Demand for Translation and Interpreting Stronger than Ever

One of the great things about serving as ATA President is the ability to meet, listen to, and learn from translators and interpreters from around the U.S. and abroad. Most recently, I traveled to Brazil—home to the second-largest number of ATA members outside the U.S.—to attend and present at the Associação Brasileira de Tradutores conference, where keynote speaker and Brazilian historian, Leandro Karnal, commented on the current uncertain political climate in Brazil and in the world at large. He said, “Pessimists go nowhere. Optimists move ahead.”

It’s easy to be pessimistic as our industry experiences some uncertainty in the face of technological changes and a globalized economy. Especially for those of us who have worked in the translation and interpreting (T&I) industry for several decades, things are changing fast. Yet, numerous statistics and forecasts point to a bright future for our industry, especially in terms of the rising demand for our services in an increasingly globalized world.

Data that was released recently from the U.S. Census indicates that the number of people employed in the T&I industry nearly doubled between 2008 and 2015, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ employment projections predict that the number of translator and interpreter jobs will grow 29% (to 78,500) by 2024.1 Job growth for translators and interpreters is actually outpacing that of other occupations.2

The reasons for this are interesting. Survey after survey has shown that people prefer products and services in their own language, and U.S. companies are starting to realize that a monolingual approach to business is a competitive disadvantage. Fourteen percent of U.S. and Global Fortune 2000 companies—companies like Google, Cisco, eBay, Twitter, Microsoft, and Marriott—report a loss of business opportunities due to lack of world language skills.3

What’s more, counterintuitively, the public discussion about free online translation tools has actually increased the market for professional translation and interpreting. Lured by visions of technology straight out of Star Trek, users often discover just how important and challenging translation is—and realize that they have sophisticated language needs that only human professionals can meet.

The global volume of content to be translated is growing exponentially each year, and with it comes pressure to produce results faster, cheaper, and more efficiently. But this has been the case for several decades, and translators and interpreters have been able to rise to these challenges by tackling technology, building better business models, and expanding their expertise. Far from being phased out, skilled human translators and interpreters are more in demand now than ever before.

The public is getting the message, thanks in part to the efforts of ATAs Public Relations Committee. Through the committee’s business outreach program and articles published in trade magazines by the PR Committee’s Writers’ Group, U.S. businesses are learning not only what translation and interpreting are, but when and how to use these services effectively. Recently, we were fortunate to get significant exposure on CNBC4 as well as PBS5 to highlight the complexity of our profession and the sustained skills and adaptive approaches needed by practitioners of our craft.

Until the elusive “universal translator” exists, the need for human-to-human communication across cultures will continue. That’s why translation and interpreting is one of the oldest professions in history. As communication becomes increasingly complex, the need for sophisticated language consultants will only grow. Taking a pessimistic approach to the future only leaves us feeling overwhelmed by the much larger societal and economic forces that are at play. But an optimistic approach of opening and adapting to these changes provides us

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Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns and more can now be found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!
Onward to DC and ATA58!

ATA’s Annual Conference goes by many nicknames: “The language industry family reunion,” and “The experience you can’t download,” among others. However you look at it, attending an ATA conference—whether for the first time or the 30th—is an energizing, educational, and, some might say, transformative experience. We’re looking forward to welcoming over 1,800 language industry professionals to Washington, DC, at the end of October for another iteration of the one-of-a-kind experience that is ATA.

I attended my first ATA conference in Toronto, Canada, in 2004. At the time, I had been freelancing very part-time for about two years and was still in the “Is this really going to work out?” phase of my freelance career. I had already passed ATA’s certification exam, but my specializations were amorphous, my client base spotty, and my workflow a series of peaks and valleys, but I was lucky to have been taken under the wing of a few experienced translators in my local chapter, the small but mighty Colorado Translators Association. One of their key pieces of advice: “attend an ATA conference as soon as you can.”

So, leaving my husband and toddler daughter for the first time—and with some instant noodles in my suitcase to save money—I headed off to Toronto. That experience was, in a word, overwhelming. I knew the names of exactly three people at the conference, which left me to make friends with the other 997 people at the Opening Reception. Termbases, translation memory software, direct clients, and freelance financial management were all new to me, as was the concept of achieving a similar level of financial security to someone with a traditional job. But slowly, over the course of the conference, I started to find my groove—connecting with other French>English translators, attending Jonathan Hine’s presentation on how to run a profitable business (thanks, Jonathan!), and even braving a few social events.

Most importantly, a chance encounter in the hallway outside a session led to my first major agency client who started sending me a steady flow of work. Within three months of attending the Toronto conference, my workflow and income had increased dramatically to the point where I could confidently say, “I’m running a successful business as a freelance translator.” I still think of the 2004 conference as the critical turning point in my freelance career.

If you’re attending your fifth, 15th, or 35th conference, I challenge you to:

- Reach out to a first-time attendee. Don’t wait for that person to emerge from a corner and talk to you. March right up to them and find out about them and their story.
- Mix it up. Refuse to stagnate. Learn a new skill. If you’re in your fourth decade as a translator or interpreter, attend sessions that will allow you to reinvent yourself in your fifth decade. With over 175 educational sessions, we truly do have something for every flavor of language professional.

It has been a privilege to serve as your conference organizer for the past two years. In my own life, taking on a major role in ATA is up there with being a mom as “the toughest job you’ll ever love.” As I move into my two-year term as ATA president, I thank you for your trust, and I thank current President David Rumsey and Executive Director Walter “Mooch” Bacak for their advice and leadership. And most importantly, I’ll see you in DC at the end of October!
ATA SOCIAL MEDIA | FROM OUR MEMBERS

FEATURED FACEBOOK POST

American Translators Association
August 16

All the things we’ve lost in translation
“It pains me to know that I have fallen in love with words, without ever knowing what the writer had meant to say in their original tongue. But maybe that’s okay. Maybe this gap in knowledge and understanding is a price that we have to pay to be able to get a small taste of what life is like beyond what we already know.”
Learn more: http://bit.ly/2uHaUmv

TOP TWEETS

Bilingual babies listen to languages—and don’t get confused: http://bit.ly/2igp60b
AUG 18 / @ATANET

AUG 17 / @ATANET

The 10 Oldest Languages Still Spoken In The World Today: http://bit.ly/2gWqCyw
AUG 9 / @ATANET

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Melissa González’s Letter in Response to Barry Slaughter Olsen’s Article on Remote Interpreting
I read Melissa González’s comments in the July-August issue in response to Barry Olsen’s article (“Remote Interpreting: Feeling Our Way into the Future,” May-June issue) and literally felt like my personal job experience was on stage.

The hospital where I was employed also decided to close our interpreter services department for “financial” reasons last year. The process began by taking away weekend interpreters, followed by overnight interpreters a few months later. A remote phone interpreting service was implemented. Sporadic training was provided by someone in-house—not even a trained expert from the company. Everyone in the interpreter services department was laid off four months later.

After my co-workers and I were laid off, we asked the hospital if they would be open to keeping us on call. This way the medical staff could still have contact with the same interpreters they had worked with for years. The hospital declined. The medical staff was upset and frustrated when they heard the news. Many had yet to be trained on how to use the new interpreting service. There were many questions concerning what was to be done in emergency situations and in the departments where outside interpreting equipment cannot be used. No one seemed to have an answer. For the hospital, it was all about saving money. Staff members were told they would be fine and needed to be patient.

I was fortunate enough to find a job three months later in the same community, but I continue to hear about the lack of medical interpreting at the hospital. The hospital ended the contract with the original interpreting service and moved on to another company, but there are still issues with access. Patients have to fend for themselves in many instances and use their own cell phones or sit and wait until the medical staff can get someone on the phone. Staff members have also had to use their personal cell phones or, even worse, resort to hand gestures to try and communicate. Some staff members are unwilling to use the service because it takes too long or they don’t trust the knowledge of the “medical” interpreter on the phone.

Although the hospital’s quarterly reports will show that money is being saved, the telephone interpreting service is not being used to its full potential. No changes will be made as long as the hospital feels that it’s better to save money by using a machine versus a staff medical interpreter.

I do agree that new technology has its place in all walks of life. However, when it comes to medical interpreting, a machine is not always the answer just because it saves a dollar or two! We are talking about a human being, not an object to be figured out at random by a machine!

Thank you, Melissa. Your story gives me hope to push forward.

Elizabeth Olson | Mansfield, Massachusetts

www.atanet.org
Bridging Other Gaps

In the field known as translation studies, much has been written about the gap between “academia” (scholarship and training) and “practice” (the professional or industry side of translation). As an expert translation practitioner and translation studies student/novice scholar, I’m deeply troubled by this unfortunate separation.

This is why I’ve followed with great interest and excitement the development of ATA’s Educators Division (http://ataeducatorsdivision.org), and want to take this opportunity to recognize ATA’s efforts toward bridging this “gap.” I also want to express my sincerest appreciation to the Board and conference organizers for the quality guest speakers they’re bringing to the conference every year.

In addition, I not only want to encourage, but humbly ask translation/interpreting professionals who are not normally involved in scholarship or research to attend at least one of the “Education and Training” sessions at the upcoming conference. Your input and participation is much more important to researchers than you can possibly realize. (And if you decide to attend one of these sessions and happen to see my name badge, please come say hello so I can thank you in person.)

It’s my sincerest hope that these and future initiatives will successfully bring the “academic” and “professional” worlds closer together so that scholars can continue to produce knowledge that is informed by (and is useful to) what practitioners do on a daily basis.

Celeste Klein Malone | Akron, Ohio

Expanding Your Business: Genealogical Translation | Corey Oiesen and Bryna O’Sullivan

Thank you for the article on genealogical translation in the May-June issue. I loved all the information you shared! I’ve been translating mostly for direct clients who are either looking for their Italian citizenship or researching their Italian roots. I’ve been doing this for about two years full-time now. My first client was a professor doing research on an Italian fellow born in Italy in the 1800s—in my own town. I loved going to the church and leafing through those old, dusty, and fascinating records! Your article gave me more ideas and renewed energy to look for additional work in this field. Thanks!

Manuela Francavilla | Madison, Wisconsin

NEW CERTIFIED MEMBERS

Congratulations!

The following people have successfully passed ATA’s certification exam:

**English into Portuguese**
Beatriz Baker Meio
Takoma Park, MD

**English into Spanish**
Aimée Valckx Gutiérrez
Querétaro, Mexico
Rosalia Sanchez-Rodriguez
Carmel, IN
Hector Vicencio
Mexico City, Mexico

**German into English**
Mikhael A. Abi-Saleh
Johnson City, TN

**Portuguese into English**
Liam Gallagher
São Paulo, Brazil
Tracy S. Miyake
Curitiba, Brazil
Elizabeth M. Herron-Sweet
São Paulo, Brazil

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 2

with the flexibility we need to shape the future and chart a path forward. ●

NOTES

The American Translators Association's Board of Directors met July 29–30, 2017, in Denver, Colorado. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

**Final Budget:** The Board approved the July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018 final budget and the 2018–2020 draft budgets. The approved budget is $3.32 million. This compares to last year’s budget of $3.18 million.

**Upcoming Elections:** The Board approved presenting proposed bylaws changes to the membership for their approval. The changes are intended to expand voting rights to associate members who are professionally engaged in language services and have been members for three consecutive years. All current voting members will be grandfathered in, which means they could drop their membership for a year, rejoin, and be able to vote. In addition, the Board approved presenting to the membership for their approval a resolution supporting diversity. Both the proposed bylaws changes and the proposed resolution will be on the ballot this fall. The elections will be held October 26 at the Annual Meeting of Voting Members—also known as the Presentation of Candidates and Election—in conjunction with the Annual Conference in Washington, DC. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.

**Date of Record:** The Board set September 22, 2017, as the date of record for the 2017 elections. This means that if you want to participate in this year’s election you need to be a voting member by September 22. There are two ways to become a voting member: pass the certification exam or apply through the online Active Membership Review process (www.atanet.org/membership/memb_review_online.php).

**Revised ATA Election Policy:** Over the years, ATA has been fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers to serve on the Board. In addition, these same Board members completed their terms and, with rare exception, never missed a meeting. It was not until we experienced two vacancies over the past two years that we needed to clarify how these vacancies are filled. In response, the Board approved revising ATA’s Election Policy to make it clear that a vacancy will be filled by the next regular election. The Board, however, does have the option to appoint someone to fill the position until the next regular election.

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 October 28–29, 2017, in conjunction with ATA’s Annual Conference in Washington, DC. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.

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**The ATA Chronicle Recognized as Best Periodical by the International Federation of Translators**

The *ATA Chronicle* was awarded the FIT Best Periodical Prize at the recent International Federation of Translators’ XXI Congress in Brisbane, Australia. ATA President David Rumsey accepted the award.

The award recognizes the journal that best promotes the professional image of the translator, interpreter, and terminologist in terms of quality, presentation, and relevance. The competition is open to any non-academic periodical published by any FIT member. A five-person international jury selects the award winner.

The International Federation of Translators includes more than 100 professional translation and interpreting associations, representing 80,000 translators in 55 countries.
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 ata58.

