Looking Ahead to ATA59

By the time you read this, registration will be open for ATA’s 59th Annual Conference, to be held October 24–27 in New Orleans—definitely one of the best conference destinations in the United States!

In January of this year, President-Elect and Conference Organizer Ted Wozniak, Professional Development Manager Adrian Aleckna, Executive Director Walter “Mooch” Bacak, and I visited our host hotel, the New Orleans Marriott, to get a feel for what we’ll be experiencing during the conference. Here are a few highlights:

- Adrian described the Marriott as “a meeting planner’s dream.” We’ll have a full ballroom with sit-down tables for breakfast, then you’ll walk just a few steps across the hall for the Opening Session and Annual Meeting of All Members. The hotel atmosphere is bright, upbeat, and inviting, and the session rooms are well situated and easy to find.

- If you attended our 2006 conference in New Orleans, this location will be one step better—on “the French Quarter side” of Canal Street, so that you can walk right out the door and into the heart of the action.

- New Orleans truly has something for everyone, regardless of your definition of fun. Many people limit their impression of New Orleans to the bars on Bourbon Street. (And they’re definitely there if bars are your thing!) But—as someone who is more into good food and jazz than late-night partying—I really enjoyed exploring the historic district on foot, people-watching in Jackson Square, and capping it all off with beignets and café au lait at Café Beignet (Ted, a New Orleans local, promised me that it would be “better than Café du Monde,” and he was right!).

At each ATA conference, about a third of our attendees are there for the first time, and about a third have attended five or more ATA conferences. We’re committed to offering a wide range of opportunities, from our Buddies Welcome Newbies program to our Advanced Skills and Training Day sessions. No matter where you fall on the spectrum, don’t forget to book your hotel room soon before the room block fills up, and start planning your networking time to make the most of your investment in this “face time” (real face time, not the iPhone version!) with your colleagues from around the world. We expect attendees from throughout the U.S. and over 50 countries, and we need you there too!

Thank you for being an ATA member, and I hope to see you soon in New Orleans!

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY—START PLANNING NOW

ATA will be celebrating International Translation Day on Friday, September 28. (The official ITD is actually Sunday, September 30.) This is a great opportunity to spotlight the important work of translators, interpreters, and others in the language services industry. Help spread the word. For more information and ideas on promoting ITD, please see http://bit.ly/ITD2018.

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Volunteering: Making Your Investment of Time Worthwhile

It’s a “What’s in it for me?” world, so why do people volunteer? And more importantly, where do they find the time? Read on to learn how to select and manage volunteer activities. You’ll also find out how choosing the right volunteer opportunity can be a good thing for your career.

Translation Scams Reloaded

Taking steps to safeguard your identity and minimize the risk from scammers is not as difficult as it sounds, but it takes diligence.

Translation and Interpreting in Mexico: Uncharted Territory, Rich Waters

The Italia Morayta Foundation, InterpretAmerica, and the Association of Public Service and Community Interpreters and Translators recently published the results of a groundbreaking initiative, the 2017 Survey on Translation and Interpretation in Mexico—featuring 100 pages of detailed information compiled from more than 1,000 translators and interpreters across Mexico.

Going Once, Going Twice, Sold! Is Your Translation Business Sellable?

“Is my translation business sellable?” Whether or not you have plans to sell your business in the near future, this question is very important and relevant, and not just to those on the verge of retirement.

Translating Diagnostic Imaging

Translating diagnostic imaging reports can be a challenging but rewarding aspect of medical translation for which the translator must master the technical basics of the diagnostic imaging modality, the report structure, and the specialized source and target vocabulary.

Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns are found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!
TA59 is less than four months away so it’s not too soon to start making plans to come to The Big Easy for four days of top-notch professional development training, numerous networking opportunities, and the chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones. (And let’s not forget the beignets, étouffée, jambalaya, and a cornucopia of other foods from around the world that will be yours to enjoy only a short walk from the conference hotel!) Conference registration is open, so reserve your hotel room now at the very attractive New Orleans Marriott. Remember, if you make your reservations at the conference hotel by October 22, you could be one of five lucky attendees selected at random to win one free night at the hotel! Need a little more incentive before making a decision? Here’s just a small preview of what’s in store for you at ATA59!

Advanced Training: Advanced Skills and Training (AST) Day takes place Wednesday, October 24. This “conference-before-the-conference” will offer intensive three-hour training sessions on interpreting, technology, neural machine translation, productivity boosters, and, again this year, preparation workshops for the Spanish→English and English→Spanish certification exams. (There will be two exam sittings at the conference for those who are ready.)

Over 170 Educational Sessions: As always, ATA’s Annual Conference will be chock full of educational and networking opportunities. Over 170 sessions have been selected through a rigorous peer-review process to provide you with training in almost every facet of our profession. In addition to the regular sessions by your peers, 15 distinguished speakers have been invited to impart their expertise and perspectives to you. As we’ve learned from past conference surveys, 91% of attendees report gaining a new skill by attending the conference.

Networking, Networking, and More Networking: While education and training are great and are alone worth the registration fee, I know many of you attend the conference to get more work and expand your client base. Previous conference surveys show that 98% of conference attendees made new contacts at the conference. To help you get more work, the Job Fair has been extended to two nights to allow more time to connect with representatives from language services companies. You can also network and gain valuable business knowledge at the ever-popular Brainstorm Networking session and Business Practices Happy Hour, as well as make new contacts at the Welcome Celebration and in the Exhibit Hall. Seasoned attendees can also help newcomers by participating in the Buddies Welcome Newbies program.

Previous conference surveys show that 98% of conference attendees made new contacts at the conference.

Connect with Attendees Before, During, and After the Conference: There’s an app for that! Once the conference app is available, make sure you download it and complete your profile, including uploading your résumé. Not only will this put you in contact with about 1,600 attendees, but also with representatives from language services companies. In addition, you can only provide feedback on the sessions you attend using the app. Your feedback is vital and is used every year during the session selection process for the upcoming conference, so please submit your session reviews. The mobile app works on Android and iOS devices, and the online version works in all browsers.

The Food! Nor should you pass up on the after-hours opportunities! This is “Nawlins ya’ll” and we know how to let the good times roll! If you can’t find a delicious meal in New Orleans, you can’t find your nose in the dark. According to The New Orleans Menu (https://nomenu.com), there are about 150 restaurants in the French Quarter alone. Add in the Central Business District, the Bywater, Marigny, and the Garden District—all easily reached by taxi or ridesharing services—and you have another 200 dining options from which to choose. And that’s just the areas quickly reached from the conference hotel.

NOT SURE?
Still on the fence about whether or not to attend? Then visit the conference website (www.atanet.org/conf/2018) to see what past attendees have to say about the value of attendance and get more details about the networking and education opportunities that await you in New Orleans. If you still aren’t sure the conference is worth the investment, check out www.atanet.org/conf/2018/attend for even more “Reasons to attend.”

So, make your plans to attend ATA59 and come meet me in NOLA. My investments in attending ATA conferences have been paid back many times over. I’m sure yours will be as well!

MORE INFORMATION ON ATA59
ATA 59 Annual Conference Website
www.atanet.org/conf/2018
ATA59 Advanced Skills and Training Day
www.atanet.org/conf/2018/astday
ATA59 Networking Opportunities
www.atanet.org/conf/2018/networking
AT59 Registration Information
www.atanet.org/conf/2018/registration
New Orleans Marriott Reservations
www.atanet.org/conf/2018/hotel
New Orleans Menu
https://nomenu.com
New Orleans Official Guide
www.neworleansonline.com
Is There a Future in Freelance Translation? Let’s Talk About It!  | Christelle Maginot

Thanks for the very thorough discussion of this subject of vital importance to the profession. I would only add a few thoughts.

In my opinion, all the factors mentioned in the article will have the inevitable effect of drastically reducing the demand for good human translators in countries with higher costs of living. When I started out (in the typewriter/snail-mail era), there was no machine translation, so everything required humans. Also, it seems to me, many translation customers in those days were generally better informed about what translation involves and what good translations look like than the large number of people who are looking for something quick and easy these days, and have no problem settling for whatever Google Translate gives them.

Therefore, a large percentage of the “exploding world-wide demand for translation” we always hear about (I have no idea how large, but it must be a considerable fraction) is perfectly happy with “good enough” translations. What supplied a good deal of demand for translators’ services when there was no machine translation is now completely unavailable to us. Smartphone apps have put the old-fashioned phrasebooks out of business, and this is only the beginning of the trend. Most of the estimates of the demand for translation and the size of the market that we see are probably not to be trusted, at least if we’re thinking about good professional careers.

Even highly skilled and experienced translators will increasingly have to change their work methods from the traditional “me and my typewriter/PC, and a few dictionaries to thumb through” to one in which they routinely work in close collaboration with machine translation systems (which, however much we want to deny it, are getting more effective). We may feel comfortable now with looking down our noses at “mere post-editing,” but I think that it will become the bulk of our work fairly soon, and we need to get used to it. We need to make it clear to the public that good translation in the 21st century has become not just a process monopolized by humans, but a partnership between machine translation and the people who know how to work with it.

The nature of the translation industry has changed so much since I entered it that I have no idea how I would counsel someone who is thinking about it as a career today. All I could say is that they should consider very carefully whether it would make any sense for them to start in on it except as a hobby.

Jon Johanning  | Philadelphia, PA

Remote Simultaneous Interpreting: The Upside and Downside  | Silvana Chaves

After nearly 10 years of doing voluntary simultaneous interpreting at my local church, my first “paid job” as an interpreter was at a conference for the global leaders of my church with over 25,000 attendees. As you can imagine, the venue (Orlando Convention Center in Florida) was gargantuan. In the main hall, our booths were set up behind the stage in the main hall. We had two large LCD screens, one featuring the visual aids being used and the other one a camera showing the main speaker.

The organizers showed me how to operate the console and wished me the best of luck. My booth partner was more experienced, which gave me some level of comfort. We performed our tasks for the next 10 days and everything went pretty smoothly.

In my opinion, there’s little difference between remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) today and what my first experience in a booth felt like. Although I agree that meeting with the speaker(s) beforehand, getting a feel for the room, and having materials and access to the technician is always helpful, in my 10 years of professional experience I’ve come to find that we don’t always get those things most of the time.

My technical experience with RSI has been good thus far, but looking toward the future, I’ll certainly miss traveling to different locations (sometimes exotic ones). Having to commute an hour to get into a booth set up in a windowless room is very different from traveling from, for example, the U.S. to the Netherlands or New Zealand. I can see how some of the conferences I’ve worked internationally will move very quickly to adopt RSI technology, but I also know there are some clients who will not be doing that in the next five years.

So, for now, I’ll cherish every trip to an assignment location just a little bit more, knowing that tomorrow, instead of getting to see the Tasman Sea for the first time, I’ll likely be staring at the rails of the New York subway as I “travel” to do my work.

Cheers to all those among us who have been part of the days when one could really get excited about “going into work!”

Everton Morais  | Tuckahoe, NY

Continued on page 19

TOP TWEETS

Mom explains why her child will be multilingual  | Los Angeles Times:
https://t.co/Z1Y8YfgOut
JUNE 20 / @ATANET

Egyptian linguist Hussein Mahmoud: “Translation is the best medium for dialogue between civilizations”:
https://t.co/8dAdtwamI2
JUNE 19 / @ATANET
10 Reasons to Attend ATA59

ATA's 59th Annual Conference registration is open! Join 1,600 of your peers in New Orleans, October 24–27, 2018. Here are 10 reasons why you should attend.

