UNRAVELING TRANSLATION SERVICE CONTRACTS
ATA Advocacy Efforts

There’s a mantra in real estate that says, “location, location, location.” Which is to say, no matter where your house is built, it’s the neighborhood that really establishes its value. In terms of ATA and the U.S. translation and interpreting industry as a whole, our neighborhood could use a little tender loving care. Particularly now.

Despite its massive size and rich history of immigrants from around the globe, the U.S. still considers itself to be a primarily monolingual, English-speaking country. As a result, “translation” and “interpreting” are still largely alien concepts for a vast portion of the population.

In an effort to “improve the neighborhood” for our industry, advocacy plays a key role. ATA has been sponsoring advocacy and outreach efforts on a number of fronts.

A report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences¹ and a related effort by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (www.leadwithlanguages.org) paint a language landscape in the U.S. that’s in dire need of attention. Language learning programs have dropped precipitously in recent years, and with them the chance to train new translators and interpreters. Where will tomorrow’s translators and interpreters come from to meet the growing need for Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, Farsi, Korean, and many other languages that are rarely taught in school? Less exposure to foreign-language instruction also leads to clients with little understanding of language issues in business or government settings, making translation and interpreting projects all the more challenging.

ATA recently participated and sponsored a Language Advocacy Day in Washington, DC, an event hosted by the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS). ATA Past President Caitilin Walsh, who now serves as ATA’s JNCL representative, joined dozens of other delegates from language-learning organizations and language industry representatives to meet with congressional staff members to lobby for greater foreign-language education and the importance of translators and interpreters in helping American businesses succeed.² Investing in language learning and educating government officials about what we do will bear fruit in the future as the world becomes even more tightly connected.

ATA offers many other ways to plant seeds and flowers to improve the language landscape in the U.S. The long-running and popular School Outreach program helps fertilize the soil at the roots by having translators and interpreters meet with local children to expose them to what translators and interpreters do and to foreign-language learning in general.

ATA’s Public Relations Committee also sponsors business outreach through its pool of event speakers, who address audiences from a variety of industries. Presentations explaining the basics and finer points of translation and interpreting to business audiences have been held at the Philadelphia Bar Association, the American Chemical Society’s Annual Conference, and the Society for Technical Communication Summit. ATA will also be present at the International Association of Business Communicators’ World Conference this summer. Since many audience members don’t have a background in foreign languages, they are incredibly appreciative of any guidance through the landscape.

As we know, like gardening and landscaping, advocacy is a job that is never done. It requires regular attention to make sure the seeds we planted grow strong and tall and don’t get choked by the weeds around them. It takes time and effort by dedicated volunteers, who help to bring passion, patience, and understanding to an industry that we care about deeply.

NOTES


Unraveling Translation Service Contracts
If translation is such a specialized professional service, where so much is at stake for the end client, why are so many translators operating without the protection of a solid contract?

Remote Interpreting: Feeling Our Way into the Future
While it’s probably impossible to quantify exactly how much mobile technology has influenced and expanded human communication, it has completely changed how just about everyone on the planet communicates.

Tablets for Interpreters: The Device You Didn’t Know You Wanted
You may already be using an Android mobile device or iPad to browse the web, play games, or stream video. But did you know that tablets also make great companions for interpreters? Read on for some great tips to get started.

Key Components of Successful Translator Recruitment
A fundamental tenet of language services is that an organization’s translation product will only be as good as the translator who provides the target content. That’s why vendor recruitment must be counted among the most critical of processes for translation firms.
Get online to see what ATA58 offers
Find photos, videos, and testimonials to discover why you must attend.
www.atanet.org/conf/2017/attend

Get connected now by using #ata58
You can’t register until July, but you can join the conversation on social media using #ata58!

Get booked at the Washington Hilton
Discounted ATA rates are available until Oct 4, 2017 or as space allows.
www.atanet.org/conf/2017/hotel

Get a boost by advertising with ATA
Your brand can be seen by 1,800 attendees and 10,000 members!
www.atanet.org/conf/2017/advertise

American Translators Association
58th Annual Conference
Oct 25-28 2017 ★ Washington DC

You belong where over 1,800 dedicated translation and interpreting professionals connect globally.

You belong where you can tackle current challenges, collaborate with industry leaders, and help shape the future of your profession.

You belong at ATA 58

Get started at www.atanet.org/conf/2017
Linguists say most Balkan languages are the same. And nationalists are mad about it

No amount of nationalism, it appears, can Balkanize a language. Twenty-five years after the former Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia was split into Serbia (which later split again to form Montenegro in 2006), Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia, a group of linguists have declared that Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and Montenegrin are all just versions of the same language. (Macedonian and Slovenian languages remain different.)

Read on: http://bit.ly/BalkanLanguages

From the article “Transitioning from Student to Translator” (March-April): “It can be very exciting once jobs start pouring in…”

This is hardly typical for the vast majority of translators entering the market these days. It is deceptive to write as if it were and harmful to those considering a translation career. Most students are finishing their studies deeply in debt and with little prospect of paying it off in a timely fashion through the few number of jobs they manage to get.

Claudia P

How Brexit Is Giving Rise to a New Wave of Language Wars
https://goo.gl/eQPZ3I via @HuffPostUKPol #x18 #1nt
APRIL 11 / @ATANET

ATA Statement Regarding President Trump’s Executive Order On Immigration
Chronicle-Online Extra
We need to be watchful in defending the interests of our colleagues from Iraq and other targeted countries. We can achieve so much more as an organization than each of us can individually (although please note some members of our Gainesville, Florida, translator/interpreter group met recently to send postcards to our representatives).

Kate Walker | Gainesville, FL
Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met April 22–23, 2017, in Alexandria, Virginia. The Board met in conjunction with the Certification Committee and Language Chairs meetings. (Each exam language combination has a language chair administering the passage selection and graders. ATA currently offers testing in 28 language combinations.)

Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

**Working Budget:** The Board approved the July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018 working budget and the 2018–20 draft budgets. The approved budget of $3.22 million is a slight increase over the current budget of $3.19 million. The 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.

**Presentation of Candidates:** The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, chaired by Past President Dorothee Racette, presented the slate of candidates for this year’s elections for President-elect (two-year term) Ted Wozniak, for Secretary (one position, two-year term) Lois Feuerle and Karen Tkaczyk, for Treasurer (two-year term) John Milan, and for director (three positions, three-year terms): Jennifer Guernsey, Tony Guerra, Geoff Koby, Elena Langdon, Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo, and Kyle Vraa. (Please see the sidebar for more information.)

**2022 Annual Conference Host Hotel:** The Board approved the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, California, as the host hotel for the 2022 ATA Annual Conference. The Conference schedule is: Washington, DC (2017), New Orleans, Louisiana (2018), Palm Springs, California (2019), Boston, Massachusetts (2020), and Minneapolis, Minnesota (2021).

**Website:** Following discussions at the winter Board meeting about the need to revise ATA’s website, the Board approved the establishment of an Ad Hoc Website Committee. The Board also approved the appointments of the committee members: Karen Tkaczyk (chair), Catherine Christaki, Michele Hansen, Jamie Hartz, and Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo.

**Certification:** Certification Committee Chair David Stephenson briefed the Board on developments in the Certification Program. Highlights included the dramatic increase in the number of computerized exam sittings—and their success—and that the Chinese>English work group is just about ready to seek Board approval to offer Chinese>English certification.

**Gode Medal Award Committee:** The Board approved the appointment of the members of the 2017 Gode Medal Award Committee: Past President Nicholas Hartmann (chair), Past President Caitilin Walsh, President David Rumsey, Director Cristina Helmerichs, and Honors and Awards Committee Chair Lois Feuerle. The Gode Medal is ATA’s highest and most prestigious award that recognizes outstanding contributions to the translating and interpreting professions. (Nominations are still being accepted.)

The Board meeting summary and minutes will be posted online once they are approved. Past meeting summaries and minutes are always posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for July 29–30, 2017. The location is to be determined. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.

Candidates Announced

**ATA Elections | 2017 Annual Conference | Washington, DC**

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled elections at the upcoming 2017 ATA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, 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 June 1. Acceptance statements and petitions should be submitted to Nominating and Leadership Development Committee Chair Dorothee Racette (ata-hq@atanet.org). Candidate statements and photos of the candidates will appear in the September/October 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):**
Ted Wozniak

**Secretary (one position, two-year term):**
Lois Feuerle
Karen Tkaczyk

**Treasurer (two-year term):**
John Milan

**Director (three positions, three-year terms):**
Jennifer Guernsey
Tony Guerra
Geoff Koby
Elena Langdon
Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo
Kyle Vraa
Projecting the Cost of ATA’s Annual Conference

The conference pricing tool was designed to provide conservative figures for both revenues and expenses in accordance with good accounting practices.

**HOW DOES ATA PROJECT THE COST OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE?**

Before 2015, the budget for ATA’s Annual Conference was based largely on historical trends in terms of the costs, such as food, beverage, and audio visual support. The registration fee for the conference was often set based on how popular previous conferences had been in similar locations and what price the Board thought the membership would bear. However, the actual numbers sometimes deviated significantly from what was budgeted. When this happened, the result would be a financial loss for the conference. This was particularly the case once staff overhead costs were calculated at the end of the year.

In cases where the revenue of the conference was less than its cost, the difference had to be paid with money that ATA received from other sources, such as membership dues. For past conferences, membership dues covered much of the staff overhead costs. This allowed the conference to remain more affordable, but it also meant that members who attended the conference were being subsidized indirectly by the dues of those who did not.

In 2015, in an attempt to further improve ATA’s finances, the Board decided to stop subsidizing the conference with membership dues from those who chose not to attend the conference. (See “Money Matters: The Story Behind Numbers and Board Decisions,” by Ted Wozniak and Evelyn Yang Garland.) Therefore, the Board made a concerted attempt to ensure that the Annual Conference would at least break even. To achieve this goal, they needed to determine the staff overhead costs and include them in the budget for the conference. They also needed a conference pricing tool to help improve the accuracy of the conference registration fee based on all of the costs.

**HOW WAS THE CONFERENCE PRICING TOOL DEVELOPED AND USED?**

In late 2015, ATA’s Finance and Audit Committee tasked an ad hoc team to project the net revenue for the 2016 Annual Conference. The team consisted of two of the authors of this article, Evelyn and John.

The team faced two challenges. First, no one ever knows precisely how many people will attend any given conference, so the team can only make a best guess as to how much food and beverage (F&B) will cost, and how much ATA will receive from conference registration. Second, there are many variables on the cost side, making the total cost a moving target. For example, some conference hotels may work with different unions, which may involve additional charges for various services during the conference. This adds to the total cost.

To tackle the first challenge, the ad hoc team decided to include multiple scenarios in their analysis. As experience suggested, the number of conference attendees normally fell within the 1,500–2,000 range. So, the team ran several analyses—one assuming 1,500 attendees, another assuming 1,600 attendees, and so on up to 2,000 attendees. These analyses would tell us which scenarios would result in the highest and lowest net incomes. Additionally, the team acquired historical data that showed attendance trends based on the conference location, which allowed the team members to make a more informed estimate of which attendance scenario was more likely to occur for the 2016 conference.

