-numbered pages and the last entry of the page above the right column on odd-numbered pages. Russian verb entries are boldfaced and shown in upper case. English verbs are also boldfaced, but shown in lower case. This facilitates the search.

So how good is the REDVC? It is good! It has a lot of collocations that are hard to find or that are not included in regular Russian>English or English>Russian dictionaries, even ones found online. It also helps that each entry includes examples of how the collocations are used in different situations. For example, for the entry ГОДИТЬСЯ, the dictionary provides numerous meanings of this seemingly simple Russian verb:

- Он для этой работы не годится (“He is not suited for this work”)
- Эта материя ни на что не годится (“This fabric isn’t good for anything”)
- Это пальто мне не годится (“I cannot use this coat”)
- Так поступать не годится (“You should not behave that way”)
• Она годится ей в матери (“She is old enough to be her mother”)

• Он не годится в офицеры (“He is not cut out to be an officer”)

Another example is ГРУСТИТЬ:

• грустить по матери (“mourn one’s mother”)

• грустить о потере (“grieve over a loss”)

• грустить по дому (“be homesick”)

I find the REDVC to be very useful for collocations where Russian verbs and prepositions are different from English ones, or where a collocation has a preposition in one language but not in the other. For example: обмотать голову полотенцем (“wrap one’s head in a towel”); он побагровел от гнева (“his face reddened with anger”); and поздравляю с победой (“congratulations on winning”).

Shortcomings

Despite the excellent information provided in its entries, the REDVC does have a few shortcomings. For instance, the authors mention that a lot of people assisted in the dictionary’s compilation and that “[t]wo native speakers of Russian who are experts on that language read the entire manuscript and made corrections and suggestions.” Unfortunately, they missed a few things I noticed when browsing the dictionary.

• Entries completely missing the meaning of Russian idiomatic collocations: браться не за свое дело (“meddle in someone else’s affairs”); она себе вдолбила это в голову (“she finally got it through her head,” or “she finally got the point”); выпустить из виду (“disregard”); and пошла писать губерния (“they are off and running”).

• Sometimes the English translation is what the Russians call “с точностью до наоборот”: подливать масла в огонь (“pour oil on troubled waters”).

• An English term does not match the Russian one: арендовать помещение (“lease office space”); задобрить лаской (“win over with flattery”); закатить скандал (“cause trouble”); лицемерить (“be deceitful, deceive”); and удобрить землю навозом (“enrich the soil with fertilizer”).

• Inexplicably, обделывать, обделать are not translated, but are referred to as обкладывать, обложить—verbs with a totally different meaning.

• Ungrammatical Russian: выйти из терпения, он дерзал на хореографические постановки, захлебнуться дымом, колоться головой о стену, наплакать себе глаза, он желает дочь.

• Non-existing words: соболезнивать, исповедовать, исповедоваться.

• The dictionary also contains quite a few typos. For instance:

• гор-ячо (should be го-рячо or горя-чо (page 1)

• выигрывать (page 28)

• выходить к гостю (page 34)

• дать дачи (instead of сдачи) (page 41)

• доволно (page 236)

• дрожать од страха (page 48)

• каме-нь (should be ка-мень) (page 64)

• исповедовать, исповедоваться (page 76)

• можить (instead of множить); ответственность ложиться на меня (page 86)

• обнинаться (page 113)

• окружать крепость рвами [“to build a moat around a fortress”] (page 120)

• опускаться (page 122)

• равнять богатство с счастьем (page 196)

• ракета влетухнулась (instead of влетнулась) в небо (page 14)

• топлы (instead of толпы) (page 63)

Overall Evaluation

As stated earlier, the REDVC is 20 years old. If the authors are contemplating an update, here is my wish list:

• Include the index of English verbs, which will help English-Russian translators find necessary information.

• Show accent marks for verbs having dual meaning, such as забЕгать – забЕгАть, сбЕгать – сбегАть.

• Include collocations with verbs that also have a slang meaning, such as вкалывать (“work hard”); обкладывать (as in обкладывать матюгами (“swear dirty”); отвести (as in
A standing joke in this household is the seeming need for a form of instruction called English as a Second Language for Native Speakers. However, when I look at the introduction of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, specifically those paragraphs under the subheading “The History of English,” dealing with Old English and Middle English, I find the joke turned back on myself. The excerpt from Old English (Ælfric’s “Homily on St. Gregory the Great”) is impossible to understand without aids. The excerpt from Middle English (“Mandeville’s Travels”) can be followed somewhat, but the text threatens at any moment to lead off in a direction that leaves me stranded and lost. Five letters have dropped out of the English language since the time they were written: Æ (ash), Ð (edh), þ (thorn), þ (wynn), and þ (yogh). What I would love to know is where we will go from here; specifically, the nature of English in the year 2450 or so. For the speculatively inclined, Per Dohler, proof-reader of this column, recommends perusing www.xibalba.demon.co.uk/jbr/futurese.html.