1. **Inspiration:** Learn from the best. See how others further along in their careers got to where they are. Get reenergized about your love of language and the drive to step up your work.

2. **Education:** 16 masterclass Advance Skills and Training (AST) Day workshops. 174 top-of-the-line sessions from experts across the globe. ATA's Annual Conference is the premier educational event for translators and interpreters.

3. **Jobs:** Connect with agencies and companies that are hiring. This year, we've added a second night of the successful Job Fair. Plus, promote yourself on the conference app where you can post your résumé and where potential clients will see it before and after the conference as well.

4. **Exhibits:** 70-plus exhibits featuring the leading tool providers, university programs, language companies, and more.

5. **Division Events:** Divisions are a “home” within ATA for many. Connect with other division members at the Welcome Celebration. Attend division annual meetings. Look for division social events and dinners outside the conference.

6. **Networking:** Buddies Welcome Newbies, group breakfasts, Brainstorm Networking, AST workshops, the Exhibit Hall, and even the hotel elevator—the networking opportunities abound.

7. **S$$:** The conference is a great way to connect with future clients and business partners or learn about new technology to help you work smarter. They all add up to money in your pocket. For some great testimonials about profiting from attending the conference, please check out the conference website (www.atanet.org/conf/2018/attend).

8. **Earn:** For ATA-certified translators, earn up to 10 continuing education points for attending the conference. You can earn more by attending AST workshops. And, interpreters can earn credits as well. ATA is once again working with various state and national organizations to recognize ATA education sessions.

9. **Fun:** Seeing old friends, making new ones, Welcome Celebration, Zumba, Closing Dance, New Orleans. ‘Nuf said.

10. **Investing in Yourself:** You have to spend money to make money. Help yourself by becoming better at what you do. It will pay off in the long run.

+ **Plus one bonus, No Fear.** If you have never been to an ATA Annual Conference, don’t worry about not knowing anyone. Lots of folks are in your shoes. The vibe at the conference is really an open, friendly community. First-timers are warmly welcomed with veteran conference goers leading the way.

For more information on the conference, please check out the preliminary program and the conference website: www.atanet.org/conf/2018. Register today! See you in New Orleans.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**ALLIANT: ATA’S PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE BROKER**

Alliant is the broker for ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance. The underwriter is Lloyd’s of London.

Why choose the ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance?

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

What does the ATA-sponsored professional liability insurance cover?

- **Broad definition of translation/interpreting services:** Covers nearly all activities relevant to a translator or interpreter, including editing, publishing, and proofreading.

- **Coverage for contingent bodily injury and/or property damage:** Covers errors in providing translation/interpreting services that result in bodily injury and/or property damage. These types of claims are typically excluded by generic professional liability policies.

- **Coverage for cyber liability, including HIPAA and HITECH breaches:** Covers breaches related to the provision of professional services in violation or breach of the HIPAA 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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**CHOOSE TO STAY AT THE ATA59 CONFERENCE HOTEL—BOOK NOW!**

The New Orleans Marriott is open for ATA59 reservations. Remember, reservations made before Monday, October 22, will be automatically entered into the Stay and Win Drawing. Learn more and make your reservation today at www.atanet.org/conf/2018/hotel!
On April 10, 2018, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations hosted “Protect Translators and Interpreters, Protect the World” at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The purpose of this roundtable discussion was to address the need for greater legal and physical protection for translators and interpreters in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict peace-building. The event was organized in cooperation with a language coalition comprised of Red T, a nonprofit advocacy organization, and five major international language associations (Critical Link International, International Association of Conference Interpreters, International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters, International Federation of Translators, and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters). Red T is dedicated to the protection of translators and interpreters in conflict zones and other adversarial settings. Led by a team of volunteers, Red T advocates worldwide on behalf of linguists at risk, raises awareness of the dangers they face, and promotes their safety. The organization invited ATA to send a representative to this event, and I was honored to be chosen to attend.

WORKING TOWARD RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION

In addition to discussing steps for mitigating risks and vulnerabilities, the panel also focused on what can be done to help translators and interpreters in conflict zones gain the international recognition and protection they deserve. The impressive list of speakers on the program included:

- Ambassador Valentin Rybakov, the permanent representative of the Republic of Belarus to the UN.
- Minister Andrei Dapkiunas, the immediate past permanent representative of the Republic of Belarus to the UN and the current deputy foreign minister.
- Maya Hess, founder and chief executive officer of Red T.
- Linda Fitchett, chair of the Conflict Zone Interpreter Project of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC).
- Kevin Quirk, president of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).
- Betsy Fisher, policy director of the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP).
- Heidi Cazes, who represented the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI).
- Bill Moody of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).
- Sara de Jong, a political scientist from The Open University in the United Kingdom.

This roundtable grew out of then-Ambassador Dapkiunas’ statement at the UN Security Council on May 25, 2017, in which he urged member states “to initiate the elaboration of an international instrument that would enhance the legal protection of translators and interpreters in situations of armed conflict and in the situation of post-conflict peace-building.”

Minister Dapkiunas also spearheaded UN Resolution 71/288, which recognizes the contribution of language professionals to the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of human rights as they assist militaries and humanitarian organizations, ensure due process, and facilitate international negotiations. Incidentally, Minister Dapkiunas and Ambassador Rybakov both trained as interpreters in Minsk before entering the diplomatic service, which is why the #ProtectLinguists issue is so close to their hearts.

The speakers touched on different aspects of the problem of linguists in high-risk settings, specifically in Iraq and Afghanistan. Maya Hess pointed out that linguists in armed conflict and post-conflict peace-building settings may not only be indirect victims by virtue of their proximity to warfare, but also direct victims as a function of the translator-traitor mentality. She emphasized that despite this double exposure, linguists in
conflict zones lack the specific protection under international law that is extended to journalists and medical personnel.

Linda Fitchett went on to explain that the problem becomes even more acute after forces withdraw from these countries and insurgents have free rein to hunt these “collaborators” down. She cited case histories and casualty statistics, including the nine-year-old nephew of an interpreter in Afghanistan who was executed because his uncle worked for the U.S. military, as well as instances where the Taliban cut out the tongues of interpreters prior to beheading them.

Betsy Fisher, whose organization represents refugees at all stages of the resettlement process, expanded on the dangers for linguists in combat situations, adding that they are not provided with body armor or safety equipment, and that there is no internationally recognized symbol like that of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent that would identify them as non-combatants (which is the basic idea behind the Red T symbol). Fisher also spoke about how linguists and their families are frequently denied resettlement visas for arbitrary reasons and sometimes spend years fighting to find safety in another country.

Kevin Quirk addressed the murky area of contract linguists working for private companies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unlike linguists who work directly for the military or a government agency, contract linguists are separated from the states for which they are working indirectly by several degrees, making it even more difficult for them to obtain protection and resettlement assistance from these states.

Finally, Sara de Jong shared some of her research findings, among them the fact that there is no international coordinated resettlement program or harmonization among states that are involved in one collective mission. The challenges linguists face in relation to their protection and resettlement can cause tensions to arise between people’s sense of belonging to a country, societal recognition of that belonging, and legal status and access to social rights.

Aside from the official panelists, participants also heard from Marcus Grotian, a German soldier who was on active duty in Afghanistan. Grotian chairs the Patenschaftsnetzwerk Afghanische Ortskrafte, an organization that supports Afghan staff that resettled in Germany.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?**

A discussion ensued on how to legally enshrine states’ obligations with respect to basic protections for linguists. Hess noted that while the nature of any such legal text remains undecided at this time, it could take the form of an international measure, along the lines of the resolutions adopted for journalists or an amendment to the Geneva Conventions. The panelists agreed that they have a long road ahead in the UN because member states that use linguists recruited from local communities may be hesitant to back such mechanisms. However, there are concrete steps that could be taken on the ground in the meantime. For instance, Fisher encouraged member states to take a more active role by providing on-base housing, respecting the right of linguists to remain anonymous, assisting with relocation, and maintaining accurate records. Hess sought greater professionalism on the part of conflict zone linguists and their employers through improved training by, for example, consulting the international coalition’s Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services, which is available on the websites of Red T, AIIC, and FIT.

Finally, Ravi Batri, a lawyer in the audience, challenged everyone in the room to take their efforts even further. While maintaining that the relocation of linguists and their families is part of the cost of war, he argued that translators and interpreters should not be compared to journalists, and that they are entitled to complete protection and diplomatic inviolability.

Participants came away from this roundtable energized by new ideas and convinced of their moral imperative to help these linguists.

(Special thanks to Maya Hess for reviewing a draft of this article.)

**NOTES**

1. To learn more about Red-T, visit www.red-t.org.


**Lucy Gunderson** is an ATA-certified Russian>English translator specializing in human rights, legal documents, and academic translation. She is also chair of ATA’s Divisions Committee and a former administrator of the Slavic Languages Division. Contact: lucy@russophiletranslations.com.
Talking Language to “Word People” at the ACES: Society for Editing

It’s always great fun to meet fellow “word people” and discuss language. I had the pleasure of doing so recently in Chicago, when I presented a 60-minute session at the ACES: Society for Editing (formerly known as the American Copy Editors Society) annual conference in April. ACES is an organization for editing professionals in various industries, as well as educators and students. Similar to ATA, its members are word-loving, friendly, and collaborative. So, I was delighted when my proposal to present “What to Know Before You Send Your Copy for Translation” was accepted.

While I only recently became a member of ACES, I found that I was not the only translation/interpreting professional at the conference. During my time in Chicago, I met with two other ATA members who also belong to ACES and who found the conference to be a good investment in their professional development.

While I had the advantage of speaking to an audience of professionals who understand and appreciate the power of carefully placed punctuation and selecting the proper term for a given text, I was also surprised to find that this audience had its own set of questions about what we do and how we do it. There were about 35 people in attendance during my session—editors and copywriters, team leads from mid-size companies who frequently work with translators and localizers, and even some senior editors from large corporations. There were even some students who approached me afterward to discuss their interest in ATA and in potentially pursuing a career in translation. All in all, the diversity of attendees impressed me and reminded me of the diversity within our own organization.

My presentation was about how to find and work with professional translators and editors who specialize in the specific area(s) in which copywriters and editors produce content. I began by talking to attendees about what it takes to create a great translation and how to find professional translators and editors in the target language. I promoted ATA’s Directory of Translators and Interpreters several times throughout the session, and those present were grateful for the resource.

Next, I discussed important ways a translation team can support one another in gaining insight about the target language. I covered such topics as the ability to discuss nuances in the source text and how they will translate to the target language, how to define the purpose or goal of the copy to be translated, and how to determine the ideal readership. I mentioned that all these factors can and do affect such aspects as word choice, the level or technical nature of language used, and sentence structure. I also briefly discussed the importance of creating a style guide with the translation team’s assistance. I found the article by ATA member Carolyn Yohn in the January/February 2018 issue of The ATA Chronicle, “Copyediting for Stand-Out Style in Any Translation” to be a helpful resource for this audience and shared it with them. They were very pleased to receive this information as well.