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www.atanet.org/conf/2017/registration

GET ONLINE to see what ATA58 offers
Find photos, videos, and testimonials to discover why you must attend.
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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
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www.atanet.org/conf/2017/advertise

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Bridging the Language Gap at TEDxNIU

I was invited to speak at the TEDxNIU Annual Conference at Northern Illinois University on April 22, 2017. There were more than 200 attendees from various backgrounds, including students, professors, academic staff, and business professionals.

TED is a nonprofit devoted to sharing ideas, usually in the form of short talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where technology, entertainment, and design converged. Today, the TED program covers almost all topics—from science to business to global issues—in more than 100 languages. In the spirit of TED's mission (“ideas worth spreading”), the independently run TEDx program helps communities, organizations, and individuals produce TED-style events at the local level.

This year, the TEDxNIU conference consisted of eight speakers from various professions, including computer science, cancer research, personal branding, and entrepreneurship. The theme was “Pushing Limits,” and speakers were asked to discuss how pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones helped them reach their goals. The conference organizers invited me to speak because they wanted a topic relating to globalization, in particular the challenges associated with working through language barriers. They thought that having someone who is both a translator and interpreter speak would be a good way to address many questions concerning the importance of bridging language barriers when it comes to business and personal matters. The title of my talk was “Hobgoblins and Coca-Cola: Beyond the Language Barrier.”

HOW DO GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION RELATE?

I began by explaining that globalization and localization are commonly considered to be poles apart, but they effectively go hand in hand with every overseas business venture. When a company decides to market its brand or expand its operations in a foreign market, it’s contributing to globalization. However, to be successful overseas, I stressed that a business has to shape itself according to the norms and needs of the host country, which is where localization comes into play. The aim of localization is to give a product the look and feel of having been created specifically for a target market, no matter the language, culture, or location. This might include:

- Adapting graphics to target markets;
- Modifying content to suit the tastes and consumption habits of other markets;
- Adapting design and layout to display translated text properly;
- Converting currencies and units of measure to local requirements;
- Using proper local formats for dates, addresses, and phone numbers; and
- Addressing local regulations and legal requirements.

To localize a brand so that it’s specifically tailored to the target country, the translation of the promotional content holds the key. I stressed that many factors needed to be considered for a translation to provide the desired results.

To truly connect with an intended market, a business has to make an effort, just as my teacher did, to adapt its message to the particular culture of the market it is trying to reach.

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE TARGET CULTURE

When a business decides to export its services internationally, it doesn’t matter how confident it is in its product, business plan, capital investment, and human resources. If a business fails to localize its message, the brand will never gain enough traction. Brand success in international markets is achieved by establishing a connection with the audience on an emotional level by transculturing the brand’s message. Transcreation addresses the challenges involved in adapting marketing messages successfully. For instance, will your message resonate with target consumers? Rather than just translating words, it’s essential to address cultural differences and adapt the tone of voice and visual language to each local market. Ultimately, reviewing the target market’s attitudes, aspirations, and other psychographics will help enhance the appeal of the message or product. To circumvent cultural and language barriers associated with this process, I explained that companies often hire translators and localization experts to ensure that the new market understands the company’s underlying vision correctly.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “BRIDGE THE LANGUAGE GAP”??

I decided that attendees might have an easier time grasping the importance of the concepts I was trying to explain by relating a little bit about my own struggles with language and then tying this in with the idea of adapting your message to the needs of another culture.

I’m Middle Eastern, originally from Iraq. I grew up speaking Arabic at home. When I was four, my family moved to Prague, Czech Republic, as my parents were fulfilling their assignments as diplomats. We moved again when I was six from Prague to London, England. I only spoke Arabic and Czech, so it was a challenge for me to communicate with the other children at school. To help me overcome the language barrier I was facing, my teacher started sending me as a
sales campaign before it even starts. For example, when Nokia introduced their new brand of smartphone, the Lumia, to Spanish-speaking countries a few years ago, the company did so without checking to see if the name it had chosen for the product had an equivalent meaning in the target market. It turns out that *lumia* means “prostitute” in a gypsy-influenced Spanish dialect, which is obviously not a word the company wanted to have associated with its flagship product. Unfortunately, this realization came too late for Nokia, and the company ended up facing considerable backlash for this error.

On the other hand, a successful marketing technique that the Coca-Cola Company utilized in 2014 to market their product through the “Share a Coke” campaign was to transcreate the brand’s message and localize it to local markets. A marketing campaign encouraged consumers to purchase Coke bottles and cans personalized with their names and with the names of friends and family members on them. The campaign capitalized on the global trend of self-expression and sharing, but in an emotional way. The results were tremendous (www.coca-cola.co.uk/stories/share-a-coke):

- #shareacoke was No. 1 global trending topic on social media.
- 998 million impressions on Twitter
- 2% increase in soft-drink sales, increasing Coke consumption from 1.7 to 1.9 billion servings per day.

Bottom line: do your research! I explained that these examples showcase the inherent challenge of entering foreign markets. Aside from flaws arising from literal translations, the culture of the intended region must be scrutinized closely to establish a deep connection with the intended audience. Cultural awareness is crucial to avoid misunderstanding or offending people.

**IT’S NOT ABOUT THE “WHAT” BUT THE “HOW”**

I concluded my talk by quoting a story told by Tommy Weir, the author of *10 Tips for Leading in the Middle East*:

“You travel abroad for the first time and decide to buy a Coca-Cola drink. Before this experience, your assumption was that Coke was the same all over the world. Every advertisement you’ve seen consistently shows Coca-Cola’s trademark red color and the bottle’s contents to be dark caramel, giving the impression that Coke’s ingredients are the same everywhere. Now you discover something new about the famed Coke drink: the taste varies greatly from one region to another. In other words, the ‘what’ of Coke is the same wherever you live—a soft drink to quench thirst, but ‘how’ it tastes varies by region to match local tastes.”

So, it’s not about the “what” of things, it’s about the “how!” In other words, for a business to succeed in a foreign market, it will have to adapt its message in a way that is culturally appropriate to the market it’s trying to reach. This is key to getting people to connect with your product or service.

**MAKING AN IMPRESSION**

After the conclusion of the talk and during a networking break, a large number of attendees lined up for questions. First, 100% gave positive feedback, telling me they enjoyed the talk very much. Many said they found it “eye-opening” and very beneficial. My topic resonated with quite a few attendees, particularly international students. Perhaps the best news of all is that the members of the university’s business faculty are considering incorporating the material from my talk with their marketing classes next year.

**WANT TO REACH A FOREIGN MARKET? DO YOUR RESEARCH**

Global corporate giants who have precariously navigated the linguistic landmines of foreign markets without proper care have found themselves in the center of public criticism from time to time. A poorly worded document or a mistranslated slogan can derail a messenger between my classroom and the classroom across the hall. She would ask me to convey verbal messages or involve me in an activity (e.g., “Please go to Mrs. Johnson’s class and bring her these books and ask her if she can lend us a book for our circle time.”) At first, I just memorized what she was telling me to say. I literally didn’t understand a word. As I interacted more with the teachers and the other children, things slowly started to make sense and I began relating to my surroundings.

In other words, my teacher helped me adapt by establishing a connection. Now, every time I hear the phrase “bridging the gap,” I remember my experience running back and forth across the hall conveying messages between the two classrooms.

I then explained that just as my teacher had made a connection with me to “bridge” our two cultures, businesses should also make the same effort to establish a connection with their intended consumers on a cultural level. In other words, localization is not just about learning the language in question, but gaining a sense of the surroundings in which you operate and developing an emotional connection to the place and the culture of that environment.

**Ghada Shakir** is the assistant administrator of ATA’s Arabic Language Division. An Arabic<>English translator, localizer, and interpreter, she is the president of Gingkos Inc. Translations, Localization and Culture, a language company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She also serves as a director of the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (an ATA chapter). She has a master’s degree in computer science from Eastern Michigan University and a BA in translation and interpreting studies from Al-Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad, Iraq.
First, I would like to thank the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee for selecting me as a candidate for president-elect. I am truly honored.

As most of you know, the primary duty of the president-elect is to serve as the organizer for ATA’s Annual Conference. Our Annual Conference is the “go to” event for translators and interpreters from around the globe. It is also the largest professional event for translators and interpreters in the world. As conference organizer, I will endeavor to ensure that ATA59 and ATA60 live up to the high standards expected of the conference, that the sessions provide top quality professional development, and that attendees get the most “bang for their buck.”

But organizing the conference will not be my sole focus as president-elect. I will continue to work closely with the other officers and directors on all issues affecting ATA. I will ensure that the new treasurer has a smooth transition and can hit the road running. I will continue to keep an eye on the Association’s finances and will work closely with the president to improve ATA on behalf of its members.

As president, I hope to have but a single overarching focus—membership. Our membership numbers have stagnated in recent years, even as the number of translators and interpreters in the industry has reportedly grown. ATA needs to improve its message to translators and interpreters about the benefits of membership and have a more convincing selling proposition. But improving the message and delivering it more effectively is not the only solution to increasing membership numbers. We also need to provide additional benefits, both tangible and intangible, to demonstrate to professional translators and interpreters that paying dues to ATA is money well spent.

For several years, I have advocated bringing back what I call “COTAs” (Conferences Other than Annual). Such conferences, be they focused on a geographic region, high-level professional development in particular specialties, or specific divisions or languages, can and should offer top quality professional development at a much lower cost than the Annual Conference. We should also look at other tangible benefits that might be provided, such as discounts on software and group rates on other necessary services such as insurance (including health care if the legal environment changes) and legal and accounting services.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve our Association.
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?
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- **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

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ATA 2017 ELECTIONS: CANDIDATE STATEMENTS continued

SECRETARY (TWO-YEAR TERM)

KAREN TKACZYK
karen@mcmillantranslation.com

I am honored to be nominated to run as secretary and welcome the opportunity to expand my contribution to ATA.

I have volunteered extensively for our profession since I became a freelance translator in 2005. Within ATA, I started with divisions. I was one of three people who re-established the Science and Technology Division in 2010, and I served as its administrator from then until 2015. I’ve chaired Nominating Committees for the French Language Division and Language Technology Division. I was chair of the Divisions Committee from 2011–2015, so I worked extensively with all divisions. One of my achievements during that time was to lead a project to revamp and restructure the existing Divisions Handbook, a guide for leaders on how to get things done, and then update it annually. I served on ATAs Nominating and Leadership Development Committee from 2011–2015. That role gave me insight into what it takes to be an effective ATA leader. Currently, I’m on the Professional Development Committee, for which I run ATAs webinar program. I also chair the newly-formed ad hoc Website Committee, which is focusing on how we should restructure ATAs website.

I was vice president and then president of the Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association from 2007–2011. During that time, opportunities for progress and change abounded. Among other achievements, we grew the membership and became an ATA Affiliate. I now live in Colorado, where I am an active member of the Colorado Translators Association.

My volunteer experience has covered everything from policy and procedural matters to event planning and motivating other volunteers. I often hold the secretary position in committees (in my community, for instance). I am well-practiced at taking effective notes and producing minutes while still participating in discussions. I am confident that I would work well with the other incoming officer candidates and that we would be a productive team for the next two years. If I am not elected secretary, I will be pleased to continue to serve the rest of my term as director. If I am elected, my focus will be to carefully capture and convey Board activity and decisions so that ATAs written records are clear and precise. I will also still continue to work in other areas that the Board handles and that I care about. I particularly enjoy improving the processes that the Board, other volunteers, and Headquarters use to work together. I aim for increased transparency and consistency.

I look forward to using my calm temperament and orderly approach to tasks to work productively with everyone involved. Thank you for considering me.

TREASURER (TWO-YEAR TERM)

JOHN M. MILAN
john@milanlanguageservices.com

I have served on ATAs Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) for the past three years, working closely with the president, president-elect, executive director, treasurer, and other Board members. The FAC oversees the Association’s finances and ensures accurate financial reporting. This experience has given me a clear view of ATAs potential, along with the challenges we face.

During this time, I have also worked with ATA Director Evelyn Yang Garland and Treasurer Ted R. Wozniak on developing a conference-costing tool that analyzes our past revenue and expenses and uses that information to help the Board plan and budget for future conferences. If elected treasurer, I shall continue to work closely with the FAC, seeking out areas to improve
the stewardship of ATAs resources and ensuring that ATA remains financially sound, transparent, and duly audited.

For those who don’t know me, I am an ATA-certified Portuguese>English translator with over 20 years of experience in our industry. I have an MS in applied microeconomics from Ohio State University, where I was a foreign-language fellow specializing in Portuguese translation and linguistics. I also have degrees in international political economy and Spanish from Indiana University, and I studied at the Institute of European Studies in Madrid, Spain. I spent 11 years in Brazil on the faculty of a university in São Paulo, as an adjunct professor of economics, while concomitantly working as a freelance translator, interpreter, editor, and consultant. Among other relevant experience, I was the financial administrator of a nonprofit organization employing eight people with a $1 million budget, in addition to being the managing director of three businesses, one of which had 45 people on staff and a $3 million budget.

From 2009–2016, I served on the board of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI), as a director, vice president, and then president. During my time at CATI, we developed a local mentoring program, expanded outreach efforts to universities and other professional associations, held quarterly meetups for translators and interpreters in cities throughout the Carolinas, updated and digitized our operating procedures, and took the chapter paperless. The most significant accomplishment was helping to organize well-attended annual conferences in partnership with foreign-language and interpreter training programs in the region.