New Queries

(Albanian>English 6-13.1) From a medical school transcript, the term peuroicemi (possibly garbled?) appeared in this context: dieta në peuroicemitë dhe buta. (Programi mësimor i universitetit “Ismail Qemali” Vlorë, dega Infermienri. Is there anyone out there capable of dealing with this?

(Dutch>English 6-13.2) Describing an event where people submit projects to a panel in hopes of winning funding, the following bullet-type snippets came from a website and include AFP-neerlegging, which is the problem term: (OPGELET: vul deze sectie genoeg in, de informatie zal immers worden gebruikt om uw project in de catalogus van de finalisten te stellen en bij andere communicatie omtreff het evenement.)—AFP-neerlegging, patent, ... Omschrijf in enkele regels uw technische, financiële, commerciële ... noden in 200 karakters.

(English>Italian 6-13.3) In mechanical engineering, “full box frame” seemed to be quite an opaque term, as in “Full box rear frame structure with high-level torsion rigidity for heavy-duty job application.” Can anyone help?

(English>Polish 6-13.4) There are at least three difficult (in my humble opinion) words in the context phrase, but the translator focused only on “guttae” and “bedewing,” which appear in this fragment from an ophthalmology report: “guttae—permanent; bedewing—lasts months.” The term “guttae” looks like a plural.

(English>Russian 6-13.5) Oh, the flights of poetic fancy that cars can inspire! This bit of English text needs good Russian: “Its primed, nose-down, attitude, power vents, and aerodynamic lines are more than an athletic pose; they’ve been precision-honed through exhaustive design testing to perfect the air flow efficiency.” Concentrate, if possible, on the words in bold print.

(Estonian>English 6-13.6) The word häirekorraldus appeared, not in a sentence, but in a definition of a group responsible for various aspects of a practice rescue operation. Here is the sentence fragment: Group B: häirekorraldus ja ametkondade vaheline koostöö. Is it some kind of alarm or alert?

(German>Russian [English] 6-13.7) In a list of spare parts, a colleague stumbled over Kettenumlenkung. Unfortunately, there is no additional context to provide for this one. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(Polish>Spanish [English] 6-13.8) In a birth certificate, the phrase wykonano zgodnie z miejscowym prawem proved difficult. Perhaps going into English might be a bit easier, so English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(Russian>English 6-13.9) Loaded with innuendoes, this query has the potential to be answered poetically or literally. Taken from a movie script, the following are the words of a character who describes herself (or whom others describe) as a приспособленка. Her signature phrase in the film is Я не такая, я жду трамвая. The context, of course, is a public street in a city. Try it if you can.

(Spanish>Dutch [English] 6-13.10) Here is a query pertaining to the installation of valves in a factory building: dispositivo de operación auxiliar manual. This happened to be the title of a section from a bid on renovation. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.

(Spanish>Italian [English] 6-13.11) This text has all the earmarks of patent litigation: Io que fue desestimado al tratarse de un cambio sustancial de pretensión y causarse indefensión a la parte contraria, formulándose protesta por la demanda. That should be enough context. The two words in bold print constitute the query. English is acceptable as an answer, although the original query did not involve English.
Again, abbreviations played havoc, this time in a text dealing with the wood industry and a process used in a plant. The troublesome phrase was *Upplös. sulfatasta till lutspr. Does it have something to do with removal of sulfur ash to wherever?*

**Replies to Old Queries**

*English>*French 4-13.1) *(launching pads [for mountain bikes]): This, states Dan Lufkin, is a section of trail that descends, and then has a short, steep rise. Riders can use the latter to launch themselves into the air or the surrounding shrubbery. Can anyone offer the French for this now that we know what it is?*

*English>*Portuguese 3-13.2) *(non-overlapping shift): Rafael Graciano Baldez Neves likes *mudança não sobreposta* for this.*

*English>*Portuguese 3-13.10) *(chicken mushrooms): Lorena Ortiz Schneider might be close to a solution in her research that brought to light the existence of the “turkey tail mushroom” *(trametes versicolor)*, which is currently being investigated for its ability to boost the immune system and thus fight against cancer.*