For the second challenge, a careful review of the cost data from past conferences revealed that among dozens of cost items, four accounted for 45%–55% of the total cost. These four major cost items were: the Welcome Celebration, breakfasts, coffee breaks, and audio/visual (AV). So, the team decided to focus on...
obtaining pricing information on these four items and then projected the total cost by adding a certain percentage to the total of these four items.

Having found solutions to both challenges, the ad hoc team built a mathematical model for projecting the cost of the Annual Conference. This model had one input variable—the number of paid attendees—and four major parameters: unit F&B price for the Welcome Celebration reception, unit F&B price for breakfasts, unit F&B price for coffee breaks, and total AV price. The team then ran the calculation, each time with a different input number (attendance scenario), and obtained a projected net revenue for each of the scenarios. The results were provided to the conference organizer (the president-elect), who set the pricing for conference registration after considering the projected numbers, input from the Board and ATA staff, as well as other factors.

**HOW DID THE CONFERENCE PRICING TOOL PERFORM?**

The 2016 ATA Annual Conference in San Francisco (ATA57) currently shows a total revenue and cost of $1,064k and $781k (including overhead of $160k), respectively, for a net profit of $283k, similar to $287k for ATA56 in Miami. The net profit, however, will change upon the conclusion of the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2017, when the conference overhead of $160k is adjusted based on total annual expenses and total staff hours, salaries, and benefits. The final conference overhead is expected to range between $200k and $265k, leaving a net conference profit between $178k to $293k.

The conference pricing tool was designed to provide conservative figures for both revenues and expenses in accordance with good accounting practices. The total revenue was underestimated by a reasonable amount, as it should be. Major costs, including F&B, should ideally be overestimated in a conservative approach, but for ATA57, F&B costs were in fact underestimated. This can be taken into account when planning the activities at the next conference. If the total overhead comes in as expected, the end result will be very close to the projection. As expected, the projections for some individual items were off the mark, but overall the projections were as accurate as could be reasonably expected given the quality of the obtainable data and uncertainty inherent in the estimates and assumptions.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS**

The net surplus from the Annual Conference is encouraging. Given that the conference incurs the highest expenses and generates the most revenues among all ATA programs, a net surplus from the conference is a major contributor to ATA’s sound financial footing.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

A tool that is not used is useless. While the conference pricing tool proved to be quite good, it was the conference organizer, Corinne McKay, who used the tool in her decision-making and allowed it to help determine the registration fees for the conference. The entire Board believed in the importance of financial stability and encouraged the development and use of this tool. Our Executive Director Walter Bacak, Accounting and Finance Manager Kirk Lawson, and Meetings Manager Teresa Kelly played crucial roles in obtaining quality input data, and together with Ted Wozniak, our treasurer, they reviewed and improved the tool.

**NOTES**

Navigating Language Access in Legal Proceedings at the Philadelphia Bar Association

As members of ATA’s Public Relations Committee, those of us assigned as event speakers were asked last year to identify groups or organizations in our area that might be target or receptive audiences to our mission of promoting professional language services. Being most comfortable with the legal profession because of my many years interpreting for depositions, I approached the Philadelphia Bar Association last fall about presenting a nuts and bolts review on proceedings that involve a foreign language and require professional linguistic support.

My proposal was accepted enthusiastically. I was asked to develop my one-hour presentation into a three-hour continuing legal education seminar (CLE) that included an ethics credit. Given the opportunity to communicate in detail the ins and outs of our profession to a captive audience, I promptly accepted to present the course on March 8, 2017.

The driving force behind this presentation came from the realization that the level of knowledge, experience, and comprehension for many attorneys, paralegals, and court personnel was uneven at best and, at worst, possibly also risky to clients, legal providers, and due process itself. As a fundamental principle of law, attorneys, judges, and the courts should provide a sound and reliable system of language access services. This will help ensure fairness and the basic right to justice, and promote the integrity and accuracy of judicial proceedings. Limited-English-proficient (LEP) individuals participating in a legal environment should be able to do so in a language they understand, and all parties should be able to comprehend one another throughout the proceedings.

The three-hour interactive CLE session provided an in-depth look at what has and continues to generate the growing need for language access, why it’s so important, how it’s structured so as to achieve effective results, and the circumstances when it’s required by law. Topics included:

1. The growing demand and challenges of professional language access in courts and private practice;
2. The perils of inadequate or nonexistent professional language access;
3. The language services resources that are available and in place for fair and effective due process;
4. The local impact of foreign languages and LEP populations due to immigration and changing demographics in the courts, health care, education, and business;
5. The complexity of the cognitive, verbal, technical, and physical skills required of a professional interpreter and translator;
6. The rigorous training of legal translators and interpreters and the ethical standards and cultural nuances that govern and manifest in daily practice of the profession in legal proceedings; and
7. Practical tips, do’s and don’ts for attorneys working with interpreters during cross-examination and depositions.

Within these categories, additional subtext covered issues around voire dire and proper identification of LEP persons, a humorous disaster video satirizing the use of a single “polyglot” interpreter for an international meeting with multiple languages, a step-by-step guide to Philadelphia language advocate Judge Chen’s courtroom proceedings when an interpreter is involved, as well as many links to case law, resources, and services useful to attorneys.

Cognizant of my own limitations, I invited a prestigious panel of local and state court, government, immigration, and linguistic experts for the last hour to present their unique perspectives and offer qualified guidance, while I served as moderator during the Q&A session. Panelists included:

Osvaldo R. Avilés
Administrator of the Interpreter Certification Program
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
In addition to the receptiveness to the core legal information, all of the ATA literature, including *Interpreting: Getting it Right* and half of the *Translation* brochures, were taken by attendees. These materials were placed strategically at the front of the room and the first break was used to bring everyone’s attention to them. A useful correlation was made during this time to help attendees understand how my local chapter, the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA), works in concert with ATA, applying the comparison of the Philadelphia Bar Association’s dynamic relationship to the American Bar Association with respect to policy, guidance, standards, etc.

A true test of a successful presentation is if one is asked to return and provide another. I was told afterwards that everyone appreciated the complexity of our job and the dedication to accuracy, excellence, and professional conduct. There is an appetite and willingness from the legal community to learn and cooperate with language professionals in support of LEP individuals. One participant mentioned a renewed interest in our profession because of the recent executive orders from the new White House administration. There is also a great interest in the increasing role of technology and how the trends will impact the courts and other legal procedure in the near future. The Philadelphia Bar Association has invited me back to speak more at length on this topic later in the year.

I was honored and proud to represent our terrific organization. This was another crucial step toward establishing and gaining respect for our profession in an ideal setting to a receptive target audience. It was truly a win/win situation in which attendees left with valuable, practical knowledge. The quality of due process is preserved and enhanced by educating potential buyers of translation and interpreting. In turn, we are able to promote our members.

An idea: The format and content could be easily adapted to other cities/states with their own Bar associations, presented by other resident ATA translators or interpreters well versed in their state’s legal administration of language services and pooling from local resources for panelists. I would be happy to share my presentation with anyone interested.

The driving force behind this presentation came from the realization that the level of knowledge, experience, and comprehension for many attorneys, paralegals, and court personnel was uneven at best.

**Janet C. Fasy**
Deputy Court Administrator
Court Reporters, Digital Recorders and Interpreters,
First Judicial District

**Tsiwen M. Law, Esq.**
Law & Associates, L.L.C., Philadelphia

**Rodolfo P. Téllez (Rudy)**
National Board Certified Medical Interpreter
Pennsylvania Court Certified Interpreter
Conference Interpreter
Faculty and coordinator of the Interpreter and Translation Master’s program at La Salle University

Each panelist brought to light their role in supporting language access in proceedings, as well as providing the fascinating trajectory of the professional evolution in each of their roles in this continuously evolving practice. Using case studies, expert practitioners addressed the challenges and obstacles, ethical dilemmas, and cultural considerations in their work. They offered practical solutions, some technology trends, forecasts, and resources. The presentation material was very well received with a great deal of interest.

*Antonio (Tony) Guerra*, chair of ATA’s Chapters Committee and the current president of the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA), has more than 20 years of experience in the management, marketing, and development of multicultural communications services. A native of Havana, Cuba, he has worked as an independent contractor as well as in-house with companies and agencies. He is a Spanish<>English translator and interpreter specializing in legal, medical, government, and marketing. Besides chairing ATA’s Chapters Committee and DVTA’s Public Relations and Certification Committees, he is also highly involved in numerous volunteer activities for ATA, including serving the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, the Public Relations Committee’s Speakers Forum, and ATA’s Mentoring Program. Contact: aeguerra@aol.com.
Unraveling Translation Service Contracts

Let’s examine what translation is to the law, what type of contracts translators should have, some of the benefits of having a contract, and resources for drafting one.

A common misconception about freedom of contract is that, when it comes to agreements between willing parties, pretty much anything goes. Although freedom of contract restricts government or other forms of interference or control over freely and mutually convened agreements, contracts are still limited by law. Therefore, if the performance, formation, or object of an agreement is against the law, the contract itself is illegal.

In every area of contract law, what’s legal and what’s not depends on several factors, such as applicable law and jurisdiction. Translation is no exception, and translation contracts are far more complex than they seem. Thus, while one may be inclined to think all that’s at stake are deadlines and rates, the truth is that translation contracts govern sophisticated relationships that may cross over jurisdictions or country borders, often involving third parties and even multiple related contracts.

Contracts are a key element of any business transaction, including translation. To better understand how translators operate, I conducted a brief online survey last year, the results of which were also presented at ATA’s 57th Annual Conference in San Francisco.

As you can see in Figure 1 on page 12, when asked about whether or not they used contracts, an alarming 48.7% out of 156 freelance translators answered “No,” and an even more astounding 64.1% claimed not to have their own terms of service. (See Figure 2 on page 12.) The results are surprising, especially when you consider that 82.1% of the surveyed group dealt with direct clients and were not necessarily relying on their clients to provide nondisclosure agreements (NDAs), purchase orders (POs), or any other legally binding document.

TRANSLATION AS A SERVICE

ATA members are probably familiar with ATA’s Translation Buying a Non-commodity—How Translation Standards Can Help Buyers and Sellers, which clearly explains, from a business point of view, what we mean when we say “translation is not a commodity.” But what does that mean from a legal point of view?

Legally speaking, the contract pie is divided into three parts: contracts for the sale of real estate, contracts for the sale of goods, and contracts for the sale of service. Translation falls into the third category. But translation is not just any kind of service. If you look at the United Nations International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), you’ll find translation listed in Section M. This is the section for “specialized professional, scientific, and technical activities [that] require a high degree of training, and make specialized knowledge and skills available to the user.” Translation is also defined under Class 7490 as “service activities […] for which more advanced professional, scientific, and technical skill levels are required.”

The reason translation is legally viewed as a service is because it makes specialist skills available to the user. Translation doesn’t require the manufacture or production of goods, nor does it rely on raw materials, which are the standard criteria for something to legally classify as a “good” instead of a service.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and should not be construed as legal advice or as an offer to perform legal services on any subject matter. Readers should not act, or refrain from acting, on the basis of any information included herein without seeking appropriate legal advice on the particular facts and circumstances at issue from an attorney licensed in their state or country.

www.atanet.org
Unraveling Translation Service Contracts continued

PROBLEM CLAUSES

If translation is such a specialized professional service, where so much is at stake for the end client, why are so many translators operating without the protection of a solid contract? One possible explanation based on the responses of the group I surveyed is that many translators refuse to enter into binding agreements that contain “problem clauses.”