I went on to examine other factors to consider discussing with when working with a translation team, such as active versus passive voice, the use of gender and pronouns, and formal versus informal language use. I mentioned the many advantages of collaborating with the translation team throughout the translation process, as good translators ask questions to produce the best product. I drove these types of messages home by sharing callouts like this one on my slides:

“IT IS BETTER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING THE PROCESS ITSELF THAN TO HAVE YOUR COPY BECOME LOST IN TRANSLATION.”

As it turned out, these callouts were a great idea, as the conference organizers had assigned a hashtag to each session. The hashtag used for my session was #ACESTranslation. I thought this was a very clever way for everyone to follow along with the sessions they were interested in learning more about, especially those unable to attend.

Attendees also posed some thought-provoking questions after my presentation. One that stood out concerned the use of machine translation (MT) and its potential capabilities in assisting copywriters and editors in their work. I mentioned the
OUTREACH REPORT continued

limitations of MT and why it’s best to avoid it when creating copy that is meant to engage, persuade, convince, or inform. The discussion was lively!

One attendee, a senior editor from Apple, was quite skeptical at first about some of the points I was making with regard to collaborating and working closely with a team of skilled human translators. She said, “I don’t see how this can work. We translate our materials into over 20 languages!” But by the end of the session she was thanking me for the insight and helpful information that she was going to take back to her colleagues at Apple. She now understood how vital it is to work closely with the translation teams who handle their copy, and she had real questions about the processes used and the limits of MT in producing content in other languages for Apple. Perhaps a comment made by one of the other attendees is what truly made her question Apple’s practices. He said, “It’s often faster and less expensive to hire a professional to translate than to rely on machine translation alone.” While we all know that poorly translated material—whether the translation alone.” While we all know that it is to work closely with the translation teams who handle their copy, and she had real questions about the processes used and the limits of MT in producing content in other languages for Apple. Perhaps a comment made by one of the other attendees is what truly made her question Apple’s practices. He said, “It’s often faster and less expensive to hire a professional to translate than to rely on machine translation alone.” While we all know that poorly translated material—whether the result of relying solely on MT or unskilled humans(?)—can be a cost creator, it was refreshing to see a professional in another industry draw this conclusion himself and share it with his colleagues.

In addition to questions from attendees about my presentation, I also had several people come up to me afterward to ask about becoming a member of ATA. It was particularly nice to know that there are colleagues in related industries who see the value in being a part of our great association. Throughout the weekend it was clear to me that professional editors and copywriters face many of the same challenges as translators and interpreters: dealing with educating clients on the importance of hiring a professional, taking time off to recharge and plan the future of our businesses, and continuing to take advantage of opportunities for continuing education while balancing a full workload from clients. I found so many parallels between the topics discussed at ACES and those we discuss among ourselves as translators and interpreters that it struck me—we can really learn from these folks, and they can learn from us as well. To conclude my presentation, I left attendees with this point, as I knew it would be something they could relate to as word people:

“Just as there is no magic formula to writing great copy, there is no magic formula to creating a superb translation. Both take time, expertise, patience, and experience.”

I encourage other ATA members to attend and present at events like this one on a regular basis. Not only was I able to network with high-level professionals in a parallel industry, but I was also asked to write a post for the ACES blog prior to the conference based on the topic of my session. I was glad to do so, as it stirred up additional interest in advance and prepared attendees for the topic of the presentation.

As I have mentioned in a previous article, it can be truly beneficial to look to other industries sometimes to help you see things more clearly in your own. Doing so can give you new ideas and creative breakthroughs while growing your network as a professional. I believe that this particular conference would be of great interest for translators of all levels.

While smaller than a typical ATA conference, the ACES event welcomed 700 attendees from many areas of expertise. There were several extra events available, such as a set of simultaneous networking lunches on the first full day of the conference. Attendees were able to choose which networking lunch to attend based on the field or industry in which they work. One networking lunch, for staff editors, was even added to the list of options a few days before the conference because the organizers realized there was enough interest to justify doing so. Extra events like this one allowed attendees to spend more time together, share ideas, and even tap into a pool of potential partners for future projects and client work.

Overall, I found those present to be very collaborative, diverse, and excited to share what they were learning with other colleagues who were unable to attend. Most of all, they were extremely interested in the work we do as translators and interpreters. I highly recommend attending if you get the chance! The ACES 2019 conference is set to be held in Providence, Rhode Island.

NOTES


THREE TIPS TO GET THE GIG
Want to spread the word about the value of translation and interpreting to a group or organization? The following tips will help you gain an edge in terms of getting people to ask you to speak at their event.

1. Research your target audience and decide how you can provide value to their work and/or industry with your knowledge and expertise.
2. Approach the organization either as a member or as an outsider who has a different perspective to share and make a pitch.
3. Review ATA’s Client Outreach Kit for more tips and strategies on getting the gig, preparing your presentation for your target audience, and more. You can find it here: https://atanet.org/client_outreach.

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Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo, an ATA director, is the chief executive officer of Accessible Translation Solutions, which she founded in 2010. She joined ATA’s Public Relations Committee in 2012 before becoming its chair in 2014. She has also served as administrator for ATA’s Medical Division (2011–2015). She has a BA in Spanish from the University of Southern Mississippi and an MA in Spanish from the University of Louisville. She is also a consultant for the University of Louisville Graduate Certificate in Translation. You can read more of her articles on her blog at www.madalenazampaulo.com/blog. Contact: madalena@accessibletranslations.com.
Volunteering: Making Your Investment of Time Worthwhile

Can we, as freelance professionals, really reach a balance wherein paid work, continuing education, and volunteering each play equitable roles, all while maintaining a work-life balance?

Volunteers are the cornerstones of nearly every nonprofit organization, and ATA is no exception. But what motivates a person to give their time for free? Can we, as freelance professionals, really reach a balance wherein paid work, continuing education, and volunteering each play equitable roles, all while maintaining a work-life balance? I say yes, and both our careers and personal lives can be more enriched for it.

Volunteering Comes in All Shapes and Sizes

As a translator or interpreter, volunteering could manifest itself as general work within an organization like ATA or pro bono professional services offered to those in need. It can also be done digitally or in person. Volunteer work can involve a long-term commitment, like serving on a board of directors, or a single afternoon spent at the local rescue mission. Most of us volunteer without realizing it, such as when we step up to chaperone a school field trip or lend a hand to someone in need in our community.

The motivations for volunteering come in all shapes and sizes. One incentive is the simple fact that volunteering can make us feel good about ourselves. We feel that we’ve given back—or perhaps paid it forward! Another motivation for volunteering is the simple existence of a need. We often fill roles as volunteers because we were either asked to do so or because we saw a gap and were willing to fill it. Sometimes we volunteer to gain experience—perhaps to learn more about an organization or community, perhaps to help us master a task or trade. At times we volunteer as a way to expand our networks, since some of the best community-building activities come about when we serve side by side as volunteers.

If you see volunteer service as a hobby rather than a necessary evil and choose your commitments wisely, they can be some of the most refreshing aspects of your professional life.

Knowing Where to Look

Don’t know where to start? Within ATA alone, there are many opportunities for willing volunteers. It’s just a matter of knowing where to look. The structure of our organization is such that with all the moving parts and vital programs that operate as branches of the parent association, volunteers are at the core of nearly every committee, program, and entity within ATA. Divisions and chapters, which offer a meaningful connection for local groups based on geographical region, subject matter, or language family, often rely on volunteers to coordinate events, publish information, and share resources. The School Outreach and Mentoring Programs, which are aimed at ushering in the newest generation of translators and interpreters, are built on a volunteer model where members are encouraged to connect with newcomers or students to facilitate learning and the development of our profession. The success of ATA’s Annual Conference and its many related activities is dependent upon the
The choice to is an ATA-certified blog team www.atanet.org furthering the mission of translators and When I dedicate my available time to says My willingness to serve as a volunteer portrays to your network: you seek to build the image you want to commitments demonstrate about me?” Here are a few examples to consider as upside down and ask ourselves this instead: “What do my volunteer commitments demonstrate about me?” Here are a few examples to consider as you seek to build the image you want to portray to your network: My willingness to serve as a volunteer says I care about my profession. When I dedicate my available time to furthering the mission of translators and interpreters, whether by contributing to

Volunteering within an organization like ATA conveys to others that I’m a team player. Serving as a volunteer is seldom a solo activity—it almost always involves teamwork. I can learn and grow as an individual through the teams I serve alongside. For example, a colleague may join me to do a School Outreach presentation or I could pair up with another translator to edit my division’s monthly newsletter. These opportunities to develop teamwork skills not only shape us professionally, but also display our ability to collaborate and cooperate with others.

As you see, volunteering can be a very constructive part of managing a professional image, in addition to the many other benefits it offers. You may find it helpful to keep in mind this final food for thought as you seek to make the most of your volunteer commitments and serve our community:

1. Know how to say “no.” Setting boundaries can be a challenge when we see there’s a need, but there are only so many hours in the day! There will always be good opportunities that you need to pass up, and it’s okay to say “no.”

2. Volunteering is great for balance on a résumé. There’s no shame in showcasing your volunteer activities on a résumé or LinkedIn profile. You can even ask colleagues you’ve volunteered with to be professional references if you feel they have sufficient knowledge of your work ethic and skill set.

3. Doing slipshod volunteer work is counter-productive for everyone. If you give 100% to your paid work, then give 150% to your volunteer work. Treat these commitments as seriously as you would a paid job because they matter. You never know who may be watching your efforts.

4. Volunteer commitments can be fun. Treating volunteering as drudgery will only make it more of a chore. If you see volunteer service as a hobby rather than a necessary evil and choose your commitments wisely, they can be some of the most refreshing aspects of your professional life.

5. Thank the volunteers in your life. There may not be a financial payoff, but the best compensation I can think of in exchange for volunteer work is to be appreciated and respected by peers. So, be sure to thank a volunteer!

For additional ideas on how to manage and select volunteer activities, you can listen to a free ATA webinar I presented on the subject here: http://bit.ly/ATA-webinar-volunteering. Happy volunteering!

Jamie Hartz is an ATA-certified Spanish>English translator and transcriber. She has been freelancing since 2013, specializing in legal and commercial translations. She received her MA in translation from Kent State University in May 2015. She serves as secretary of her local ATA chapter, the Delaware Valley Translators Association, and has been a member of the The Savvy Newcomer blog team since its inception in 2013. Contact: jamie@tildelanguage.com.
Translation Scams Reloaded

Scams are on the rise in online commerce. Learn about the three most common types of fraudulent schemes in the language industry, along with steps to protect against them.

Merrim-Webster defines “scam” as “an instance of the use of dishonest methods to acquire something of value.” Below you will find a summary of some of the dishonest methods that are unfortunately on the rise in the language industry and other sectors. This is a continuation and an update of two previous articles that appeared in the October 2014 edition of The ATA Chronicle and in the Spring 2017 edition of Translorial, the journal of the Northern California Translators Association (the latter co-authored with Peg Flynn).

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SCHEMES?
The following schemes are the most common in the language sector:

- Variants of the age-old Nigerian check scam, tailored to the language industry.
- Nonpayment for services rendered, possibly ordered under a false name and/or while impersonating a reputable client.
- Impersonation of reputable translators by the scammer, also known as CV theft.

I’ll summarize each of these schemes here along with tips on how to recognize them before getting defrauded. I’ll also cover new and sophisticated variants of these old schemes and the steps you can take to protect against them.