*German>*English 3-13.5) *(Fondskaufvolumen): Roland Greifer renders it as “the amount of funds purchased.” Cynthia Klohr likes “volume of funds purchased.” The bank has its own capital investment subsidiary *(Kapitalanlagegesellschaft)* that buys stock certificates *(Anteilscheine)* for a net inventory value *(Nettoinventarwert)*, and then invoices them for a certain amount *(in Rechnung gestellter Gegenwert)*. The volume of funds purchased is equivalent to the amount invoiced.*

*German>*Italian [English] 3-13.6) *(potentialfrei): Since *potential* is simply another word for “voltage,” Cynthia Klohr says this is “without voltage.” You pull all the plugs when you install this item of hardware. Roland Greifer likes “potential-free” or “floating” for this. Leonid Gornik says the Italian for this is *collegato a potenziale zero.*

*German>*English 4-13.7) *(Spontanerfassungssystem): This is about a German organization that monitors pharmaceuticals for side effects, says Dan Lufkin. Pharmacists and doctors generate reports to the agency spontaneously, hence the “spontan-” in the query word. A good rendering would be “Reports from the Voluntary Adverse Event Reporting System are not available.” The words in bold print are how the Food and Drug Administration designates it.*

*German>*Polish [English] 3-13.7) *(Reklamationen aus dem Feld)*: This, says Roland Greifer, refers to complaints received from the field, meaning from customers and/or the field service staff.*

*Italian>*English 3-13.8) *(vetrino spia): This, says Jacopo Madaro, is an expression as old as the Industrial Revolution, usually translated as “sight glass.” He found a mention of it in a dictionary published in 1908, Scholmann’s *Steam Boilers, Steam Engines and Steam Turbines,* where it is defined as a variety of “sight hole.” The translation can be found easily in all Italian technical dictionaries. Leonid Gornik points out that it is a slit covered with glass or transparent plastic for observation of flow. Eric Bye calls it an “inspection window,” and says that in certain contexts it is also called a “witness glass.”*

*Swedish>*Norwegian [English] 4-13.10) *(skarvbleck): Dan Lufkin says that in Norwegian, this is a *skjøtjern,* known as a “connector bracket” in English. You see them everywhere: those little metal strips with a pair of countersunk holes in it to hold two boards together, with screws through the holes. The Clas Ohlson hardware catalog helped with this.*

*Welcome to two new languages that have not, to my knowledge, appeared in this column on my watch (Albanian and Estonian). Thanks to everyone mentioned above for the thoughtful and professional replies!*

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Humor and Translation

Mark Herman
mnh18@columbia.edu

El Idioma Castellano

Humor that depends on the idiosyncrasies of a particular language is extremely difficult to translate. I thank Efrain Rodriguez Ballesteros for the following piece of doggerel regarding *el idioma castellano* (the Castilian tongue); that is, the language commonly called “Spanish” in the United States. I leave it to others to capture its rhymes and humor in English. I only give my poor attempt at a literal translation.

**Tomado del Homenaje al III Congreso de la Lengua Española**

Señores: Un servidor
Pedro Pérez Paticola,
cual la Academia Española
“Limpia, Fija y da Esplendor.”
Y no por ganas de hablar,
pues les voy a demostrar
que es preciso meter mano
al idioma castellano,
donde hay mucho que arreglar.
¡Me quieren decir por qué,
en tamaño y en esencia,
hay esa gran diferencia
entre un buque y un buqué?
¿Por el acento? Pues yo,
por esa insignificancia,
no concibo la distancia
de presidio y presidio,
ni de tomas a Tomás
ni de topo al que topó.
Por eso no encuentro mal
si alguno me dice cuela,
como decimos Pascuala,
femenino de Pascual.
Mas dejemos el acento,
que convierte, como ves,
las ingles en inglés,
y pasemos a otro cuento.
¿A ustedes no les asombra
que diciendo rico y rica,
majo y maja, chico y chica,
no digamos hombre y hombra?
¿Por qué llamamos tortero
al que elabora una torata
y al sastre, que trajes corta,
no lo llamamos trajero?
¿Por qué las Josefas son
por Pepitas conocidas,
como si fuesen salidas
de las tripas de un melón?
¿Avuestro oído no admira,
lo mismo que yo lo admiro,