When asked specifically about clauses that have stopped translators from signing with clients, the following were cited as being either the most problematic clauses or absolute deal breakers from the point of view of translators:

Without a contract, you’re unprotected, and if the relationship goes south, it’s your word against that of the non-compliant party.

Spy Clauses: By “spy clauses,” I mean any clause in which clients reserve the right to inspect their translator’s computer. While such clauses may not necessarily be illegal, they should be reasonable and limited to situations that justify the intrusion, such as government contracts involving national security or other high-stakes translation jobs. Before agreeing to such clauses, translators need to make sure that doing so doesn’t conflict with or otherwise breach existing agreements with other clients who could potentially be affected by such inspections. If translators agree and authorize the inspections, they’ll need to take necessary measures to protect all private or confidential information and documents belonging to all their other clients.

Indemnity/Limited Liability: Though not illegal, this is yet another clause that should be limited. When it comes to such clauses, a point that often gets overlooked is that clients, brokers (when applicable), and translators are all equally responsible for ensuring that the translator is actually right for the job. Therefore, placing all the burden on a single party may not pass a fairness test.

Notification of Potential Opportunities: This is the clause by which brokers expect their freelance translators to notify them of potential new leads or market opportunities, as opposed to trying to take advantage of the lead or opportunity themselves. Though not illegal, translators must exercise caution in judgment before agreeing to such a clause and make a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the situation.

Non-compete/Non-solicitation/Non-dealing: These clauses are commonly found in agency contracts. Non-compete clauses are legal in the majority, though not all, U.S. states. (They are also illegal in many countries.) In translation contracts, they are basically clauses designed to stop translators from competing with their agency client. Non-solicitation clauses, on the other hand, stop translators from approaching the agency’s clients or prospective clients. The problem with this clause is, of course, the difficulty of knowing who the agency’s “prospective clients” are. Meanwhile, non-dealing clauses are far more restrictive than non-compete and non-solicitation clauses, and are designed to stop translators from dealing with clients or prospective clients, even if the client approaches the translator and not the other way around. All three clauses are only enforceable in jurisdictions where they are legal and when they are for a set period of time, normally up to one year, though some contracts stipulate up to three.

Payment of Translation Contingent Upon End-client Approval of the Translation/End-client Payment of the Translation: Though also common in agency contracts, such clauses walk a dangerously thin line. A translator’s contract with an agency client is a separate contract from that of the agency with the end client. Unless both contracts are legally interrelated because of the complexity of the business transaction at hand, it’s very likely that the clause is unjustified. Interrelated contracts involve specific types of transactions. Contracts don’t become interrelated by the mere desire of one party to transfer risk to another.

Copyright: If a translation is intended as a work for hire, then the contract should either read “work for hire” or make it otherwise very clear that the translation is intended as a work for hire. Under U.S. law (as well as the law of many other countries), if there is any ambiguity in wording, then the translator owns the copyright, which can then be sold, transferred, or licensed out.

TERMS OF SERVICE

When asked “Do you have your own terms of service,” an astounding 64.1% of translators surveyed answered “No.” When asked why, reasons varied from expecting clients to be the ones doing the drafting to being afraid of scaring clients away. Some respondents claimed email is enough for proof of contract, which is a claim that is only true in some countries.
While one can understand why some professionals are a bit apprehensive of contracts, the benefits of having a solid contract outweigh the hassle or perceived (though unfounded) risk of sending a client your terms and conditions before working on a translation. These benefits include:

- **Protecting Your Business:** Contracts provide a description of responsibilities, establish a timeframe for duties, bind parties to their duties, help secure payment, and provide recourse if the relationship falters in any way. Without a contract, you’re unprotected, and if the relationship goes south, it’s your word against that of the non-compliant party.

- **Covering Attorney’s Fees and Court Costs:** When a translation is small, the amount of money the contract is for is usually also small. Therefore, if the translator doesn’t get paid, it may not be worth it for him or her to seek out an attorney and file suit. However, your terms of service can include a provision for reasonable attorney fees whereby the prevailing party in any dispute arising under the translation agreement is awarded his or her reasonable attorney fees and costs. This creates a legal incentive to pay by making it riskier for your clients not to do so.

- **Warding Off Deprofessionalization:** “Deprofessionalization, in its simplest form, is the process by which highly educated and skilled professionals are first displaced and then replaced with individuals of inferior training and compensation.” Both the legal and medical professions are suffering deprofessionalization through the “substitution of standardized practices and protocols for existing methods of production of professional services.” It has been argued that the trend toward deprofessionalization is increasing the translation profession as well.

Deprofessionalization often results from the notion that no special qualifications are required to do a certain job. The overall lack of entry barriers to the profession, widespread misconceptions about bilingualism and translation, misrepresentations about advancements in machine translation, and other similar trends contribute to the deprofessionalization of translation. Against that backdrop, I would argue that a well-drafted contract that takes into consideration all the complexities and nuances involved in a translation helps increase the client’s perceived value of what we do, creates awareness about what separates professional translators from amateurs, and helps counter the trend toward deprofessionalization.

**Translation contracts govern sophisticated relationships that may cross over jurisdictions or country borders, often involving third parties and even multiple related contracts.**

**RESOURCES FOR DRAFTING CONTRACTS**

Whether you’re among the 64.1% of translators who don’t have their own terms of service, or you have terms of service and want to update them, some excellent resources include ATA’s Translation Job Model Contract,10 PEN America’s Translation Contract for Literary Translators,11 and PEN America’s Translation Contract Checklist.12 Of course, these models will need to be adapted to your local law, jurisdiction, and particular business setting, so seeking appropriate legal advice from a lawyer in your area is also recommendable. While standard clauses are available online, the way the courts interpret such clauses may vary from one jurisdiction to another. A qualified legal professional in your area can help you adapt them to your particular needs.

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**NOTES**

1 Freedom of contract is “a judicial concept that contracts are based on mutual agreement and free choice, and thus should not be hampered by undue external control such as government interference.” Black’s Law Dictionary (10th edition, 2014), 779.


6 In this section, I use the term “client” in its broadest possible sense to refer to both direct clients as well as brokers and agencies.


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Remote Interpreting: Feeling Our Way into the Future

New communications technologies make interpreting available where it wasn’t in the past. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the way we will work remotely, because what’s going on is game changing and shaking our profession from top to bottom.

In April 2015, I published an article and video on the blog A Word in Your Ear by Lourdes de Rioja called “Technology and Interpreting: Three Questions on Every Interpreter’s Mind.” In that video, I addressed some of technology’s broad effects on interpreting. In this article, I’d like to address a specific technology topic that’s also on many interpreters’ minds—remote interpreting.

Remote interpreting is a vast field and one that cannot be done justice in all its depth and breadth in one relatively short article. What’s more, the growth of remote interpreting is taking place within a much broader context of radical technological change that’s affecting society as a whole. Demand for interpreting is expanding and evolving because mobile communications technology has completely changed the way we communicate. Keep in mind that this has happened in a relatively short period. Not over a century or even over a generation, but in about a decade.

Ten years after the beginning of the smartphone revolution and the launch of the iPhone in 2007, it’s probably impossible to quantify exactly how much mobile technology has influenced and expanded human communication, but it has completely changed how just about everyone on the planet communicates. We’re now communicating in ways that we couldn’t have imagined at the turn of the 21st century—and across more borders, cultures, and languages than ever before. Consequently, interpreting services are often needed with much less lead time, sometimes instantly, in places where it was never needed before and in ways never conceived of previously.

My hope is that after reading this article you’ll have a broader vision and better understanding of what remote interpreting is and may become, how it’s changing and expanding how we work, how clients access the services we provide, and how we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the way we will work remotely. What’s going on is game changing and shaking our profession from top to bottom.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

Let me begin with a brief analogy. In many ways, remote interpreting is like the proverbial elephant being described by several blind men who are touching it in different places. Unable to see the entire animal, they must rely only on their sense of touch.

“It’s long and round and it bends like a snake,” says the one touching the trunk.

“No, it’s hard, smooth, and pointed,” says another running his hand along one of the tusks.

Still another says, “No, it’s big and rough like a wall,” as he feels the elephant’s side.

And yet another touching one of the animal’s strong back legs says, “You’re all wrong. It’s thick and round like the trunk of a tree.”

And so they argued, each convinced that he was right and that the others surely didn’t know what they were talking about. The irony is they were all right—at least to a degree. However, by relying exclusively on their own personal experience, they were unable to piece together the bigger picture. They were incapable of gaining a broader vision of what the entire elephant looked like.

I see something similar happening with how interpreters often perceive remote interpreting. Let me explain.
FEELING OUR WAY INTO THE FUTURE

Interpreting today has many different modes, settings, and specialties. Interpreters work at the United Nations, the European Institutions, and in diplomatic circles. We work in courtrooms, boardrooms, and classrooms, police precincts, and prisons. We work in hospitals and clinics, conflict zones, and refugee camps—practically any place people come in contact and don’t speak the same language. The need for interpreting services has expanded dramatically with the growth of international commerce, travel, migration, and interaction among peoples and cultures. The settings and requirements of each interpreting assignment vary greatly from one job to the next, but it’s all interpreting—different parts of the same beast, if you will.

Demand for interpreting is expanding and evolving because mobile communications technology has completely changed the way we communicate.

Remote interpreting, like face-to-face interpreting, is varied and has many different implementations. The technologies used for remote interpreting are as varied—or even more varied—than the current modes of face-to-face interpreting. We must understand this to see the bigger picture, because far too often we look upon other modes of interpreting through the lens of how and where we are used to working. Sometimes we even put blinders on, refusing to see that other ways of working are not only possible, but potentially more efficient and effective.

REPLACEMENT OR EXPANSION? BOTH, ACTUALLY.

Remote interpreting can be viewed as doing two things: replacing existing interpreting models—what many view as a zero-sum game—but it’s also expanding access to interpreting in new ways and creating more opportunities for interpreters. Let’s talk about replacement first.

Remote interpreting is replacing, and will continue to replace, some (not all) face-to-face interpreting in medical, court, and conference settings. Though many lament this development, there’s little that can be done to stop it. The change is most evident currently in health care settings in the U.S., where telephonic and, more recently, video remote interpreting (VRI) are being implemented at a quickening pace. Some face-to-face jobs are disappearing, but most are evolving.

In the courts, remote interpreting has been a topic of heated discussion for years, but the momentum for its use is growing. In the U.S., at least two major remote interpreting pilot projects have been launched and are in different stages of development. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) began working on a nationwide remote interpreting pilot as early as 2014.\(^2\) However, the current state of this project is unclear. Also in 2016, the Judicial Council of California approved a pilot program for VRI in the state courts.\(^3\) After a round of testing in 2016 to select the technology platforms for the VRI pilot, two systems from different vendors are set to be deployed in various courtrooms across the state in July 2017.\(^4\) Many smaller courts across the country have either implemented or are considering how to implement some form of remote interpreting into their operations. Resistance from court interpreters has been particularly strong in some states.