Of course, there are many other devious schemes out there, including email phishing attempts. For more information on what to watch out for, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Consumers League maintain extensive lists of the most common fraud schemes. (See sidebar on page 14.)

FAKE CHECK SCAMS

How It Works: These check scams proceed according to the following pattern. The scammer pretends to be a client in need of language services. The unsuspecting translator/interpreter sends a quote to the ostensive client, and the client accepts the terms. So far, so good, but then the trouble begins.

The fake client sends a check in advance for an amount that is quite a bit larger than the quoted price. The fake client then contacts the translator/interpreter about the error, explaining that it would be too complicated to send another check for the correct amount and asks the person being scammed to wire the overpaid amount from the first check back to them. The unsuspecting translator/interpreter wires the extra money to the fake client and never hears from them again. Several weeks later, the check bounces. To add insult to injury; not only has the translator/interpreter lost the money he or she wired to the fake client, but they are also stuck with a bank fee for the bounced check.

This scam exploits the fact that the payment processor (the payee’s bank) doesn’t verify the authenticity of the check at the time of deposit. In fact, it takes days to weeks for a check to arrive at the payer’s bank, where the check is finally cleared or rejected.

This type of scam is most often attempted by ordering translations of random texts that are sometimes pulled off the Internet. However, interpreters could be similarly defrauded if the check is sent before the alleged interpreting assignment.

How to Spot It: Most of these fake check scams are fairly easy to spot. Although the presence of any one of the following warning signs doesn’t necessarily mean that you are dealing with a scammer, a combination of these would be a strong indication that someone is trying to scam you:

- The email is sent from a free, quasi-anonymous account such as Yahoo or Gmail.
- The email is sent to you via blind carbon copy without a personal salutation or other details about the alleged project. This indicates that the
email has been sent to a large number of people simultaneously.

- The email is written in really bad English, despite the fact that the sender uses a (very generic) name indicative of a native English speaker.

- A signature and any other information that can identify the sender are missing.

Even if a potential client has no idea about the process to request language services, they usually give you a means to contact them other than their email address. Real clients also know which language they need the text translated into.

**The Latest Twist:** Since people are becoming increasingly aware of these types of fake check scams due to the aforementioned warning signs, some savvy scammers take extra steps to obfuscate their evil intentions. They attempt to impersonate a reputable person or entity by emulating the signature of that entity, complete with logo in the email message, and sometimes even set up a fake web domain from which they send the message. For example, I recently received a message that was allegedly from the editor of a reputable newspaper. However, upon closer inspection, it turned out that the message had been sent from the domain “.net” instead of the correct “.com” domain.

**How to Prevent It:** When dealing with new direct clients, I recommend asking for payment, or at least a portion of the payment, in advance via a payment method where the liquidity of the payer is verified at the time of the transaction. Payment processors such as Paypal or Stripe, bank transfers, money orders, or cashiers checks work well here. Language agencies or larger corporations will generally not agree to pay in advance. In these situations, due diligence using the online resources listed in the sidebar on this page is recommended.

**NONPAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED SCAM**

**How It Works:** The client simply gives a fake name and contact information or impersonates a reputable person or entity. This is similar to the scheme described in the previous section on the latest twist on the fake check scam. After delivery of the translation or interpreting services, the client disappears without paying or sends a fake check. The fraudsters are usually the middlemen and sell the language service to a real end-client. In this case, the translator/interpreter doesn’t lose any money, only time for services rendered.

**How to Spot It:** Dishonest people who order translation or interpreting services under a false name are hard to spot, especially if they impersonate reputable entities.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- **ATA Business Practices Listserv**

- **ATA Business Practices Resource Page**
  www.atanet.org/business_practices/index.php

- **ATA Members and Internet Scams**
  www.atanet.org/membership/internet_scams.php

- **WHOIS Lookup**
  https://whois.icann.org/en
  (This is another site to obtain information about domain registrants and owners of IP addresses. Just like Domain Dossier, the same comments regarding GDPR apply.)

- **IP Location**
  www.iplocation.net
  (An IP address location service)

- **WHERE TO REPORT SCAMS**
  Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center
  www.ic3.gov

- **National Consumers League**
  http://fraud.org

- **Federal Trade Commission**
  www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov

- **Translator Scammers Directory (For translator CV theft)**
  www.translator-scammers.com

- **IP Location**
  www.iplocation.net
  (An IP address location service)
fake contact information, a nonexistent phone number, and an address that shows cows on green pastures instead of the expected office building when you enter the address into a satellite map all point to a fraudulent scheme.

**How to Prevent It:** Again, due diligence, possibly combined with payment in advance, as mentioned earlier in the section on fake check scams, can go a long way.

### CV THEFT AND IMPERSONATION

**How It Works:** This scam has become increasingly prevalent in the past few years. The scammers take the CVs of reputable translators (or interpreters, although this is rare), edit the contact information to show their own, and send the CVs off to unsuspecting agencies or pose as translators on an online translation portal. Unsuspecting clients hire the alleged translators, who then pipe the text through a machine translation engine, take the payment, and disappear. When the clients discover that the text delivered was machine translated, they blame the real translator whose CV, and thus reputation, were stolen.

**How to Spot It:** In many instances, the translator/interpreter is unaware that their information has been stolen until after the damage is done. This is why prevention is key. The Translator Scammers Intelligence Group maintains a list of fake names along with the names of the victims whose CVs were stolen. (See sidebar on page 14.)

**The Latest Twist:** Lately, a lot of translation portals with large databases of linguists, where end-clients can order translations with only a few mouse clicks, have cropped up on the web. The portal providers take a small cut of the percentage of the project price to keep the portal running. This is not a fraudulent business model in and of itself. However, some portal providers scrape the contact information of reputable translators from public databases and add them to their own databases without their knowledge or consent while rerouting the projects elsewhere.

**How to Prevent It:** First and foremost, CVs, profiles, or résumés, and the like should never be provided in Microsoft Word or plain text format because scammers can edit these formats too easily. A password-protected PDF file, possibly with a watermark, is best, although passwords can be cracked. For information on how to create a password-protected PDF with Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word, please check out a blog post I wrote on the subject.4

Also, never post details that are too personal online or unnecessary to conduct business, such as your date of birth or social security number. Instead, use an Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, which is used to identify a business entity. You can apply for an EIN online, even as a sole proprietor.5

Finally, to monitor your online reputation, you can create a Google Alert for your name or your business name. Google will then notify you automatically whenever a new entry is added to its database of search results for the specified keyword.6

Since translation services and even certain interpreting services are mostly transacted entirely online, the language sector is particularly vulnerable to fraudulent schemes.

### “IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS.”

This old adage holds especially true in online commerce. Since translation services and even certain interpreting services are mostly transacted entirely online, the language sector is particularly vulnerable to fraudulent schemes. Yet many of these scams can be thwarted relatively easily by implementing the measures outlined in this article:

- Verify the client’s identity by checking their contact information via phone calls, satellite maps, email IP addresses, etc. (See the sidebar on page 14.)
- Examine the client’s payment practices. (See the sidebar on page 14.)

- Request payment in advance via nonreversible methods.
- Never give out too much personal information that is not needed to conduct business, such as date of birth, etc. Use an EIN instead of a social security number.
- Password-protect your CV.

### NOTES


Carola F. Berger is an ATA-certified English>German patent translator with a PhD in physics and a master’s degree in engineering physics. After being defrauded by an impersonator at the beginning of her career, she did some in-depth research on online fraud, which led to a series of blog posts and several articles in publications such as *The ATA Chronicle* and *Translorial*, the journal of the Northern California Translators Association. Contact: cberger@cfbtranslations.com.
Translation and Interpreting in Mexico: Uncharted Territory, Rich Waters

Featuring 100 pages of demographic data, earnings information, language combinations, and educational backgrounds—the 2017 Survey on Translation and Interpretation in Mexico sheds light on the fascinating depth and breadth of translation and interpreting in Mexico.

In September 2017, the first Lenguas conference was held in Mexico City. Lenguas is an international forum for interpreters and translators with the goal of bringing professionals in these two fields under one roof to discuss best practices, learn about the language services market, and receive practical training.

As a central element of the inaugural Lenguas conference, the Italia Morayta Foundation, InterpretAmerica, and the Association of Public Service and Community Interpreters and Translators (ITSPyC) published the results of a groundbreaking initiative, the 2017 Survey on Translation and Interpretation in Mexico. Featuring 100 pages of detailed information compiled from more than 1,000 translators and interpreters across Mexico—including demographic data, earnings information, language combinations, and educational backgrounds—the survey sheds light on the fascinating depth and breadth of translation and interpreting in that country.

The Mexico survey report is the result of nine months of intense work by an independent research team, garnering support from multiple institutions and industry professionals who not only helped spread the word about the survey, but also provided crucial input on its design. As the leader of the research team, I want to share some of the incredible lessons we gleaned from this maiden voyage, and the shift it caused in all of us along the way. You’ll also hear directly from key members of the team (Gonzalo Celorio Morayta, Ana Lucía López Mendoza, and Alejandra Hernández León), whose perspectives are interspersed in the sidebars throughout this article.

Fish Out of Water

On October 6, 2016, I received a call from Gonzalo Celorio Morayta, the president of the Italia Morayta Foundation, which works to professionalize and celebrate the interpreting profession. The Foundation is named after Gonzalo’s grandmother, Italia Morayta, Mexico’s first simultaneous interpreter. Gonzalo is also the director of CM Idiomas, a language services provider for heads of state and other high-profile figures whose history goes back to 1948. Gonzalo is an experienced translator and interpreter who laughs easily and speaks English with an endearing British accent as he tirelessly advocates for his colleagues and the field at large.

Gonzalo and I discussed the need for a better understanding of Mexico’s translation and interpreting professions. We wanted to know who engaged in these activities and the details of their work. Gonzalo wanted to conduct a nationwide survey to find out. The results of this unprecedented effort would then be unveiled within the framework of another first in the field: the 2017 Lenguas conference, Mexico’s inaugural nationwide conference for both translators and interpreters.

In the U.S., interpreting professionals are fortunate to have a good lay of the land thanks to InterpretAmerica’s trailblazing The Interpreting Marketplace: A Study of Interpreting in North America, carried out by Common Sense Advisory in 2010. This survey demonstrated the power of data in setting priorities, convincing stakeholders, and helping translators and interpreters make sound decisions about the future direction of the profession.

But, as Gonzalo pointed out to me, that baseline data didn’t yet exist for Mexican interpreters and translators. Without hard
data, the future of the industry in Mexico would remain subject to the quicksands of assumption, anecdote, luck, and, in some cases, special interests.

It was clear a survey was needed, but why had Gonzalo reached out to me? Perhaps it was because of my experience in several areas of the industry, including interpreter training and emerging interpreting technologies. But beyond that, the Foundation and its partners, InterpretAmerica Co-Presidents Katharine Allen and Barry Slaughter Olsen, believed an impartial outsider—someone blissfully unaware of existing factions and fault lines—would have greater success reaching the Mexican translation and interpreting community as a whole. So, I accepted Gonzalo’s offer enthusiastically and set out, determined to build a ship where all factions of the industry could feel comfortable on board.