I shall draw on all this experience to make sure that ATA has a solid budget, sufficient funding, accurate financial statements, and an open channel of communication with the membership.

I look forward to this opportunity and am honored to be considered for this position.

**DIRECTOR (THREE-YEAR TERM)**

**JENNIFER GUERNSEY**

jenguernsey@gmail.com

As I celebrate 20 years of ATA membership, I am honored to have been nominated to serve as an ATA director.

Though I first put my Russian degree to use running tour groups in the USSR, processing refugee applications, and assisting in biological defense research, translating was my side gig throughout. It became my primary occupation in 2003, the same year I attended my first ATA conference in Phoenix. From that first conference, I was hooked. I had found my tribe! Through ATA, I have gained knowledge, clients, trusted colleagues, and close friends.

ATA’s Slavic Languages Division (SLD) promptly recruited me as a newsletter copy editor, and I subsequently served the SLD as assistant division administrator, as a member of its Leadership Council, and as a presenter at ATA Annual Conferences.

ATA has amazingly diverse stakeholders: translators, interpreters, company owners, instructors, researchers, project managers, and freelancers. No two members fill the same niche. It can be challenging to meet the sometimes conflicting needs of these groups. My colleagues describe me as a good communicator, a good listener, and a team player who is flexible and open to good ideas from any source. My particular passion in the SLD has been welcoming and integrating newcomers and ensuring that the “minority languages” in our Russian-dominated division are adequately served. I believe my ability to perceive and balance the needs of a varied membership will enable me to serve as a conduit to the Board for ideas and concerns from all sides.

As an ATA director, I would like to focus on increasing transparency and communication between the Board and the membership. The Board has made tremendous progress on this over the past several years through the ATA talk listserv, clear and accessible Board meeting summaries, and periodic and thorough treasurer’s reports. I hope to increase communications further regarding significant Board decisions. For example, in late 2014, I perceived that a dearth of information and transparency about conference site selection, session selection, and distinguished speaker selection and funding had led to grumbling and wild speculation about these processes. Therefore, I initiated an article in The ATA Chronicle entitled “Anatomy of an ATA Conference” (February 2015), in which I interviewed then-President-elect David Rumsey to clarify how conference planning works.

I perceive ATA as occupying a critical nexus in this era of a rapidly changing language services marketplace. Again, communication is key. I support expanding our existing public relations and client education efforts, which I believe are critical to ATAs mission. But I also hope to foster communication among translators, interpreters, agencies, government, software and translation tool developers, and consumers of translation services. I would also like to reach out to other associations, to include other translators’ and interpreters’ organizations and related organizations like the American Medical Writers Association and the American Bar Association, and to explore joint opportunities for client education and member training.

I am a firm believer in “giving back” through service, so I welcome the opportunity to serve ATA in this fashion. Thank you for your consideration.

www.atanet.org
TONY GUERRA
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I am honored to be nominated for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors. This role is one that I would enthusiastically welcome and one that I would infuse with the same passion, creativity, energy, and vision that I have brought to every professional endeavor throughout my career.

I first worked in the language services industry on the corporate side, starting at a Fortune 500 company in 1994. I then worked at smaller agencies, utilizing language for multicultural marketing and focusing on connecting communities. Subsequently, I moved on to freelance work as a language services consultant specializing in Spanish legal, medical, and labor translation, interpreting, and communication. Returning to agency work in 2006, and during the 10 years that followed, I successfully launched and developed a local language company’s interpreting program into a profitable, award-winning international operation with major clients in the government, health care, and legal sectors. In 2016, I resumed my freelance interpreting career, and I have recently embarked on completing my medical and legal certification.

Throughout my freelance and agency phases, I became increasingly involved as a volunteer with ATA and the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA), my local chapter. At DVTA, I served first as a director and most recently as its president and chair of its Public Relations and Certification Committees.

My current ATA activities include my role as chair of the Chapters Committee and participation in the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, the PR Committee’s Speakers Forum, ATA’s Mentoring Program, and the Leadership Council of the Medical Division (for which I served two terms as assistant division administrator). I also served on ATA’s Nominating and Leadership Development Committee from 2012 to 2016. I have had the pleasure and the privilege of collaborating with many brilliant and generous volunteer leaders, some of whom are current and past ATA Board members. Together, I am proud to say that we have accomplished a great deal.

How does the sum of this experience qualify me as a worthy contributor to ATA’s Board? I am told by my peers that I am a great listener and a consensus builder. My livelihood and volunteer work have consistently focused on raising the standards of our profession and fostering a strong sense of community. I have always viewed myself as an advocate for our profession, whether organizing an intimate chapter networking event, a 12-language military conference in Korea, or speaking to the Philadelphia Bar Association on the importance of working with professional language services. The diversity of my professional experience will be an asset to the Board, allowing me to offer unique perspectives on the current trends and issues shaping the translation and interpreting industry from both the supply side and the buyer’s side.

I ask for your vote so that I may be your advocate. I believe in our power as an association to affect change, and I am committed to promoting the use of our collective voice to strengthen our unity and gain greater public respect for our profession. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

GEOFF KOBY
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Over the past three years it has been my honor and privilege to work with the diligent and highly professional members of ATA’s Board. At the same time, I continue to work full-time as a professor of translation studies, training translators and researching translation pedagogy, assessment, and quality, and part-time as a freelance legal, business, and financial translator. I also continue to grade German>English certification exams.

Quarterly Board meetings involve intense weekends of work on a wide variety of topics. We read chapter and division reports and deal with ongoing major policy issues as they arise. During my term these issues have included such things as decoupling certification from membership, recognizing interpreters in the online directory, and approving a uniform website policy for divisions.

With my background in financial translation, I have focused particularly on monitoring ATA’s finances in detail. Luckily, the Association’s finances have been very capably managed by ATA Treasurer Ted Wozniak and ATA’s financial staff at Headquarters. This included important policy changes and conference pricing models that helped bring ATA’s financial figures back into the black! Conference pricing is always a particularly interesting topic. As a matter of principle, I believe ATA’s conference revenue should always at least cover conference costs, because otherwise ATA’s general revenue (i.e., membership dues) must make up the difference. And yet we must strive to keep the conference both highly professional and reasonably affordable. This may also include holding the conference in smaller cities. I look forward to the Palm Springs conference as a test of a possible new approach.

My last candidate statement emphasized education and certification, but also advocacy for all professional translation and interpreting activity. As issues and challenges have arisen, I’ve worked on projects for ATA in a variety of areas listed below:

■ Worked with the Certification Committee and a programmer to develop a database for online certification exam grading.

■ Wrote an article on certification pass rates for The ATA Chronicle.

■ Chaired The ATA Chronicle Editorial Board.

■ Participated in quarterly phone meetings to develop content for the magazine;

■ Wrote the final assessment report on The ATA Chronicle redesign task force.

■ Appointed to ATA’s Governance and Communication Committee.

■ Helped develop ATA’s policy on substantive member resolutions;

■ Helped develop the current bylaws revisions; and
Monitored the ATATalk listserv for issues related to certification since December 2015.

Served on ATA’s Education and Pedagogy Committee.

Working to develop grants for translator and interpreter education.

Helped develop the 2015 ATA Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey.

Proposed creating an ad hoc advisory board for the next survey.

Appointed in November 2016 to the board of the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, ATA’s foundation for charitable activities, education, and research in support of the translation and interpreting professions.

Analyzed the sites of past ATA conferences and the geographical distribution of ATA members and helped develop a site selection policy.

If re-elected, I will still represent the interests of all ATA members. I would be honored to be able to continue to serve ATA on the Board.

I am an engaged member of every association to which I belong. I help produce a bimonthly webinar for interpreter trainers for the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, serving as its host and webpage administrator. As a board member of the New England Translators Association, I organized an annual conference with nearly twice the attendance compared to the previous year. I have served as treasurer and administrator of ATA’s Portuguese Language Division. I also helped launch the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters by joining its inaugural board and becoming its second chair.

ATA membership has given me a sense of community and connection with other professionals in the field, and yet many of us worry that current trends will fracture our ties and weaken our presence in the larger context. For this reason, as a Board member, my focus would be along the following lines:

- **Strengthen the base of interpreters** within ATA by reaching out to interpreters who are not yet members and providing more educational and networking opportunities for those who are. ATA can be seen as the voice for interpreters, as its tagline states, but it is not there yet.

- **Shape national policies on language and language access** to increase the visibility and role of professional interpreters in community and business settings. In the fast-changing environment of remote technologies, for example, we need to ensure that recognized professionals are the ones working to bridge the language divide.

- **Create a strong network of educators** to cohesively advance quality interpreting and translation. Many of us reinvent the wheel over and over, and ATA could be a hub for trainers, instructors, and academics working in the field to educate our future colleagues.

Finally, I hope to color the conversation at the Board level by bringing to it traits I honed in my adopted culture. Brazilians are resourceful, inventive, and steadfastly positive people. As a result, my dedication is tinged with levity and imbued with a strong sense of endless possibility. It would be an honor to represent ATA members on its Board of Directors. Thank you for your consideration.

**MADALENA SÁNCHEZ ZAMPAULO**
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As I wrap up my current term as a director on ATA’s Board, I am incredibly humbled to be nominated to run for a second term.

For those who don’t know me, I have worked in the translation and interpreting industry for the past 10 years. I served as the administrator of ATA’s Medical Division from 2011 to 2015, and I was appointed chair of the Public Relations Committee in 2014.

During my time as chair of the PR Committee, we have come a long way in promoting the profession and the members of ATA. First, I am proud of having led the project of refining the PR message. In addition, I worked directly with ATA leadership and Headquarters to hire a professional speaker trainer to train our PR spokespeople and event speakers. We now have 12 spokespeople and event speakers who are trained to deliver ATA’s PR message to the public. I helped coordinate the hiring of a PR firm that regularly pitches articles, written by members of the PR Committee, to industry magazines and journals. I also oversee the writing and pitching of these articles. So far, we have over 40 publications in various trade magazines and journals. If you have not read these articles, I invite you to view them on ATA’s website and share them with clients and colleagues (www.atanet.org/pressroom/client_ed_public_relations.php).

If re-elected to the Board, I plan to continue my work in PR and take it several steps further. For example, I would like to see our spokespeople and event speakers have more opportunities to speak about the profession and promote ATA members in various venues. I would also like to create materials that help guide our members to utilize the work of the committee to further promote their professions and their work to potential clients. I want to ensure that you, as individual ATA members, can...
benefit from the work the PR Committee is doing and convert it into a return on the investment you make every year, simply by being dues-paying members.

In addition to my work in PR, I recently joined the ad hoc Website Committee to assist in revamping ATA’s website. I feel it is essential for me to be involved with this project, as I want to ensure that our members are well represented to the public through the website and the online directory. If you have input on improvements we can make to the site, please reach out to me.

While I am proud of my work over the past three years as a director on the Board, I feel it is crucial to look ahead to the future. We live in a time that allows us a unique opportunity and an obligation to educate the public about our work as professionals. The value we bring to so many industries cannot be overlooked. I hope you will consider voting for me. I would be honored to serve a second term as an ATA director.

KYLE VRAA

I have been a full-time freelance translator since the summer of 2000 (ATA-certified: Danish>English, German>English). In addition to Danish and German, I also translate from the Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, and Dutch languages into English.

I became a mentor in ATAs Mentoring Program in 2013, and have taken on individual mentees each year since that time. I was invited to become a member of ATAs Mentoring Committee in 2016, and participated in the mentor-mentee matching process with other committee members for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 mentoring years.

There are three areas of interest for which I could bring a good perspective to ATAs Board: 1) languages of limited diffusion, 2) mentoring, and 3) expansion of ATAs co-sponsorship of seminars and conferences abroad.

Working with a major language (German) alongside languages of limited diffusion—the Scandinavian languages and Dutch—has taught me that the approaches to a career in translation and the interests of established translators working with major languages and those working with languages of limited diffusion are interconnected, but different. Pricing for services, narrowing or broadening fields of specialization, whether to target direct clients or agencies, and many other considerations require an approach for languages of limited diffusion that differs from the major languages in the translation industry. My perspective working on both sides of this equation would be a valuable resource to the Board as it strives to represent the interests of all members of the organization.

Recently starting my fifth year as mentor to a mentee in ATAs Mentoring Program has reinforced my commitment to helping recent graduates and career changers make the transition into our profession. When I started my career 17 years ago, I did so without the benefit of a mentor. As a dedicated and independent individual, I learned and built my translation career through trial and error, not really certain that people could actually make a living doing only translation. After nearly two decades as a successful freelancer, its a pleasure to reassure nervous newcomers to the profession that succeeding in translation is not a mere fantasy, but a very realistic professional goal with the correct approach. I would like to continue to advocate for mentoring as a member of the Board.

Finally, I have had the pleasure of attending two conferences abroad (in Warsaw, Poland, and Freiburg, Germany) that were co-sponsored by ATA. As a regular attendee of many years of ATAs Annual Conference, I found earning ATA continuing education credits at smaller conferences abroad to be an excellent opportunity to go to new places and network with translators who don’t have the opportunity to attend the Annual Conference. I would like to be an advocate on ATAs Board for the expansion of these conference opportunities.