In conference and diplomatic circles, remote interpreting has been around for many years, but the technical and financial barriers to implementation were often prohibitively high. However, this is no longer the case. Instances of conference interpreters working remotely onsite (i.e., from outside the actual conference room, but in the same building) and off site via an online connection are growing.

As this shift to remote interpreting happens, it’s paramount that we clearly understand and be good at describing the value of face-to-face interpreting and identifying the interactions where its use is crucial. For example:

- **In medical:** trauma, end-of-life, and special needs scenarios;
- **In legal:** multi-day trials and evidentiary hearings;
- **In conference and diplomatic settings:** sensitive negotiations and protocolary events, to name just a few.

The pressure to reduce costs while increasing access to interpreting will continue. We must be articulate as we explain why and in which scenarios face-to-face interpreting should be the first choice, and the only choice in some cases. But we must also embrace new delivery methods and recognize that reducing the overhead associated with providing interpreting (travel, per diem, and administrative costs) and improving access will require adaptation on our part. Digging in our heels and refusing to change is a bad idea.

So far, the discussion of remote interpreting among practitioners has tended to revolve around what we stand to lose, not what we stand to gain.

Now, let me touch briefly on how remote interpreting is expanding access to our services and creating new opportunities for interpreters.

Remote interpreting is ideal for new forms of communication, such as video conferences, audio conferences, webinars, earnings calls, virtual press conferences, and expert network interviews. Here are some actual examples of remote interpreting in action:

- A United Nations agency conducts executive committee meetings via conference calls with remote simultaneous interpreting in English and French with participants on three different continents.
- A tropical fruit producers’ association holds biweekly meetings online in English and Spanish to discuss fruit production and export activities.
- A South American nongovernmental organization conducts webinars where
REMOTE INTERPRETING continued

a group of panelists from different countries presents the results of their research to a global audience. The webinars are held with simultaneous interpreting in Spanish and English, which allows people to engage and to interact in their own languages.

- An investment manager conducts an interview over the phone with an expert in the mining industry in China with remote interpreting (consecutive or simultaneous) between English and Mandarin.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies convenes an emergency teleconference with simultaneous interpreting in multiple languages to help nations around the globe coordinate efforts to address the spread of the Zika virus.

In these examples, none of the participants met in the same place. All of them were remote, just like the interpreters. In fact, none of these meetings was ever planned to take place face-to-face. The participants didn’t travel to attend, so why should the interpreters?

These use cases put the interpreter into an interaction where in the past doing so was either cost prohibitive or technically impossible. But as these examples show, new communications technologies make interpreting available where it wasn’t in the past.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The growth in remote interpreting is not without its challenges. We must engage with our clients and the technology developers to ensure appropriate working conditions, particularly for interpreters who may work remotely all day. This includes addressing concerns like:
- The number of interactions interpreted per day
- The number and frequency of breaks
- Fatigue
- Isolation
- Stress

We must be articulate as we explain why and in which scenarios face-to-face interpreting should be the first choice, and in some cases, the only choice.

- Fair remuneration for services
- Audio and video signal quality

But it’s important to remember that interpreters aren’t the only professionals adapting to new communication technologies. Think of telemedicine, where the doctor and patient aren’t even in the same room anymore, or the thousands of webinars and meetings that take place by audio and videoconference every day.

How can we insist that where we work remain the same if our clients are no longer interacting the way they used to?

Remote interpreting truly is a boon to multilingual communication. It makes our services more available than ever before and in new ways. As the market for our services expands, it diversifies. Put simply, that means things are not going to remain the same. Evidence of this can be seen in how interactions requiring interpreting have become much more varied in format and duration.

WHAT WE STAND TO LOSE…AND GAIN

As practitioners who are experts in our own modes and specialties of interpreting (e.g., conference, court, and medical), we are keenly aware of what we stand to lose if the way we work changes. What we often don’t see is what we and society as a whole stand to gain if we evolve to offer our services in new ways.

So far, the discussion of remote interpreting among practitioners has tended to revolve around what we stand to lose, not what we stand to gain. These conversations echo those had by translators starting in the mid-1980s, when the use of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools such as translation memories began in earnest. Technological advances affecting translation have proliferated in the past 30 years and the types of translated content have burgeoned. The written word on the printed page has become only one of a vast array of content types that need translation. I see the initial stages of a similar development with remote interpreting.

That said, face-to-face interpreting at conferences, in courtrooms, and health clinics will not disappear because of remote interpreting. It will evolve. There is great value in the long-standing modes of interpreting, just as there is great value in meeting people face-to-face to build and maintain relationships of trust and work together. This will not change.

To sum up, remote interpreting is here. It poses both challenges and opportunities. If we focus exclusively on what remote interpreting will replace in our profession—or what we stand to lose—it will seem threatening and scary. If we ask ourselves how it can fit into our professional practice together with all of the other modes of interpreting, we stand to gain and will be able to help shape the future of international communication. And that’s a good place to be.

NOTES

Tables for Interpreters: The Device You Didn’t Know You Wanted

Just as increases in laptop storage and processing capacity led to the replacement of desktop computers, advances in tablet technology make it possible for users to streamline even more.

The latest tablets offer a host of streamlined tools for interpreters, even in high-stakes settings like court and conference interpreting. How can interpreters take advantage of these tools for business tasks, assignment preparation, and consecutive and simultaneous settings?

Come along with us for a tour of some of the tools we recommend. After reading this you’ll have a better idea how to incorporate tablet technology into your workflow.

Glossary Management

A glossary is an important part of any interpreter’s toolbox. Building a list of useful and important terms during the preparation phase can really help you get up to speed on the topic at hand. And once you have a glossary for that topic or, say, a specific conference or client, it’s much easier to build it up over time. Obviously, electronic glossaries are much easier to maintain and expand than paper ones. However, this doesn’t preclude you from printing your electronic glossary for an assignment, if you so wish. (But you might as well just use your tablet.)

While we won’t go into the details of what you should put in a glossary, we can show the different approaches that exist in terms of glossary management software. The most basic approach would be creating a table within a Word document, but we don’t recommend this as it’s simply too rigid to work with over time. Similar criticism applies to spreadsheets (i.e., Excel files), which seem popular among interpreters. However, they are not very flexible, and there is the potential risk of getting your terms mixed up when something goes wrong during sorting. If you still prefer spreadsheets, some mobile apps you can use include Microsoft Excel (available on iOS and Android, free for basic use), Google Sheets (free on both platforms), or Apple Pages (iOS only, free with your device).

Alexander prefers dedicated apps that work more like databases than spreadsheets. They tend to be more robust and provide more options for working with data. One example is Interplex, which has a long tradition on Windows computers and is co-developed by Peter Sand, an interpreter and member of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). Interplex is also available on mobile devices (iPhone, iPad) and lets you synchronize data through Dropbox.

If you’re looking for a web-based solution, make sure to try Interpreters’ Help. In addition to robust glossary management features, such as reverting back to older versions when something goes wrong, this app is also quite social-savvy when it comes to collaborating with other users and sharing your work on the “Glossary Farm.” Interpreters’ Help has a companion app for iPad, called “Boothmate.” Android users should check out Memento Database, a very user-friendly way to manage not only glossary data, but also all kinds of other information (like client contact information or a to-do list).

On top of standard spreadsheet features like filtering, sorting, or rearranging terms, database-driven apps allow for faster searches and give you more control over importing existing glossaries and exporting your data—not to mention the additional possibilities to go beyond just words by adding images, video, or audio. It may sound strange at first, but think about it: for highly technical topics like medicine or engineering, visualizing terms can make a lot of sense. As does recording the pronunciation of a difficult term in a short audio clip, or making a video...
may have already worked on a shared Google Doc with somebody else online, but did you know that Google also has an online spreadsheet tool (aptly named Sheets) that you can use to collaborate on glossaries with remote colleagues? (Leonie Wagener, a Germany-based conference interpreter, has published a tutorial on AIIC’s website about this.) The benefits of this approach are obvious. You can split up the workload of bigger conferences (e.g., by speaker or by language), you get valuable input from others, and there’s a built-in chat to discuss issues with the team. Everybody contributes, and everybody ends up with a solid glossary.

Even if you work on your glossary solo, it’s a good idea to add terms during the assignment. After all, we often get the best terms from the people for whom we work, and we know the terms are relevant. This also means less work when you get back to the office, as there’s simply no need to go through all the scraps of paper with scribbles on them that you usually bring home.

In some ways, using a tablet and stylus to take consecutive notes digitally instead of on paper is the holy grail of “tablet interpreting.”

FREELANCE BUSINESS TASKS
For freelancers, tablets also offer a modern way to take care of administrative functions, even while you are on the move. Prepare estimates, invoice jobs, do bookkeeping, and keep up on marketing tasks—non-billable work that traditionally had to wait until you got back to the office—are now easily taken care of during long lunches or on the ride home.

For example, interpreters can use their mobile phone or tablet to send job invoices before they leave the building while the job details are fresh in the mind of both the freelancer and the client. This encourages prompt payment and cuts down on email exchanges to correct or explain invoices. Applications such as...
you’re good to go! I don’t recommend taking interpreting notes straight away. Instead, you might want to start slowly by doodling to get a feel for how the app works. Move on to jotting down a shopping list or short text, and when you feel more comfortable, try taking notes for a short test-style speech from Speechpool or the European Union Speech Repository. If you get hooked, then digital note-taking is probably for you. Great note-taking apps for iPad are Notability and Noteshef. (See Figure 3 above.) They both integrate with lots of styluses, including the Apple Pencil, and they support cool stuff like audio recording.

Holly: I haven’t tested digital note-taking on recent Apple products, but I’ve had great results on Android tablets and my current sweetheart, the Microsoft Surface Pro 4 (laptop/tablet hybrid).

Samsung tablets use the Android mobile operating system and come with a free app called S-Note that meets all my note-taking needs. For example, it offers continuous page scrolling (no searching for a button to go to the next page) and automatic deactivation of hand recognition (ensuring your palm doesn’t mark or move the digital paper, allowing for a natural hand position for writing). Samsung discontinued the Note line of tablets that featured a pen-size stylus that nested neatly into the body of the device, but there are many compatible stylus options to suit any preference. Just look for the one that feels natural for you and play with the settings in your note-taking app to get the type of stroke you like.

Another option, if you want to do all your computing and note-taking on one lightweight device, is the Microsoft Surface Pro 4 or a similar laptop/tablet hybrid—many manufacturers are following...
Microsoft’s lead in this space now. (See Figure 4 above.) For notes, DrawBoard PDF, intended for viewing and annotating PDFs, has proven to be perfect for consecutive notes, which don’t need to be organized or stored later. Just create a new document (selecting your preferred “paper” color and texture) and start taking notes. When clients require destruction of notes, it’s as simple as deleting the file.