ASSEMBLING THE CREW
Anchored by Gonzalo, Katharine, and Barry, it was time to round out the crew. Ana Lucía López Mendoza, an interpreter and researcher based in Mexico City, came on as a research assistant to provide ground support and know-how. Gibrán Mena Aguilar, a data journalist, joined to assist with the survey design, monitor for data bias, and analyze the resulting raw data.

It also became clear early on that to reach a highly under-documented sector of the industry—indigenous language translators and interpreters most often working in legal, health care, and community settings—we would also need real expertise in indigenous community outreach. For this we reached out to sociologist Alejandra Hernández León of Mexico’s recently-formed Association of Public Service and Community Interpreters and Translators (ITSpyC). Alejandra would design an outreach strategy and consultation process with indigenous communities.

BUILDING THE SHIP
We needed the survey to be relevant to both translators and interpreters who work in indigenous, foreign, and signed language combinations in varying specialties and settings—each with their own lexicons and ideas about their profession. (Despite our efforts to make the survey relevant to sign language interpreters, the response was not as enthusiastic as we had hoped.)

This resulted in a highly labor- and time-intensive survey design process. We went through several rounds of edits before we finally launched the survey in April 2017. The next step was to get the word out about the survey, which led to several interesting and unanticipated challenges.

Challenge 1—Overcoming Mistrust:
The first hurdle to overcome was mistrust. As we moved forward, the research team was immediately met with questions, such as “How can you guarantee my privacy will be protected?” or “What will the data really be used for?” The fact that the survey was anonymous, requested no identifying information, and that we sought to merely gather the data for anyone in the field to leverage for the benefit of the industry seemed to raise more concerns than it quelled.

ASSEMBLING THE CREW
Gonzalo Celorio Morayta, Research Sponsor
A little over a decade ago, at one of the first InterpretAmerica meetings, I discovered there was a translation and interpreting community out there that had been unknown to me previously. I had been living in a bubble that included only conference interpreting and literary translation.

I was struck by this larger community’s commitment and courage. I understood that their work was quite similar to the conference work with which I was familiar, but it was done without the protection of a cozy booth or aid of a computer. Not only was there a lot that I could learn from these interpreters, but, with the luxuries afforded to me, I would also have something to share.

In that moment, the dream of uniting Mexico’s disparate interlinguistic communication sub-sectors under one umbrella was born. The survey results presented at the Lenguas conference was a first step toward going beyond helping others communicate to learning to communicate amongst ourselves.

Seeing the sheer depth and breadth of data analyzed, the research team’s enthusiasm following new discoveries, the survey’s reach, and witnessing the transformation as translators and interpreters across Mexico began to recognize themselves in the findings have all been among the most moving experiences of my life.

BURSTING THE BUBBLE
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FIGHTING FOR THE LITTLE FISH
Ana Lucía López Mendoza, Research Assistant
I’ve always liked to think of myself as a communications advocate, but beyond the areas of immigration and refugees, my understanding of how to fight the battle was limited. Concepts such as indivisibility, interdependence, and demanding one’s rights were theoretical for me. However, they became real after interviewing indigenous language translators and interpreters for the survey. It was clear that the indigenous interviewees practiced these concepts daily.

In Mexico, respect for rights is not a given—even for translators and interpreters. Yet, many of those interviewed were willing to push forward with their work, often without remuneration, because of a conviction that social responsibility trumps individual well-being. This has inspired me to reflect on the role of interpreters as agents of the change we wish to see around us.
Challenge 2—Old School versus New Tech: A second challenge involved technological limitations. Limiting our efforts to an internet–based campaign and survey would almost certainly result in a respondent bias. In the capital and other major cities, translators and interpreters are well connected and face fewer barriers to online participation. However, Mexico’s politics and varied geography mean that individuals in smaller, more remote locations often have limited access to the internet. Computers and other devices are also expensive for many practitioners. The team worried that translators and interpreters working with indigenous languages would run the risk of being excluded from the survey.

To address this, we designed a system to administer the survey over the phone. Ana Luzia began recruiting a team of volunteers and, with the assistance of Alejandra and the team from ITSPyC, created a guidebook with information about the survey, team responsibilities, our confidentiality policy, and a phone script. The detailed phone script was designed to communicate the purpose of the survey in a clear manner, including its non-commercial nature, confidentiality protections, and the full set of survey questions, each one with additional notes and culturally-adapted phrasing suggestions.

Local academic institutions also pitched in by helping to recruit volunteers and hosting training. With our volunteer team in place, we needed a way—really multiple ways—to reach the indigenous constituency. Mexico has a long history of mistrust between government institutions and indigenous communities. As a result, we worked to create a communication strategy that focused on existing, trusted indigenous community institutions that embodied the principal of “free, prior, and informed consent,” and that left room for cultural norms that might differ from our own.

This is where Alejandra’s deep understanding of indigenous community relations became crucial. Armed with the online, over-the-phone, and in-person methods of responding to the survey, she launched a multi-pronged, ground-up effort that included the following: consultation and relationship-building with indigenous leaders; a subway and bus advertising campaign, procurement of indigenous translator contact information databases; and even in-person travel to key indigenous communities in the states of Tabasco and Chiapas. The entire effort was capped off with the convening of a National Indigenous Translator and Interpreter Forum to consult the community about the survey in person. After navigating these early technological challenges, the survey data started rolling in.

Challenge 3—The Ticking Clock: The National Indigenous Translators and Interpreters Forum Alejandra organized took place at the time the survey period was scheduled to end, so we elected to push back the survey’s closing date. Happily, this move allowed for more participation, but we realized that we had also put ourselves in a bind. The data needed to be analyzed, transformed into graphs, and the final report written and edited in time for the Lenguas conference, which was only nine weeks away!

Then, a week before the conference, the devastating earthquake that nearly shut down Mexico City struck. The study would have to wait. There were bigger fish to fry: missing family members, injured victims, homes in tatters, power outages. But storm-battered and sea-weary, the ship we created to convey the survey made it to port without a minute to spare.

LAND AHOOY

Finally, it was time to share with the world what Mexico’s translators and interpreters had so generously shared with us.

We had many powerful revelations to present. For example, the survey revealed that translators make more from translating than interpreters make from interpreting, but neither group is able to live exclusively from their craft. We also found that nearly 50% of indigenous language interpreters go unpaid for their work. In addition, the majority of translators who responded work in both directions in their first combination. As you can imagine, choosing which findings to highlight in our short hour was our final challenge.

On September 28, 2017, buttressed by our research advisors—Gonzalo, Katharine, and Barry—and surrounded by multiple individuals and organizations who had stuck their necks out to make it all possible, the research team took the stage and shared the survey results. Here are some of the highlights:

Language Combinations and Services

- Besides Spanish, the next most common target languages among translators are...
English, French, Náhuatl, Maya, Tseltal, and Italian (page 46). The vast majority (84%) work bi-directionally in their primary combination (page 47).

■ On the interpreting front, the most common combinations, measured in working days (20 or more days per month), are Spanish plus one of the following languages: English, Náhuatl, and Mexican Sign Language (pages 69–70).

■ Though conference interpreting may be the most prominent work setting, interpreters also work as escort interpreters and in community settings with greater frequency (page 72).

Education, Training, and Technology

■ The majority of translators and interpreters surveyed have completed higher education in some subject area. Over 50% have a bachelor’s degree, 27% a master’s degree or equivalent, and 4% have a doctorate.

■ 74% of indigenous language translators and interpreters have a bachelor’s degree or higher (page 26).

■ Over one fifth of translators are self-taught, having not participated in any translation-specific workshops, courses, or programs. However, many are formally trained in related fields such as languages or interpreting (page 63).

■ The most common types of interpreting training are courses (20+ hours), diploma programs (120+ hours), and conference workshops and presentations. A significant portion (16%) of interpreters do not have any sort of training in the field (page 81).

■ CAT tools, machine translation, and voice recorders are the most commonly used technology tools among translators of any age (pages 66–67).

■ Nearly half of the interpreters who responded state that they do not use technological tools in their work (page 84).

Income, Income Sources, and Professional Associations

■ Translators and interpreters do not live exclusively from their work in

New Certified Members

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

English into Arabic
Mahmoud Basal
Cairo, Egypt
Camila Kohen
Chesterfield, MO
Tatiana Paolucci
Jacksonville, FL
Marcela Remna
Overland Park, KS
Manuel Vazquez
Miami, FL
Silvia Xalabarde
Alicante, Spain
Graciela Zozaya
Houston, TX

Spanish into English
Lydia M. Carter
Arlington, MA
Victoria Chavez-Kruse
Huntsburg, OH
Artemis Lopez
Washington, DC
Jennifer J. Nielsen
Brighton, CO
Diana Szilard
Houston, TX
Judith Taylor
Minneapolis, MN
Elizabeth Torres
Sayreville, NJ

Swedish into English
Alice R Klingener
Leyden, MA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from page 5

Is There a Future in Freelance Translation? Let’s Talk About It! | Christelle Maginot
Thank you for this informative and well-researched article. Unfortunately, most poorly compensated professional translators wishing to enter the interpreting field are not necessarily going to be in a better position than they are now.

Parallel developments in the fields of legal, medical, and conference interpreting are also combining to drive down quality and qualifications in these areas. These developments include:

■ The steady transition from on-site interpreters to phone and video remote interpreting services in courts and hospitals.

■ The increased hiring in state and federal court systems of uncertified court interpreters as a significant cost-saving measure.

■ The preferential use of foreign-based and lower priced U.S.-based interpreters working both remotely or onsite at U.S. conferences.

■ The general uninformed state of knowledge by judges, attorneys, medical providers, and conference organizers who fail to recognize the difference in quality provided by a certified interpreter, as compared to an untrained or poorly trained bilingual.

Kathleen Morris | Chicago, IL
Translation and interpreting agencies need to arduously improve their services and address barriers to professionalization. One example of this is the lack of awareness of and respect for the profession, which leads to low rates being charged by those who are in this stage. The belief persists that speaking two languages is enough to translate. This is not the case, as translation and interpreting services are required by linguistic rights legislation, but these rights are denied. Furthermore, indigenous language translation and interpreting services are undervalued (page 89).

Lack of training programs that would allow for continued professional development: “ [...] Translation is thought of as an informal trade rather than a profession. [In my state] there is no well-known, accessible formal degree for those who are in this stage. The belief persists that speaking two languages is enough to translate” (page 90).

Lack of awareness of and respect for the profession: “Bilingual amateurs who are not trained in translation and charge low rates are saturating the market” (page 89). In response to the obstacles highlighted above, several respondents called for:

- An increased awareness of the translation and interpreting professions, including those who provide these services.
- The creation of new linguistic rights legislation for unregulated aspects of the profession and the enforcement of existing regulations.
- Expanded online and in-person training options that focus on more language combinations, specialties, and modalities, and that ideally result in recognized certification (pages 93–94).

In spite of the challenges to the profession, many respondents expressed personal and professional satisfaction, as evident in the following comments: “It’s hard work, but people are very grateful. Many say: ‘I don’t know what I would have done without your help! The physician wouldn’t have seen me.’” (page 94)

SHINING A LIGHT ON HIDDEN CORNERS

Boarding the plane back to Brazil, with the liminescent and vibrant Mexico City at my back, I reflected on what had been accomplished. By translators and interpreters having shared their experiences, we had managed to shine light on previously hidden corners of our industry. At the end of the day, we’re all laboring arduously to improve this complex and noble act we call communication. The 2017 Survey on Translation and Interpretation in Mexico gives us the concrete and powerful information needed to do so. The next Lenguas conference in January 2019 will be one place to make good use of it. 