Proposed Bylaws Revisions and Resolution

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws to be Presented to the Membership for Voting in October 2017

In addition to electing Board officers and directors, voting members will also vote on some proposed bylaws revisions. The Board approved putting forward a proposed bylaws revision for approval by the membership. The changes are intended to expand voting rights to associate members who are professionally engaged in language services and have been members for three consecutive years. All current voting members will be grandfathered in, which means they could drop their membership for a year, rejoin, and be able to vote. The proposed revisions are online at www.atanet.org/bylaws_change.php. Please note that material proposed to be deleted is struck through; material proposed to be added is underlined. ATAs bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the voting members.

Resolution Supporting Diversity

In addition to the proposed bylaws changes, the Board approved presenting to the membership for their approval a resolution supporting diversity. The statement appears below:

“Whereas translators and interpreters are committed to promoting and facilitating communication and understanding between peoples, be it resolved that we, members of the American Translators Association, strongly oppose all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, country of origin, or sexual orientation, as well as all forms of expression of and incitement to xenophobia, racial hatred, and religious intolerance, and strongly favor welcoming qualified immigrants who, with their skills and knowledge, contribute to the wealth of our country or seek refuge here from war or persecution.”
Translation: An Intellectual Pursuit

The nuance involved in translation ties into the intellectual element of considering the meaning of the source text. What does the text mean? What is it trying to convey?

Well-executed translation requires more nuance than simple word replacement—shades and levels of meaning that machine translators can’t deliver. Creating this nuance is what makes translation an intellectual pursuit.

Translation is often considered a commodity, and it’s referenced in the language of commodities with words such as “vendor” and “translation services provider,” or, more recently, “post-editor of machine-translated output” and “machine translation copy editor.”

In some circles, the translation enterprise is seen as a service that can be produced or manufactured entirely using machine-based processes. For example, computer-aided translation (CAT) has been marketed as a tool that increases speed and accuracy when performing automated repetitive tasks in the translation process.¹

These tools have become a way for agencies to pay translators less, with nonpayment or partial payment for “full matches” (words in a document that are already translated in the translation software database) or “partial matches,” where “a sentence or a segment in a source document for which the translation memory tool can match some of the words in the target language […]” already exists.² Paying by the word is not a reflection of what translators do, as it suggests word for word replacement, and detracts from what translators actually do, which involves editing (including the words in full and partial matches) when bringing the translation together.

A MACHINE DOES NOT CONSIDER CULTURAL NUANCE

Take, for example, the word patria in Spanish. Will we translate it as Motherland? Homeland? How about borrowing terra nostra, a word from a third culture (“our land” in Italian), to describe what the word means for English readers? We could also go a different route and translate patria as “country.”

A translator has many questions to consider. How does the target culture refer to its own country? What implications does the word’s target culture have in its distinct cultural context? This is just a small taste of the intellectual work of translators.

Let’s look at the word “homeland” and its implications and history. In the

This increasingly popular reductive thinking is based on an assumption that machine-driven translation can deliver a quality product simply by substituting words in one language for words in another. In reality, translation is a complex undertaking involving languages that are innately connected to the cultural ecosystems in which they are spoken. The core processes of translation operate in the mind of the translator, not in the bowels of a machine. True translation is an art that involves the translator understanding and appreciating the culture behind and reflected in the language. It’s the art of exercising an intellect.

Machine translation can play a productive role in assisting the translation process (e.g., as one of several tools a translator uses). It’s when computer-assisted translation becomes computer-only translation that the process becomes corrupted. Words are more than scribbles on a paper to be deciphered by a mechanical algorithm. A word can reflect a whole culture.

Well-executed translation requires more nuance than simple word replacement. Creating this nuance is what makes translation an intellectual pursuit.
U.S., the word came into mainstream use after 9/11 with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security—a powerful government organization charged with protecting the country from terrorist threats. “Homeland” was once a word used by the Zionist movement in the 1920s and 1930s to refer to a Jewish “homeland” in the Middle East. Later, Hitler expanded its interpretation to advance the idea that people needed a tribal-like devotion to land and country to create a sense of racial superiority.


This word from worlds away would not be my choice in reference to Mexico. It simply doesn’t fit the history and context of the Spanish word patria. This patria refers to Mexican history; to mestizaje, the blending of Spanish and indigenous peoples; to two revolutions; to the intrigue and trickery of Mexican history; and to the blood spilled on Mexico’s earth. Even in this sense, the boundaries are blurred, because America was Mexico, Mexico is America, and borders change. The Mexican Cession of 1848 ceded the territories comprising present-day California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, half of New Mexico, and part of Wyoming and Colorado. Most Mexicans living in these areas decided to stay and become Americans. But Mexicans are Americans in the same way everyone living on the continent of America is American.

So, how will a machine translate patria? As it’s been translated before or as it’s been translated most frequently? The machine uses what it knows, and what it knows are words and word combinations that have been published previously or uploaded to the internet, or that are in machine-translation databases. But will those translations even be relevant to the Mexican concept of patria? And what about when the translation database software comprises texts from Spain? Or Cuba? Or Argentina? Will it translate the idea of patria as it is uniquely felt in each of these countries?

The core processes of translation operate in the mind of the translator, not in the bowels of a machine.
CULTURAL EXPERTISE IN TRANSLATION

Translators use language to convey an idea from one culture so that it can be understood in another, seeking semantic equivalence within cultural contexts. And the best translation isn’t always cut-and-dried.

For example, if a text mentions the name of a volcano in Spanish, should you adapt it, translate it, or explain it? How about the name of a canyon? Would you translate Canyon del Cobre as “Copper Canyon” or “Del Cobre Canyon”? What if another Copper Canyon already exists? Will you take its name and apply it to a different geographical area?

In Mexico and many other parts of the world, organizations and places often have multiple names. In Guadalajara, for example, a large canyon abuts the edges of the municipalities of Tonalá, Zapotlanejo, Ixtlahuacan del Rio, and Zapopan.

This canyon-park is known both as Barranca de Huentitán (Huentitán Canyon) and Barranca de Oblatos (Oblatos Canyon). While Huentitán and Oblatos refer to the canyon, on the side that abuts the Guadalajara Metropolitan Zone’s municipalities, each name refers to a different entrance to the canyon.

What about translating cultural events? Will you describe the event, create a new name for it, or use its original name, trying to bring readers closer to the target culture? Would you consider translating quinceañera as “sweet-sixteen birthday party,” a concept familiar to Americans, even though a quinceañera is a celebration of a girl’s fifteenth birthday in Mexico?

Words belong to their cultures, but how do we describe the reality of one culture using the language of another? Is a “spice-infused roasted goat meat” stew the same as birria? How about adapting carne asada as “barbecue”?

Déjà vu, a French expression, has been seen and felt so much that some native English speakers consider it English. Is English other languages? Every word we use slants the resulting message. Words associated with places and societies give clues to readers about where and how a text fits into a language and its culture.

WRITING IN TRANSLATION

The translator is first and foremost a good writer. The translation of a text into another language involves the actual writing of it.

There are many steps to translating a document: reading it, understanding it, processing the information, expressing it in a different language for a different culture, and then editing it. Even if a document is poorly written in the source language, the translation in the target language should flow naturally and be well written. This necessitates having a conceptual understanding of how to balance culture with language.

Translators have to keep up with translation.

EDITING TRANSLATIONS

Editing is the elucidation of the text, bringing it into the light where it can be seen clearly and its fine-tuning appreciated. Editing a translation is what finally places it squarely in its own culture, bringing another culture alive for those who don’t know its language.

WHAT IS THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE OF TRANSLATION?

The nuance involved in translation ties in to the intellectual element of considering the meaning of the source text. What does the text mean? What is it trying to convey? Words are here, there, and everywhere, but it is the meaning behind and within them that carries significance and tells us about origins, wars, and history as written by both the victors and the vanquished. History books, critical essays, and research published after major events attempt an objective accounting about what really happened.

When translators delve into what words mean in a historical context, they bring objectivity to translation, literary and otherwise.

What exactly is the intellectual side of translation? Which stage of reading-understanding-conceptualizing-writing-polishing is the intellectual part?

All of it. All of these efforts contribute to translation as an intellectual pursuit carried out by humans—research, cultural expertise, writing, editing, and learning. All this intense critical reflection is focused on making meaning for the benefit of those who want to understand and fully appreciate written texts in another language. It’s the human computing and processing that is intellectual. The most human part of translation is cognitive activity.

When machines can be thoughtful and intellectual, they too will be able to complete the operations of the translation process, matching each intellectual process needed to mold together the figure of written language. Until then, they’ll only be helpers (and excellent ones) to the actual brains doing the thinking.

NOTES
5 Ibid.

Jesse Tomlinson is the administrator of ATA’s Literary Division. She is an interpreter, translator, and voice talent. Originally from Canada, she now lives in Mexico and translates from Spanish into English and interprets in both languages. She is currently translating Latin American authors born in the 1980s into English for Proyecto Arroyo. See her essay on uprooting (“La vida sin limones”) at http://bit.ly/la-vida-sin-limones. Contact: jesse@tomlinsontranslations.com.
Who Is Really Visiting Your Website? (It’s Not Who You Think!)

Learn how Google Analytics can mislead you if you’re not careful.

Over the past decade, several articles in The ATA Chronicle and sessions at ATA Annual Conferences have addressed the importance of websites as a way to market translation and interpreting services. As websites have become more important to translators and language services providers, many of us have tried to measure how successful our websites are at attracting new business.

A variety of monitoring and analytical tools are available for this purpose, but one of the most widely used is Google Analytics. Unfortunately, within the past two or three years unfiltered Google Analytics reports have become increasingly contaminated by automated computer programs called “bots” (also known as “spiders” or “crawlers”).

What is a bot? Bots are software applications that are written to perform specific online tasks, usually repetitive ones that would be impossible or difficult for humans to perform quickly. While “good” bots perform useful functions similar to those initiated by search engines to index a website, “bad” bots visit websites with all sorts of evil intentions for disrupting internet traffic, such as spamming, content scraping, and malware distribution. This can cause problems in terms of analytics, particularly in reports measuring who is visiting your site. These contaminated reports can lead to potentially bad marketing decisions for the companies that take the results at face value. As a result, the accuracy of Google Analytics reports could be dubious. This was the case at our company. But before relaying our story, let’s back up a bit and explore a few basics about search engine optimization.

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO WEBSITES

About 15 years ago, website owners attempted several techniques to drive traffic to their sites. Frank Dietz, in his seminal article in The ATA Chronicle in 2006 (“Search Engine Optimization for Translators and Interpreters”), identified a number of these techniques, including:

- Using meta tags (snippets of text) to describe the content of each page.
- Identifying key words and using them in expanded website text.
- Registering with multiple search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, MSN Search, and AOL Search.
- Creating inbound and outbound links to the sites.
- Improving internal site navigation.

Many of the techniques mentioned by Dietz are still relevant today. The activities Dietz describes culminated in search engine optimization (SEO), which is “the process of affecting the visibility of a website in a search engine’s unpaid results,” often referred to as organic (search) results. Basically, SEO means getting your site to appear as one of the first suggested sites when someone searches with Google or another search engine. For several years users were bombarded with marketing propaganda from the purveyors of SEO, promising improvements in keyword rankings, link popularity, organic traffic, and even visibility on the first page of Google, Yahoo, and Bing.

How does SEO work? SEO projects typically begin with a keyword search that involves the identification of somewhat odd phrases that people actually enter into search browsers (e.g., “online English-to-Spanish document translation”). The next step is to modify existing website text to include the odd phrases. This is followed by the generation of “new” content (press releases, articles, blogs, etc.) with links to the “optimized” website that are then placed on a variety of sites, including those that are
frequently visited, as well as obscure sites that will publish almost anything.

With the exponential increase in website and related content, plus billions of links, search engines use ever-changing search algorithms to increase the probability that users receive quality links to websites with “killer content.” Since each change in a search algorithm alters search results, SEO is never finished.

Once the effects of “bad” bots and spam referral data are removed, you’ll have a much better idea about the origin of visitors to your website and actionable data.

MEASUREMENT OF WEBSITE TRAFFIC
Attempts to drive traffic to websites have been accompanied by efforts to measure the success of such attempts. At first, online services provided users with one-dimensional data, such as website hits and the number/source of inlinks. (An inlink is a link directed to a website. The more inlinks any given website has, the more likely that the website will rank higher in a search ranking.) The launch of Google Analytics, a service that tracks and reports website traffic, in November 2005 shook the market. Within one week of its launch, Google Analytics signed up 100,000 new accounts, which was four times larger than the entire website statistics market. Edging out competitors such as WebTrends, Coremetrics, Omniture, and IBM, Google Analytics quickly monopolized the website statistics market with its free services. By 2015, 30 million websites were using Google Analytics.

EXPERIENCE WITH GOOGLE ANALYTICS: HAD IT AND LOST IT!
Our company relied on the website statistics generated by Google Analytics for several years. We found that the reports it generated helped us understand the success (or failure) of attempts to drive traffic to Inline’s site.

