Helping Members through Difficult Times

As I write this, we’re about two months into the coronavirus pandemic in the United States. According to at least one model, the situation is showing signs of improvement, but will not approach normal until the beginning of June. Whatever the timeline, I have faith that we will persevere and survive this crisis.

The economic impact of the pandemic has affected all our members. Many conference interpreters have seen their business shut down entirely. Many other interpreters have also seen a severe reduction in their work volume, while the assignments that remain are switching over to remote interpreting. Our interpreter members are thus grappling with reduced volume and having to switch to new modes of providing their services. The impact on translators has been more varied. While some have reported a massive decline in work, others have not yet seen a change, while still others have reported an increase in projects related to the coronavirus.

However you may have been impacted by this crisis, ATA is here to help.

The ATA website redesign—a massive project involving every single ATA committee and division and covering thousands of webpages—is now in its final stages. We hope to have a launch date within the next several weeks.

At the same time, the staff has also been putting in a massive effort on the new Association Management Software (AMS) system. This AMS software will replace our current database with state-of-the-art technology that will increase efficiency in many work processes while improving communication with members. This project is even more extensive than the website revamp as it involves every single work procedure and process at Headquarters.

So, I would encourage you to take a moment to send a brief email to ata@atanet.org saying thanks to Walter, Roshan, Mary, Kirk, Caron, Jamie, Cathy, Adrian, Jeff, Trish, and Teresa.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

The Advocacy Committee (formerly the Government Relations Committee) has also


ATA WEBSITE AND AMS

Speaking of Headquarters, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire staff for their hard work and dedication during this crisis. They are the people who make these webinars and other offerings available to you, who are constantly updating the website with announcements and news that you need during this critical time, or answering your emails and phone calls, all while dealing with their own personal challenges caused by the pandemic. And even though the entire staff is working remotely, which brings its own set of challenges, not only are they successfully meeting the normal day-to-day work requirements, they’re also meeting the additional requirements imposed on them by the pandemic while continuing their work on two very major projects.

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FEATURES

8 ATA Members and the CARES Act
The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or the “CARES Act,” provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Here’s a summary of the provisions that are pertinent to ATA members.

10 ATA’s Statement on California Senate Bill 900 Amending AB 5
An amendment to AB 5 has been introduced to the California Legislature. While SB 900 is an improvement on the situation under AB 5, ATA believes there are several issues that should be addressed and resolved before ATA can fully support the bill.

12 InterpretAmerica 2020: A Timely Response to an Unprecedented Crisis
In early March, when it became clear that the world was headed toward global lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interpreting profession was thrown into nearly universal chaos. To respond to the crisis, InterpretAmerica held a two-hour online panel to discuss how to ensure professional interpreting services during the pandemic and beyond.

16 Marketing Services during a Pandemic and Economic Crisis: Why You Should Do It and How to Get It Right
While I’ll admit that I initially questioned whether I should be marketing my services during a global health and economic crisis, I quickly changed my mind. Why? Because our clients still need us, and their clients need us. Plain and simple.

20 What the Business Practices Education Committee Is Doing for ATA Members
To succeed in today’s competitive economy, you need specialized knowledge and an inside track. As an ATA member, we’ve got you covered with ATA’s Business Practices Education Committee.

22 Going Institutional: A Primer on Translation for International Organizations
Translating for international organizations involves a steep learning curve, but it also offers an environment of steady work and predictable income, as well as daily opportunities to be on top of world affairs and to work on assignments that make a difference.

26 Heritage Speakers in Health Care Interpreting: A Case Study in Virtual Training
Two experienced trainers share some lessons learned from the efforts of a three-month training program at Barton Health in South Lake Tahoe, California, to prepare bilingual employees who are Spanish heritage speakers to enter the field of health care interpreting.
ATA61: Planning in a Time of Unpredictability

The past month or so has been a whirlwind for all of us. With the COVID-19 pandemic in full swing, events, trips, meetings, and so much more have been cancelled or postponed. I know this crisis is affecting everyone right now, so it feels a bit odd to be planning and sharing about ATA61 in the midst of everything. That said, I see our Annual Conference this year as a way to reconnect with one another after a rough start to the year.

Whether we are able to hold the conference in Boston or are forced to move it completely to an online platform, rest assured that we are aware that this year is different than any other, and we are planning an online component to the conference. No matter the format, our conference remains an opportunity to come together with more strength and perspective to move forward in our professions, learn from one another, make up for continuing education opportunities lost from cancelled events in the first half of the year, and spend time in community with cherished colleagues and friends.

Now, for an update! The call for proposals for ATA61 closed on March 2 with a total of 494 proposals. I think it’s safe to say that we’ll have quite a roundup of fascinating sessions to attend this year. For those who took our Professional Development Survey at the beginning of the year, thank you! It was a great tool to help us see what kind of content you would like from our Professional Development Program, and it guided me in creating a call for proposals that fit your preferences. Without giving too much away, let me just say that our colleagues delivered! Stay tuned for more information in the July–August Chronicle.

Whether we are able to hold the conference in Boston or are forced to move it completely to an online platform, rest assured that we are aware that this year is different than any other, and we are planning an online component to the conference.

Professional Development Opportunities to Take Advantage of at ATA61
In the meantime, and assuming we get a chance to meet in person in Boston, let’s take a look at what to expect this year! In addition to the 174 regular conference sessions taking place Thursday through Saturday, we’ll kick off the learning events on Wednesday with a series of Advanced Skills and Training (AST) sessions. We’ll have quite a lineup this year, so if you make plans to arrive earlier in the week, make sure you check out the variety of three-hour, intensive workshops and grab a seat once registration opens.

For those interested in taking ATA’s certification exam, there will be two morning AST sessions for English>Spanish and Spanish>English exam preparation. Speaking of the exam, there will be two opportunities to test at the Annual Conference again this year—one on Wednesday afternoon and another on Saturday morning.

The Annual Meeting of Voting Members will take place on Thursday. You’ll have the opportunity to hear from the candidates for the three available director positions and present a question for them to answer. So, be sure to:

= Watch for the statements from the candidates in the September–October Chronicle.
= Subscribe to The ATA Podcast to hear interviews with the candidates (watch for details in ATA Newsbriefs).
= Become an Active Member so you can vote in the election.
= Attend the Annual Meeting of Voting Members.
= Attend the Thursday morning Breakfast with the Candidates in Boston.

As usual, we’ll hold our Annual Meeting of All Members on Friday. This is your chance to hear about the big-picture items from the past year, including the treasurer’s report, updates from our stellar Public Relations Committee, and much more.

What Else Can You Expect at ATA61?
You can expect many of the same events you know and love. We’re also introducing a few new items to this mix this year.

For those who are early risers, we’ll have our energetic morning movement and exercise options available. And for those who prefer to start their day at

Continued on page 6
**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

*Why ATA Should Open the Certification Exam to All Professional Translators | Matt Baird*

Do we want to become a certifying agency, or do we want to remain an association that represents the interests of its members and also provides the possibility of certification?

If ATA opens its certification exam to nonmembers, it would eventually develop into a certifying body and an organization where representing the interests of its members becomes a side activity.

The number of members would decline because many translators/interpreters join ATA with the intention of becoming certified. Many of them remain members to retain their certification and because they see the great work and advantages of being a part of a big association that works to defend the interests of translators and interpreters (e.g., ATA's efforts regarding AB 5 in California to ensure its members understand the possible implications and to encourage them to ask legislators to exempt translators/interpreters). If membership is no longer required to retain certification, many would get certified and leave without developing any interest in the organization.

Financially, this would weaken ATA. I read the financial report in the January/February issue, and the problem of the declining number of members, even before decoupling was announced, has to be addressed. The membership fees are the biggest contribution to ATA's budget. If people no longer needed to be members to retain their certification, membership would drop and the additional exam fees would not be enough to finance both certification and the current activities of the association over a long period. Furthermore, more exam graders would have to be found, trained, and paid accordingly.

Membership and certification should go together.

*Marianne Beyer*

*Opening Certification to Nonmembers*

I'm in favor of decoupling. I work in Brazil and know many very good translators who want to be ATA members but simply cannot afford it. I support the argument that membership and certification can be mutually exclusive, but I would only support the proposal fully if, when approved, it allows members who are certified to retain their certification without having to continue paying membership dues if they leave the association.

*Liam Gallagher | São Paulo, Brazil*

*Bring Your “A” Game to Video Game Localization | Marina Ilari*

Great summary of the many things we need to do when localizing a game! Some people believe video game localization is easy because we’re not translating super technical or scientific papers, but terminology in games—that may even be made-up—can get really hard really quickly. Thanks for sharing.

*Santiago de Miguel | Buenos Aires, Argentina*
been hard at work during the past several weeks. Working with the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS), we lobbied for inclusion of independent contractors in economic relief legislation such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act recently passed by Congress. (See page 8 in this issue.) We continue to monitor legislation for “Phase 4” of the government’s response to the pandemic.

The Advocacy Committee also continues to monitor legislation related to worker classification, in particular proposed amendments to AB 5 in California. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Coalition of Practicing Translators and Interpreters of California (CoPTIC), we are pleased to see the introduction of SB 900, which would exempt most translators and interpreters from the “ABC test” imposed by AB 5. Instead, SB 900 mandates application of the multifactor Borello test to determine employee or independent contractor status.

While SB 900 is an improvement on the status quo under AB 5, in particular due to the express inclusion of sole proprietors in the permissible forms of business entities, there are several issues of varying degrees of importance from ATA’s perspective that should be addressed and resolved before ATA can fully support the bill. Among others, those issues include placement of the exemption under the “referral agency” section instead of the section for “professional services,” the question of whether “non-certified” translation and interpreting services are covered by the exemption, and the meaning of the phrase “good standing” with respect to membership in the various translator and interpreter associations listed in the bill.

ATA encourages its members to continue to support CoPTIC in its efforts to improve the wording of SB 900, and strongly urges members in California to contact their state assemblypersons and senators and advocate for improvements to and passage of SB 900. (To read the full text of SB 900, visit https://bit.ly/SB900-California.) While SB 900 is far from perfect, it’s a good starting place for us to lobby for improvements in the final wording. (See page 10 of this issue to read ATA’s Statement on California Senate Bill 900 Amending AB 5.)

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Board Meeting Highlights

For the first time since December 2005, ATA’s Board of Directors did not meet in person. The Board met online April 18, 2020, for the Spring Board meeting. The meeting was originally scheduled for Alexandria, Virginia, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

**Budget:** The Board approved the July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021 working budget and the 2021–23 draft budgets. ATA Treasurer John Milan walked through the budget planning process and the challenges with financial forecasts and the pandemic. The proposed $2.6-million working budget includes a reduction in membership and conference revenues. The working budget provides an interim financial framework. By using this interim budget, changes and revisions can be made based on the actual year-end figures. The final budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

**Proposed Bylaws Revisions:** The Board approved putting forward revisions to the Bylaws to be approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting of Voting Members, October 22, 2020, in Boston, Massachusetts. The proposed revisions clarify the proposed changes to the rights and privileges of membership and certification and replace the proposed changes previously approved at the October 2019 Board meeting.