Both the executive summary (English/Spanish) and the full report (Spanish) are available for free download.

(Acknowledgement: Thanks to Gonzalo Celorio Morayta, Ana Lucia Lopez Mendoza, and Alejandra Hernandez Leon for their contributions to this article, and to editors Katharine Allen and Lauren Stephenson.)

NOTES

2. For more information on Italia Morayta, please see http://italiamorayta.org/en/italia-morayta.

Laura Vaughn Holcomb has been a health care interpreter and conference interpreter for nearly a decade. An interpreter trainer, curriculum developer, remote interpreting/training consultant, and English for interpreters coach, she has a master’s degree in conference interpreting from Glendon College. She is an adjunct professor of the Virtual Healthcare Interpreting Practicum at Glendon, and launched CoLAB Toronto, a peer-driven conference interpreting practice intensive. In 2017, she directed Mexico’s first nationwide survey of translation and interpreting professionals on behalf of the Italia Morayta Foundation and InterpretAmerica. Contact: laura@lauraholcomb.com.
Going Once, Going Twice, Sold! Is Your Translation Business Sellable?

The theoretical ability to sell one’s business is actually a reflection of its value to others. Here’s how translators can add tangible value to their services to make their business appealing to a potential buyer.

Is my translation business sellable? Whether or not you have plans to sell your business in the near future, this question is very important and relevant, and not just to those on the verge of retirement. The theoretical ability to sell one’s business is actually a reflection of its value to others. Therefore, evaluating what others value about the business will give you a better idea of its potential selling points and the areas that need improvement.

Taking on the Elephant in the Room

Many translators have a hard time separating themselves from the business they created. “I’m my company and my company is me,” some would say. For those lucky enough, the day will come to set down the keyboard and retire. At this point, if the business and the translator are inseparable, the business may not be very valuable to others. If clients are only interested in working with you, then there is no way to continue providing the same service with new ownership. If clients are only interested in working with you, then there is no way to continue providing the same service with new ownership.

But are we letting go too easily? Is there a way to build a business so that its value is not dependent on the person running it? Are our business practices and working methods unique, and could they conceivably be used by someone else? Is it easy for someone to see the value of what we’ve created and to build upon it so the business continues to grow? Taking the time to think about these questions can help reframe our understanding of translation practices, the role translators play in them, and their value to others. By exploring how we create value beyond ourselves, we can take on the elephant in the room and learn how to build our own businesses in a way that can hold value to a potential buyer. The first step is to think practically about potential buyers.

If clients are only interested in working with you, then there is no way to continue providing the same service with new ownership.

Who Would Want to Buy My Business?

The key to answering this question is to identify potential “interested parties” and figure out what value your business could provide them. If you can approach an interested party with potential for growth, they may consider buying your company instead of trying to grow their own organically. Here are a few suggestions for where to start your search.

Fellow Translators: If you have trusted colleagues who specialize in fields similar to yours, it might be worthwhile speaking to them to see if they have any interest in expanding their business through buying yours.

Boutique Translation Companies: Smaller companies who are looking to expand in your language set or field of specialization.

Main/Secondary Beneficiaries: Consider interested parties in your industry who may not currently focus on translation or editing, but may want to add such services.
Anyone who is interested in adding value to their business can benefit from evaluating the business in terms of its value to others to get a sense of the areas that need improvement.

Now that you have a few ideas for who might want to buy your business, you need to analyze the business critically and think about what can be done to make it relevant and attractive to a potential buyer. The more confidently you can address the following issues, the more value you can add and the more attractive the business will look to a potential buyer.

8 STEPS TO ADD VALUE BY IMPROVING YOUR BUSINESS

1 Ironclad Numbers—Know Your Accounting: All stable businesses start with the most tedious part of the job—finances. Thoughts of selling or even evaluating a business can’t start until you audit the numbers and make sure they are defendable. Do you know what your profit/loss statement was last month? Do you have a separate bank account for your business? Do you know the current balance in your account? If you’re serious about evaluating the business, it’s worth considering hiring a professional accounting or auditing firm to complete a review of your finances and give you tips for how to improve your financial standing.

2 Mile 1, Not Mile 26—What Can Your Business Become? It can be tempting to look back at what you’ve accomplished over the years and try to estimate the value of the business based on that success. However, it’s much more critical to get into the mindset of a buyer and conduct a thorough analysis to see how feasible it would be for someone to take what you’ve created and potentially grow the business to something even greater than it is today. Remember, you may be at mile 26 of your marathon, but your buyer is only at mile one and needs to see what could be coming ahead. Can your model find success in a different market, specialty, or language set? Do you have a unique work process that differentiates you from others that would be difficult to replicate?

Another question worth considering is whether you can cross-sell new services to your clients in addition to your core business. For example, in the world of academia, translators can offer formatting, indexing, and other services that are important to their clients. Your business may have the potential to open up new channels for your buyer that they didn’t have before (be it new languages, geographic reach, cultural understanding, or otherwise). You need to make it easy for others to see this potential.

3 The Golden Rule of Seesaws—Diversify Your Client Base: One question every potential buyer will want answered is how much of the business is dependent on a single client. Think about what would happen if your biggest client left tomorrow. If one client accounts for more than 25% of your work, that can be a big liability and create an imbalance that presents greater risk to a potential buyer. A business that profits $100,000 and has 100 clients can actually be more valuable than a business that profits $125,000 and has five clients. The same rule applies for the services we pay for. It’s important not to be overly reliant on one employee, freelancer, or service provider. Think about a backup plan for every system you have in place and how complex it would be to switch providers or replace a departing employee. In addition, consider how complicated it would be for someone else to come in and implement a change or tweak your workflow process without your help.

4 Reverse the Rollercoaster—Improve Cash Flow Processes: Cash flow comes down to the simple question of how quickly you’re paid for your work relative to when you need to pay your expenses. If you pay suppliers at the end of the month but only collect what you’re owed after 60 days, you’ll run out of money. Cash flow issues are one of the most common reasons businesses fail. When a potential buyer comes to check out the business, the first thing they’ll want to know is the payment terms you have in place for clients and suppliers. This is why agencies often have long payment terms. While I’m not suggesting adopting agency payment terms with your suppliers, it may be worth considering asking clients for (at least partial) payment up front so that you can continue to pay your suppliers on time while not being crippled by cash flow issues. One way to encourage clients to pay in advance is to incentivize early payment.
When Did You Drink Your Last Coke? Repeat Business is Critical: The average citizen of the world consumes a Coca-Cola product once every four days. One of the secrets of the Coca-Cola company’s success is its ability to attract repeat customers. If you want to succeed in selling your business, your clients must be on board, which requires their trust and loyalty. How often do your clients return with new assignments? What percentage of your clients are repeat and what percentage are new? How big are the projects from returning clients? In other words, how loyal are clients to you and your brand? Loyal clients can also help you gain “social proof,” meaning that your clients talk positively about you online and your positive reputation creates positive word of mouth referrals (the best kind!).

Be a Fruit Loop in a Bowl of Cheerios—Stand Out from the Competition: The more specialized you are and the more you stand out among peers and competitors, the more value is created. Review your marketing materials, such as your website or newsletters. What makes you different? Is this difference clearly visible to the average visitor? Does anyone care deeply about the services you provide?

One way to differentiate yourself and encourage loyalty is by providing clients with content that is thought provoking. Another way to set yourself apart is to take a positive attitude when others are defeatist. If the word on the street is how Google Translate is taking business away from translators, be the translator that demonstrates how your translations are inherently superior to anything a machine can produce.

The Disney Principle—Customer Satisfaction: You’ve likely been asked to fill out a customer satisfaction survey for some product or service. There’s one simple question that all major companies, including Disney, Apple, Google, and Facebook, ask: “How likely are you to recommend this service to a friend?” The collected answers to this question are known as the “net promoter score.” True satisfaction is reflected by people willing to personally go out on a limb and recommend your services to others.

This is why you need to start tracking your success with clients. It’s important that this evidence be more than anecdotal and can be backed up by data. Celebrating success and learning from critique is the only way businesses can grow. That may mean spending more time making sure your current clients are happy than on recruiting new ones. If you can demonstrate a high level of customer satisfaction, the value of the business can skyrocket.

Letting Go—How Dependent Is the Company on You? It’s important to document the processes used in your business. While no one translates the same way, there are concrete and repeatable actions that can be modelled and copied by others. Think about what processes can be automated to make things easier for someone else. For example, if you’ve created glossaries or termbases, these may be able to give your buyer a step up. Selling your business also requires the humility to say that there might be someone else in the world who can translate materials in your niche at a high level.

If you want to succeed in selling your business, your clients must be on board, which requires their trust and loyalty.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?
Selling a translation business isn’t a very common practice and comes with significant obstacles. However, by improving the value of your business while still working, you can create a system that’s efficient and sellable. You’ll also have a better chance of passing the business on to someone else when the time is right. This process requires reflection, honesty, and even the fortitude to let go. Parting with a business can be difficult and painful, but it can also be an important step. Beyond the financial considerations, it’s important to remember that you’ve created a legacy. Therefore, it’s important to take steps now to ensure that others will value what you’ve created and want to continue developing the business after you’ve moved on. What do you want the legacy of your business to be?

NOTES
1. This article is based on a presentation given at the 2017 ATA Annual Conference in Washington, DC. You can find a recording of the full presentation here: http://bit.ly/Staiman-ATA58.
2. Davies, Stuart. “Small Business Growth through Acquisitions,” http://bit.ly/Stuart-acquisitions. One example is academic publishers who have added language services to their portfolio to expand the range of services they offer their clientele.
Translating Diagnostic Imaging

The following explains just two of many DI modalities: radiography and computed axial tomography.

Diagnostic imaging (DI) is the process of generating a visual representation of the inside of the body for medical diagnosis and treatment. Many DI modalities exist—e.g., radiography, computed axial tomography (CAT or CT) scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, and scintigraphy—and each has particular applications to which it is best suited. DI examinations of patients are generally interpreted by physicians called radiologists, who adhere to a specific structural formula and specialized vocabulary to report their findings. These reports are often extremely concise and dense, limiting the contextual clues translators often rely upon. Translating these reports can be a challenging but rewarding aspect of medical translation for which the translator must master the technical basics of the diagnostic imaging modality, the report structure, and the specialized source and target vocabulary.

The following explains just two of many DI modalities: radiography and computed axial tomography. It provides some terminology commonly found in DI reports and shares French>English translation examples from actual DI reports to illustrate some of the challenges and solutions to translating these accurately. Although the examples are language-specific, the information presented is useful to others considering work in this area.

**RADIOGRAPHY**

Radiography involves directing certain wavelengths of radiation through a particular part of the body. Depending on their density, body tissues absorb or attenuate the radiation to varying degrees. The information produced in this process is then collected to form an image of the body part, called a radiograph or, more colloquially, an X-ray. Radiography is one of the least expensive and most widely available diagnostic imaging modalities. It is often available onsite in doctors’ offices.