MUCH MORE THAN FOR ENTERTAINMENT
Just as increases in laptop storage and processing capacity led to the replacement of desktop computers, advances in tablet technology make it possible for users to streamline even more, replacing their laptops with feather-light tablets. Professional devices are much more than an overpriced entertainment device. For example, Alexander uses his iPad Pro as his main computer for almost everything, from referencing documents in the interpreting booth, taking notes on consecutive assignments, and writing blog posts and editing podcasts. Holly brings her Surface Pro 4 to assignments as a tablet and mobile workstation—even running two full translation programs—and connects it to a dual-screen desk setup when at the office.

Prices for basic devices start at just a few hundred dollars, so it’s a great time to try out tablet interpreting.

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1 Apps: Ubiquitous shortened form of applications, mobile device programs.

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Figure 4: Consecutive notes on the Surface Pro 4 with the Surface Pen, compared to a steno pad and analog pen.
Key Components of Successful Translator Recruitment

A well thought out recruitment process contributes to providing firms and their clients and target users with the implicit peace of mind that comes with a consistent translation product.

A fundamental tenet of language services is that an organization’s translation product will only be as good as the translator who provides the target content. To provide culturally and technically appropriate translations, translators must have a wide range of knowledge and capabilities, reflected in the standards issued by such organizations as ASTM International and the European Committee for Standardization. As indicated in the ASTM’s “Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation”—“Proficiency in two languages is important, but does not necessarily guarantee translation competence.”

According to ASTM, source and target language, translation, subject matter, and text types are among the competencies necessary to carry out translation, and firms can use such indicators as certifications and degrees, experience, references, and sample translations to determine if a candidate has the required competencies. In European Standard prEN 15038, the European Committee for Standardization adds research, cultural, and technical (translation technology) competencies to those listed by ASTM. These competencies are obtained through “formal higher education in translation … a university degree or equivalent plus a minimum of two years of documented experience in translating, or at least five years of documented professional experience in translating.”

The International Organization for Standardization’s ISO 17100 certification is based on the language of prEN 15038. Notably, firms maintaining this certification must have documented processes for the verification and maintenance of records of professional competence. According to ISO 3.1.8, further requirements include processes for recording ongoing updates to linguist and staff competencies, and highlighting the importance of continuing education in language services.

Whether or not firms intend to pursue certification such as ISO’s, vendor managers can benefit from an awareness of the standards and certification requirements established by large standardization and certifying bodies. This information can be a great knowledge base for initiating recruitment efforts and designing vendor recruitment processes.

Translator Directories: An Essential Recruitment Tool

When recruiting translators in new language pairs or specializations, vendor managers have a variety of online directories at their disposal to identify candidates. Being aware of the characteristics, functionality, and size of directories not only speeds up recruitment, but also aids in the design of language- or specialization-specific recruitment processes. This awareness also helps vendor managers put steps in place to mitigate the risks associated with carrying out recruitment primarily online, among them identifying the best talent available among thousands of search results (in which all sorts of big claims are made about capabilities) and weeding out any translator scammers. (Joseph Wojowski’s article, “On ‘Lying Through Their Teeth’: Identifying Translation Scams,” offers great insights on translator scammers and precautions one can take to avoid them.)

As a vendor manager, I prefer to start my own recruitment activities with ATA’s Directory of Translators and Interpreters for several reasons—the overall focus of which is to set my recruitment efforts.
KEY COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL TRANSLATOR RECRUITMENT continued

Communication between vendor managers and translators during recruitment sets the tone for the entire working relationship between a translator and a firm.

First, for recruiters, membership in a professional association such as ATA demonstrates translators’ understanding of the business investments necessary to operate as professionals within the language services industry, and presumably, their commitment to the field. Second, membership also represents a greater potential for participating in legitimate ongoing professional development through webinars, articles in The ATA Chronicle, or the ATA’s Annual Conference. Members of professional associations are also more likely to have strong networks of other members of professional associations to whom they can turn with language-, process-, or technology-related questions—and who they can recommend to vendor managers!

Other well-known translator directories include Proz.com and Translators Café (TC). These directories are good resources for languages of lesser diffusion, in particular. However, when recruiting through these directories, vendor managers should be aware that the free profiles available on these sites are more likely to attract scammers and new translators who are more likely to misrepresent their translation and subject-matter qualifications. That’s not to say that professionals can’t be found on directories such as Proz and TC, only that added efforts are recommended to verify that individuals’ actual training, background, tools, etc., correspond to any claims they’ve made in their directory profiles—advice that holds true no matter the directory through which one recruits. (Recruiters can also limit their searches on Proz to display only vendors who have had their credentials verified by Proz, which is a worthwhile parameter to put in place.)

While the ATA, Proz, and TC directories are perhaps the best known, regional professional associations are excellent resources for recruitment efforts. For example, visiting the member directories of ATA chapters and affiliates (including my local group, the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters) is a great solution for recruiting U.S.-based linguists for any projects with location or citizenship requirements. Vendor managers can also carry out simple online searches to identify professional associations and their directories for specific target countries, such as the Swedish Association of Professional Translators for Swedish translators, the Brazilian Association of Translators and Interpreters for Brazilian Portuguese linguists, and the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario for Canadian French. Beyond these online resources, there’s no substitute for meeting new candidates in person at local and national translation events and conferences. For vendor managers and all other translation professionals, it pays to get involved.

BASIC CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING SUITABLE VENDORS

An often-quoted statistic within the language services industry is that recruiters decide whether to pursue a candidate after spending just one minute scanning that candidate’s résumé, CV, or profile. This is absolutely the case, and the speed with which this decision-making is carried out is based on the reality of recruitment. To illustrate, my own vendor management experience includes recruiting talent in over 50 languages. To carry out that recruitment, I contacted 1,000 candidates in 2016 alone, and of these 1,000 initial contacts, approximately 40% of candidates responded to my request. Of the approximately 40% who responded, around 20% met the criteria established by my firm for experience, education, translation technology, payment capabilities, etc. That is to say, for every one translator who met the organizational requirements to be passed on to linguistic testing, 12.5 translators were contacted. That does not include the countless profiles, résumés, and CVs that were first screened to even establish a list of candidates to contact. Therefore, no matter the directory being used to identify
Regardless of the specifics, vendor managers carefully develop organizations' basic criteria for new partner translators. They analyze the needs of their businesses carefully to—once again—set up their recruitment efforts for the greatest chance of success.

Making Initial Contact

Initiating contact with candidates whose profiles seem to meet organizational requirements is another component of recruitment that requires a deliberate process. During initial contact, recruiters request the documentation that will allow them to verify that a translator's background aligns with organizational needs. Carrying out this verification is incredibly important because it protects translation firms from working with individuals who do not have the necessary qualifications and training. This process also serves to elevate the field of translation as a whole, since requiring candidates to provide evidence of their qualifications (such as diplomas and certifications) is a check that allows vendor managers to avoid translator scammers and inexperienced translators who have misrepresented their capabilities. Keep in mind that checking documents like diplomas and certifications requires an understanding of degree equivalencies and the resources necessary to verify any target-language documents submitted.

On the other hand, this initial request for documentation must also be carried out in a way that recognizes the administrative time investments being made by all participants. Therefore, any initial contact should clearly define a firm's basic requirements and the documents for submittal. Further, any forms the translator is required to complete and submit should be designed in a way so as to capture all of the information the firm requires to establish a working relationship (i.e., experience, education, contact details, billing information, translation technology, etc.) in a single pass. Having a clear set of requirements eliminates the back and forth that results when these parameters are not defined, thereby promoting efficiency. It also allows both vendor managers and translators to determine as quickly as possible if a potential working relationship is a good fit, allowing all parties to focus limited resources to areas of greatest impact.

Aside from giving vendor managers the chance to verify credentials and collect necessary information, the initial contact and request for documentation is also an incredibly valuable opportunity to test candidates in a variety of other areas. For example, an initial contact email with a clearly defined list of required documents for submittal gives vendor managers an immediate opportunity to determine a candidate's ability to follow directions. Any CVs or résumés submitted also serve as indicators of translators' formatting capabilities and of their ability to organize and present information based on their audience's needs (i.e., information should be presented based on the understanding that recruiters will spend no more than one minute scanning those documents). When a vendor manager requests samples and translators refuse based on nondisclosure agreements they have signed with other firms, the vendor manager can take this as an indication that any content translated for her or his organization will be handled with the same care. For any samples that are provided, vendor managers can also check that no client-identifying information is included in either the content or the file properties.

Overall, the process for requesting documentation is designed to allow vendor managers to carry out as much due diligence as possible at that stage. Like all the stages of vendor recruitment, having intentional processes in place allows vendor managers to ensure that their recruitment efforts will yield the greatest results, so that only the best talent available is passed on to any subsequent linguistic testing phases.

A Comprehensive Process

The design and implementation of successful recruitment processes requires substantial investments of time and resources, as evidenced by the descriptions of the stages outlined above. This article does not even address the organizational parameters necessary for tracking recruitment efforts or the linguistic testing phase that follows recruitment. Still, since recruitment processes are designed to
establish mutually beneficial relationships with professional candidates, organizations must approach recruitment with an understanding of what their investments will yield. For instance, communication between vendor managers and translators during recruitment sets the tone for the entire working relationship between a translator and a firm. A well-designed and efficient process not only accomplishes the explicit objectives of collecting information and verifying credentials, but also indicates a firm’s quality expectations to candidates, and the kind of approach they can expect when working with that organization. A well-designed process therefore aids in attracting the best talent available.

More importantly, front-end investments in recruitment processes allow firms to prevent the translation mishaps that result when working with untrained providers, which reflect poorly on an organization’s services and reputation and are exponentially more costly to repair on the back end than good preventative processes. A well thought out recruitment process contributes to providing firms and their clients and target users with the implicit peace of mind that comes with a consistent translation product. That product is the result of working with quality providers.

Therefore, vendor recruitment must be counted among the most critical of processes for translation firms. After all, organizations can work with the most up-to-date technology and design the most intricate of production processes, yet even with the best supporting components in place, the translation product will only be as good as the translator who provides the target content.

Organizations must approach recruitment with an understanding of what their investments will yield.

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Interview with John Ayto, Lexicographer

I admit it, I love words. Consequently, I have always been fascinated by dictionaries and have a certain reverence for lexicographers—those who compile them. Among the many dictionaries on my shelves, the Dictionary of Word Origins is an old favorite. It contains the histories of more than 8,000 words in the English language: just my cup of tea. The author of this book is the British lexicographer John Ayto, who graciously agreed to be interviewed for this column.

After earning a degree and doing research on medieval English at Durham University, Ayto joined the Longman publishing house in 1974 to work on the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, a ground-breaking dictionary for foreign learners of English. He later became managing editor of their dictionary department, working on native-speaker dictionaries. He left in the mid-1980s to become a freelance lexicographer, and subsequently produced the Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins, Bloomsbury Dictionary of Euphemisms, Oxford Dictionary of Slang, Oxford Dictionary of Rhyming Slang, and 20th Century Words, among others. He also edited the 17th edition of Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase & Fable. He has taught courses in lexicography at Surrey University, written a column on words in the Observer newspaper, and appeared from time to time on radio and television, talking (of course) about words.