**Advocacy:** ATA President and Advocacy Committee Chair Ted Wozniak briefed the Board on the committee’s efforts. The committee continues to work toward legislation in California to remedy the classification of translators and interpreters as enacted in AB 5. Ted noted that the need to focus on California is due to the fact that many states follow California’s lead. We want to get it corrected here so we don’t have this battle in other states as well.

**Military Membership Discount:** The Board approved a two-year member recruitment test by offering members of the military a 50% discount on ATA membership. The discounts are for individuals who are currently active duty or in the Guard or Reserves. This proposal is part of the ongoing work of the Government Linguists Outreach Task Force to promote careers in translation and interpreting for those transitioning out of the service who have been trained as linguists in the military. The Task Force also promotes private sector resources and professional development opportunities to government linguists.

**Editorial Board Appointment:** The Board approved the appointment of Jost Zetzsche as chair of the Chronicle Editorial Board. Jost, who is an ATA Gode Medal recipient, is a long-time contributor to the Chronicle. He is the columnist for the GeekSpeak and Resource Review—both look at tools to help translators and interpreters do their jobs.

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for August 1–2, 2020. A decision will be made closer to the meeting as to whether it will be an in-person or online meeting.

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**CANDIDATES ANNOUNCED**

ATA ELECTIONS | 2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled elections at the upcoming 2020 ATA Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, to elect three directors for a three-year term. Further nominations, supported by acceptance statements in writing by each additional nominee and a written petition signed by no fewer than 60 voting members, must be received by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee by June 1. Acceptance statements and petitions should be submitted to Nominating and Leadership Development Committee Chair David Rumsey (ata-hq@atanet.org). Candidate statements and photos of the candidates will appear in the September/October issue of The ATA Chronicle and on ATA’s website. The candidates proposed by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee are:

**Director (three positions, three-year terms):**
- Robin Bonthrone
- Veronika Demichelis
- Tony Guerra
- Manako Ihaya
- Elena Langdon
- Lorena Ortiz Schneider

1. A special meeting of the Board of Directors was conducted via conference call to discuss the certification program.
ATA Members and the CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. It’s intended to mitigate the impact of the nationwide economic shutdown.

The provisions that are pertinent to ATA members are summarized below for your information. As with all such legislation, some of the implementation details must still be worked out by the relevant agencies.

The CARES Act is 880 pages long and contains many more provisions than can be covered here. The focus below is on the provisions that are most likely to affect ATA members, both individual and corporate.

This overview is for information only and does not constitute business, financial, or legal advice. You should consult with an accountant, financial advisor, or the appropriate federal or state authority on your eligibility for any of these relief measures before making concrete decisions.

But don’t delay too long. It’s not inconceivable that demand for some of these funds, such as Small Business Administration loans, may be rapid and strong.

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF INTEREST TO ATA MEMBERS

- The tax credits should apply to most of our individual members; top earners, or those with significant other income, not so much.
- The social security tax deferrals will help all members a bit.
- The unemployment provisions will help anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has had to care for a stricken family member.
- The student loan deferrals will help members with such loans.
- The loans will help company owners, including single-person companies who pay themselves a salary, and independent contractors.
- There is also the option for an employer, including an owner/employee, to pay up to $5,250 in 2020 on an employee’s student loan, with the payment being tax-free to the employee and the total payment going to principal.

As with all such legislation, some of the implementation details must still be worked out by the relevant agencies.

Unemployment Insurance:
Beneficiaries will receive an additional $600 per week for up to four months. Benefits are extended to self-employed workers and independent contractors.

- Check with your state unemployment benefits agency for details on how to apply. This does not apply to individuals who have the ability to telework with pay or individuals receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

Recovery Rebate: Provides a $1,200 refundable tax credit for individuals
($2,400 for joint filers), plus $500 per child. The rebate is not taxable income as it’s a credit against tax liability and is refundable for taxpayers with no tax liability.

- Income phases out starting at $75,000 for single filers, $112,500 for heads of household, and $150,000 for joint filers.
- The amount of the rebate will be recalculated based on 2020 income when 2020 tax returns are filed. Current payments will be based on 2019 tax returns (or 2018 returns if 2019 returns have not yet been filed).
- If the calculation in 2020 results in an underpayment, the taxpayer can claim the difference on their 2020 tax return. Overpayments will (probably) be forgiven (taxpayers will not be required to pay it back).

Charitable Deductions: Creates a $300 “above the line” deduction for cash contributions to certain charities for taxpayers using the standard deduction. For itemizers, contributions may be temporarily deducted up to 100% of adjusted gross income, with any excess carried over to the next five years.

IRA Withdrawals: Waves the 10% early withdrawal penalty on certain retirement account distributions for taxpayers facing virus-related challenges.

- The waiver only applies if the taxpayer meets specified virus-related conditions. The withdrawals are still subject to regular income taxes but may be spread out over a three-year period. Amounts withdrawn may be repaid without regard to the annual cap on contributions.

Student Loans: Payments and interest on all federal loans held by the Department of Education are suspended until September 30, 2020. This allows an employer to pay up to $5,250 in 2020 on an employee’s student loan debt, with the payments being tax-free to the employee.

- Does not apply to Federal Family Education Loans and Perkins federal loans or loans that are not held by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Payments made during this period should be counted in full as principal repayments, resulting in a faster reduction of the principal balance and lower interest costs.

Delayed Payment of Employer Payroll Tax and Self-Employment Tax:

- The employer share of the 6.2% Social Security tax due through December 31, 2020 can be paid on December 31, 2021 (50%) and December 31, 2022 (50%).
- Self-employed taxpayers can defer paying 50% of the self-employment tax due through the end of 2020 until the end of 2021 (25%) and 2022 (25%).
- Not available to businesses receiving forgiveness of a payroll protection loan.

Changes to Net Operating Loss Rules:

Temporarily reverses the changes made by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) on loss carrybacks and carryforwards.

- Losses from 2018, 2019, and 2020 may be carried back for up to five years. Taxpayer may forgo the carryback and carry the loss forward instead.
- Losses carried forward to 2019 and 2020 will be permitted to offset 100% of taxable income, instead of 80% as under TCJA.

COVID-19 has disrupted the translation and interpreting marketplace in ways we could not have imagined a few months ago.

Small Business Loans (Paycheck Protection Loans) for Certain Small Businesses, Including Self-Employed Individuals During the Period from February 15 to June 30, 2020:

- May be eligible to obtain loans to cover payroll, group health benefits, employee salaries and other compensation, interest on mortgages, rent, utilities, and interest on other debt obligations previously incurred.
- “Payroll” includes wages, commissions, salary, or similar compensation to an employee or independent contractor.
- A separate section allows a portion of these loans to be forgiven tax free.

Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) and Grants of Up to $10,000 for Small Businesses, Nonprofits, Independent Contractors, and Self-Employed Individuals:

- Similar to the small business loans above, the interest rate on these loans is 3.75%. They are repayable over a period of up to 30 years. Loan applicants may apply for an advance of up to $10,000, which need not be repaid if the loan is not granted.

Employee Retention Credit: Creates a one-year credit against the employer’s 6.2% share of Social Security payroll taxes for businesses that were forced to suspend or close operations due to the pandemic but continue to pay their employees during the shutdown.

Businesses are eligible if:

- Operations were fully or partially suspended during any calendar quarter in 2020 due to orders from a government authority as a result of the pandemic, or
- Business remained open but gross receipts during any quarter in 2020 were less than 50% of what they were in the same quarter in 2019.

To read the full text of the CARES Act, visit: https://bit.ly/CARES-pandemic.

We Are a Community—Share and Connect

COVID-19 has disrupted the translation and interpreting marketplace in ways we could not have imagined a few months ago. This is going to be a real challenge. As an ATA member, you don’t have to go it alone. Please do not hesitate to let your association know how it can support you in your professional life.

Questions? Need More Information?

ATA staff are available 9:00 to 5:00 EDT! Call us at +1-703-683-6100, extension 3001, or email ata@atanet.org. Need to get in touch with someone about membership? Send an email to Trish Boward at membership@atanet.org.
ATA’s Statement on California Senate Bill 900 Amending AB 5

California Senate Bill SB 900 creates an exemption for the relationship between a “service provider that provides . . . certified interpretation or translation services” and a “referral agency” in the application of the ABC test under AB 5. In its place, SB 900 mandates the application of the multifactor Borello test.

While SB 900 is an improvement on the status quo under AB 5, there are several issues of varying degrees of importance from ATA’s perspective that should be addressed and resolved before ATA can fully support the bill.

**Positive Aspects of SB 900**

- Exempts many translators and interpreters (T&I) from application of the ABC test, thus allowing their classification as independent contractors.
- Expressly includes sole proprietors as a permissible business entity for a service provider.
- Expressly recognizes ATA as one of several professional associations for purposes of SB 900.

**Areas in SB 900 That Need Revision, Improvement, or Clarification**

- **Exemption under referral agency rather than professional services.**
  Translation and interpretation services would be included in Section 2781 of the California Labor Code, which addresses relationships between service providers and “referral agencies,” including companies connecting service providers for minor home repair, home cleaning, errands, pet sitting, picture hanging, etc.

  As highly-educated and experienced professionals, translators and interpreters should be included under Section 2777, which deals with “professional services.”

  This characterization of the role of language services companies and agencies (LSCs) as mere “referral agencies” flies in the face of reality. Additional services, such as project management, editing, and proofreading, are essential components to the
quality provision of T&I services. The overwhelming majority of LSCs provide other value-added services to the end client, such as desktop publishing and localization in addition to any “matching of” translators and interpreters with end clients.

■ Delivery in one’s own name

Section 2781 (a) (4) will be extremely problematic from the LSC perspective in that it requires the service provider (translator or interpreter) to deliver services to the (end) client under their own name, and not under the name of the LSC. This, too, flies in the face of reality as many LSCs shield the names of translators and interpreters to prevent losing hard-earned business. While some may argue this may be desirable, it should not be a prerequisite for classification as an independent contractor.

■ Meaning error?

Section 2781 (b) (3), which specifies the type of service providers for which the referral agency acts as a broker, uses the phrase “certified interpretation or translation services.” It is currently unknown if “non-certified” T&I services, which comprise the vast majority of T&I services, would also be covered by SB 900. This appears to be a drafting error: the services provided in our field are not certified, but rather the actual people providing the services are sometimes certified.

The use of the term “certified,” be it in reference to the service or the service provider, entails a number of problems that have long been issues in the T&I profession.

■ Certification

Section 2775 (b) (7) states “Certified interpretation or translation services means a person who...” and then lists several organizations of which the service provider must be a member in good standing, or which has provided the service provider with a certification or credential.