However, as mentioned earlier, the initial usefulness of Google Analytics reports to our company has declined significantly. This deterioration began in 2014 and accelerated in 2015 and 2016. How did we determine this? The remainder of this article will offer a glimpse into how we uncovered contamination in the reports generated by Google Analytics with our company’s actual data and how we worked to solve the issue. By detailing our story, we hope to leave readers with some pointers on how to recognize contaminated data and how it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to assess the performance of your website. We’ll also offer solutions that freelance translators and smaller translation companies can implement.

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO DRIVE ONLINE TRAFFIC
From the start of 2009 to the end of 2012, our company successfully used Google Analytics reports and data to monitor the effectiveness of attempts to drive traffic to our site. (See Figure 1 below, which shows the number of site visits during this time period.)

Our company’s first attempt to increase website traffic began in late 2008, when we contracted with DirectoryM, a specialized advertising company that emphasized online marketing campaigns to businesses. DirectoryM’s affiliation with online business journals across the U.S., coupled with small ads with links to our company’s website, resulted in an initial

upick in visits to our website during a one-year trial.

The second major attempt to drive traffic to our company’s website began in early 2010. We could no longer resist the siren call of the SEO consultants with their promises of hordes of new customers descending upon a highly visible website. So, we engaged a SEO consulting firm for a one-year program that included the usual services: keyword research, website modification, and content generation. Although the SEO consulting firm sent us a stream of reports showing how successful they had been in their efforts to increase traffic to our site, we continued to use Google Analytics reports to independently measure the impact of our newly optimized website. After the one-year SEO program, which cost about $30,000 and resulted in only $590 of new business, we decided not to renew the contract.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: THE GOOD YEARS
In addition to site visit statistics, Google Analytics reports have provided our company with detailed visitor profiles, including the languages spoken by site visitors, how long visitors stayed on the site, the source of traffic, new versus returning users, the pages visited and the sequence of pages visited, the percentage of single page visits (called the “bounce rate”), and much more. Of all the statistics provided, the Source/Medium report, which shows the origin of site visits and referrals, was initially the most useful and actionable.

The 2009 and 2011 data

Figure 1: Number of site visits by month before, after, and during SEO program (2009–2012) as reported by Google Analytics
The Hijacking/Contamination of Google Analytics

Beginning in 2014, bots and spam referrals began to distort our Google Analytics data. Apart from “organic searches” via Google and “direct” site visits, we couldn’t recognize what was really behind the main sources of visits to our company’s website in 2016. Historically important sources of visits, such as atanet.org, translatorscafe.com, and linkedin.com, were no longer in the top 10 and seemed to drop in importance.

What we didn’t realize at the time was that they were displaced by bad bots that had targeted our site (and sometimes Google Analytics separately) with hundreds of visits of extremely short duration, leaving behind a trail of what are called spam referrals. In fact, eight of the top 10 referral sources in 2016 consisted of bad bots, such as rank-checker.online, site-auditor.online, monetizationking.net, and traffic2cash.xyz. (See the 2016 data column in Figure 2.)

Prior to our research for this article and discovery of just how contaminated Google Analytics data can be, we were seriously considering measures such as consolidating our three ATA memberships into a single membership based on the decline in ranking of atanet.org. Fortunately, general inertia prevented us from making such an unwise decision.

The Russians Are Coming... Or Are They?

In addition, the profile of visitors to our site changed from overwhelmingly English-speaking in 2009 and 2011, to majority Russian-speaking, according to Google Analytics reports. (See Figure 3 on page 23.)

The surge in Russian speakers to our website from 2011 to 2016 bore no relationship to the types of languages requested by our clients. English>Russian and Russian>English translation projects have accounted for less than 1% of our business from 2009 to the present.

The increase in bot traffic is highly correlated with the surge in Russian-speaking visitors. (A smaller surge in Brazilian Portuguese visitors can also be seen for this same period in Figure 3, which is also unrelated to any increase in Portuguese translation work.) Although correlation is not a guarantee of causality, it may be possible to dig deeper into Google Analytics to connect these two events.

Recognizing Bad Bots and Spam Referrals

Bad bots and spam referrals are relatively easy to identify. Most will have unfamiliar names, often containing telltale words such as “rankings,” “traffic,” and “cash.” Indications of bad bot traffic in Google Analytics reports include low session durations, high bounce rates (i.e., visitor leaves after visiting only one page), an unexplained surge in new visitors with low engagement (combination of high bounce rate, short session duration, and no goal completion, such as viewing a certain number of pages per visit or going to a specific URL), or use of an xyz domain.

Figure 4 on page 23 shows how the profiles of sites with real referrals differ from sites spewing out spam referrals. Note how referrals from legitimate sites, such as atanet.org and cprintalliance.com, lead to sessions that last more than a minute, with visits to multiple pages, and submittal of an occasional request for a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source/Medium</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Source/Medium</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Source/Medium</th>
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<td>1. google/organic</td>
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<td>1. google/organic</td>
<td>1,502</td>
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<td>2. direct</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>2. rank-checker.online/referral</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>3. atanet.org/referral</td>
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<td>3. bing/organic</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>3. site-auditor.online/referral</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. bizjournalsdirectory.com/referral</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>4. yahoo/organic</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>4. direct</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. articles.directorymy.com/referral</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5. atanet.org</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5. monetizationking.net/referral</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. yahoo/organic</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6. miis.edu/referral</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6. traffic2cash.xyz/referral</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. proz.com/referral</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8. search/organic</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8. website-analyzer.info/referral</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. directory.net/referral</td>
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<td>10. proz.com/referral</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10. fix-website-errors.com/referral</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. cprintalliance.com</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. atanet.org/referral</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Session Duration: 112 seconds
Average Session Duration: 56 seconds
Average Session Duration: 40 seconds

Figure 2: Source/Medium Report (origin of site visits) and average session duration for 2009, 2011, and 2016 (unfiltered Google Analytics data)
quote (i.e., one of the main goals of having a website in the first place!). In contrast, referrals from bad bots, such as rank-checker.online and website-analyzer.info, lead to sessions lasting just a few seconds, with most visits to only one page, and never result in a quote request.

**HOW TO FILTER OUT CONTAMINATED INFORMATION FROM GOOGLE ANALYTICS REPORTS**

Unfortunately, there is no universal fix or global solution for eliminating bad bots and spam referral from Google Analytics data. Nevertheless, we provide three ways you can “decontaminate” Google Analytics data. They range in cost and complexity and the choice will ultimately depend on your objectives and the resources you want to devote to the effort.

Apply Filters: The more advanced Google Analytics users and aspiring cyber security sleuths can visit the ADMIN section of Google Analytics. (See Figure 5 on page 24.) Under the “View” column, you will find a section called “Filters.” Here, filters can be added to remove additional unwanted bot traffic and spam referrals. At this point, the steps involved can be stressful and time-consuming and could have unintended results such as accidently removing a legitimate website crawler that is indexing your site and which could increase its visibility. Consequently, you should consider taking advantage of Google’s automatic exclusion feature discussed in the next paragraph, or contracting with experts on the matter. Keep in mind that the creation of these filters will not clean up historical data.

Check the Box: In July 2014, Google Analytics announced a new feature to automatically exclude bots and spiders that appear on what is known as the International IAB/ABC Spiders and Bots List that is updated continuously. Since every Google Analytics account requires a unique sign in, there is no direct link to the box you need to check to exclude these nasty critters. You can find this feature by going to the “ADMIN” section of analytics and clicking on “View Settings” under the “View” column. (See Figure 5 on page 24.) Under “Basic Settings” you can check the Bot Filtering box labeled “Exclude traffic from known bots and spiders.” Unfortunately, “Checking the box” will not clean up historical data, but should filter data going forward. It may take a week or two to begin working. You may want your website administrator to set up a test view first to prevent any accidental damage to unfiltered historical data you may need later. Note: You will need admin access to your Google Analytics account to apply filters or to check the Bot Filtering box.

Manually Recreate the Source/Medium Report: Since you cannot apply filters to the contaminated historical data, you may want to recreate the Source/Medium report for one or more past periods. This can be done by opening a new document in Word and creating a simple table. Copy the valid sources of site visits and data from the contaminated Source/Medium report, while purging data left behind by the bad bots and spam referrals. You can then recalculate session numbers and re-rank the sources. Bad bots and spam referrals can be found by looking for characteristics such as a 100% bounce rate, session durations of one second or less, and the telltale words mentioned earlier in this article. The Source/Medium page may be the only one you can recreate, but it’s one of the most important reports that provides actionable information for marketing your translation business.

In Figure 6 on page 24, we compare our company’s manually filtered 2016 Source/Medium data with 2016 unfiltered data. Note how atanet.org regains its historic position in the top five sources of referrals, as compared with the 13th position in the unfiltered data.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Language</th>
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<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
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<td>1. Russian</td>
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<td>2. English</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2. English (U.S.)</td>
<td>1,417</td>
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<td>4. German</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4. Spanish</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4. Russian (Russia)</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Italian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6. Spanish (Spain)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6. Secret.google.com You are invited! Enter only with this ticket URL. Copy it. Vote for Trump!</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. French</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8. French</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8. c (the “c” indicates a bot)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
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Average Session Duration: 112 seconds  
Average Session Duration: 56 seconds  
Average Session Duration: 40 seconds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th># of sessions</th>
<th>Average # of pages per session</th>
<th>Average session duration (minutes:seconds)</th>
<th># of quotes requested</th>
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</thead>
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<td>553</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1:38</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>cprintalliance.com</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>rank-checker.online</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0:12</td>
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<td>site-auditor.online</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0:17</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

Figure 3: Audience Overview: Language–2009, 2011, and 2016 (unfiltered data)

Figure 4: Contrasting profiles of visitors from legitimate websites and profiles of the bad bots that generate spam referrals (2009 to 2016)
WHO IS REALLY VISITING YOUR WEBSITE? (IT’S NOT WHO YOU THINK!) continued

WHAT’S IT ALL MEAN?

Google Analytics data has increasingly become contaminated by the emergence of bots and spam referrals. This contaminated data creates lots of noise and drown out important signals from the marketplace. For this reason, Google Analytics reports should not be used in an unfiltered format.

Depending on your needs, you may want to add custom filters to your Google Analytics program, which you can do in the ADMIN section of your Google Analytics account. This approach, however, requires time spent researching bots, identifying the bad ones, and then excluding them with proper coding. Even then, this “do-it-yourself” approach won’t prevent your data from becoming contaminated. The bots are evolving constantly so your work will never be finished, even with expert help.

Consequently, we highly recommend you consider taking advantage of the Google Analytics Bot Filtering feature, which you can activate as described above. (The default mode is OFF) The advantage to this approach is that the list of excluded bots is updated constantly without further intervention on your part.

Even if you don’t apply filters to your Google Analytics program, it’s possible to manually recreate the Source/Medium report, which is one of the most useful Google Analytics reports. After removing the residue from the “bad” bots and spam referrals, you’ll have a much better idea about the origin of visitors to your website and actionable data. And you may not have to learn Russian after all!

NOTES

7. The Source/Medium report shows the origin of a site’s traffic (such as Google) or a domain (such as example.com). It also shows the general category of the source called the Medium: for example, organic search (organic), web referral (referral), and cost-per-click paid search (cpc).

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Thea Dery joined Inline Translation Services in May 2017 as an assistant translation services coordinator. A recent graduate of Occidental College in Los Angeles, she majored in Spanish language and culture. Her undergraduate experience included a semester at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaiso in Chile. She has worked on a variety of translation projects with public health and environmental agencies in the U.S.

### Table: Source/Medium 2016 (unfiltered) vs. 2016 (manually filtered)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source/Medium</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Source/Medium</th>
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<td>3. atanet.org/referral</td>
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<td>4. direct</td>
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<td>4. bing/organic</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. monetizationking.net/ref</td>
<td>387</td>
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<td>9. paymentpractices.net</td>
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<td>10. fix-website-errors/ref</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10. yelp.com/referral</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. atanet.org/referral</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Audience Overview: Source of Visitor in 2016 as reported by Google Analytics (before and after purge of bot traffic and spam referrals)
EDUCATORS WANTED.

Your students aren’t working to fill credits. They’re arming themselves with knowledge and skills that can save lives. Flourish as an educator working with small class sizes, outstanding technology, smart colleagues and truly driven pupils. This isn’t academic or theoretical – you’re teaching functional, practical skills to people who want to learn.

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Emotional Self-Discipline: A Key Ingredient for Success as a Freelance Translator

If we listen to our inner voices all the time and haven’t learnt how to distinguish between useful objective information and fear, then those voices will soon start to take over your business.

We’ve all heard and experienced how important self-discipline is for freelancers, particularly those working from home. Some freelancers may naturally gravitate towards working all the time while others might have trouble motivating themselves to do any work. Without the routine of going to the office every day for a fixed number of hours and being answerable to somebody higher up, and without a set start and finish time, freelancing really does bring with it as many challenges as it does luxuries. A key ingredient for success as a freelancer—and one that people are much less aware—is emotional self-discipline.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL SELF-DISCIPLINE?
I’m going to start by letting you in on a little secret: I hear voices in my head. In fact, I can hear one right now (“You’re not seriously going to write that are you?”). Perhaps you hear voices too. If not, try listening a little more closely because we all have them buzzing in our heads. It’s just mind chatter and completely normal (or at least I hope so). This chatter is simply the mind’s way of making sense of what we’re doing and protecting us on the basis of past experience. The mind’s main objective is to keep us safely in our comfort zones and keep everything as it is.