I’d like to begin by asking whether your family background played any part in your decision to become a lexicographer. I ask because I certainly don’t come from a long line of lexicographers! No, my father’s skills, for example, lay more in the areas of science and technology than in the arts. But my parents did encourage me in the habit of reading, which was a decisive first step. And, yes, I certainly agree about Dr. Johnson. I’m sure that if you asked the average Brit to name a lexicographer, you would mostly be met with a blank stare, but the few who did reply would say Johnson.

What originally sparked your interest in lexicography as a specific field? Or was it more of a gradual process, one thing leading to another? How did you come to specialize in lexicography?

Studying English at school, I found my interest being drawn to the medieval period (Chaucer et al.), as much for the fascination of the language as for the quality of the writing. I went on to earn a degree in medieval English, and then for my postgraduate work, I edited a Middle English text, which involved producing a glossary. Up to that point I hadn’t remotely thought of lexicography as a possible career, but then I happened to see an ad in a journal for people to work on a new dictionary project. I thought it might be a good fit for my skills, applied, got the job, and the rest is history.

Where and when did lexicography, the specific field, begin? Is there much to see from that period, much surviving material? What is the earliest dictionary ever found? How similar is it to contemporary dictionaries? There’s evidence of Akkadian/Sumerian wordlists from the third millennium BC, and interlinear glosses in medieval manuscripts are clear precursors of modern dictionaries. But it wasn’t really until the introduction of printing that dictionaries as we recognize them today came on the scene. The earliest ones were bilingual (Sir Thomas Eliot’s Latin-English dictionary of 1538, for example). The first monolingual English dictionary is generally accepted as being Robert Cawdrey’s Table Alphabeticall (1604). But, following the model of the earlier bilingual dictionaries, this was what is known as a “hard-word dictionary”—it only included words that the compiler thought his readers might not know the meaning of. It wasn’t until the late 17th century that the trend toward including all the words in the language became established, a trend that was confirmed by the triumphant success of Johnson’s 1755 dictionary. We live with the consequences today, in dictionaries that contain much redundant information about things we already know (such as the meaning of chair).

You have said that words are the servants of events. Could you flesh that idea out a little for us?

The idea of words as servants of events applies most obviously to names for things. Entities that never existed before are coming into being constantly, and we have to have some label with which to refer to them. That may in some cases be determined by some official body (as in scientific nomenclature, but more often it involves a gradual process of trial and error. See, for example, the various attempts to find a name for television until television eventually came out on top.

We recognized that foreign learners needed to know not just what words mean, but how they behave grammatically.
Lexical change in more abstract areas is far harder to link to changes in human society. Why, for instance, in recent years (in British English, at any rate), have people begun to use convince to mean persuade? These are matters of trends rather than events.

When you were at Longman publishers in 1974, you worked on their dictionary for foreign learners of English. Please tell us something about what a project like that involves. How is it structured? How does it address the specific needs of any particular language?

The two key requirements of foreign learners we sought to address in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English were: understandability of definition, and grammatical information. Previous dictionaries in this market had used vocabulary in their definitions that was way beyond the competence level of their target users. By studying relevant teaching materials and consulting experts in the field, we developed a vocabulary list of about 2,000 words, with which users could be expected to be familiar, and which we used for writing all the definitions in the dictionary. We also recognized that foreign learners needed to know not just what words mean, but how they behave grammatically. A system of coding for verb grammar had been pioneered by A. S. Hornby in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, but we developed this much further, applying it to other word classes and expanding its range of application. Subsequent experience suggests this was not the best path to follow. Codes (usually combinations of letters and numbers) tend to put people off. They respond better to actual examples incorporating the grammatical feature in question, and that’s what modern English Language Teaching (ELT) dictionaries generally use.

Did the same criteria apply when you worked on dictionaries for native speakers?

On the whole you assume that native speakers are familiar with the grammar of their language, so (apart from the traditional word-class labels, which have become part of the lexicographic furniture) little needs to be said about it. But there may be contentious points on which it can be helpful to offer guidance (for example, can data be used with a singular verb?). I think/hope our work on ELT dictionaries made us more aware of the need to avoid obscure or obfuscatory vocabulary when writing definitions for native speakers.

Do you do the research and write the definitions yourself, or is it a team effort?

This very much differs from dictionary to dictionary, and from publisher to publisher. On the Oxford English Dictionary, for example, I believe lexicographers are expected to research and write every aspect of a dictionary entry themselves, while on other dictionary projects I’ve been involved in, specialist editors have been employed to write scientific and technical entries, to prepare and produce all the information given on pronunciations, and so on.

You’ve also worked on dictionaries of euphemisms and rhyming slang. How does one go about compiling a specific dictionary of, say, rhyming slang? Please describe your process.

When setting out to produce a specialist dictionary, much depends on whether one already exists. If not, and you’re starting from scratch, you need to assemble for yourself a corpus of material that’s likely to contain the vocabulary you need and work through it to put together your wordlist in consultation with experts in the field. That works for particular subjects (say, the terminology of the gas industry), but with more nebulous concepts (such as dysphemisms) you probably need to start young and gradually pick up potential entries as you pass through life. Fortunately, these days most subjects have been covered before, and as there’s no sense in trying to reinvent the wheel, it’s best to concentrate on researching new developments in the field and on devising better ways of presenting your information than anyone has thought of before.

In your Dictionary of Word Origins you say that the average English-speaker knows around 50,000 words, as compared to the half million listed in the Oxford English Dictionary. That was in 1990. Are those figures still accurate? Can you expand a little on your definition of “average”?

As far as I’m aware that figure hasn’t been overturned by any subsequent research, and I still believe it to be broadly true. By “average” I mean someone who has had a standard education up to at least age 16.

You also say that words are a mirror of their time, and your book, 20th Century Words places “escalator” in the 1900s, “hologram” in the 1940s, and “road rage” in the 1980s. How do you make those determinations? What references do you use as a basis for your decisions? Who or what generates statistics of that sort?

All the datings I used in 20th Century Words were taken from the Oxford English Dictionary. That basically meant the second edition, and the datings in that had all been established using the traditional methods of lexicographic data gathering: extensive, exhaustive reading programs resulting in written or printed citations on pieces of paper. The caveat always given is that the earliest date shown is the earliest hitherto found in the written record, and doesn’t necessarily represent the first use of the word. From the mid-1990s computerized databases have played an increasingly central role in lexicographic data gathering, which has enabled a vastly larger amount of text to be searched and resulted in many, many antedatings.

You’ve written a great deal about the emergence of new words in the English language. Please share your thoughts on the process involved in the creation of neologisms. Are they predominantly slang, or is it the other way around?

As I mentioned earlier, many neologisms are born of necessity: a new word is needed for a new thing. But there doesn’t have to be that impetus. Human beings love novelty, and creating new words seems to be a favorite way of achieving that. The great majority of neologisms are based on existing words, by combining them in compounds, adding prefixes or suffixes, abbreviating, etc. The percentage of completely new things (that is, words taken from other languages, or created
Where has slang been coming from in the last hundred years? So-called “bad words” are often an outright repudiation of cultural traditions and codes of behavior. But those standards shift, so that the target is religion for one age, bodily functions for another. In that sense, what influences contribute to the origins of slang?

The areas of human activity that attract slang are thrown into fairly sharp relief in my Oxford Dictionary of Slang (1998), which is arranged thematically rather than alphabetically. Not surprisingly, words relating to bodily parts and functions, sex and sexual orientation, ethnic and national groups, crime, alcohol and drugs, money, unpleasantness, foolishness, plus imprecations and opprobrious epithets, make up a far higher proportion of the total than they would in a general dictionary. For the most part, I think these categories have been fairly constant over the centuries in their tendency toward colloquial vocabulary. The sort of attitude shifts you refer to seem to me to be more reflected in the euphemisms they engender and the taboos they impose.

Acronyms, you tell us, have been the 20th century’s great new contribution to English word formation. Please tell us about that process. What’s behind it?

The impulse to abbreviate written words is probably as old as writing itself (medieval manuscripts, for example, are full of abbreviations), but acronyms do seem to be a genuinely new way of doing it that emerged in the 20th century. You simply take the first letters of a string of words and join them together to make a new word. Technically, what distinguishes them from initialisms, such as NBC, which are just spoken as separate letters, is that they are said as an individual word (e.g., NATO). The real explosion in usage took place during the second world war, and I suspect that a major impetus behind it was the proliferation of organizations with multi-word titles at that time.

From the mid-1990s computerized databases have played an increasingly central role in lexicographic data gathering, which has enabled a vastly larger amount of text to be searched and resulted in many, many antedatings.

What does this say about our society?

As Zhou Enlai famously remarked when asked about the effects of the French Revolution, it’s too early to say. But I suspect that, along with more recent developments such as text-speak and emojis, human beings are no less impatient than we have ever been when it comes to getting our thoughts down on paper (or screen), and we’re ingenious at working out ways to do it as fast as possible.

The digital age has returned us to a form of communication by symbols—emojis or emoticons, numbers, acronyms, and abbreviations—that’s here to stay.

How does lexicography address this phenomenon? What precedents are there that might help? How do dictionaries react? Items that consist of letters, such as abbreviations, aren’t really a problem, and terms that contain a numeral tend to be alphabetized according to the way the number is spelled (so, for example, MI5 would come before MI6 because f comes before s). Things like emoticons that have no letters to anchor them are clearly more of a problem for alphabetical dictionaries (though not so much for thematic thesauruses). I guess a separate table at the back of the dictionary would probably be the answer.

In the mid-1980s you left your employment in the publishing field and became a freelance lexicographer. Freelance translators and interpreters would be interested to hear anything you have to say about that transition. What skills and experience must one have to take the leap and become a freelancer in your field? Who does one work for? Do agents play a role?

Setting aside fairly obvious things such as being good at what you do, having a reputation for reliability, etc., I’d say that what helped me most in making the transition to freelance work was the contacts I’d built up in the field during my 10 years of employment in publishing. It takes some nerve to make the initial leap, but it’s important not to allow oneself to be discouraged if lots of jobs don’t fall into one’s lap straightaway. As far as agents go, I took the view from the outset that I probably knew more about the dictionary publishing scene than any literary agent was likely to, so I ploughed my own furrow. I don’t know if the same would apply to translators.

You taught courses on lexicography at Surrey University. Please give us an overview of those courses and their objectives. Do you still teach?

The courses I taught were specifically aimed at students doing a postgraduate course for translators, and their aim was to give students a comprehensive grounding in the theory and practice of lexicography: the history of lexicography, the typology of dictionaries, the techniques of lexicographers, the collection and evaluation of evidence, and so on. I no longer teach.

How has lexicography evolved? When you look at Dr. Johnson’s dictionary, do you see a difference in scope or method compared to what you and your colleagues do today? Please tell us what you see. What has happened in two and a half centuries?

Dr. Johnson based his dictionary on the best language of the best authors, and that remained essentially the default position of lexicographers for the next 200 years. They presented the English language in its shining Sunday best, with any embarrassing or vulgar bits tucked away behind the sofa. It followed from this that, even in the case of a historical dictionary of record like the Oxford English Dictionary, their stance was broadly prescriptive rather than descriptive. I think the biggest changes
over the past 50 years have been, partly from the influence of theoretical linguistics, that the emphasis is now more on description. Also, because computerized databases have brought about a quantum leap in the amount of evidence available to lexicographers, dictionaries now reflect more accurately the language as a whole, rather than just the literary tip of the iceberg.