Aside from the issue about people, and not “services,” being certified, as previously mentioned, the list omits existing professional T&I credentials that should legitimately be included. Using the word “certified” also may create unintended consequences for practitioners of our profession.

While still a work in progress, SB 900 is an acceptable starting point for obtaining the desired exemption for translators and interpreters from the ABC test under AB 5.

SUMMARY AND CALL TO ACTION

While still a work in progress, SB 900 is an acceptable starting point for obtaining the desired exemption for translators and interpreters from the ABC test under AB 5.

California translators and interpreters should contact their state legislators and demand that the problems outlined above be fixed. ATA also encourages all translators and interpreters to continue to support the Coalition of Practicing Translators and Interpreters of California in its efforts to improve the language of this bill.

NOTES


2. To find out more about the ABC test and Borello test, see “Independent Contractor versus Employee” on the State of California Department of Industrial Relations website, https://bit.ly/FAQ-independent-contractor.


InterpretAmerica 2020: A Timely Response to an Unprecedented Crisis

We all know the world will not be the same when we come out the other side of this crisis. But we’ll also have gained something immeasurably valuable in our profession: solidarity.

In early March, when it became clear that the world was headed toward global lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interpreting profession was thrown into nearly universal chaos. The greater part of the interpreting supply chain, based largely on onsite, face-to-face interactions, broke apart in a matter of days. Reports of lost contracts and cancelled jobs flooded in. The almost instantaneous switch to remote communication worldwide threatened to leave our profession behind. But just as quickly, many in our field jumped in to help our profession make the switch to remote.

This year marks InterpretAmerica’s 10th anniversary, and we had been planning an as-yet-unannounced celebratory event. But COVID-19 made it immediately apparent what we needed to do instead: organize an online forum to spark as broad a conversation as possible about the global lockdown’s effects on the provision of interpreting services and what needed to be done to adapt to this new reality.

And that’s what we did. In the space of seven short days, we announced, organized, and successfully held InterpretAmerica 2020: A Unified Response to Ensure Access to Interpreting Services during the Pandemic. The event went viral. More than 1,500 registered and 1,358 attended live, representing 50 countries and five continents. (See Figure 1 on page 13 for a geographic breakdown of participants.)

Sixteen presenters gave five-minute lightning talks interspersed with extensive audience participation using the interactive polling tool Mentimeter (two assistants worked behind the scenes to keep the polling running smoothly). The agenda included a final session recapping the feedback we received. Attendees could listen in five languages (American Sign Language, Arabic, English, Portuguese, and Spanish) interpreted simultaneously over KUDO, a remote interpreting platform capable of hosting online events with simultaneous interpreting. It was an event that in any normal time would have taken months to set up, publicize, and run—not a single week. But this is the reality-bending time we’re living through, when days can seem like weeks and weeks like months.

ATA asked us to write up how this all came together behind the scenes and what we learned along the way. This is our report.

10 YEARS OF GROUNDWORK PAYS OFF
We founded InterpretAmerica in 2010 with a single purpose: to raise the profile of interpreting. Over the past 10 years we’ve held six national summits focused on bringing together stakeholders from across the field. At the very first summit, our primary goal was simply to introduce ourselves to each other. Our field was so entrenched in separate silos that most of us had never met. That founding event, as well as efforts by many others, helped break this isolation. Today, the interpreting profession has built many crisscrossing connections. We know each other a lot better now, and the importance of that should not be overlooked.

Over time, people across the interpreting profession and language services industry found value in what we had to offer. We became effective conveners. InterpretAmerica turned into the platform where we could pursue big-picture topics and contribute, in our own way, to strengthening this profession we love. We learned our way around organizing a conference (our own and for others), including live-streaming events. We stayed on top of new technology and in touch with the rapidly-changing landscape in which interpreting takes place. We gained expertise, particularly in remote interpreting and interpreter employment trends. So when the time came to act extremely quickly to help where we could at an international level, we had already laid the necessary groundwork to do so.

AN UNLIKELY DRESS REHEARSAL
Fast forward to now: InterpretAmerica 2020 actually began with the postponement of this year’s Globalization and Localization Association’s (GALA) annual conference due to the coronavirus outbreak. For the past six years, InterpretAmerica has provided content related to interpreting through think! Interpreting, a conference it co-organizes with GALA. When GALA was called off, one of our planned events, a roundtable discussion on interpreting and the fast-growing area of interpreting technologies, was shifted online to take place during the week GALA would have been held in mid-March.

The event, originally designed as an interactive discussion about interpreting within GALA, quickly morphed into a first conversation about the threat COVID-19 represented to interpreting and business continuity. Without meaning to, the
planning of this event became a dress rehearsal that gave us the confidence to put on the much larger InterpretAmerica 2020 exactly one week later.

The GALA Interpreting Roundtable, “Interpreting Tech and Business Continuity: Delivering Interpreting Services During a World Health Crisis”, was held March 19, 2020, on the KUDO platform. The target audience was made up of GALA members and conference registrants. But as word spread on social media about the roundtable, concerned end users, language services companies, and interpreters from around the world signed up for the event. Over 200 attended online. Remote simultaneous interpreting was provided into six languages (English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish). What we had originally envisaged as a small online discussion for GALA conference registrants had morphed into the largest online event we had ever organized. Our audience had grown far too big to engage in a live, interactive discussion about the impact COVID-19 was having on interpreting. So, in what would become a proof of concept for InterpretAmerica 2020, we made use of polling software on KUDO to gather crucial information about what was happening on the market.

The results were stark. Even as early as mid-March, the coronavirus was clearly wreaking havoc along the entire interpreting service delivery pathway, from agencies to practitioners to trainers. A majority of the participants attending the roundtable had already experienced significant job cancellations, with interpreters losing income in the thousands and tens of thousands of dollars, and some companies registering losses in the millions. Almost no one was working onsite anymore.

The message was clear: the entire interpreting supply chain needed to go remote along with the rest of the world, and those who could help lead the way needed to step up to the task.

PUTTING INTERPRETAMERICA 2020 TOGETHER

The idea for InterpretAmerica 2020 began to crystallize as we pulled the GALA event together. The need was clearly there. A few days before the GALA webinar, nudge by Marjory Bancroft, director of Cross-Cultural Communications, the national training agency for community and medical interpreting, who encouraged us to do something similar for a bigger audience, we committed to holding InterpretAmerica 2020. We announced InterpretAmerica 2020 at the close of the GALA webinar and opened registration for the event a few hours later. We knew time was of the essence, given the urgency of information that came out of this first webinar.

To hold an event, you need a focus, and Cindy Roat, the well-known language access veteran from the health care interpreting world, gave it to us. In an initial brainstorming meeting, she insisted that the critical issue had to be access to language assistance, of all kinds, whether for diplomats, business, or health care. Her quote became our theme: *“The continued use of interpreting should be our number one priority.”*

And the rest flowed from there. We designed an event we hoped would provide everyone with a comprehensive view of how interpreting services were currently structured so we could then understand which links along the chain had to shift most to be able to use remote technologies. (See Figure 2 on page 14.)

We reached out to top leaders in our field who we felt could give us that knowledge in brief, clear five-minute talks. (See the speaker list and topics discussed in the sidebar on page 14.) We asked KUDO if they were willing to host another event and provide the interpreting at no charge. We recruited a team of four to analyze the data coming in from the Mentimeter polls we planned to hold in real time.

quickly designed a webpage and asked everyone we knew to spread the word about the event. And not a single person said no. Some we emailed at midnight, and the answer would ping back almost immediately (“Count me in!” “Whatever I can do.”). Everyone gave their time, for zero payment, for nothing in return, including ATA President Ted Wozniak. The response was beyond moving.

Then the registrations started pouring in. By the end of the first 24 hours, we had over 100, by the end of the weekend, almost 500, and by the evening before the event, when we finally shut registration down, over 1,500. They came in from all over the world and from every part of our profession. We knew then that we had tapped something bigger than us. We were seeing, in real time, the complete disruption of a profession, with thousands now seeking information and guidance for what to do next.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Our program sought to cover the challenges we’re facing and offer some beginning guidance for where to go. We wanted to answer the following questions:

- What can we do to help our face-to-face workforce—whose work has disappeared overnight—find work as remote interpreters? How can they be visible to those who need to hire them?
- How can we help our language services companies access remote platforms (telephonic and video) to dispatch work to their linguists? What are the technology solutions they can use to
The Remote Interpreting Supply Chain

...and Training and Education!

![Diagram ofinterpreting supply chain]


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker/Panel</th>
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<td>InterpretAmerica: The Urgency to Ensure Language Access</td>
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<td>Dieter Runge</td>
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<td>Winnie Heh: Middlebury Institute of International Studies</td>
<td>How Can We Reach End Users So They Can Still Access Interpreting Services?</td>
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<td>Odilia Romero: Frente Binacional de Organizaciones Bilingües y CIELO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marjory Bancroft: Cross-Cultural Communications</td>
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<td>Cindy Roat: Health Care Trainer and Language Access Consultant</td>
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<td>Andrew Dafoe: TraduccioNOLA</td>
<td>Next Steps Data Capture</td>
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<td>Darinka Mangino: Léxica</td>
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- How can we ensure that high standards for working conditions and compensation can be maintained during this massive shift to online delivery?

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The information we received from the audience polling detailed the challenges the field is facing with the loss of so much onsite work and the need to transition to remote interpreting. We also obtained data on what would help attendees the most. Figure 3 on page 15 gives an idea of what we learned.

**Who Participated?**

InterpretAmerica 2020 attendees represented a solid cross-section of the interpreting profession, with roughly even representation from conference (25%), community (22%), health care (27%), and legal (17%) interpreters. Sign language interpreters (5%) were also represented, and another 5% of attendees were not practicing interpreters.

**Unemployment Is Huge:** Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, the number of job cancellations has been staggering. In all, 90% of attendees saw job cancellations, with over 25% of those polled seeing more than 21 cancellations as a result of the pandemic.

**Fear of Remote Interpreting Replacing Face-to-Face Interpreting:** Many attendees expressed fear that remote interpreting would now replace their previous face-to-face work structures. They reported lower pay for remote interpreting work, even when assignments are available, and greatly worsened working conditions in the rush to switch to remote.

**Maintaining Professional Standards:** Attendees provided many examples of having to lower working and professional standards to work using remote interpreting, from taking pay cuts to poor technological solutions to the interpreter becoming even more invisible in the communication process. Many expressed distress that lower standards could become permanent. They were also concerned about the difficulty of advocating effectively.

**Training and Access to Information Are Top Priorities:** Among attendees polled during the event, the number one concern was providing training for interpreters so they can begin to provide their services on remote platforms, followed by an urgent need for a public relations campaign to inform end users of interpreting services about the options available to them for using remote interpreting.