Radiography is best used to detect bone lesions, such as simple fractures (those consisting of only two bone fragments), masses, or infections, as well as lesions of the thorax, such as pneumonia, or air or fluid in the thoracic cavity. Radiology is also used for screening purposes, such as mammograms for breast cancer. Radiography, however, is not a particularly sensitive DI modality, so it is not as well-suited for detecting very subtle lesions (such as very small lung metastases) or imaging complex fractures (those consisting of more than two bone fragments). It also does not provide good contrast between tissues that differ only slightly in density, such as the gray and white matter of the brain (MRI and CT are superior DI approaches for this).

Areas of interest on radiographs are described in terms of radio-opacity and radiolucency, depending on how white or black they look. Radio-opaque designates areas that appear white, and radiolucent areas that are black. In a normal thoracic radiograph, the lungs appear radiolucent and the bone is radio-opaque. Any metal on the radiograph (e.g., a directional marker or an implant) appears bright white, as metal is even more radio-opaque than bone. The soft tissues (e.g., the heart and diaphragm) appear as shades of gray, falling along a spectrum between these two poles. Thus, soft tissue may be described as more radiolucent than bone, but more radio-opaque than the lungs.

**TRANSLATION CHALLENGES**

Translating French DI imaging involves many challenges, but a primary one is the lack of one-to-one correspondence between French and English terms and acronyms. For example, thoracic radiographs are often generically called “chest X-rays” in English, but in French the same imaging examination can have several names: radio du poumon (chest X-ray), radiographie poumon (lung radiograph), radiographie thorax (thoracic radiograph), radio thorax.
Radiography is one of the least expensive and most widely available diagnostic imaging modalities.

**COMPUTED AXIAL TOMOGRAPHY (CAT)**
A second significant diagnostic imaging modality is computed axial tomography (CAT or CT). A CAT scan is essentially an expanded radiograph that involves collecting a large number of radiographic cross-sections using a fan-shaped beam of radiation. These are then integrated into one three-dimensional image. A useful analogy is to think of the individual cross-sections as slices of bread and the full CAT scan as a “loaf” comprising these slices. With computers, the CAT scan data can be processed and modified to provide different perspectives of the body part(s) being examined and to highlight various features that yield the most information to radiologists and clinicians.

CAT is based on radiography, but it involves a much higher dose of radiation to the patient than a plain X-ray and is a much more specialized and expensive test. Thus, it is unlikely to be a primary care doctor’s first-line diagnostic tool, but it is tremendously informative in the appropriate cases. CAT scans are best used for imaging brain lesions, such as tumors or hemorrhages, complicated or suble fractures (e.g., of the hip), and small metastases (e.g., lung metastases of bone cancer).

Areas of interest on CAT scans are described along a spectrum similar to that in radiography. However, the terms utilized in CAT scans are hyperdense and hypodense. Areas that appear whiter are called hyperdense and those appearing blacker are called hypodense. For instance, on a cerebral CAT scan, blood appears whiter, or hypodense, relative to the surrounding brain tissue. Images containing these hyperdense areas might suggest cerebral hemorrhages and illustrate the location and extent of such lesions.

**TRANSLATION CHALLENGES**
As we saw in radiography, CAT scans also have multiple synonyms in French—e.g., un scanner (CT scan), une tomodensitométrie (TDM), un TAC scan (CAT scan), un CAT/CT scan (TDM/CT scan), and une tomodensitométrie (TDM) (CT scan)—all of which correspond to the standard English “CAT scan” or “CT scan.” Note this list of French terms contains the English acronym CAT, a French version TAC, and the uniquely French acronym TDM. When translating DI reports, the number one rule is not to make assumptions. Specifically, the translator should expand all source acronyms, assess their meaning, and then determine if an equivalent exists in the target language.

In the above example, one cannot simply refer to a “TDM” in the English translation because this acronym stands for a unique French term (*une tomodensitométrie*) that has no literal equivalent in English. This illustrates the importance of researching the correct terms in the source and target languages and avoiding the literal translation or direct transfer of acronyms from the source to the target.

Another example involves the structure of DI reports. These are typically divided into predictable sections in French and English: 1) *Renseignements cliniques* (History), 2) *Technique* (Technique), 3) *Résultats* (Findings), and 4) *Conclusion* (Impression). A very common translation error is to translate *Résultats* (Results) as “Results” and *Conclusion* (Conclusion) as “Conclusion.” While the reader would still certainly understand the meaning, these are not the standard English medical terms, meaning that the target would read as a “translation” rather than as a transparent and authentic text in its own right. In medical translation, it is essential to use the correct medical terms—ideally, the one doctors use, because doctors are your target audience—not merely a translation that is comprehensible but clearly not proper medical terminology.

Similarly, difficulties often arise when translating normal findings between French and English. French reports often describe findings as *sans particularité* (without special findings), *sans anomalie* (without abnormalities), *pas d’anomalie* (no abnormalities), or *pas d’anomalie particulière* (no special abnormalities). In English, these are sometimes mistranslated literally, such as “without particularity” or “no anomalies.” Again, while the meaning would be understood, these would be considered poor translations because they do not reflect the language used by native...
A STEEP LEARNING CURVE WITH REWARDS

Radiography and CAT are common DI modalities, each with its own specialized vocabulary. Translators must invest time and effort in researching the correct terms for image description (i.e., “radiolucent/radio-opaque” versus “hyperdense/hypodense”). By building an understanding of the technical basics and differences between modalities, translators will have a better command of the terminology and enhance translation quality. While an initially steep learning curve is involved in these documents, translators should strive to do the extra research on the procedure and terminology in context. In other words, never make any assumptions regarding terms or acronyms, even if the cognate “seems” to be right. While translating these reports can be challenging, this is a potentially lucrative area of specialized medical translation and one with a relatively limited range of terminology, which means the investment of time and research can reap tangible rewards.

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Lori Newman is a freelance Chinese, French, and Spanish >English translator, editor, and veterinarian based near Boston. She specializes in veterinary and human medical translation and editing. She recently translated four veterinary clinical guides from Spanish into English for publication. She has a DVM from Tufts University, an MA in linguistics from the University of California, San Diego, and a BS in biochemistry from Brown University. Contact: lori@newmantranslations.com.
When Should We Apply Extra Charges to Translation Projects?

For some, the answer is obvious. For others, it’s not that easy. I personally think that it’s a case-by-case decision that is not only dependent upon you, but also on the client and the specific project. So, let’s try to analyze this sensitive issue.

People usually believe that extra charges should apply for overtime hours, rush deliveries, or complex jobs. I don’t think these concepts mean the same thing to each of us. Let’s explore these three points.

WHAT ARE OVERTIME HOURS?

I tend to consider that freelancers don’t really do “overtime hours.” They sometimes work more than they had planned or would like. But I always feel it’s a bit strange to talk about “overtime hours” for professionals who are supposed to work “whenever they want.” That being said, should we consider that we’re entering into the “extra working hours” area if we work over eight hours per day? In this case, what about the freelancers who decided to work six hours per day or ten? What about working in the evening? Should this be considered overtime? When I was working as a freelance reviser, I occasionally enjoyed shopping during the day and checking translations in the evening. I never considered I was working overtime, and I was happy to accept some interesting assignments arriving at the end of the day. I sometimes even enjoyed revising at night. Nevertheless, 15 years later, I wouldn’t do this anymore and I might consider asking to be paid more if I had to be at my desk after seven at night.

We could probably say that we could charge more for working hours that fall outside our own defined professional time frame. However, is this really linked to the client asking for the job? If the client is based in the same time zone as yours and requests a six-hour job at 5 p.m., he could reasonably understand that you’ll have to work out of your standard working time, and, therefore, agree to compensate you for this by paying you more. Now, what if you decide to travel while continuing to translate and receive a job at 5 p.m. local time while it’s still 10 a.m. for the client? They might not understand why you want to bill them more.

Your additional working hours might not be linked to a specific client. If you accept too many jobs from several clients and end up needing to work 12 hours a day to deliver them all, should you consider charging some of those clients more? Probably not. Or maybe yes if you warned them that you were already overloaded.

The same question occurs for weekends. Is it really normal to charge the same rates for the weekend? Most clients will agree to pay more if they send a request on a Friday evening asking for delivery on Monday morning. However, if you decide to work on the weekend so you can enjoy some days off during the week or to compensate for a lack of work the month before, you shouldn’t charge your client more. Some freelancers might even inform their clients that they don’t work on Mondays and Tuesdays but are generally available on the weekends, so Saturdays and Sundays are considered “normal” working days.

You’ll also have to make another decision. If extra charges can be applied, how much more will you charge—10%, 50%, or perhaps even 100% more? Will it be the same increase across the board or will it be higher for nonregular clients? Would you charge more regardless of project volume? Will the surcharge apply only to one part of the project? Many factors can influence your decision.

WHAT IS A RUSH DELIVERY?

Whether a deadline is tight or not depends on your perspective. Personally, I would consider a request to deliver a translation of 250 new words within one hour a rush assignment. Having to deliver the same job within one day would be just fine, however. But of course, sending back a translation of 2,500 words eight hours after the initial request might also be regarded as an urgent job.

The overall schedule should also be considered when the volume is quite large. For instance, it might be acceptable to handle 12,500 new words in five days, but it will definitely turn into a rush job if you have to deliver the same volume within four, or worse, three days, especially if it all has to be checked by a reviser within the same time frame. The only solution in that situation might be to ask a second translator for help.

Should all those cases entail extra charges? Probably. Or maybe not always. If you’re fully available and happy to get some work, you might decide to keep your regular rates. On the contrary, if you have to stop working on some jobs to take on those new ones, or work quicker to squeeze them in, not to mention...
WHEN SHOULD WE APPLY EXTRA CHARGES TO TRANSLATION PROJECTS?

Continued

paying someone to help you, you might charge rush rates.

The same question arises again. How much more? Is it reasonable to charge an extra 25% for translating 2,500 words within a day without any client pre-announcement? Would you charge 100% more if you have to put everything on hold and jump on 250 urgent words to be delivered ASAP? Once again, all this will be a case-by-case decision, and for the same client you might charge 50% more for a project once and drop rush fees one month later for the same request.

WHAT IS A COMPLEX JOB?

For some translators, dealing with software interface localization is very complex, while others find it a lot of fun. If I had to translate medical texts, I would find this highly complex, while I really enjoy working on marketing texts in the information technology sector. Obviously, the complexity of a job might depend on our own experience. Does this mean we can charge more when we’re not used to a sector? Probably not. Experience in a certain domain can be acquired, but the clients shouldn’t be the ones paying for this, except if they really insist on hiring you for the job.

The complexity of the format for some jobs might justify higher rates. For instance, translating application strings means working out of context, most of the time using specific software or finding your way through files full of codes, which takes more time than translating complete sentences in a simple document. Therefore, it’s logical to charge more, either raising your word rate or adding an extra percentage to the final price. This would also be true for some projects with specific requirements, like limiting the length of the target sentences, adapting keyword lists for websites, and respecting time codes for video scripts. Extra charges could indeed cover the additional effort involved in complying with these specifications.

WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU—JUST BE CLEAR

Some freelancers prefer to avoid extra charges for their regular clients or when they’re approached by new clients with high potential. They might occasionally even offer their services for a small rush job as a favor for a client who is really desperate. Others will charge more for rush jobs regardless of the client, perhaps because they hate working fast or don’t want to let their clients get into the habit of always asking for rush jobs. They might also consider that some project requests are too risky in terms of quality, which could then jeopardize their reputation.