When a neologism is imported, are statistics kept on the country of origin? Are there dictionaries or lists of words arranged according to where they originated? I don’t know of any specific register devoted to that subject, but it’s the sort of information that would be fairly easy to access by doing a search of, say, the Oxford English Dictionary database. By looking in the etymology field one would be able to discover, for example, how many words of Italian origin had come into English in the 1950s.

Human beings are no less impatient than we have ever been when it comes to getting our thoughts down on paper (or screen), and we’re ingenious at working out ways to do it as fast as possible.

How has the internet affected lexicography? Do online resources take market share from the traditional product? Is there a future for paper dictionaries?

The lexicographer lives on, presumably, by switching to online reference works? How does that differ from the traditional product?

As an originator of text, I think the online lexicographer’s job remains fairly similar to that of her offline predecessor, except, as I said above, in the amount of evidence available to use. The most important differences lie in the possibility of giving users more differentiated and sophisticated ways of accessing the text. It’s still comparatively early, but there are all sorts of potential ways in which the look-up procedure can be digitally streamlined (talking to the dictionary, for example; say a word you don’t know how to spell and it’ll find it for you). For all I know such a thing may already exist. Automated speech recognition is now apparently 95% reliable (though it doesn’t seem that way when I try to communicate with a computer over the phone).

Is lexicography an expanding field? Are there more new lexicographers every day? If so, what sustains or fuels that expansion? There certainly seem to be more amateur lexicographers around today, or perhaps it’s just that the internet enables them to publish compilations that in previous decades would have remained forever in a desk drawer at home. As far as professional lexicography is concerned, I’m not so sure. Publishers certainly tend not to have in-house teams these days, preferring to rely on freelancers employed on a casual basis, and the demand for these will fluctuate according to the projects the publishers have on hand. My impression is that there aren’t significantly more of us around than when I started out 40 years ago.

What advice do you have for those who might be interested in a career in the field of lexicography?

First, make a dispassionate assessment of your own aptitudes. To be a good lexicographer you need methodicalness and the stickability to see a long project through to its finish, through to its finish. You also need a lively and inquiring imagination and a flair for writing. This is an unusual combination of attributes that any prospective employer will be trying to search out in an applicant. They won’t be so interested to know you have “a love of words,” although presumably if language didn’t exert a fascination over you, you wouldn’t want to be a lexicographer.

John, thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts about this fascinating field!

Tony Beckwith was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spent his formative years in Montevideo, Uruguay, then set off to see the world. He moved to Texas in 1980 and currently lives in Austin, Texas, where he works as a writer, translator, poet, and cartoonist. Contact: tony@tonybeckwith.com.
How to Develop Effective Communication Skills to Get and Keep Clients

Effective communication is both a means to achieve your business goals and the very essence of your business. Have you ever been unsure about what the client really wanted? Have you ever forgotten what you or the client promised because you didn’t keep good records of your interactions? If so, your communication with clients could be improved.

Here are some tips to improve communication, both written and oral, especially with potential and current clients.

**Determine your client’s communication style.** Does the client prefer you to pick up the phone, send a quick email, or do they want to meet in person? If possible, try to adapt to your client’s preferred style.

**Keep records of your interactions.** You can do this by adding everything to an Excel worksheet, saving email, and noting conversations on the phone or during meetings. This will make it easy to see with whom you need to check in or follow up.

**Pay attention to your tone, especially in email.** Always remember to keep it professional, and pay attention to tone, style, grammar, and typos. (One good tip is to re-read an email before sending it.) In addition, make sure your voicemail has a professional-sounding message. Always treat the client with respect.

**Be very specific about documenting project terms and expectations in advance.** If you don’t know, ask, and have everything documented in writing. For example, set appointments for communicating with clients so you can be more prepared when they call. I sometimes screen incoming calls, letting them go to voicemail, and then call back as soon as I’ve prepared what I want to say. If you’re following up with a client, ask if you can call back at a specific time, or offer an alternative time to talk.

**Focus on listening to what the client says instead of thinking ahead in the conversation.** This is mostly useful for phone calls, but it can also be a powerful tool for negotiating rates. Usually in negotiations, if you remain quiet, the client might think what they’re offering is too low and give you a new offer.

**Respond quickly.** In order for us to provide great customer service, we need to make an effort to return email and phone calls promptly, within an hour or so if possible. Doing so reaffirms your professionalism and tells the client that you are easy to work with. If you’re unavailable, remember to activate away messages on all of your communication channels (email, voicemail, Skype, etc.). It shows that you care about the caller’s business.

**Be available.** Being a freelancer means setting your own hours, but if you want to work with clients, you need to be available based on their schedule. This is why informing clients of the time zone in which you conduct business is also important.

**Try to identify your next step in advance.** Make your process as clear as possible for you and your clients. When you accept a job, ask the client to confirm with a purchase order number before starting work (for agencies), or to confirm with a contract for direct clients. To make it easier for the client, you can include your price or fee when you confirm the deadline, which tools to use, and other key details. This makes it easy for the client to confirm those terms as well.

**Make a template of the initial email you send to clients clarifying the...**

Business Practices will alternate in this space with “The Entrepreneurial Linguist.” This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors.
Don’t send an email five minutes before the deadline with a lot of questions concerning the file, or say that it will be delayed. If you’re delayed, inform the client as soon as possible so they can make arrangements.

scope of the project. This will save you a lot of time—and eventually money. The projects you work on may differ, but the initial stages are mostly the same. A template will help you ensure that you didn’t leave out anything important, while at the same time providing a way to record details about the work.

When delivering a job, remember to ask the client for feedback. You can also take this time to ask them if you can help with a future project. Or, simply say that you’re looking forward to working with them again.

Keep the client in the loop. If you’re working on a long-term or large project, send the client updates weekly, or daily, to keep them informed. It’s your responsibility to apprise them of the project status. Different clients may expect different levels of contact, so try to find out how often your client wants you to provide an update. Even if it seems a little excessive, you could send one or two email updates letting the client know that everything is going as planned, or that you are a little bit ahead or behind.

Confront problems. Don’t send an email five minutes before the deadline with a lot of questions concerning the file, or say that it will be delayed. If you’re delayed, inform the client as soon as possible so they can make arrangements. As problems arise, deadlines may shift or revisions may get out of hand, but you must communicate with the client to find the solution.

Verify everything by repeating and recording it in writing. Even if you agree on something over the phone, always send an email with details that the client can verify. Ask, don’t assume. If your invoice is not paid, or if you are unsure of something, just ask.

Always keep things positive. Don’t take your horrible day out on the client, and don’t let an angry client get to you. You can keep the conversation positive and focus on finding a solution instead. This applies not only to how we communicate via email or on the phone, but to everything we post online. Many agencies and direct clients tell me that they Google perspective hires and check out their presence on social media. What you share online can be seen by anyone, so it’s important to be aware of the image you’re presenting.

I hope this has given you a better idea of what to focus on when communicating with potential or current clients to keep them interested and coming back for more.

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Tess Whitty has been an English-Swedish freelance translator since 2003, specializing in corporate communications, software, and information technology. Her educational and professional background is in marketing. She is a speaker and trainer at conferences, sharing her knowledge and experience in marketing and the freelance business. She is also the author of the book Marketing Cookbook for Translators. She hosts the Marketing Tips for Translators podcast, where freelance translators (and interpreters) find tips from fellow translators and other experts on how to grow and thrive in their freelance business (http://marketingtipsfortranslators.com/podcast-2/). Her new book, Marketing Tips for Translators—The Ultimate Collection of Business Tips from the Podcast, is adapted from material presented on the podcast. She is the current chair of ATA’s Membership Committee and served as the chair of ATA’s Chapters Committee. Contact: tess@swedishtranslationservices.com.
Speech Recognition Is in Your Back Pocket (or Wherever You Keep Your Mobile Phone)

BY TIAGO NETO

Speech recognition (n.): The process of identifying and interpreting or responding to the sounds produced in human speech.

—Oxford English Dictionary

Speech recognition is a software application best described as converting sound into words. While it’s far more detailed than that, the appeal for people whose work revolves around words is immediately apparent. Speech recognition can, depending on the circumstances, increase output dramatically—remember, you can speak much faster than you can type.

It also brings significant ergonomic advantages. For example, you aren’t chained to a desk and keyboard, and you trade the likelihood of orthopedic injuries for perhaps a sore throat. However, like all good things, speech recognition software also has its drawbacks. Some adaptation is required, the software can be finicky to set up, and while you’ll probably never have a typo using it, you’ll surely get “dictos”—misrecognized words that sound similar, but don’t have the same meaning.

One of the most difficult adaptations is learning to read out everything—and by that I mean everything, including punctuation. For example, you would have to read the paragraph above as: “One of the most difficult adaptations is learning to read out everything [dash] and by that I mean everything [comma] including punctuation [period]”

Now that you have a clearer understanding of how speech recognition works, let’s explore how you can use a phone or tablet to unlock its potential for nothing, or nearly so.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND

A few years ago, I started experimenting with speech recognition at a fellow translator’s request. The limited number of languages (U.S. and British English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Japanese) supported by Dragon Naturally Speaking (DNS) left me using it mostly for dealing with administrative and academic writing, with no practical application to my work as a translator due to my language pairs.

I ended up experimenting with Apple’s Mac OS built-in speech recognition engine, and was extremely unimpressed with my early results—to the point of even recording my experience on video to send back to the aforementioned colleague. It turns out that I was actually making more work for myself because I had not downloaded the improved language packages. When I did, the difference was astounding, and for a long time my main workhorse was an Apple laptop running a virtual machine where my CAT tools could run while allowing me to benefit from high-quality speech recognition into Portuguese. I explored its advantages and limitations, and even circumvented the issue of adding custom vocabulary (but that’s an entirely new can of worms, and not the purpose of this piece).

Shortly after that first run, the issue of using mobile devices came along, as iOS—Apple’s operating system for its mobile devices—also provided multilingual speech recognition. Now, being a fan of Android, I also looked into that environment to see what could be done to enable using them with Windows. So, without further ado…

WHAT YOU CAN DO ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE

If you’re using an iPhone or iPad, you may have noticed the little microphone button right next to the space bar when you bring up the keyboard. That button activates the speech recognition engine, which will do its best to convert the sounds the microphone picks up into the words of the selected language, placing said words wherever the text cursor may be at that particular time.

Now, if you’re a user of a Mac computer, you: a) don’t really need this, and b) will find it somewhat underwhelming. Mac computers allow you to download the language packs for offline use (and to customize your vocabulary). With iOS, you’re stuck with an exclusively online feature with no customizing capabilities other than choosing the speech recognition language. Also, you can’t create custom verbal commands, which can be quite useful for certain CAT tool functions.

Now, if you’re using Android, that’s an entirely different set of circumstances. Android does support some degree of speech recognition (via Google voice), but to get the really good features, you need an app from Nuance, the creators of DNS. You’ll need Swype (www.nuance.com, available on Google Play). With that downloaded and installed, you now get that coveted microphone button on your keyboard. When you press it you get a new screen with a big yellow button that you press whenever you want to use the speech recognition engine. Just like iOS’ speech recognition features, you must be online to use it.