**Access to Interpreting Has Been Hit Hard:** The COVID-19 pandemic has affected access to interpreting services across the board, with conference interpreting, a market segment almost entirely dependent on people being able to travel and meet in large groups, being the hardest hit.

InterpretAmerica 2020 caught a moment in time in this crisis. It tried to make sense of the overnight shift to remote interpreting, and the unsettling fact (for many) that remote is, for the duration of
this crisis, the most important pathway to save our jobs and protect those who need our services.

During the ensuing weeks, we’ve seen a full-scale effort to go remote. And the generosity of our field continues in plain sight. Multiple free webinars guiding interpreters onto remote platforms have been given and hundreds of existing trainings are now available for free. Professional associations are also compiling resources and advocating for the health and safety of those working alongside doctors and nurses with sick patients, and fighting to have our independent contractors included in federal relief funding. Others are focused on preserving important professional standards for safe working conditions and appropriate compensation.

For InterpretAmerica, our big next step to help where we can in this crisis is the launch of the clearinghouse website, RemoteInterpreting.info. By the time this article is published, the public will have access to a starting point when looking for information about remote interpreting enabled. Soon to follow will be similar information for language services companies looking to offer remote interpreting and for interpreter trainers who need to learn how to teach online.

We all know the world will not be the same when we come out the other side of this crisis. Many will have died. Many more will experience disruption and financial loss. But we’ll also have gained something immeasurably valuable in our profession: solidarity.

NOTES
1. www.interpretamerica.com/interpretamerica-2020
2. www.mentimeter.com
3. www.kudoway.com

Figure 3: Sample Polling Results from InterpretAmerica 2020

Katharine Allen is a health care and community interpreter with over three decades of experience interpreting, training, and designing curricula. She is the co-founder and co-president of InterpretAmerica. She was the lead developer and author for The Indigenous Interpreter 60-hour training course. She also helps embed professional interpreting into medical missions in Mexico. She is also co-author of The Community Interpreter International: An International Textbook and The Medical Interpreter: A Foundation Textbook for Medical Interpreting. She has taught for the Master of Conference Interpreting program at Glendon College’s School of Translation and the online interpreting certificate program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has an MA in translation and interpreting from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Contact: sierraskyit@gmail.com.

Barry Slaughter Olsen is a veteran conference interpreter and technophile with over two decades of experience interpreting, training interpreters, and organizing language services. He is an associate professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, the founder and co-president of InterpretAmerica, and general manager of multilingual operations at ZipDX. He is a member of the International Association of Conference Interpreters. For updates on interpreting, technology, and training, follow him on Twitter @ProfessorOlsen.
Marketing Services during a Pandemic and Economic Crisis: Why You Should Do It and How to Get It Right

There’s a way to market your business and not be salesy. There’s a way to market your business and still be compassionate. There’s a way to market your business and serve your clients where they are right now.

Lately, you may be asking yourself, “How do I market my translation or interpreting services during a global health and economic crisis?” or “Should I be marketing at all?” You’re not alone. This question has landed in my inbox so many times during the past few weeks from colleagues asking what they should do.

How you decide to market your business during the COVID-19 pandemic is a very personal decision. You may be of the mindset that outbound marketing (actively marketing by sending your marketing message to clients) is inappropriate right now. While I’ll admit I thought this myself, especially during those first days when things seemed to shift by the hour, I quickly changed my mind. Why? Because our clients still need us, and their clients need us. Plain and simple.

While I’ll touch on inbound marketing later, I would like to ask you to consider two things before deciding that you absolutely will not do any outbound marketing during this crisis.

1. Do you have work landing in your inbox consistently right now?
2. Are you sure that you’ll continue to have enough consistent work coming in throughout this crisis?

If your answer is “no” to either of these questions (most of the colleagues I talk to would answer “no” to at least one) and you don’t have another source of cash flow in your household to rely on in uncertain times, you may need to rethink what you will and won’t do.

I get it. No one wants to appear out of touch or opportunistic, especially when there’s so much suffering. But rather than continue to worry that you might turn clients off or bother them during what is a very stressful time for everyone, have you considered that your clients might very well need your services as a solution to one of many problems they’re experiencing?

While continuing to work and earn money, you can continue to contribute to the economy. You can continue to provide clients incredibly useful services during a time when their challenges are great and their resources are potentially very few.

You can continue to provide clients incredibly useful services during a time when their challenges are great and their resources are potentially very few.

To be clear, there’s a way to market your business and not be salesy. There’s a way to market your business and still be compassionate. There’s a way to market your business and serve your clients where they are right now. If incoming work has slowed down, or if it’s come to a complete standstill, you might be experiencing a lot of doubt when it comes to marketing at all. But trust me. Just because some of your clients don’t...
Everybody is thinking about this right now. And while your messaging should not focus solely on COVID-19, acknowledge it while keeping in mind that you have something of value to offer that’s relevant.

**CURRENT CLIENT APPROACH**
Craft a brief, but sincere, email to clients.
- Ask how they’re doing.
- Let them know that you’re available to help with anything urgent. If they have something related to COVID-19, messaging to send their clients, colleagues, or employees, tell them that you’ll put it at the front of the project queue.
- Avoid a direct sales pitch of any sort unless what you’re offering is relevant and can help them right now.

Pretty simple, right? When you write to clients, don’t do so expecting a response. That said, I would be willing to bet that you’ll receive at least a few. Even if there’s no offer or mention of projects or assignments in the pipeline, your clients will be happy to hear from you, to experience some normalcy and a friendly face in their inbox. I mean, couldn’t we all do with a kind message in our inbox these days?

It’s important to remember that everyone is stressed and working double-time in fewer hours right now. My own work dried up for about a week or so, but once clients seemed to get settled in their new remote routines, my project flow picked up again. Of course, my messaging helped. Here are two messages I sent to clients and their responses:

**Outbound message #1:**

Good morning, XXX and YYY!

I hope you are both well. I know things are a little unpredictable right now related to the ever-changing situation of COVID-19 in different areas, so I just wanted to let you know I am thinking of you and hoping your organization is remaining relatively unaffected.

If there is anything I can do to help regarding translations pertaining to COVID-19 (or in general), please don’t hesitate to let me know. I’ll be happy to put any related projects at the front of the queue.

Stay safe and healthy! I know we are looking forward to returning to “normal” whenever possible, and I imagine you are as well.

Take care!

Madalena

**Client Response:**

Thanks! We really appreciate the check-in and hope you are staying safe and healthy, too.

We actually have two COVID-related items we’ll need translated relatively quickly as soon as we get internal content approved. Thank you for moving those to the front of your queue when they come—we’re working frantically on them ourselves.

Wishing you and yours all the best,

YY

**Outbound Message #2:**

Hi, XXX!

I hope you and your family, as well as the entire ABC team and their families, are well and staying healthy. Since we just wrapped up next quarter’s content, I wanted to check in to see how you’re getting along in this hectic time.

I saw that you were able to reuse the content from the blog post I provided on XYZ. Wonderful! I was curious to know if it would be helpful for me to write a few blog posts a month for the next few months.

The goal would be to drive more traffic to ABC’s site, as well as to take some work off your plates. I know that most people’s schedules have been thrown for a loop these days, and I would be happy to work on them for you. If I can be of help to you all and remove any added stress that content creation might be causing during this time, when I know there is so much else going on in addition to routine business, please don’t hesitate to let me know.

Warmly,

Madalena

**Client Response:**

Hi Madalena,

Thanks for checking in! We are all doing well at ABC, just adjusting to this new normal we are in. I hope you and your family are doing well and staying healthy as well.

**If your messaging is**
appropriate and you’re coming from a place of service, clients will see you as a helping hand, not as an opportunist.

**HONE YOUR MESSAGING FIRST**

Messaging is always key when it comes to marketing, but now, more than ever, it’s absolutely essential to get it right. If your messaging is appropriate and you’re coming from a place of service, clients will see you as a helping hand, not as an opportunist. While we surely all want to be the former, proper messaging is vital to avoid being the latter.

During a time when everyone is struggling, the best way we can help our clients—both now and all the time—is by solving problems. The key to your messaging lies in how you solve problems for those you serve. Only you know what messaging is appropriate for your ideal clients. Only you can determine the right messaging for a scenario like the current crisis.

Whatever approach you take, it’s important to recognize the current situation. Don’t avoid mentioning COVID-19. Instead, call it out.
MARKETING SERVICES DURING A PANDEMIC AND ECONOMIC CRISIS continued

Yes, that blog post has been great content for us to use elsewhere. Thank you again for turning it around so quickly! I’ll definitely check in with YYY and ZZZ on your offer to write more blog posts for us. I really appreciate your offer to help out during this time! I’ll be in touch soon!

While both messages resulted in positive outcomes, there’s the possibility that there may not be a specific assignment for you at the time you send current clients a message like this. On the other hand, it could very well be the case that your email is well-timed and that you could take something off your clients’ overly full plates, either now or a month from now. You’ll never know if you don’t reach out.

NEW CLIENT APPROACH
Once you’ve had a chance to craft your pandemic-related messaging to your current clients, it’s time to think about new clients. Yes, it’s easier to market to existing clients than new ones, but that doesn’t make it impossible, nor does it make you tone-deaf. Consider your area(s) of specialization and the clients you have the ability to serve. Then ask yourself these questions:

■ What potential clients could you reach out to who are in a similar position as your current clients and who could truly use a professional translator or interpreter right now?
■ What gap(s) do you fill in the market right now?
■ Are you willing to offer services at a discount to those who may not have an ideal budget due to the economic downturn caused by COVID-19?
■ Can you serve another industry by using the skills and experience you have?
■ Who most definitely needs professional and prompt language services during a time like this? Who will need them long after this crisis has ended?

Craft a message similar to the ones in the examples I shared earlier and tweak them to fit potential clients who would value your services and appreciate some help to overcome language-related challenges. Again, just remember to:

■ Ask how they’re doing.
■ Tell them you’re available to help with anything urgent and that you’ll put anything related to the COVID-19 messaging for their clients, colleagues, or employees at the top of the list.
■ Avoid a direct sales pitch of any sort unless what you’re offering is relevant and can help them immediately.

If this pandemic has shown us anything, it’s that everyone has been impacted in some way. We’re seeing industries and companies suffering losses like never before. But at the same time, they’re working on their own messaging and communications—both to survive the current crisis and to prepare for the future. They have to be ready to meet their customers where they are when people are ready to spend money on their products and services.

During a time when everyone is struggling, the best way we can help our clients—both now and all the time—is by solving problems.

DECEIDE IF A PIVOT—EVEN A TEMPORARY ONE—is NECESSARY
Small and large businesses and organizations are showing just how creative and determined they can be right now. As I write this, restaurants are offering take-out and delivery options so they can remain open. Schools are taking to online instruction on an unprecedented scale to allow students to finish out the school year with some semblance of order. Fitness studios are offering remote group classes to pay the rent while their employees and patrons have been ordered to stay home.