Now, there are certainly advantages to this. For example, if your mind remembers that you once did something that caused something terrible to happen, then you’re unlikely to want to go and do it again. However, what about all the opinions those voices have and the judgments they are constantly making on things you haven’t tried yet, such as raising your rates, contacting new clients, or choosing a new area of specialization? If we listen to our inner voices all the time and haven’t learnt how to distinguish between useful, objective information and fear, then those voices will soon start to take over your business. Are they already running yours?

The only way to grow, both personally and as a freelancer, is to take steps out of your comfort zone and be prepared to try something new, even where the outcome is uncertain.

The illusion of control being necessary

Not being in control isn’t something that the human mind can handle very well. For that reason, it does all it can to try to stay in control of every situation. This is one of the reasons that the voice telling you not to take new action is so loud. The only way to stay in control is to take the same action you’ve always taken. Then there’s no (or little) risk. But remember that saying “no risk, no gain”? It’s 100% true. If you want change, if you want to get out of the vicious circle you feel you’re stuck in, then it’s time for you to take action and let go and be open to what happens next.
As I tell my mentees again and again, awareness is the first step on the path to change and the first step on the ladder to success.

LISTEN CAREFULLY
When you start listening carefully to the voices in your head you may find that there are several. Some want to support you, some want to hold you back, some are encouraging you to move forward, and others are doing everything possible to stand in your way. Which of those voices is the loudest? If it’s not the one encouraging you, then it might be useful to ask why you are listening to the ones that are trying to hold you back. Is it just because they are louder? Is it simply a habit? Is it easier for you that way?

I hear from so many translators who feel like they’re stuck in a vicious circle. They read books about marketing and try to take new action, but they rarely get very far. Even if they have the best of intentions—and some are the most conscientious translators I know and are excellent at their craft—they lack emotional self-discipline. This leaves them unable to break out of this vicious circle.

A PROCESS, NOT INSTANT RESULTS
Like anything, learning to practice emotional self-discipline is a process. If you expect immediate results, you’re going to be in for a disappointment. Just like starting out with any new client or personal relationship, you need to take some time to pay attention to what is going on inside your mind. Differentiating between those voices and weighing which ones you’re going to choose to listen to takes time. But once you start to do this, you will feel more empowered. Why? Because even if you still find yourself listening to the obstructive voices for a while, you will at least be aware of what you’re doing. As I tell my mentees again and again, awareness is the first step on the path to change and the first step on the ladder to success.

ACTION STEPS
- Pay attention to those inner voices. What are they saying? Is there more than one? Listen carefully to what the quiet ones are saying.
- Write down everything those voices are telling you on a piece of paper. This is important as it allows you to detach. When they are all in your head shouting for attention, it’s easy to lose track or to only hear the loudest ones or the ones you are most used to listening to.
- Now that you have everything down on paper, try to dis-identify with the situation. Perhaps try imagining that you’re advising a good friend rather than yourself.
- Go through the statements provided by your inner voices one by one and look for objective, useful information and write it down.
- Identify the statements that are purely fear-based. Identify what the fear is in each case.
- Determine whether the fear is valid or whether your mind has simply been making up stories about one of the potential outcomes and is perhaps focusing on what it considers to be the worst-case scenario. Ask whether the negative outcome you are expecting is a certainty or whether there are other possibilities.
- Take the new action. If necessary, coach yourself through the next step. Talk back to those voices and explain why you’re doing what you’re doing and that you have considered the situation carefully and that this is the best objective course of action.
- Let go, trust, and embrace any changes.

Remember that until you take new action, you can’t know exactly how things will change. Life is never as black and white as our minds want us to believe it is.

Karen Rückert is a German>English legal translator specializing in commercial law. She has 14 years of experience in the translation industry, initially working in-house for a large commercial law firm in Germany before embarking on her freelance career in 2007. She has an MA in legal translation and is a publicly appointed and sworn translator for the English language for Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Since 2012, she has served as a mentor in the mentoring program for the Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer. She writes the Translator Mentoring Blog. Contact: kr@legal-translations-rueckert.com.

Not being in control isn’t something that the human mind can handle very well.
Legal Aspects of Marketing Content: Things to Consider when Translating

Marketing copy and legal content are not as separate as they appear. There are, in fact, texts in which we may perceive a subtle interplay of the two fields.

The marketing and legal fields as they relate to translation may appear to be quite different from one another. In a way, they may even be perceived as opposites. When working with marketing copy, a rather free translation, or transcreation, is often desirable. But translating legal content requires the translator to scrutinize the meaning of each word—considering both ordinary and legal usage—and to stay close to the source text.

Marketing copy is meant to persuade its audience to take action and buy a certain product or service. Its primary function is generally an appellative one. Its secondary function may be informational: to explain about a certain product, service, or cause (along with the company or organization behind it). The translation should have the same function as the original—to persuade the audience to take the desired action. For this reason, the translation can deviate from the original. It can and should be creative. But the translator should be able to identify the important elements and the function of the source text and preserve them in the target text.

Legal texts seem to be at home on the opposite side of the translation world, together with legalese, nominalization, and passive voice. In reality, however, marketing copy and legal content are not as separate as they appear. There are, in fact, texts in which we may perceive a subtle interplay of the two fields. These are challenging because they require specialization in one field and knowledge in another.

So, while the translation of marketing copy does require some creativity, it may also require some knowledge of law. This is because marketing content will sometimes include legal terms that have to be translated under careful consideration of the law of the source country and that of the target country to ensure clear communication and avoid confusion. Depending on their subfields of specialization, marketing translators or transcreators may not encounter such terms very often, but they should be prepared to recognize their relevance in a legal context and be able to handle them appropriately.

Legal Considerations

In everyday life, we may not be very aware of legal aspects, but we’re surrounded by them—be it when we buy a cup of coffee with a label that warns of its hot contents, when we read a restaurant menu with allergen information at the bottom of the page, or when we walk into a store and see a sign that lets us know that the floor is slippery. Translators may encounter these warnings when translating product manuals or signs or when localizing websites. Marketing translators may also encounter copy that mentions warranties or that makes a statement about a product.

A professional legal translator will likely spot legally significant terms quite easily and will know how to translate them appropriately. But a legal translator will probably not be the one working on marketing copy. It will be the marketing translator or the transcreator. Because of this, translators specializing in the marketing field may benefit from being familiar with the basics of tort law, consumer law, and intellectual property law. Knowing the basics of these legal areas will help translators identify terms of legal relevance and find appropriate solutions for the target text.

Warranty

Let’s look at a U.S. English>German (Germany) example. One of the terms translators may encounter when approaching marketing-legal content is the term “warranty.” Langenscheidt’s Dictionary of Law offers the German translations Garantie, Gewährleistung,
and Zusicherung. Of course, translators cannot simply choose the translation that sounds best or that they may have seen used frequently elsewhere. To provide an adequate translation, the translator will need to 1) know the context surrounding the term, 2) understand how terms such as “express warranty” and “implied warranty” relate to U.S. consumer law, and 3) know the meaning of terms such as Gewährleistung and Garantie in the German legal system.

**Context is key in the realm of translation, but it can be beneficial for marketing translators to familiarize themselves with the basics of the law of trademarks as well as the proper usage of trademarks and generic names.**

**TRADEMARKS**

Just like copywriters, marketing translators should also be familiar with the basics of trademark rights and know how to handle trademarks appropriately. One important issue to be aware of in this context is generic use. In the U.S. legal system, a mark may be considered abandoned if it becomes a generic name for the goods or services offered under the mark. Therefore, knowing what constitutes a generic name and what a mark plays a significant role in the creation and translation of marketing copy. Translators should have the expertise to be able to identify trademarks and generic names in the source text and pay special attention to them and their correct usage when creating the target text.

Spinning®, for example, is a registered trademark owned by Mad Dogg Athletics, Inc. and the generic term here would be “indoor cycling.” VELCRO® is a registered trademark of Velcro BVBA, and possible generic names here are “hook-and-loop fastener” or “touch fastener.”

The Associated Press recommends using “a generic equivalent unless the trademark name is essential to the story.” A similar suggestion can be found in The Chicago Manual of Style. As always, context is key in the realm of translation, but it can be beneficial for marketing translators to familiarize themselves with the basics of the law of trademarks as well as the proper usage of trademarks and generic names.

**AMBIGUITY**

Ambiguity is something else to look out for. Translators may come across ambiguous statements in promotions or even in the fine print accompanying them. In such cases, it’s a good idea to ask the client for clarification.

**A UNIQUE NICHE?**

Approaching such hybrid marketing-legal content requires expertise in the marketing field and knowledge in the field of law. Translators need to be prepared to conduct thorough (and often time-consuming) research in two legal systems. As with other fields of translation, terminology management is key when it comes to working efficiently and creating high-quality target texts. There are various ways for marketing translators to prepare themselves to take on such twofold texts—from self-study of relevant topics to taking courses at a college or university. Considering the challenges and rather demanding requirements of marketing-legal content, this combination of two fields of expertise could be a unique niche for translators who specialize in one field and have thorough and relevant knowledge in the other.

**A FEW HELPFUL RESOURCES**


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**NOTES**

2. Albrecht, Jörn. Literarische Übersetzung: Geschichte, Theorie, kulturelle Wirkung (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 259–266. Also see: J. Albrecht’s discussion of literary translation, especially in regard to function, purpose, and important elements to keep in target texts.
3. Langenscheidt ALPMANN Fachwörterbuch Kompakt Recht Englisch, s.v. “warranty.”
Building Successful Relationships with Clients and Vendors

In the 22 years I have been in business, I’m most proud of the fact that I have some clients whom I have serviced since the company’s inception. Through recessions, demands for cheaper translation, economic pressure, and the machine translation movement—all threatening to either force me to change my detailed process or go out of business—I’ve managed to keep it all intact. I attribute a large part of this success to the relationships I form with my clients and vendors.

I started as a freelance translator, then expanded to a boutique-style company. I have always strived to follow the golden rule of treating others as I would like to be treated. I write this from the perspective of both the employer of my independent contractors and as a vendor to my corporate clients. I also maintain the viewpoint of a translator, which allows me to run the business within a scope of excellence grounded in reality.

Below are some of my fundamental practices that create and ensure successful business relationships. Without these basics, I believe doing business can be arduous and downright unpleasant. And since our profession takes the majority of our days and lives, and we’re often on our own at our computers, it’s worth investing our time and effort to ensure that the time we spend cultivating relationships with our clients is the best it can be.

THREE KEY POINTS IN RELATIONSHIP ETIQUETTE

1. Regardless of what’s happening in my personal life, I always maintain a professional attitude with my vendors and clients. Hearing about someone’s personal problems in a working environment doesn’t apply, unless it’s vital information that may affect the work in any way.

2. I always keep basic manners in place. This includes responding quickly, paying attention to detail, using professional salutations and closings in all correspondence (regardless of how the client or other vendors/colleagues do it). Doing so shows respect and adherence to professional values.

3. I maintain a professional attitude that does not vary, regardless of any circumstance—too busy, not enough work, sick, etc.

As a vendor, my goal is to be a team member, and that requires good communication, respect, and attention to detail.

FIVE RED FLAGS WHEN SEEKING POTENTIAL NEW VENDORS

As an employer, it’s not my place to tell independent contractors who work with me how to run their businesses or do their work. My intention by sharing this is to offer some insight into ways in which their work experience and the outcome of their efforts can be improved.

1. Typographical errors in résumés or correspondence: This does not reflect on attention to detail or professionalism in an industry where this is imperative.

2. Delays in getting back to me with more information or when filling out legal documents to be set up as a vendor: It tells me they’re too busy for me and not interested in new work.

3. A brusque or unprofessional manner: I like to talk to potential vendors to find out as much information as possible. I also invite them to ask me any questions. Skype calls are even better to get a sense of a person with whom you’ll be dealing before committing to bringing them into the team.

4. Delays in sending invoices: Slow admin is not a good sign of a vendor taking care of the business aspect of the relationship. It reflects disorganization or lack of value for their own work.

5. Invoices that are unclear or incomplete: This is imperative. This tells me they’re too busy for me and not interested in new work.

10 SUCCESS POINTS ON WHICH I BUILT MY BUSINESS

1. Have professional and personal backups so that if an emergency of any kind arises, the client’s needs and delivery are always met.

2. Make sure that all administrative points are being handled (e.g., billing, invoicing, payments, answering phones, and responding to e-mail quickly).

3. Have a full understanding of what the client’s needs are and how they change over time. This usually involves asking questions and having a conversation. I also keep notes on specific client requests and preferences, and these are added to the guidelines for that client.

4. Always meet or beat deadlines. It’s up to me to ensure the schedule is doable, including a cushion for unexpected events.

5. Do not create or pass on any confusion regarding the project to clients or vendors. Intercept any that occur and handle them quickly.

6. Do not change your original estimate once it has been agreed upon. Once we have submitted an estimate (based on...
Making time to Skype with vendors

Personalizing or creating gifts I know

Publishing monthly articles (also

1. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

FOUR KEY QUALITIES TO

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

1. Transparency and Responsibility: Being transparent and taking responsibility for mistakes (after fully understanding the client’s concerns) is vital. Offer a solution that improves the process if the issue stemmed from the client’s side. Or assure the client that this issue has been looked at and that measures have been taken on your end to ensure it doesn’t happen again. The idea is to confront, address, and adjust processes in a speedy fashion to avoid the same issue reoccurring in the future.