The advantage that Swype brings you is...
Chrome Remote Desktop is more a matter of personal taste than anything else. The mobile apps do have a character limit in the text buffer, but it’s quite hard to dictate such a long sentence in one go.

Remote keyboard apps are interesting in another way: they capture the “keystrokes” (i.e., the text output) from your phone and transfer it on the computer. There are quite a few apps from which to choose, although I did go with Remote Keyboard Plus (www.goonbee.com, available on iTunes for $1.99). In this instance, you open the text box in the mobile application, dictate into it, and have the content transferred to another app by the same developer running on your computer, thus bridging both devices. (See Figure 3.)

A somewhat similar approach was used by the developers of MyEcho (www.myechoapp.com, $1.99) an application that allows you to export the text output of an iOS device’s speech recognition to a Windows machine—again, at the cursor position. (See Figure 4.)

For Android users, there are several apps available at the Google Play store that mimic a virtual keyboard, and due to the nature of that ecosystem, more keep coming up regularly. Any application that allows you to invoke the Swype keyboard to type on a remote machine (i.e., your computer) will work. In the end, it will allow you to use an Android device to type messages on your computer’s keyboard. You’ll immediately see the benefit of this approach if you have a fully customizable vocabulary. We’ll get to that in a bit. (See Figure 1.)

Now that you’ve managed to get your mobile device to recognize what you say and convert it into words, comes the really techy bit. That text output needs to go where you need it, be that the current segment or translation unit on which you are working in your CAT tool of choice, word processor, or whatever. (See the table below for language support capabilities.)

Remember, the recognized text is output to the text cursor position on your phone, just as if you had just actually typed it using the phone’s keyboard. The trick here is to make sure that happens at the computer you’re using. And for that, you’ll need another app on your phone and on your computer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages (and variations)</th>
<th>MAC OS (Mac computers)</th>
<th>iOS (Apple mobile devices)</th>
<th>Android with Swype + Dragon Dictation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45 at the time of writing, with Nuance having commercial models for 86 languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offline use</td>
<td>Yes, with downloadable improved dictionaries</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customizable vocabulary</td>
<td>Yes, manually or automated with scripts</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, manually (but you can do it in bulk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires another app to use with a computer</td>
<td>No (unless you’re running a virtual machine)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sampling of Speech Recognition Applications**

- Chrome Remote Desktop
  - chrome.google.com
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
  - www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm
- MyEcho
  - www.myechoapp.com
- Remote Keyboard Plus
  - www.goonbee.com
- Swype
- TeamViewer
  - www.teamviewer.com

**Figure 2:** Enlarged view of TeamViewer on an Android phone using Swype. Note the text and mouse cursor positions, which are the actual positions on the computer.
be mostly a matter of personal preference, although I do tend to favor using TeamViewer or Chrome Remote Desktop, as you’ll always need to piggyback two applications to obtain the desired outcome.

One important factor to consider here is, as always, where do you want your data to circulate? The audio utterances will be travelling to Nuance’s servers, then the text will be sent back to your device, from which it will be forwarded elsewhere depending on your method of choice.

**IS SPEECH RECOGNITION RIGHT FOR YOU?**

Speech recognition does require some fiddling and experimentation on the user’s end, as each application has its own mix of software packages and, particularly with Android devices, sometimes very different specifications. There is no one-formula-fits-all solution, but most applications are easy enough to figure out, and you have a good shot at improving your workflow.

For additional information, you can look up the blog section on my website at www.tiagoneto.com for over an hour of videos on setting up these applications on several combinations of platforms. You’ll also find a few helpful tips regarding custom vocabulary.

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Certification Forum | By Michèle Hansen, ATA-Certified French->English Translator

You Do the Math: Continuing Education Points

Whether your certification certificate is newly minted or dusty, all ATA-certified translators (CT) must maintain their CT credential by accruing continuing education points (aka CEPs). This process is known as “re-certification.” Since re-certification is not an annual occurrence, some of us lose track of what we need to do and when we need to do it. So, here’s a brief rundown of what you should know.

Who, What, When: ATA-certified translators must submit proof of 20 CEPs every three years.

Why: Certification is not “one and done.” Like other professional certifications, it requires us to stay current with the profession and expand our knowledge.

How: Any number of ways!

- All ATA national and chapter educational events qualify for CEPs automatically.
- Taking and/or teaching a course or seminar related to translation and interpreting is another excellent way to get points.
- Acquiring business skills also counts, such as workshops through SCORE (the Service Corps of Retired Executives) or your local Chambers of Commerce.
- Release your inner author and write an article for The ATA Chronicle or another professional publication.
- Commit to ATA’s School Outreach Program or become a Mentoring Buddy.

All of these activities will garner you CEPs. Who is responsible for tracking and reporting CEPs? You are. ATA should notify you before your CEP report is due, but you can easily check your status on ATA’s website. Just log in under the “Members Only” section and check your membership information. You’ll see something like this:

Your Membership Expires on 01-01-2018
You Belong to 4 Division(s)
Your Last Invoice was Dated 08-24-2016
Your Continuing Education Points expire on 07-01-2017 Submit Now

Simply click on “Submit Now” and you’ll be directed to the appropriate online page. You can download the CEP form as a Word or PDF file to track your activities over the three-year period so you don’t forget anything when your expiration date rolls around. This form contains all the information you need about the CE requirements and the types of activities that qualify. (These guidelines can also be accessed by selecting the following: Already Certified—Report your CE Points—then, at the end of the text, click on—Approval Request Form for ATA Continuing Education Points.)

Once you’ve filled out the form, the final step is payment. Payment? Yes, there is a $30 charge for re-certification to cover the time Headquarters staff spend verifying and processing the CEP records. Verifying? Yes, again! ATA audits a random selection of the records submitted, so be sure to keep your own records of the activities for which you are claiming credit.

When you’ve finished and submitted the form, you’ll get a confirmation email that reads as follows:

Dear ATA member,

This message is to inform you that we have received your online continuing education record. ATA will contact you only if there are questions about your submission or if you are selected for audit. Here is a quick summary of what you have submitted:

Category A: x
Category B: x
Category C: x

If you don’t receive this email, an error may have occurred, so be sure to contact ATA’s Certification Manager, Caron Mason (caron@atanet.org). Note that your submission will take 7–10 business days to be processed, so your profile won’t immediately appear to be updated on the website.

If you’re planning an event or applying for CEPs for individual activities, be sure to consult ATAs guidelines cited above on how to assess the number of CEPs you may offer or claim. Note that a university course has a maximum of five points, and a single event, even if it lasts several days, has a maximum of 10 points. ATAs Annual Conference, for example, which spans three days, is worth 10 points. If you indicate a number that is higher than the maximum allowed for a field, the CE report will be rejected automatically. If you’re claiming CEPs for an event or activity not covered in the guidelines, check with Caron Mason at Headquarters first.

The easiest way to track your CEPs is to keep a folder (paper or electronic) as soon as you get your initial certification (or when you re-certify). Put a copy of the CEP record form that you downloaded from the ATA site in that folder. Every time you complete a continuing education activity, put the backup paperwork in the folder and record it on the CEP record. This way you’ll always know how many CEPs you have and how many more you may need. When it’s time to turn them in, you’ll have everything in one place ready to input online. If audited, you’ll also have everything together in one folder with no need to “dig things up” from the past three years.

All CEPs must have been earned within the three-year period beginning with certification or re-certification. So, in the example above, where the CEPs expire in July 2017, only activities performed between July 2014 and July 2017 can be claimed. You cannot claim credit for activities or events that took place before you were certified or before your previous re-certification deadline. After all, the purpose of continuing education is to stay current!

As with all rules, this one has an exception: certified members who have reached age 60 are exempt from this requirement. ATA Headquarters also has the authority to extend the deadline for accruing CE points, upon request, for up to one year based upon extenuating circumstances, such as long-term illness, undue hardship, and military duty.

All the information you need can be found on ATAs website under the FAQ section of the Certification tab (http://bit.ly/FAQ-certification). If you have further questions, the staff at ATA Headquarters is there to assist. With a little planning, this math shouldn’t be a problem. ☺
There’s Still Time to Enter ATA’s School Outreach Contest!

Make a School Outreach presentation during the 2016–2017 school year and you could win a free registration to ATA’s 58th Annual Conference in Washington, DC, October 25–28, 2017!

Here’s how to enter:

- Visit ATA’s School Outreach Presentations section for information on setting up a presentation, ready-made presentation materials for download, and speaking tips.
- Choose the age level you like the best and download a presentation, or use the resources on the School Outreach webpage to round out your own material.
- Speak on translation and/or interpreting careers at a school or university anywhere in the world between August 1, 2016 and July 18, 2017.
- Get someone to take a picture of you in the classroom. For tips on getting a winning shot, visit the Photo Guidelines.
- Send your picture electronically to the ATA School Outreach Program 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 July 18, 2017. The winner will be contacted no later than August 20, 2017. (Note: You must be a member of ATA or an ATA-affiliated organization to enter.) Complete details are available on ATA’s School Outreach webpage (http://bit.ly/ATA-School-Outreach).

Questions? Contact School Outreach Program Coordinator Meghan McCallum (meghanraymccallum@gmail.com) or send an email to schooloutreach@atanet.org.

NEW ATA PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE BROKER

Alliant is the new broker for ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance. The underwriter is still Lloyds of London. All policies remain in effect and unchanged.

Why choose the ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance?

The policy is specific to the translation and interpreting professions. This is not a one-size-fits-all plan, but a plan that is specific to the work you do.

What does the ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance cover?

- Broad definition of translation/interpreting services: Covers activities relevant to a translator or interpreter, including editing, publishing, and proofreading.
- Coverage for contingent bodily injury and/or property damages: Covers errors in providing translation/interpreting services that result in bodily injury and/or property damage. These types of claims are typically excluded by generic professional liability policies.
- Coverage for cyber liability, including HIPPA and HITECH breaches: Covers breaches related to the provision of professional services in violation or breach of the HIPPA and HITECH Acts.

Visit ata.alliant.com for additional information.

Questions? Contact Alliant at +1-703-547-5777 or ata-questions@alliant.com.

Tell Us Your Story!

Please share your past and present School Outreach experiences with us! Whether you decide to enter the contest or not, ATA’s School Outreach team would love to hear from you. Please contact Meghan McCallum at meghanraymccallum@gmail.com with a description of when and where you presented and let us know about your memorable School Outreach experience.
At the National Security Agency, translating a foreign language is not just an academic exercise. It is a critical step in keeping our nation safe.

That’s why NSA language professionals are inspired to lead the nation in foreign language analysis. It is their job to know fine details of dialect and context, nuance and culture.

At the end of the day, they know they have played a key role in securing our future, now and for generations to come.

Join us, for the inspiration of a lifetime.

U.S. citizenship is required for all applicants. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and abides by applicable employment laws and regulations. All applicants for employment are considered without regard to age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or status as a parent.

NSA has a critical need for individuals with the following language capabilities:

• Arabic
• Chinese
• Farsi
• Korean
• Russian
• And other less commonly taught languages

APPLY TODAY

IntelligenceCareers.gov/NSA