As you consider the current and future state of your business, don’t be afraid to rule out a pivot, even if it’s a temporary one. For example, perhaps you work for one of the harder hit industries, let’s say travel and tourism. Take some time to look at previous projects and assignments you’ve successfully completed.

■ Are there any projects you’ve handled that could relate to another specialization or field?
■ What can you provide for an industry that might be booming right now?
■ How can you show up for your travel and tourism clients to help them finesse their current messaging, as well as their post-COVID-19 messaging when customers are ready to travel again?

While a complete pivot may not be necessary, it’s important to stay open to possibilities you might not have considered previously. If you’re not sure where to start with your new-client messaging, go back to the idea of looking for a gap that you might fill right now. You can find a lot of these if you’re paying attention!

If you’re a health care interpreter, for example, consider contacting all of the local doctors and dentists offices that have patients in areas with large populations of speakers of other languages and offer your services. A lot of them are still cancelling and rescheduling appointments via phone calls, text messages, and emails, as well as conducting virtual “office visits” with their patients by utilizing remote interpreting methods.

If you’re a translator, could you offer those same doctors and dentists a way to notify their clients about new procedures and healthy practices by translating email content for patients? Many offices will be sending COVID-19-related notifications for the next several months, maybe longer. How can you offer your services to help?

CONSIDER OFFERING SHORT-TERM, PRO BONO RELIEF TO THOSE MOST IN NEED
You may have considered offering some free translations related to the pandemic within your specializations.
Or perhaps you’re willing to volunteer as an interpreter for a situation that requires critical communication. If you have the ability to give something for free during this chaotic time, you can serve a current need while planting a seed for the future—when clients do have the cash flow to allocate part of their budget to professional translation or interpreting.

If you’re not in a position to volunteer your services, is there anything you could create or pass along to clients who you know are currently facing challenging situations? If you’re drawing a blank, consider sending something useful but meaningful such as:

- An article or resource that might be timely and relevant.
- A simple message in one of your working languages that lets your client’s customers know how long they will be closed or when they plan to reopen.
- An uplifting message (this can seem like a very small gesture, but you never know who needs to receive one).

Whatever you offer, make sure you can relate it back to your brand and services in some way, but be sensitive about the language you use when you deliver. What I’ve found most effective is to simply acknowledge the hardship and share what you can offer as a small contribution to helping clients in a tough time.

**DON’T FORGET YOUR INBOUND MARKETING STRATEGY**

This is probably rather obvious. After all, if you have extra time on your hands due to a slow trickle of incoming work, you can put that time to use by marketing your business in ways other than those mentioned here.

- First and foremost, make sure your website is updated so the copy and design appeal to your ideal clients. If you’ve been meaning to create a new website, now is the time.
- If your clients and leads are active on social media, engage with them regularly. You can still market your services indirectly by being helpful and available to them online.
- Update any directory profiles you have on association websites. Make sure the profile leads back to your website.
- Polish your résumé. Add any new experience or training and remove anything that doesn’t reflect the work you want to attract going forward.
- Make a list of companies, organizations, or agencies where you would like to apply or market your services once people are going back to work.

I could go on and on. Bottom line: there’s plenty of marketing work you can do to look to the future and prepare your business for better times to come.

**Messaging is always key when it comes to marketing, but now, more than ever, it’s absolutely essential to get it right.**

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**START SMALL AND MARKET YOUR SERVICES WITH CARE**

If you’ve been on the fence about marketing your business during the COVID-19 crisis, start small. Perhaps a happy medium of both outbound and inbound marketing is the right fit for you. Work on your inbound marketing first so that when you’re ready, you have a place (e.g., website) where you can lead clients. When you figure out the outbound marketing techniques that are most appropriate for your ideal customers, be ready to put your plan into action. So, get to work. Make this time count. No matter what, don’t simply wait for the work to come to you.

After dusting yourself off from the initial shock of all this, take proactive steps and consider the fact that this is a perfect time to be planting seeds. The economy will turn around, people will go back to work, and when they do, they will remember you for your future translation or interpreting needs—but only if you reach out now.

Whatever your specializations are, there is work for you. There are people who need your services, and there are many who needed them yesterday! It’s time to step up, pivot your message with care, and contribute value by solving problems.

If your project pipeline has dried up, or even if it’s just barely flowing at a trickle, you have the gift of time right now. And if it hasn’t yet slowed down, count yourself lucky. But think twice about putting off all marketing efforts until another time. You never know when crises like COVID-19 will happen. As quickly as this virus has taken hold of our communities, bringing many to their knees, your current project load could slow down tomorrow. No one is immune to the effects of “here today, gone tomorrow.” But take comfort in the fact that you have incredibly important skills that are valuable to others.

Even if your clients or leads cannot afford your services at your normal rates right now, they will remember that you reached out to them when they were struggling. This does not go unnoticed. What does go unnoticed is if you stay silent and don’t find a way to be relevant by offering your support and incredibly valuable services when everyone can use an extra hand.

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**Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo**

is ATA president-elect and chairs the Membership Committee and Governance and Communications Committee. She is the owner of Accessible Translation Solutions and a Spanish>English translator. She served as chair of ATA’s Public Relations Committee (2014–2018) and administrator of 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.
What the Business Practices Education Committee Is Doing for ATA Members

ATA's Business Practices Education Committee offers many opportunities for members to get involved, give back to the Association, work with fellow members, and broaden their professional network.

Have you ever asked yourself what the Business Practices Education Committee is up to these days? Probably not. In fact, you're more likely wondering: “What is the Business Practices Education Committee?” For the uninitiated, the Business Practices Education Committee was established in 2005 to provide ATA members with information about sound business practices for the translation and interpreting industry. Fine, you say, but what has it done for me lately? That’s a good question, so let's elaborate.

Business Practices Listserv: To begin with, the committee's core project remains the Business Practices listserv, which recently migrated to groups.io under the name ATA-Business-Practices. As of the end of April 2020, the group had 847 members, who typically submit anywhere from several dozen to several hundred posts per month. Discussions are moderated with a light touch primarily by Paul Merriam, with occasional help from Frieda Ruppaner-Lind and May Fung Danis. The archives contain nearly 3,400 topics dating back to 2005, with the very first post by ATA Past President Dorothee Racette welcoming subscribers to a group intended for the discussion of topics related to conducting business in the translation and interpreting industry. Not surprisingly, California Assembly Bill 5 and “Sons of AB 5” have provided a seemingly endless source of discussion in recent months along with a wide variety of other topics ranging, for example, from language services providers and machine translation to nondisclosure agreements, client/project management software, unpaid translations tests, and much more. To join the group, send an email to ATA-Business-Practices+subscribe@groups.io. The moderator will contact you with further instructions to complete your subscription.

The committee has hosted a one-hour Brainstorm Networking Event at every ATA Annual Conference since 2014.

Brainstorm Networking: In addition, the committee has hosted a one-hour Brainstorm Networking event at every ATA Annual Conference since 2014. ATA Past President David Rumsey, who was president-elect at the time, first came up with the idea for the Chicago conference to replace the former speed networking event. Participants in the brainstorming event join a group of typically between four and six people around a table and have a few minutes to introduce themselves, after which they discuss a scenario provided for them involving an ethical issue or some other sort of business-related problem. When time is called, everyone moves to a different table and starts over with a new group and a new scenario.

Online Resources: The committee is also responsible for compiling, editing, and updating the resources available on ATAs website under Resources > Business Practices. This material is listed under the general headings “Getting Started,” “Taking Care of Business,” and “Tools and Resources.” Topics include “Finding Jobs, Getting Hired,” “Determining Rates,” “Getting Paid,” “Apply Best Practices,” and “ATA Certification,” among others. If you haven’t visited the page recently, check it out. There’s bound to be something of interest to you.
ATA Mentoring Program: The Mentoring Program was originally conceived by former ATA Secretary Courtney Searls-Ridge, who administered the program alone for roughly 10 years before Susanne van Eyl took charge in 2011 and tweaked the format to boost participation. This ATA member benefit was recently brought under the umbrella of the Business Practices Education Committee, where it is once again being revamped.

The Mentoring Program pairs translators and interpreters seeking to learn a new skill with ATA members possessing more experience in the relevant area. Mentees are typically industry newcomers, although students and linguists with less than one year of experience are directed to The Savvy Newcomers blog (more on this below). Even longtime ATA members can benefit from the mentee experience if they would like to learn something new; for example, adding a new specialty, marketing to direct clients, becoming a better proofreader, or fine-tuning their business skills. Key to the mentee’s success over the course of the program is the articulation of clear and actionable goals at the outset. For more information, visit https://bit.ly/ATA-mentoring.

The program begins each year on April 1 with an application deadline in early March. Previously, it ran for 12 months, but beginning this year the program will run for six months, after which the mentor-mentee pair will have the option of extending for an additional six months. The application process is more streamlined if you have paired up with a mentor and agreed on your objectives. But if you haven’t already found one, the Mentoring Committee can pair you with a suitable mentor. Mentees and mentors generally meet about once per month, typically via Skype or a similar platform for Q&A or other discussion. It’s also worth noting that certified translators earn continuing education points for participating. If this sounds intriguing and you think you would like to be a mentor or a mentee, please contact the Mentoring Committee at mentoring@atanet.org and mark your calendar for the 2021 program year!

Masterminds Program: The committee also has a Masterminds program in the works. The idea is to bring together independent groups of around a half-dozen self-guided professional peers of approximately the same level of experience to discuss opportunities and things they have struggled with in their business. These peer groups will typically meet for six to 12 months in a venue of their choosing to brainstorm solutions and set goals, as well as to encourage and hold each other accountable for attaining their goals. This is conceived as a supplement to the Mentoring Program and other ATA continuing education offerings. The program is expected to be launched later this year at the ATA’s 61st Annual Conference in Boston—yet another reason to attend!

The Savvy Newcomer Blog: Always popular, The Savvy Newcomer blog aims to provide high-quality, peer-reviewed content directed at newcomers to the industry, although the information is often also relevant for more experienced practitioners. The blog began as an independent activity, yet always collaborated informally with the Business Practices Education Committee and looked to the Business Practices listserv as a source of inspiration for blog topics. So, it seemed a natural fit for the Practices Education Committee when ATA decided a few years ago that it was time to bring the blog under the umbrella of a committee; nevertheless, it remains essentially an autonomous operation. The Savvy Newcomer was founded by Spanish Language Division members Helen Eby, Jamie Hartz, and Daniela Guanipa in 2013, but was ultimately the product of a broader effort by ATA to assist students and newcomers to the profession that went through several stages of development before taking on its current form. Meanwhile, the founding members are part of a whole team of volunteers working to provide fresh and reposted content on a weekly basis. Topics include “So You Want to Be a Freelance Translator (or Interpreter): Starting from Scratch,” “Questions to Ask Before You Accept a Translation Project,” “Attending Your Clients’ Conferences,” and “Translating for Pharma.” Of course, this barely scratches the surface of what the blog has to offer, so if you haven’t visited lately, check it out under https://atanet.savvynewcomer.org.