In the end, there is no universal rule. Everyone will determine whether to apply extra charges to their translation jobs and how much to request. Whatever works. My only advice would be to make it clear to your clients from the beginning of the relationship. Don’t hesitate to include a section on extra charges in your price grid or contract. Make sure you state what you mean by overtime hours, how you define urgent deliveries, and which additional percentage(s) will apply. Also include your range of rates for various types of projects, adding some explanations if needed.

Who knows? Maybe your clients will understand your priorities and will try to avoid requesting “urgent” translations at the last minute. ♦

Nancy Matis has been involved in the translation business for more than 20 years, working as a translator, reviser, technical specialist, project manager, and teacher, among other roles. After earning degrees in translation and social and economic sciences, she worked for an international language services firm for several years. She currently manages her own company based in Belgium, specializing in localization, translation project management, consulting, and training. She also teaches translation project management at Université Lille 3 (France), KU Leuven (Belgium), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), and through webinars. Besides publishing articles on project management and the importance of teaching this subject to future translators, she has also written about terminology management in projects and quality assurance in translation (www.translation-project-management.com). She is the author of How to Manage Your Translation Projects, which is available on her website. Contact: nancy@nmatis.be.
April is always a busy time for ATA’s Certification Program. This is when the Certification Committee holds its meeting to coincide with the Annual Language Chairs meeting. (Each exam language combination has a language chair administering passage selection and grading. ATA currently offers testing in 30 language combinations.) This year, the Certification Committee and more than 50 graders convened in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 13–15. Here are some highlights of what was discussed and decided:

FBI Guest Speakers: The assembled language chairs and other graders were treated to a fascinating and stimulating presentation by Maria Manfre and Mahonri Manjarrez from the FBI’s Division of Language Testing and Assessment. Their talk focused on the criteria for the FBI’s translation testing, specifically the skill level descriptors employed for language assessment. Participants had plenty of opportunities to consider differences and similarities between that system and ATA’s approach. We hope that further cross-fertilization between ATA and other organizations will take place in the future.

Feedback Matrix: One of the most frequent complaints about the certification exam is that candidates who fail have no way of knowing “what they did wrong.” (Those who take the practice test before the exam—something that is strongly recommended—do receive such feedback.) To address this issue, the Certification Program is considering giving candidates who fail a feedback chart showing the broad areas in which they did well, or not so well. During the language chairs meeting, graders applied the proposed model to actual former exams to see how well it served the intended purpose. Discussion was lively and further work on this option lies ahead.

Regional Candidate Preparation Sessions: Building on the success of the Certification Preparation Workshop held in Boston in January, ATA hopes to replicate the concept, which is to coach candidates on exam strategies using past passages, showing examples of errors, and analyzing them as a group. Additional sessions might be offered in Texas and in the Chicago area later this year, and possibly in North Carolina in early 2019. The Certification Committee is very attuned to the strong demand for more resources to help candidates prepare for the exam in various formats.

YouTube Videos: Be on the lookout for new offerings on ATA’s YouTube channel relating to certification. The plan is to produce a suite of short videos (5–10 minutes each) highlighting various aspects of the Certification Program.

Continuing Education Points: The continuing education (CE) requirement for maintaining certification has existed for over 10 years. While the system has been tweaked occasionally, the Certification Committee has concluded that an in-depth analysis of the CE system is overdue. A task force has been formed specifically to consider whether the current opportunities for earning CE points are reasonable and equitable, and whether other activities should be added to the approved list for earning CE points.

Automation: On the heels of the successful introduction of the computerized exam, ATA is looking at various options for further automating certification processes, both in terms of workflows at ATA Headquarters and grading activities. Savings on overhead costs could significantly narrow the gap between the costs associated with the Certification Program and revenues.

Look for more updates from ATA’s Certification Program in future issues of The ATA Chronicle!

NOTES
2 You can find ATA’s YouTube channel at http://bit.ly/ChannelATA.

David Stephenson is the chair of ATA’s Certification Committee. An ATA-certified German>English, Dutch>English, and Croatian>English translator, he has been an independent translator for over 30 years, specializing in civil litigation and creative nonfiction. Contact: david@stephensontranslations.com.
Translation Commons: A Community for Language Professionals

Translation Commons is a nonprofit, volunteer-based online community designed to facilitate collaboration among diverse sectors and stakeholders of the language industry and encourage transparency, trust, and free knowledge sharing. It was established with the idea that translated data and memories truly belong to the translators who create them and that they should be the ones to benefit from their work. By offering free access to open source tools and other resources, Translation Commons facilitates community-driven projects, aims to help empower linguists, and allows the sharing of educational and language assets.

A BRIEF HISTORY
Translation Commons didn’t happen in a vacuum. I first heard the catch phrase “collaborative commons” in 2014, and the concept of collaboration within the language community struck a very deep chord. How could that become a reality and how would everyone benefit? Would the platform for this collaboration offer collective translation memories and data, or perhaps merely serve as a means of talking to each other? Maybe it could serve both functions?

I discussed the idea at many conferences and networking events with language professionals, mostly in Silicon Valley, but I also had many online conversations through various LinkedIn groups. In December 2014, I created a LinkedIn group to determine the interest level for an online community serving all language professionals. I was very surprised by the positive response: just 20 days after starting the LinkedIn group, there were already 1,000 members. I felt that as far as feasibility studies go, this was a runaway success and demonstrated that there was a need for such a community waiting to be fulfilled.

I’ve always been in the language business with my husband, so after just a brief discussion we were both committed to take Translation Commons to the next level. We started a corporation and applied for nonprofit status. A few months later, to our surprise, the IRS not only granted us nonprofit status, but also determined that we could be categorized as a public charity benefiting the larger community, not just our linguistic members.

After many discussions, we managed to pin down and crystalize our objectives. In a nutshell, Translation Commons is concerned with helping all language professionals achieve due recognition for their work. More specifically, Translation Commons’ vision is to help the language industry by building an infrastructure to:

- Help our language students by bridging the gap between academia and industry.
- Facilitate collaboration and mentoring.
- Organize language resources from around the world.
- Grow the visibility and importance of our community and gain recognition.

DESIGNING THE PLATFORM
Our first task was to create an advisory board consisting of high-profile professionals from many diverse sectors who could represent their interests and guide the community. We’ve been able to assemble an amazing group that’s still growing.

The next step was to move on from LinkedIn and start building our own online platform. Thankfully, we teamed up with Prompsit, an amazing engineering company in Spain that understood and shared our vision. We’ve been working with them for nearly two years now and have managed to expand the offerings on the website.

I would like to clarify that building such a platform is a vast undertaking. Although we now have a fully functional website, there’s still a lot to do. So far, the site architecture consists of Linux and Windows servers, 10 language applications (both proprietary and open source), docker containers (allowing applications to run virtually anywhere), MySQL, wikis, application programming interfaces, G Suite apps, and single sign-on integration.

To address all the issues in our mission, we’ve divided the Translation Commons online platform into three modules: Translate, Share, and Learn.

Translate: The Translate module offers translation tools and applications, both open source and proprietary, most of them on our servers with a few cloud applications integrated with our single sign-on integration. The goal is to create a seamless platform with all available applications. This is an extremely important endeavor as it helps students and those beginning their professional careers familiarize themselves with tools that they might not normally be able to access. We’ve found that quite a few of our members who are recent graduates are unfamiliar with the variety of tools available to help them work more effectively. By offering open source tools and free trials to proprietary applications, we hope to increase their skill set and knowledge of technology.

Share: The Share module is the main portal for all community sharing activities, including think tanks, language industry initiatives, group discussions, and working groups. This is also where any member of the community can start a new project or group and ask people to join. Because we know how difficult it is for small project groups to develop an online platform for collaboration, we offer them
By offering open source tools and free trials to proprietary applications, we hope to help everyone increase their skill set and knowledge of technology.

The tools to do exactly that: a website, mailing list, calendar, task page, and a drive and document uploader to gather their volunteers and work effectively. We also offer members the entire Google G Suite, which was donated to Translation Commons due to its nonprofit status. Currently, there are around 60 apps available to all members.

**Learn:** The Learn module offers a Learning Center, tutorials, skill development programs, online courses, and group webinars. Links to our free resources (both online and offline) are available in the Translation Hub. These resources include terminology databases and glossaries. Of course, this is a work in progress and we ask for everybody's help to upload links to any free online resources to which they have access (e.g., tips, insights, and guides). We’re also talking with proprietary automation toolmakers that offer free trials and asking them to add their links in the Translation Hub. Finally, we’ve inherited and are hosting the eCoLo Project (electronic content localization), which provides useful training materials for both students and teachers to help improve skills in different areas of computer-assisted translation (e.g., translation memory, software localization, project management, and terminology). You'll also find multilingual material, training kits, training scenarios, and full courses on various translation and localization techniques.

**WORKING GROUPS**
The working groups have been created from within the community. We call our groups Think Tanks because their mission is to identify areas that need improvement and the gaps that need to be filled.

**Mentoring:** This was the first Think Tank to emerge from the original LinkedIn group. There are some very good mentoring programs available through associations and other organizations in the U.S. and Europe (including ATA’s program) that have managed to capture the essence of mentoring and have a great group of people managing them. However, our mentoring group conducted a global survey and found that many of the freelance translators who responded were unaware of existing mentoring programs or didn’t have a clear understanding of how to get involved. Respondents also stated that expectations and responsibilities are issues of concern when agreeing on mentoring on a one-on-one basis. After analyzing the survey results, the mentoring group decided to create guidelines for freelance mentors who wish to take on freelance mentees. Under the guidance of Nancy Matis, an experienced project manager and teacher, we now have a thriving group that has written an extensive document, “Mentoring Guidelines for Freelancers,” which is currently available for download from the Translation Commons website. The group is also creating a list of mentoring programs so that graduates have somewhere to start their search for mentors.

**Technology:** The Technology Think Tank is an integral part of Translation Commons. Our commitment to open source resources allows us to make language and the work of translators a priority. Led by Mikel Forcada, a professor of computer science in Alicante, Spain, and with representatives from other translation platforms that include Apertium, Moses, Omega T, Mojito, Okapi, and Translate5, the goal is to catalogue all language-related open source applications and facilitate their adoption.

**Interpreting:** The Interpreting Think Tank is led by Barbara Werdertisch and ATA Member Arturo Bobea, who have created a very active LinkedIn group. They conducted a survey on interpreters’ knowledge and use of technology and are currently preparing the results. Their reports on various technology providers and new interpreting delivery platforms are also available on the Translation Commons website.

In addition to the working groups, we also host and facilitate volunteer groups that any member can create. Under the expert guidance of Gabriella Laszlo, who worked on Google’s Localization Operations and who now designs backend workflows for Translation Commons, we’re able to offer collaborative volunteer initiatives related to language.

**VOLUNTEERS**
Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the Translation Commons community.

Their passion for language and expertise in technology are the cornerstones of our initiatives. Their commitment and clear vision of the roadmap that our industry needs to follow are a testament to the merit of a united global language community.

We invite everyone to join and register at www.translationcommons.org and to participate in the LinkedIn groups. Do you have an idea that would benefit the community? Do you want to become a mentor to the next generation of language professionals? Do you want to share your expertise, links, material, tutorials, or articles? Are you part of a small initiative and need more exposure? Then please share your knowledge with all of us!

Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzsche at jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
Join us in the BIG EASY for even BIGGER OPPORTUNITIES

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