**Taken from the Testimonial at the Third Congress on the Spanish Language**

Gentlemen: A servant
Pedro Pérez Paticola,
whom the Spanish Academy [calls]
“Clear, Certain, and Brilliant,”
and [who is] not willing to speak
[until] after I go to them to demonstrate
that it is necessary to put my hand
to the Castilian idiom
where there is much to adjust.
They want me to say why,
largely and essentially,
there is a great difference
between a ship and a bouquet!
Because of the accent? Then I,
because of that insignificance
do not comprehend the distance
between garrison and I-presided,
nor between assumptions and Thomas
nor between a mole and I-bumped-into.
Because of that I do not find it bad
if someone says to me that,
as we say, Pascuala,
feminine of Pascual.
But we should omit the accent
that converts, as you see,
groins into English,
and pass to another tale.
Should you not frighten those
who, while saying rich man and rich woman,
sporty lad and sporty lass, boy and girl,
do not say man and manly woman?
Why do we call a cake-maker,
someone who prepares a herd of bulls
and a tailor, one who cuts dresses,
but not a corrupt I-may-bring?
Why are Josefas
known as Pepitas,
as if we should be bulging
like the insides of a melon?
Are you upon hearing not astonished,
the same as I am astonished,
отвесить оплеуху - "slap smb. in the face," отвесить поклон - "make a bow"); перебрать ("drink too much"); подкалывать ("tease"); and стучать ("snitch").

To summarize: despite its shortcomings, the REDVC is a helpful aid, and a good value at the paperback price.

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Dictionary Review  Continued from p. 33

By Boris Silversteyn

Boris Silversteyn is the secretary of ATA. He is a past chair of ATA’s Divisions and Dictionary Review Committees. He is a Russian and Ukrainian translator and interpreter specializing in science and technology, finance, business, law, and the environment. He is an ATA-certified English<>Russian translator and a grader for ATA’s English<>Russian and English<>Ukrainian certification exams. Contact: bsilversteyn@comcast.net.

Submit items for future columns via e-mail to nh18@columbia.edu (that is 18, not el-8) or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 2222 Westview Drive, Nashville, TN 37212-4123. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.
Upcoming Events

July 25, 2013
American Translators Association
Continuing Education Webinar
“The Use of Customized Corpora to Improve Translation Accuracy”
www.atanet.org/webinars

August 1-3, 2013
Nebraska Association for Translators & Interpreters
14th Annual Regional Conference
“Opening Doors to the World Through Language”
Omaha, NE
www.natihq.org

August 22, 2013
American Translators Association
Continuing Education Webinar
“A Comparative Analysis of Legal Systems in French-, English-, and Spanish-Speaking Countries”
www.atanet.org/webinars

September 13-15, 2013
Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters & Translators
11th Annual Conference
Memphis, TN
www.tapit.org

September 21, 2013
Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters
11th Annual Conference
Chicago, IL
www.matiata.org

September 27-29, 2013
New Mexico Interpreters Conference
Albuquerque, NM
www.nmcourts.gov/index.php

September 29, 2013
Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators
Annual Conference
“Professionalizing Our Industry”
Roswell, GA
www.aait.org

October 11-13, 2013
California Federation of Interpreters
11th Annual Continuing Education Conference
“Expanding Our Horizons”
Oakland, CA
www.calinterpreters.org

October 12, 2013
Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network
3rd Annual Conference
Novi, MI
www.mitinweb.org

October 14-15, 2013
Translation Automation User Society Conference
Portland, OR
www.translationautomation.com

October 16-19, 2013
American Literary Translators Association
Annual Conference
Bloomington, IN

November 6-9, 2013
American Translators Association
54th Annual Conference
San Antonio, TX
www.atanet.org/conf/2013

November 22-24, 2013
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention and World Languages Expo
Orlando, FL
www.actfl.org

December 7, 2013
Arizona Court Interpreters Association
Annual Meeting
Phoenix, AZ
www.aciainline.org

January 9-12, 2014
Modern Language Association
129th Annual Convention
Chicago, IL
www.mla.org/convention

January 16-19, 2014
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International Federation of Translators
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www.fit2014.org
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Presenter: Ana Julia Perrotti Garcia  |  Duration: 60 minutes  |  CE Point(s): 1
July 25, 2013  |  12 Noon U.S. Eastern Daylight Time

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Presenter: Suzanne Deliscar  |  Duration: 60 minutes  |  CE Point(s): 1
August 22, 2013  |  12 Noon U.S. Eastern Daylight Time

Understanding the differences and similarities between various legal systems is critical to legal translation. The way in which a court matter is handled from inception to end is a prime example of the way in which disparate legal systems are sometimes parallel, yet also extremely different. The common law and civil law systems are the two primary legal systems that French and Spanish source linguists will confront when translating legal documents. This webinar will provide a comparative analysis of the main characteristics of the legal systems currently in place in French-, English- and Spanish-speaking countries. Attendees will also learn about resources to assist them in researching accurate terminology.

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