A New Blog for Experienced Translators/Interpreters: Finally, the committee is busy developing another blog to be geared toward more experienced translators and interpreters, with content to be added initially on a monthly basis. The name of this new blog was recently determined by vote in a poll posted to the Business Practices listserv. Henceforth, it will be known by popular demand as… (drumroll please). …The ATA Business Practices Blog. A launch date has not been set, but look to this blog for guidance on next level business practices later this year when it is expected to go live.

The committee is currently looking for a social media manager to coordinate and promote its blog content on social media.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?
Now that we’ve answered the question of what the Business Practices Education Committee is doing for ATA members, you may find yourself wondering what you can do for the committee. As a matter of fact, the committee is currently looking for a social media manager to coordinate and promote its blog content on social media. This would be a great way for a gregarious newcomer to raise their profile or for any ATA member who enjoys social media to give back to the profession. Complete the form online at https://buff.ly/2YfpoxQ if you are interested in becoming the committee’s social media manager. And if you have any questions, you can contact Sarah Symons Glegorio at sarahsg@sharktranslations.com for more information.

Michael Engley, CT is currently a member of ATA’s Business Practices Education Committee. Previously, he served as administrator and assistant administrator of the German Language Division (GLD), as well as the dictionary review coordinator for the GLD’s newsletter interaktiv. He is an ATA-certified German>English translator specializing in corporate communications and financial translation. Contact: michael@bullishtranslations.com.
Many experienced translators consider a shift toward international organizations, either as part of the staff or as freelancers. But how is translating for an international organization different from commercial translation? This overview will consider what matters most when translating for an international organization.

**HOW IS INSTITUTIONAL TRANSLATION DIFFERENT?**

There may be several reasons why an international organization needs translation services, but the main one is that many of them have official languages, defined as such in their charters. Some organizations differentiate between official and working languages, although there are differences in what each term means: in some institutions, working languages are a subset of official languages, and vice versa. The key idea, however, is that some organizations are mandated to make at least some of their documents available in more than one language. Depending on the size of the organization, they may have an in-house team of translators, revisers, and other language specialists, or rely on subcontractors, or use a combination of both.

A lot of the documents that are translated in an institutional setting consist of parliamentary documentation, which means documents that are circulated before a meeting and then discussed, negotiated, and voted on. Obviously, the different language versions must match exactly, including all nuances and formal structure.

Otherwise, imagine the delegate from Narnia saying, “I will only vote in favor if we remove the bracketed phrase in paragraph 47,” and the delegate from Lalaland responding, “there is no bracketed phrase in paragraph 47 of my document.” It doesn't matter if the translation was otherwise correct and the expression was set between commas. If the meeting has to stop because of a translation issue, the credibility of the entire document is compromised, and that might impact the flow of negotiation. Sure, replacing parentheses with commas may be fine in other contexts, but not in institutional translation.

A salient characteristic of institutional translation is the need for the final product to be entirely anonymous, without a trace of the personal voice of an individual translator.

So, how is institutional translation different from other types of translation? The truth is, it’s not that different from translating for a large company. There will be glossaries, style guides, and conventions or “house rules.” There will also be many reference documents that may be similar or almost identical to the text at hand. There will be humongous databases and parallel corpora that will be both a blessing (the answer to your
A salient characteristic of institutional translation is the need for the final product to be entirely anonymous, without a trace of the personal voice of an individual translator. Think of it as a chorus singing in perfect harmony, where the result is the sum of multiple voices, but each of them must be indiscernible. There are several reasons for this. The most obvious is that the translated document, just like the original, belongs to the institution, which is its sole author, but there are other practical, very compelling considerations, such as the need for consistency.

Be Stylistically Consistent: One reason for stylistic consistency is that many originals are broken down into two, three, or maybe 20 pieces, each going to a different translator. Everybody agrees that splitting a document is not ideal, but there simply is no other way to handle a report that’s over 200 pages long and needs to be formatted and circulated in a week. To complicate matters, there’s often no time for a final, unifying round of revision. In another setting this would be a recipe for a Frankenstein monster, but institutional translators are used to following “the house style,” which may be stilted and sometimes awkward but highly consistent. And consistent writing lends itself very much to a seamless outcome.

Adopt the Institution’s Working Methods: Splitting a source document among several translators is not the only counter-intuitive practice in institutional language services. Another one that’s sure to puzzle newcomers is the nonlinear processing of documents, which means working on an interim version of the source while it’s still being negotiated or refined. This requires working on the assignment twice, first with the draft and then with the final version, not counting the multiple corrections and minor updates that may materialize along the way. Nobody likes to work like that, but, again, sometimes it’s the only way to meet deadlines. And sometimes the translator updating the interim translation is not the same one who worked on it in the first place, which showcases the relevance of uniformity and adherence to conventions.

If the meeting has to stop because of a translation issue, the credibility of the entire document is compromised, and that might impact the flow of negotiation.

Learn to Write Like Everyone Else: Another reason for stylistic consistency is that most assignments involve some degree of recycled text from a similar original. Again, if the translator gave in to the temptation to show off their talent and knack for elegant prose, the result would be a messy patchwork. The ability to write just like everybody else is one of the most valued strengths of an institutional translator. Mastering it requires a great deal of attention and humility, but it’s worth cultivating.

Adhere to Precedent: Adhering to precedent is also very important for consistency and integrity. This means that, whenever there’s a quote from or a reference to a previous document, no matter how long or short, you must assume there exists a previous translation that needs to be found and reused. It would certainly be easier, or at least faster, just to translate it from scratch, but that would be bad practice.

Adhere to Vetted Terminology: Strict adherence to vetted terminology is another way to achieve consistency within and across documents. Most institutions have their own terminology databases, which are living organisms that grow and evolve daily. These databases are maintained by terminologists who are themselves translators, or at least work in close proximity to translators.

A lot of work and research goes into each entry, and there may be excellent reasons why a certain term is translated “this way” instead of “that way,” even if “that way” is the preferred term in another institution or if the translator knows for sure that “that way” is also correct or, possibly, better. A term with an entry in the database must be translated “this way,” provided that the context matches. If the translator thinks there is a compelling reason to depart from the database (and sometimes there is), a good approach is to ask a terminologist or a more senior translator for guidance. If the term is not in the database, the translator should do some research and submit a proposal to the terminologists. All of this takes an awful lot of time.

Characteristics of Successful Institutional Translation

To be successful, the institutional translator must:

Lose Their Individual Voice: A salient characteristic of institutional translation is the need for the final product to be entirely anonymous, without a trace of the personal voice of an individual translator. Think of it as a chorus singing in perfect harmony, where the result is the sum of multiple voices, but each of them must be indiscernible. There are several reasons for this. The most obvious is that the translated document, just like the original, belongs to the institution, which is its sole author, but there are other practical, very compelling considerations, such as the need for consistency.

Adhere to Institutional Language Services: Another only counter-intuitive practice in several translators is not the

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together with good technique (i.e., systematically checking databases for suspicious phrases), are priceless.

For example, imagine your original has a sentence that reads: "In Albanta, delegates pledged to provide a strong impetus to inclusive prosperity and welfare for all citizens." You may just see a sentence here and simply proceed to translate it to the best of your ability, but you would be missing a hidden quotation. The delegates got together in Albanta sometime in the past and agreed to an institutional declaration that read precisely like this: "We pledge to provide a strong impetus to inclusive prosperity and welfare for all citizens and to take special care of those struggling with inequalities." Most CAT tools would miss the coincidence. It's up to the translator to recognize it and find the right reference.

But how would you know there's even a reference document, let alone find it? In this case, you have a strong hint: the word “pledged.” Pledge is not something delegates do casually in their own time. It's a deliberate commitment, and there has to be an institutional record of it. If you've been working for this institution long enough, you may be very familiar with the Albanta Declaration, so there you go. Otherwise, be alert and heed the “pledge” hint, and scan your databases for key words such as “impetus” and “inclusive prosperity” in case there is a coincidence. It may take a while, so don't give up too soon.

Not all precedent has to be followed all the time. It depends, mostly, on the hierarchical value of the reference. If it's a legacy document (i.e., a treaty, agreement, or institutional declaration such as a resolution or decision), you need to reproduce the language verbatim. Otherwise, there may be some leeway, but the general rule is: follow precedent, unless you have a good reason to deviate. Not being aware of the precedent is not a good reason to deviate.

SOME GIVENS ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL WORK

An institutional translation must be linguistically flawless. This is a given, and it's not something that can be learned on the job. If a translator has trouble with dangling modifiers in English or the proper use of gerunds in Spanish, or whatever high-level difficulty their target language might present, they may still have a bright future in translation elsewhere, just not in an international organization.

This is one of the reasons why passing rates in access exams are so low: the house style, terminology, conventions, and procedures can be taught, but a translator has to come on board in full command of the target language.

Another given: translations must be submitted on time. True, meeting deadlines is important everywhere, but in other settings many project managers build buffers into their planning because, well, life happens. In the institutional world, life happens too, but the consequences of a delay may be extreme. Don't submit late, ever. And if you absolutely must, be proactive. Let the scheduler know as soon as you become aware of the extenuating circumstance so they can make alternative arrangements (i.e., someone else will pull an all-nighter to finish your work).

Accuracy is another hallmark of institutional translation. In addition, you have to be extremely mindful of political and diplomatic considerations. Nuance and emphasis must be carefully weighted. The safest approach is to stick very close to the original, sometimes closer than you would like. The result may not flow as beautifully as that other rendition that came to your mind; it might even be unnatural or clunky. But, as long as it's faithful, that's the right translation.

Conversely, institutional translation is not necessarily idiomatic. In an ideal world, it definitely would be, but your focus has to be on the must-haves above. If you have to give up something, give up idiomaticity. Did the original use two adjectives that sound redundant in your language? Go ahead, be redundant. That's better than raising eyebrows and having someone question the integrity of your translation.

How about ambiguity? Should institutional translation aim for an unequivocal, crystal-clear message? Not
necessarily! There is a lot of deliberate ambiguity in the originals. A translator’s goal has to be to detect any ambiguity in the original, which is easier said than done, and recognize if an obscure passage is accidental or intentional, and ask for clarification when necessary. The translation may need to mirror the ambiguity in the target language, which also requires skill.

By the way, there are a few fascinating cases in history where ambiguity was elevated to a form of art in the world of diplomacy, but that is beyond the scope of this article. If anyone is curious, go check "constructive ambiguity" on Wikipedia.

And what if the original has an obvious error? Outside of the institutional setting, you may be tempted to just translate what’s in front of you without questioning it, or you may consider just fixing the mistake in your translation. Neither solution would work in an institutional context. Instead, you are expected to raise the issue with someone in a position to contact the author for clarification and correction. Otherwise, you’ll end up with mismatched versions, a problem that might be compounded if there are multiple languages involved.