I always take full responsibility for any error or mistake. “The client is never wrong” maxim applies, and if the relationship becomes abusive (when it becomes apparent that we’re going to lose working with this client no matter what we do), I have the power to end the relationship.

I select my clients as carefully as I select my vendors. I deal only with polite, professional, reasonable, and competent people who appreciate the value of what we deliver. I avoid problems with both clients and vendors by selecting them correctly.

Although the majority of my clients in the past 22 years in business have come to me by referral, I still select with whom I choose to work. That referral works well in both directions. Additionally, I encourage vendors to share the names of colleagues they have worked well with so they can be considered to join the team.

2. Quality and Team Effort: As an employer, I only deal with consummate and experienced professionals who can work as part of a team with the intent to create something of the highest quality for the client. Self-centered individuals don’t fit our paradigm. In addition to qualifications and competence, the ability to value and enjoy the team effort is necessary for this profession. It’s the team that accomplishes the magic. Team effort is what ultimately creates a better product for our clients. That team includes the client, our staff, and any vendor involved. I don’t accept or pass on deadlines to my vendors unless they’re actually doable while maintaining our strict quality assurance process. Having been a translator myself, I understand the process very well.

3. Loyalty: A relationship with a client should be based on loyalty. We have their trust that we will take care of their translation needs. But this long-term investment should never be taken for granted by either party. I don’t abuse my capital (as in goodwill, trust, a strong relationship)—not with clients nor with vendors. Each job is an opportunity to demonstrate our abilities and skills and empower our clients with the best translation of their documentation. A job should be done with enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity.

4. Personal Touch: In an industry where we rarely get to meet our clients or vendors face-to-face, building a relationship in other ways is vital. Among the things I do to lend a personal touch include:

- Making time to Skype with vendors about important project issues.
- Visiting clients once or twice a year.
- Personalizing or creating gifts I know will benefit or be enjoyed by my clients and vendors.

In short, I find my own way of connecting that’s authentic and personable. All these points, I believe, are what make my relationships with clients unique and lasting. It also makes for a fulfilling life.

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Interview with Maurine McLean, Former Sign Language Interpreter

I have long considered sign language interpreting to be the most mysterious version of the kind of work we do in our particular corner of the linguistic universe. But I had no idea just how mysterious—and remarkable—it was until I started researching it for this interview.

I began by approaching Maurine McLean, a federally certified Spanish-English court and conference interpreter who began her career as a sign language interpreter. It was Maurine who suggested I should read the book Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf by Oliver Sacks, who was a renowned neurologist, best-selling author, and professor of neurology at the New York University School of Medicine. After reading this extraordinarily moving book, I realized that much of what Sacks has to say should be part of this interview, as it will help readers gain a better understanding of the field we’re about to discuss. For, as Sacks says, “We are remarkably ignorant about deafness, which Dr. [Samuel] Johnson called ‘one of the most desperate of human calamities.’”

On the whole, since the dawn of human consciousness, deaf people—literally unable to speak for themselves—have been, at best misunderstood, and at worst ignored and abused.

Having read Seeing Voices, I now understand that there are different ways in which to experience deafness. One can be born totally (prelingually) deaf, in which case one has never heard language spoken. One can also lose one’s hearing later in life and become post-lingually deaf, after mastering speech and gaining an understanding of the concept of speaking. Other crucial factors involve the individuals early home life: some are raised in a family in which they are the only deaf person, while others are born to deaf parents and/or have deaf siblings. The difference, in terms of the deaf individual’s potential and degree of suffering, is truly like night and day. Later in life, the deaf individual’s exposure to supportive—or otherwise—community and teachers also has a huge impact on his or her experience.

Those of us who can hear take our hearing for granted, just as we take our vision for granted if we can see. It requires effort to imagine what life would be like if we were deprived of the ability to hear people speaking, or never had that ability in the first place. The thought is quite frightening, and we’re quickly overwhelmed by a sense of isolation that we’ve never really contemplated, let alone experienced. But I don’t think we can ever fully appreciate what it would be like to have never heard speech, and therefore never learned how to speak. For interpreters and translators, the very idea of a world without words is incomprehensible.

For interpreters and translators, the very idea of a world without words is incomprehensible.

level, our ability to speak is inextricably linked to our ability to think. As Sacks says, “Speech is a part of thought.”

Over the past three centuries different theories have been proposed concerning how best to teach the deaf to communicate. Some of these methods rely on the idea that, with enough training, the deaf can learn to lip read and speak. Others rely on a codified system of signs that are based on the natural gestures that deaf people have always developed instinctively and used among themselves. Conflicts have arisen, pitting competing methodologies against each other—Signed English versus American Sign Language (ASL), for example—just as in other areas of linguistic teaching. All this, of course, has a direct bearing on how interpreters approach the task of interpreting for this community.

So, Maurine, please begin by telling us how you first became interested in sign language. How did you learn sign language interpreting?

I’ve always been drawn to work involving sound and meaning. One of my earliest jobs was teaching English as a second language (ESL) to Spanish-speakers at a continuing education program at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas, around 1978. I was also performing in a series of musical groups at the time. Teaching involves quite a bit of talking, and since I was also singing many evenings, I started having recurring bouts of laryngitis. Instead of resting and reducing my vocal wear and tear, I decided that if I were to learn sign language, I wouldn’t need to take time off from teaching. I began taking sign language classes at San Antonio Community College and became proficient enough that I could teach my basic ESL class through a sign language interpreter when laryngitis laid me low.

But that self-interested initiation into the world of deafness soon evolved into much more as I befriended some deaf people and started learning about deaf culture and the varieties of sign language. I learned more sign language after moving...
to Austin by taking courses at deaf churches, community college, the Texas School for the Deaf, and signing with deaf friends. At some point I sent off to Gallaudet University’s library to get sign language lessons on videotapes. That was before the internet; it must be much easier now to learn sign language with online videos. I was studying books that had two-dimensional drawings with arrows to explain each sign, which wasn’t optimal!

How did you get your sign interpreter’s license? Once you were certified, how did you go about becoming active as a sign language interpreter?

While working on a master’s in applied linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin, I kept up my studies of sign language until I was proficient enough to get an entry level license that allowed me to interpret in community and classroom settings in Texas. That’s when I began working for Travis County Services for the Deaf. Assignments varied from interpreting public meetings to doctor appointments to job training sessions. I learned quite a bit on the job as I interpreted for different kinds of signers, ranging from the initialized signs of the Signed English system to the iconic and often idiosyncratic signs of American Sign Language (ASL). I also learned that signs vary according to deaf/hearing family composition, degree of deafness, socioeconomic status, generation, regional origin, and race.

As for certification, Texas has a Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI). The BEI tests and certifies five levels of sign language interpreting. The highest level is for court interpreting. There is also a trilingual certification for ASL, English, and Spanish. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf offers two national certifications. The National Association of the Deaf also certifies interpreters. There may be other state certifications of which I’m unaware.

After graduating with a master’s in applied linguistics, I took a position in Puebla, Mexico, teaching English at the University of the Americas for a year. When I returned to Austin, I went back to graduate school to study speech communication at the University of Texas department that houses deaf studies. I completed all the coursework toward a PhD, but then took a major detour and went to study Spanish>English judiciary interpreting at a summer program at the University of Arizona at Tucson. A lot happened that summer: my Spanish was clearly more proficient than my sign language skills, I fell in love with court interpreting, got my state and federal credentials as a Spanish court interpreter, abandoned the doctorate, and, regretfully but inevitably, let my sign language interpreter’s license lapse. Despite this, I’ve remained keenly interested in the field, as an observer if not actually a practitioner.

In his book, Sacks tells us that the 18th century was a time of enlightened understanding of, and compassion for, the condition of the deaf, when several fine French minds suggested new methods for instructing this community. These new ideas were brought to the U.S., and the American School for the Deaf was established in 1817 in Hartford, Connecticut. The French Sign system was blended with the sign languages used in this country to form a hybrid called American Sign Language, as distinct from the combined system of sign and speech that was called Signed English. What is “Signed English” and how does it differ from ASL?

I believe the principal difference is that ASL arose from the deaf community, whereas Signed English began as a way to teach deaf people English. The most extreme form of Signed English is a system called Signed Exact English that follows English word order, spells out past participles, and has gerund indicators in accordance with the English language—features that are superfluous to ASL.

Signed English uses initialized signs. For example, the days of the week use a small circular movement of the hand shape for M, T, W, Th, F, and S. Sunday has its own sign, since the “S” is already taken for Saturday. Signed English usually, but not always, tends to follow the word order and structure of English.

ASL isn’t dependent on letter hand shapes corresponding to English words. For example, the ASL sign for “GO” uses two index fingers, while the Signed English version uses a “G” hand shape. The systems aren’t totally exclusive. Many people combine signs from both systems, or adjust to their interlocutor’s use of one system or the other.

Please tell us how a sign language interpreter works with a deaf client. How is it different from working with someone who can hear whatever proceedings are involved?

It’s important to arrive a little early so you can chat with the person a bit to get a preview of the way they sign. One big difference in interpreting for the deaf is how to deal with sounds. A hearing person will perceive an airplane flying overhead or loud construction noises and pause the conversation. For the deaf person such a pause could be perplexing. Suddenly no one is talking—what’s wrong? In these situations the interpreter will sign “loud airplane” or “waiting for noise to stop.”
There are also certain visual logistics to consider. The interpreter should wear clothing that provides a sharp color contrast to the color of his or her hands so they are easily visible. Busy prints are to be avoided. The interpreter should be careful to stand at a distance and in lighting that facilitate easy perception of the signs. An interpreter standing in front of a window on a sunny day won’t be easy to read. In a group situation in which participants sit around a table, I would sit or stand directly across from the deaf client to minimize the excessive swiveling of the neck involved in glancing from me to the other speakers.

Sign interpreters at conferences or concerts are called “platform interpreters,” and they have the same concerns about light and contrasting clothing. But nowadays the interpreter’s image can be projected on the big screen, obviating in part the need for special seating up front for deaf attendees.

How does a sign language interpreter determine which register is most appropriate? Are regional influences a factor as in spoken languages?

There are generational differences in sign language, just as in other languages. Each generation likes to have its own slang. Some signs have evolved over the years to replace stereotypes and reflect political correctness, such as signs for ethnic groups and nationalities. There are also regional differences in signs, corresponding to areas of the country or to which school for the deaf one has attended. I suspect that the internet may be reducing these differences somewhat.

An interpreter usually works between two languages. But a sign language interpreter is doing something different in terms of making the speaker “audible” to a deaf client. Can a bilingual sign language interpreter sign into a language other than the one being used by the speaker?

There is such a thing as relay interpreting in sign language, when several spoken and sign languages are involved. I’ve seen this in action at conferences. If a deaf client has specific language needs due to learning disabilities, mental health problems, or idiosyncratic signs, an additional interpreter may adapt signs to a usable form for that person. Deaf-blind clients use interpreters who sign in the hand-under-hand style. Clients with retinitis pigmentosa have a very limited visual field or tunnel vision, so their interpreter must stand farther away and sign in a limited field to make the signs legible. A deaf person educated in the U.K. would use a different sign system from the one used in the U.S., so a chain of interpreters may be needed to receive ASL and produce British Sign Language. You can see that there are quite a few complexities to be considered.

Two of my most interesting assignments were trilingual. I interpreted a basic high school French class for a hard of hearing client. I had studied about five years of French, so I understood the basic French input. My output in sign language had adaptations to indicate verb endings, much as in the style of Signed Exact English, but adapted for French. I was listening in either my first language, English, or my fourth language, French, and interpreting into my third language using signs with French adaptations that the student and I had agreed upon. It helped that she was a good student and that I was such a language aficionado.

Another trilingual situation was when I interpreted phone calls from someone in a Spanish-speaking country to a deaf adult who had immigrated to Austin, Texas. He used a mixture of ASL and English-initialized signs. I was listening to the phone in my second language and signing into my third, then perceiving the client’s signs and voicing them into Spanish over the phone. It may sound complicated, but that mode of interpreting was extremely easy compared to the French class, which usually left me exhausted.

Unsurprisingly, there are several misconceptions about sign language and interpreting. One is that sign language is a sort of universal lingua franca. There is an invented system of gestures and signs called Gestuno, which is analogous to Esperanto, and there is also International Sign Language. Can you tell us how those systems work and where/how they are used?

I’m aware of Gestuno and Esperanto, but I’ve never seen them in use. I think of those systems as language pastimes more than actual functioning language systems used by communities.

Isolated deaf people, perhaps rural residents who don’t know many or any other deaf people, will develop “home signs” within the family. Such a deaf person’s knowledge of standard sign language would depend on the school services available in the area. With
Another misconception is that sign language is not a proper language, but a sort of pantomime or gestural code. Oliver Sacks tells us about William Stokoe, a young linguist who came to Gallaudet University in the late 1950s. He saw that sign language was nothing of the sort and went on to prove that it satisfied every linguistic criterion of a genuine language, in its lexicon and syntax and its capacity to generate an infinite number of propositions. Stokoe suggested that each sign has at least three independent parts—location, hand shape, and movement (analogous to the phonemes of speech). Can you tell us about that?