In addition, there’s always the risk that you misunderstood something, or that you “fixed it wrong.” See, for example: “The index increased from 596 in the first half of 2017 to 577 in the same period of 2018.” There is clearly an error in this sentence, but is it that the index, in fact, decreased, or are the figures swapped? Or is there a typo in one of the figures? There is so much opportunity to make an error worse! Bottom line: don’t assume anything!

**WHAT IS QUALITY IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING?**

One might want to summarize all the above under the umbrella of “quality” and say that institutional translation must be of the highest quality, but things are not that simple. What, precisely, is quality in an institutional setting? A translation that contains no errors? Does this mean no stray commas, no typos, no misplaced footnote calls? No nuance lost? It depends!

The important thing to understand is that there’s no external, objective definition of quality in institutional translation. Quality is defined by the organization, and it’s document-specific. A quality translation is one that meets the institution’s expectations, whatever those may be, for that specific document. The term of art is “fit for purpose.” There are many factors involved, but the main ones are visibility (including political aspects), shelf life, and legal/financial impact.

Given an unlimited budget and timeframe, we would all strive (with more or less success) for absolutely perfect translations. But reality has a way to bring us back to earth, and the fact is that budgets and deadlines are often tight and shrinking, so the best practice is for the team in charge to assign the right amount of time and resources to each project so that the institution’s commitment to multilingualism is duly honored. If the assignment is for a working internal document that will undergo several rounds of negotiation, the bar will correctly be set much lower than for the final version of an institutional declaration that will get quoted, referred to for generations, and possibly sculpted in marble, figuratively or even literally.

In practical terms, a translation is fit for purpose if it goes entirely unnoticed. If it’s delivered on time and nobody raises concerns—success! If you’re a freelancer translating for an institution, fit for purpose also means delivering a translation that requires little to no intervention by the in-house team. And remember, it’s emphatically not up to the translator to define what the standard of quality is for any given document. It’s up to the institution. The translator’s responsibility is to do the best they can in the time assigned, without cutting corners.

**NOT FOR EVERYONE, BUT VERY REWARDING**

I said at the beginning that institutional translation is not for everyone. It requires skill, experience, and the right tools, as well as good instincts and a deep understanding of the particular institution and its workings. In addition, the institutional translator has to be willing to check their ego at the door and sing in harmony with everyone else, and to take the time to submit terminology proposals, ask the right questions, and learn all the conventions. The learning curve is very steep and not all assignments are exciting or interesting, with hundreds of pages of tedious budgetary documents that are, nonetheless, equally crucial and demanding of your full attention to detail.

Why, then, choose this field? First, it offers an environment of steady work and predictable income, which are nothing to scoff about in the industry these days. It also provides daily opportunities to be on top of world affairs and to work on assignments that make a difference. And, interestingly, what makes it hard is also what makes it easy, with those gigantic multilingual corpora and databases at your fingertips and many brilliant colleagues, right next door, all sold on teamwork and willing to coach the newcomers and share their burden.

**Izaskun Orkwis, CT** has been a translator for more than 20 years, both as a freelancer and in-house, working mainly for international organizations. She is currently a staff reviser for the Spanish translation service at the United Nations Secretariat in New York. She has a BA in Romance languages and an MA in institutional translation. She is an ATA-certified English<>Spanish translator, a certified court interpreter in Virginia, and a sworn translator in Spain. Contact: izaskun@gmail.com.
Heritage Speakers in Health Care Interpreting: A Case Study in Virtual Training

Find out how implementing a flipped classroom methodology is proving to be a valuable component in a program designed to support bilingual employees who are Spanish heritage speakers on their journey toward becoming professionally certified health care interpreters.

As health care interpreting becomes more professionalized, thanks to the efforts of national and statewide professional interpreter organizations and associations and the introduction of national certification in 2010, heritage speakers entering the profession face a unique challenge. In the following, we would like to share the lessons learned from the efforts of a pioneering three-month interpreter training program at Barton Health, a community health system in South Lake Tahoe, California, where more than 80% of the bilingual employees participating in our program are Spanish heritage speakers. This initiative used the flipped classroom methodology to introduce students to the medical interpreting profession, improve Spanish fluency, and expand their bilingual medical terminology.

ABOUT BARTON
If you’re fortunate enough to have visited South Lake Tahoe, we hope you had a grand time and were able to stay out of Barton Memorial Hospital. But if you were seen at Barton, we hope you received consistently exceptional care from our rural, yet robust health care system. Barton Memorial Hospital, a component of Barton Health, consists of 24-hour emergency care services, 63 patient beds, a skilled nursing facility with 48 resident beds, and many departments to serve the health and medical needs of our patients, residents, employees, visitors, volunteers, and the community.

Our Language Access Services Department was established in 2006 with approximately 10 untrained dual-role Spanish medical interpreters and two rickety laptops that rolled around the emergency department for video remote interpreting. We currently have 14 nationally certified Spanish dual-role medical interpreters, an additional 14 students waiting for the results of their Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters’ National Oral Test, and another 12 participating in the training for this year. Thirty-four sturdy video remote interpreting units are scattered throughout our health care system as well. If the 14 students pass the oral test, we’ll be able to provide an in-person or video Spanish interpreter for each of our 63 beds simultaneously.

USING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL
If you’re new to this jargon, here’s a little primer. A flipped classroom is a teaching model that uses technology to flip the roles in a traditional classroom. It’s called a “flipped” classroom because the classroom paradigm looks totally different than the traditional classroom. Essentially, it means that students first gain exposure to the subject outside of class through a series of online materials, such as videos, audios, and reading assignments, that they can refer to as many times as necessary. Then the actual class time is used to do the harder work of assimilating that knowledge through problem-solving and discussion.

Asynchronous learning, as opposed to synchronous learning (which involves students learning together at the same time, whether online or in person), means the material is delivered online via web-based platforms, email, online forums,
and message boards. Students work at their own pace and on their own time.

The online flipped classroom portion of our program during January, February, and March was strategically designed to take place over our worst weather/commuting months. (Lake Tahoe is uniquely located on the border of California and Nevada, with an average snowfall of 34 feet a year, which can make commuting a challenge.) Students were expected to dedicate five hours per week to studying and online classwork, for a total of 60 hours.

**INTERPRETER TRAINING TIMELINE**

To keep up with national advances in our profession, as of January 1, 2019, Barton Health started requiring all in-person interpreters to be nationally certified. To accomplish this, we expanded our training program and evolved our 40-hour course into a year-long program. The program follows the timeline below:

1. **Take the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Oral Proficiency (OPIc) Exam.** Students must obtain a minimal speaking proficiency level of Advanced-Mid for Limited Certification on the oral exam to enter our program. (Many times, heritage speakers score one level below at Advanced-Low on their first attempt. Some then re-test at their own expense and achieve an Advanced-Mid for Limited Certification on their second attempt.)

2. **A three-month introductory flipped online class.** This is where we really dug in and catered to our heritage speakers’ needs by working on increased fluency, advanced language vocabulary, and instilling linguistic and cultural pride.

3. **A 72-hour onsite medical interpreting course.** During the three-month time period, we also include shadowing sessions (students watch a trainer interpret for four to eight hours).

4. **Preceptorships:** students are observed interpreting and coached as needed (four to eight hours).

5. **Practice written and oral tests** (one to two hours).

6. **Take the National Certification Exam (Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters).**

**OBJECTIVES**

We chose a flipped asynchronous learning environment because we felt it lent itself best to our somewhat isolated geographical location (including challenging winter driving conditions for both trainers and students) and scheduling issues for full-time employees who are juggling work, parenting, and other responsibilities.

This format worked very well for both the instructor (Julie), who didn’t have to brave the four-hour drive on icy roads every week during the winter, and for Barton Health, as it meant no disruption of our student employees’ work schedules, no need for coverage during work time, and no classroom space required.

We initially chose the Schoology online learning platform for our online training because Julie had previous experience with it as a student. Our objectives for the three-month course were for the students to:

1. Become familiar with Schoology and learn to access instructional material (documents, video links, etc.), homework assignments, and upload completed homework assignments.

2. Become familiar with the advantages, challenges, and solutions associated with studying on an online learning platform.

3. Learn to use Audible as a tool for improving Spanish-language fluency.

4. Use Audible, YouTube Videos, and podcasts to learn and practice the technique of shadowing.

5. Use the above material to harvest medical terminology.

6. Learn to use online and paper resources to research and expand bilingual medical terminology.

**COURSE ELEMENTS**

Each class included a variety of activities: group discussions, assignments, YouTube videos, readings, and exercises. Once students were familiar with the online platform and had installed Audible on their mobile devices, we introduced them to the practice of shadowing with an audio book that was full of medical terminology and jargon: *Cerebro de Pan (Grain Brain)* by David Perlmutter. As the weeks went on, we built on students’ initial shadowing practice by introducing some material on reflective learning. We then progressed to having students record themselves shadowing, reflecting on their progress, and finally submitting their recordings to the instructor.

Once the students were at ease with using Audible to practice shadowing, we added YouTube videos and podcasts in Spanish and assigned more terminology exercises from this material, which also provided rich opportunities for group discussions. One especially impactful YouTube video was a TEDTalk by Mexican actress Karla Souza, who eloquently described her struggles in the film industry and how she overcame adversity. In an ensuing assigned group discussion, students were asked to reflect on what life lessons Karla had learned, what inspired them about her talk, and what lessons they
would apply to their own journey as professional interpreters.

This and similar activities led to indepth discussions, gave students the opportunity to express themselves in Spanish in writing (which many of them were not accustomed to doing), and build community by learning about each other’s experiences and reacting to everyone’s comments. As one participant wrote: “The discussions did help a lot, like to break the ice and get to know each other, and then when we were in class, it was like we already knew each other.”

Another key element of the classes was using the material (the Audible book, podcasts, and YouTube videos—all in Spanish) to harvest new medical terminology and begin building students’ skills related to researching and evaluating bilingual terminology resources.

One very heartwarming and slightly unanticipated outcome of the online course, which was expressed by many students, was an increased sense of pride in their bilingual abilities and cultural heritage, and a newfound determination to use these abilities to serve the members of their community who rely on interpreters to meet their health care needs.

LESSONS LEARNED
This was also a rich learning lesson for both of us as trainers. The following are some of the changes we’ve implemented in our 2020 program based on what we learned from the 2019 class:

Get an early handle on the tendency to procrastinate. In our 2019 classes, we realized that many students were waiting until the wee hours of the night before assignments were due to complete their work, so we created a module and assignments focused on procrastination and time management into the curriculum about halfway through the course. This time, we simply moved these modules and assignments to the first two weeks, with good results!