We can use the sign for “thank-you” as an example. This sign uses a hand shape of an open palm with the fingers touching each other, not spread out. The location of the sign starts at the chin. Touch the tips of the fingers to the chin with the palm toward the chest. Then execute the movement by dropping the hand forward and downward until the palm is perpendicular to the chest. It’s so much easier to show someone a sign than to describe it in words!

Stokoe also says, “Speech has only one dimension: its extension in time; writing has two dimensions; models have three; but only signed languages have at their disposal four dimensions—the three spatial dimensions accessible to the signer’s body, as well as the dimension of time. And sign language fully exploits the syntactic possibilities in its four-dimensional channel of expression.” Please tell us more about how this works.

Signing is a total body experience. Signs are clarified and embroidered upon by the speed of their execution, the facial expression, blowing of air from puffed cheeks, and the posture of the entire body. The same basic sign for “eat” can be modified to mean “eat without much appetite” or “scarf down a meal.”

Sacks tells us that the syntax, grammar, and semantics of sign languages are complete in themselves, but they have a different character from that of any spoken or written language: they are visual, spatial languages. It is therefore not possible to transliterate a spoken language into sign language word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase because their structures are essentially different. Can you explain how they are different? From this perspective, how does sign language work?

Sign language has its own word order and idioms. These must be studied in the same way as spoken languages to become accustomed to the way the language is produced by the community that uses it. An example of word order would be EAT-LATE-YOU-QUESTION, meaning “Have you eaten yet?”

One idiom that sticks with me is WRONG-ZERO, which means “You two look just alike.” One of the delights of language study is discovering such expressions, trying them out, and having success in communication. Sign language is no different than other languages in this respect.

Yes! As in the expression “born in a mill,” which denotes deafness. Something most interpreters learn quickly is that they develop bonds with their clients in environments where the client feels vulnerable for any number of reasons. The deaf consider themselves to be a linguistic and cultural minority. How does a “hearing” interpreter relate to and gain the trust of a client from that community?

I think an interpreter gains trust by having a sterling reputation regarding confidentiality. Interpreters can’t talk about their clients, but the clients do talk about and recommend interpreters. So professional courtesy, empathy, continuing study and cultural sensitivity help an interpreter have a good standing in the community. If a hearing interpreter has deaf parents, there is no question of acceptance in the deaf community. As a hearing interpreter from a hearing family, I didn’t enjoy that kind of entrée and had to earn acceptance job by job.
Dрагош Чибаниу, из переводческого отдела Университета Лидса, написал мне недавно:

The reason I’m writing is to ask whether you’ve had a chance to play with Sketch Engine (see sketchengine.co.uk). In Leeds, we’ve been using it in our corpus linguistics work a lot. It’s got brilliant features, from the terabytes of super useful multilingual data which it already comes with, to features for term extraction, specialized corpus building, thesaurus, collocations, and tons more! It’s really, really cool and I’m only writing to you because the translators I know who have been playing with it also like it a lot.

Not sure whether you could tell, but Dрагош really likes Sketch Engine. And in a way, I could stop this column right here, because he already said it all—sort of.

After spending some time looking at Sketch Engine, I felt embarrassed that I hadn’t known more about it. As Dрагош said, it’s really, really cool. It’s also a monster of a tool (size-wise) and it’s not particularly easy to navigate when you first encounter it. (According to Ondřej Matuška of the Sketch Engine team, one of the areas they’re trying to focus on in the immediate future is to make the product more user-friendly.)

But first, what exactly is Sketch Engine and what does it do?

It’s a corpus tool developed by the Czech company Lexical Computing Limited. Lexical Computing was originally founded in 2003 by the late Brit Adam Kilgarriff and Pavel Rychlík, a professor at Masaryk University in Brno. The idea of corpus tools, and this corpus tool in particular, is to find how language behaves based on large collections of data. For this purpose, Sketch Engine built corpora in more than 80 languages (as well as “time-stamped” corpora in a slightly different set of 18 languages for the purpose of comparing word usage over time). The sizes of the corpora differ widely (from just a few million words in Maori to more than 800 billion in English), and they are available for a number of analysis purposes for any paying trial user. (The annual subscription price is 100 euros for non-academic users, with the trial period ending after 30 days.)

The analyses you can do on these corpora with Sketch Engine include the following:

**Figure 1: An example of a Word Sketch**

Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail me at jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
the privilege of having high-quality translation memories or termbases for a particular subject matter that they need to translate. As a logical extension of this feature, not only can you perform any of the functions mentioned earlier, but it’s also possible to run a keyword search on the user-created corpus, identify the terms that are relevant, and download that into an Excel or TBX file. This feature is currently available for Chinese, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The bilingual version of this is just around the corner.

By the way, you can find an example of the up-and-coming increased user-friendliness of Sketch Engine in OneClick Terms (terms.sketchengine.co.uk) that allows you to extract terms from TMX, XLIFF, PDF, DOC, DOCX, HTML, or TXT files in essentially one or two clicks. (See Figure 3.)

Translators have been one of the primary target groups for the makers of Sketch Engine. One immediate result of that focus is the availability of a plug-in for SDL Trados Studio (see http://bit.ly/SDL-appstore-sketch and http://bit.ly/user-guide-sketch). The plug-in itself is free, but it requires a trial or paid registration to be usable. It allows you to perform collocation, thesaurus, and concordance searches and will soon offer term extraction. According to Ondřej Matuska at Sketch Engine, talks with makers of other translation environment tools are under way to offer plug-ins or add-ons for those tools as well.

Can you believe you’ve never heard about this tool before? Well, maybe you were quicker than I to find this, but the good thing is that now we all know.

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Peer Reviewed: Collaborative Preparation for the Certification Exam

Currently, the main option available to help candidates prepare for ATA’s certification exam is the practice test. An obvious advantage of taking the practice test is that it’s representative of the actual exam: the passages used for the practice test are retired exam passages. However, unlike the actual exam, which is pass or fail only, a practice test is graded and returned with error markings clearly visible and classified as to type and seriousness. This feedback should give candidates a reasonable idea of whether they are ready to take the exam and, if not, the areas where they need more work.

Even though the practice test is still the best option, candidates may want to do even more to prepare. Not all practice test passages are updated annually, so candidates will find it difficult to reliably measure their performance. So, what else can you do to prepare for the exam? Although ATA does not offer preparation courses, candidates are encouraged “to look for ways to gain more translation experience and improve language proficiency skills.”

In addition to the practice test, candidates should consider enrolling in a translation program or class, attending an exam workshop offered at ATA’s Annual Conference or by an ATA chapter or affiliate, or asking translators who have passed the exam for advice. Practicing on your own is an option, but it won’t do much good without feedback to gauge improvement.

So, what about forming a practice group? The following details how we set up an online platform for ATA’s Slavic Languages Division (SLD) to help prospective exam-takers in the division practice on a regular basis and exchange feedback.

Choosing a Platform

After taking the practice test in 2016, Maria was looking for colleagues with whom she could exchange translations and feedback. Coordinating that effort through individual e-mail exchanges proved to be overwhelming and didn’t meet the needs of all candidates interested in practicing. Encouraged by SLD Administrator Ekaterina Howard at the division’s annual meeting in 2016, Maria and I set out to find an online platform that would allow members to exchange and translate passages into and out of Croatian, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian (the Slavic languages offered on ATA’s certification exam).

We chose Slack as the platform for coordinating practice sessions. Slack is an online tool for group communications, organized into custom “channels” (message boards). It also allows participants to send each other private messages, which is useful for exchanging feedback discreetly with a practice partner. In addition to two default channels, we created a channel for each combination in the Slavic languages that is currently available for ATA certification.

Some of the reasons for choosing Slack were:

- A free trial version with robust features that met the group’s needs.
- The ability to communicate asynchronously, which is useful for participants in different time zones.
- File upload and sharing options that eliminate the need for e-mailing attachments.
- Integration capabilities with external applications (e.g., polls, calendar reminders).

We posted information about ATA’s certification exam, including the framework for standardized error marking and the flow chart for error point decisions, so it could be available to all members of our practice group. These resources were “pinned” to each active channel, making them easily accessible from a side panel.

Slack’s linear interface has not always been straightforward. At its most basic, Slack is organized like a newsfeed. As a result, some participants had trouble joining the channel for the appropriate language combination or finding the necessary instructions and reference material. Hopefully, this shortcoming can be solved through additional training or an external application.

Practice Steps

Once the medium for the group had been chosen, we invited prospective participants and volunteer reviewers to join the Slack platform. New members to the group were encouraged to join the channel for the language combination(s) in which they wanted to practice. The following process has evolved through trial and error after several rounds of practice.

Signup:
- Candidates in a specific language combination opt in for each round of practice.
- Organizers compile a list of all participants for the month.

Translation:
- A practice passage is posted.
- Participants translate the passage independently under exam conditions.
- Candidates send their translation via a private message to the person listed before and after them on the list of participants (all participants exchange translations with two colleagues).

Grading:
- Using the Track Changes feature in Word, each participant corrects and scores the received translations according to ATA’s grading framework.
- Everyone returns the graded translations with comments back to the original authors.

Discussion:
- All participants share the challenges encountered and discuss possible solutions in the public channel reserved for their language combination.

Expert Feedback:
- The organizers put together a list of challenges encountered and solicit feedback from volunteer experts (certified translators or ATA graders).
- Unlike the official ATA practice test, the reviewers do not grade each individual translation, but do provide overall guidance on common challenges. We’ve
found that the official practice test and the practice group complement each other.

- The organizers share the reviewers’ comments and suggestions with channel members.

The entire cycle for one passage normally takes a month, with overlaps between cycles. We have recently added a calendar integration linked to a public Google calendar listing the important dates of the practice cycle.

This setup has helped the group work consistently and manage participants’ expectations at every stage of the process. At the same time, it has required some hands-on involvement from the organizers, such as compiling participant lists every month and preparing questions for the reviewers. Slack features could further automate some of these tasks. For instance, the Donut app can pair up members of a specific channel “via direct message on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis” so practice partners don’t need to be assigned manually.

CHOOSING THE PRACTICE TEXT

Since it’s impossible to use real ATA exam passages, we’ve been choosing passages from online journalism and print sources such as textbooks and academic publications. We pull an excerpt of 225-275 words from a general text that matches the features of a typical ATA exam passage: “chosen in such a way as to avoid highly specialized terminology challenges requiring research.”

As much as possible, we’ve tried to include challenges similar to those candidates will encounter on the exam: a line of argument that may be tough to follow, a few terminological challenges, interesting syntax, and a professional or semi-formal register. While there have been a couple of missteps, such as terms too obscure to be found in a general dictionary or a register that skews a little too colloquial, we’ve become more proficient at finding appropriate passages thanks to the group’s expert consultants.

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

As of mid-May 2017, 60 participants had joined the Slack platform. Since the group launched in December 2016, the two most active channels—English-Russian and Russian-English—have worked through one round of practice passages each month. Since settling on the procedure described above, we’ve held steady at about 10 participants per text in each channel, which is enough for us to switch partners and get feedback from different people. We’ve also been exchanging messages about exam procedures, strategies, and resources.

Russian is the most active language in our group. Unfortunately, the following challenges have hindered participant engagement in the other language combinations:

- Recruiting participants and reviewers.
- Choosing passages for languages other than English and Russian—the organizers, who don’t speak the other languages, must rely on volunteer submissions.

Because the group is designed for practice in several language combinations, this variation in activity is probably inevitable. However, despite limited resources for the languages that are less well represented, the group’s organizers can develop ways to allow candidates working in those languages to continue to practice. As a bare minimum, two participants working in the same language combination can exchange translations and feedback as described above.

PRACTICE OUTCOMES

At this point, a few participants have registered or taken the certification exam. (One has passed and the rest are waiting for their results.) In a recent survey conducted by the organizers, members pointed out the practice group has helped them become familiar with the exam format and error categories. They also appreciated free, recurring rounds of practice and the opportunity to discuss translation challenges with their peers. At the same time, several respondents pointed out that peer feedback varied in quality, with some of their partners not following ATA’s grading rubric, making erroneous corrections, or failing to review their translation altogether.

These drawbacks could be mitigated by making sure all participants have basic familiarity with ATA’s standards and grading process. In addition, having each translation reviewed by two different colleagues lets the translator compare the feedback and identify any common threads. In the end, our practice group is meant to complement, not replace, the official ATA practice test, where the translator does receive detailed feedback from an ATA grader.

BLUEPRINT FOR OTHER GROUPS?

SLDs practice group has helped prospective exam takers get regular, evaluated translation practice and become accustomed to ATA’s exam format and grading criteria. Although this format presents its own set of challenges—e.g., a new interface, fluctuating participant engagement, the need for input from organizers and expert reviewers, and the varying quality of peer feedback—we hope that other groups will find our experience helpful and might consider starting their own practice activities to complement the resources offered by ATA and third parties.

NOTES

2 Although the practice group discussed in this article was not organized or sponsored by ATA’s Certification Program, the Certification Committee recognizes the value these types of groups have for candidates.
4 “Bring People Together” (Donut), www.donut.ai.

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