Avoid technical glitches and slow starts. Instead of simply diving in online like we did in 2019, we added an onboarding one-hour synchronous
Students expressed an increased sense of pride in their bilingual abilities and cultural heritage, and a newfound determination to use these abilities to serve their community.

“I feel honored to be part of this program. I thought that I spoke Spanish properly, but after this program I know that there is always something to learn.”

“There are so many ways of studying and learning, and I feel this is one of the best experiences I could have had.”

“You learn better study skills, like self-reflection to better yourself with interpreting. I didn’t realize this was a whole other career, which is really awesome. So, at the end of it, it’s actually well worth the sacrifice.”

NOTES
1. If you’re unfamiliar with the term “heritage speaker,” here’s a definition from Language Line International: “A heritage speaker refers to a person who has learned a language informally by being exposed to it at home, as opposed to having learned it formally in a school setting. It may be their native tongue—the language they identify as being their primary language—but more often than not, their heritage language becomes secondary to English, the language in which they receive their formal education, and is used the most in their daily life outside the home.”

2. Dual-role interpreters are generally ad hoc interpreters who are hired in an administrative or clinical position as their primary role, but use their bilingual language skills to serve as interpreters in a secondary role. For more information, download: Wilson-Stronks, Amy, and Erica Galvez. E. Hospitals, Language, and Culture: A Snapshot of the Nation—Exploring Cultural and Linguistic Services in the Nation’s Hospitals (The Joint Commission, 2007), https://bit.ly/Wilson-Stronks-Galvez.

3. For more information on the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters, see http://cchicertification.org/certifications.

4. The OPIc is an online test that provides valid and reliable oral proficiency testing on a large scale. (See: https://bit.ly/ACTFL-OPIc)

5. Information on tester and rater certifications awarded by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages can be found at https://bit.ly/ACTFL-certifications.

6. Shadowing is a technique used for learning new languages and improving fluency that involves listening to a source audio while repeating what is said in the same language with a slight delay (décalage) as in simultaneous interpreting, but without the language conversion.

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Interpreters are vital part of ATA. This column is designed to offer insights and perspectives from professional interpreters.

All interpreters have been affected by the pandemic, and for many (if not most), the financial threat is significant.

Interpreting in the Face of a Pandemic

(The following was originally published on the blog of ATAs Interpreters Division, www.atanet-division.org/ID/blog.)

On January 21, 2020, the state of Washington reported the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the U.S. On February 29, it announced the country’s first COVID-19-related death. The virus has since spread across the country, just as it has around the globe. And as the world hunkers down against COVID-19, those of us who work in language access services face an abruptly-changed environment.

FALLOUT
As social distancing was implemented and stay-at-home orders issued, conferences and events were cancelled. Courts closed. Depositions and interviews dropped off the calendar. School districts closed their doors and found ways to provide meals. Hospitals and clinics scrambled to find beds and equipment.

Traditionally, onsite interpreting has accounted for over 80% of all spoken-language assignments, while the remaining percentage of the work was done by over-the-phone interpreting (OPI) or video remote interpreting (VRI). In a few short weeks, that scenario flipped. [1]

Judicial: Initially, courts took a short hiatus. They postponed all nonessential legal proceedings and jury trials in the expectation that things would soon return to normal. Interpreters’ only measure of protection was the use of wireless equipment. Now, judges and court staff are learning to hold many proceedings remotely. Depositions are being held using online platforms. Many court interpreters with a lifetime of experience have been struggling to find their footing in this virtual world.

Health Care: While remote services are provided where possible, health care interpreters still have to report to hospitals and clinics in person, which makes them the most exposed during this pandemic. The need for personal protective equipment has increased, but shortages are widespread. The protective clothing (or bunny suits) required in these settings can muffle the voices of medical personnel. Most medical staff and interpreters understand the need to project their voices, especially when wearing masks. However, keep in mind that patients and their family members—who are already sick, nervous, or scared and unaccustomed to wearing masks—could be more difficult to understand if they speak as they would under normal circumstances.

Education: School districts across the country closed their buildings (at first temporarily, then indefinitely). Districts worked to educate families and feed schoolchildren while shifting to online learning and implementing technology solutions so all students could study online. In California, the Orange County Department of Education, which serves nearly 500,000 students, cancelled all existing interpreting assignments until Individualized Education Program (IEP) and other meetings could be rescheduled. Schools have traditionally used a combination of trained in-house interpreting staff, independent contractors, and language services companies. However, it takes time to equip school personnel for remote work.

Conference: Early in this pandemic, before the full impact on health care, judicial, and educational interpreting was felt in the U.S., conferences and meetings around the globe began to cancel. Conference interpreters, booked months in advance, watched their calendars empty, with no idea when they would be rescheduled. All interpreters, in these categories and others, have been affected by the pandemic, and for many (if not most), the financial threat is significant. Some may find it necessary to shift to other lines of work. This could result in a loss of qualified professionals before the world finds its new normal.

WHAT COMES NEXT?
Where do we go from here? How do we continue to serve our clients and feed our families?

We train. This is the time to expand our skill sets. Learn that new tool you’ve been eying. Explore unused features of tools you’ve had for years. Read those books on legal contracts that have gathered dust while you waited for time. Listen to podcasts, watch webinars.

We retrain. For those of you who, like me, have always squirmed at anything other than in-person interpreting—‘it’s time to get over it. The hallmark of a professional is the ability to give our best regardless of the circumstances. Right now, giving our best means relearning how to do our jobs.

Training in OPI, VRI, and remote simultaneous interpreting is being offered by numerous individuals and companies. For example, the Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association in the Dallas-Fort Worth area is holding peer-to-peer online training and practice sessions, including mock depositions, for its members. There are also webinars, articles, books, and training videos.

We maintain our professional standards and rates. The only thing that makes providing remote services easier than in-person is the lack of a commute. There is no valid reason for rates to change when the service provided (and its quality) is fundamentally the same.

Here are some other things we need to consider doing:

- Learn to use online platforms before you have to use them professionally. Be prepared to guide clients on how to communicate through an interpreter while using remote solutions.
Rather than driving to a client’s office, invest in your own online meeting account (Zoom, GoToMeeting, UberConference, etc.) and reach them virtually.

Avoid locking yourself into a given field. Court interpreters in limbo, for instance, might find opportunities with school districts as they restart IEP meetings. Look beyond your usual clientele.

All equipment must be up to the task. Our skills are of little use if no one can hear or understand us. Make sure that your equipment delivers the best possible results or replace it.

An online calendar (such as Calendly or Acuity) can let clients check your availability and schedule interpreting services at their convenience.

Be intentional. Draft an outline of what services you will and will not offer. Identify how you will provide them. List your hourly rates, any equipment you might need to acquire or upgrade, and your availability. Writing it out can help you identify issues before they become problems.

Learn how your clients are handling business during this time. If you know what changes they have had to make, you will have a better idea of how you can serve them.


Consider offering related services, such as online language classes, while waiting for clients to get back to business.

Look into any government or other relief programs that may help you stay afloat as the world finds its footing.

THE NEW NORMAL

Eventually, the pandemic will subside. Businesses will reopen, conferences will be held, and school kids will be back in the classroom. But we’ll never go back to “normal.” The world will be changed.

RESOURCES (JUST A FEW)

- ATA Webinars On-Demand: “Understanding Remote Simultaneous Interpreting”
- Better Business Bureau Tips for Business Owners during the Pandemic
- Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters Statement on Ensuring Interpreters’ Safety during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Comparison of Popular Remote Meeting Tools
  (Please note that some of the information is outdated, but this comparison can help you ask the right questions as you evaluate online platforms.)
- Consumer Reports Coronavirus Hub Tips on Equipment and Services
- InterpretAmerica 2020: A Unified Response to Ensure Access to Interpreting Services
  www.interpretamerica.com/ia-2020-resources
- InterpretAmerica Choosing a USB Headset for Remote Interpreting
- International Association of Conference Interpreters Best Practices for Interpreters during the COVID-19 Crisis
- KUDO Online Meeting Platform
- National Center on Deafness at California State University Northridge YouTube Video on Using an Interpreter in Zoom
- National Council on Interpreting in Health Care Webinar on the Temporary Transition to Remote Interpreting During Health Emergencies
- Rochester Institute of Technology Libraries Healthcare Industry Association Practical Interpreting II: Video Remote Interpreting
- Techforword Free Webinars
- Troublesome Terps Podcast “Remote Interpreting with a Cat on Your Lap”
  www.troubleterps.com/15
- U.S Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Guidance on Telehealth Remote Communications
- Zoom Introduction to Zoom Conference Interpreting

We’ll be changed. We need to accept and embrace that as of now.

Companies may alter their business models, more people may work from home, and protocols and procedures may change. We don’t know the exact shape of the changes to come, we only know that they will. And we can be sure that our services will be just as essential in that new normal as they were before and are today.

So, while the world hunkers down against COVID-19, please remember: we’re all in this together. And we have work to do.

NOTE


Carol Shaw, CT is the editor of ATA’s Interpreters Division (ID) blog and a member of the ID Leadership Council. She is an ATA-certified translator (Spanish>English) and licensed court interpreter, and has been providing Spanish<>English translation services to school districts in North Texas for nearly 20 years. She created a brief training program for district employees providing informal language services, consults with districts regarding their translation and interpreting needs, and occasionally serves as an interpreter for district-level meetings. When she is not partnering with schools to enhance communication between parents and educators, she primarily focuses on legal, business, and marketing translation. Contact: carol@carolshaw.net.
Dealing with Uncertain Times

By Judy Jenner

By the time you have this issue in your hands, things may or may not have gotten back to normal after a very difficult and unprecedented spring due to the coronavirus outbreak. I’m going to go out on a limb here and predict that things will be far from normal, so an article about how to deal with your interpreting business should be relevant at the time of this writing and in early summer.

In mid-March, I saw my interpreting business decline by 90%. By the end of the month, it was completely decimated as law firms cancelled depositions, arbitrations, mediations, etc., and courts continued most cases but only held hearings for urgent cases. The few court hearings that needed an interpreter were easily handled by in-house interpreters rather than by contractors like me. I had quite a few conference interpreting assignments lined up, and those were all cancelled in mid-March. Some entrepreneurial law firms and litigation services companies moved to remote depositions, and I did a few of these with average results. I continued charging my same hourly rate, but as we were using Zoom or even just a phone conference call, everything had to be done consecutively, which is challenging (but lucrative, as I bill these by the hour).

Many of my law firm clients stopped doing remote after they realized how difficult this was for most parties, including the court reporter and deponents, who often rely on a cell phone and speakerphone with poor audio quality.

Just like for all my colleagues, this has been a difficult time. Not necessarily for me personally, because I’m in the lucky position of also having a boutique translation business that still has clients and work coming in (albeit less), but because I’m worried about others of lesser means and the impact this situation will have on so many who already live paycheck to paycheck. The global effect of this crisis is almost unimaginable, and it’s made me feel hopeless, angry, and sad. However, I’ve come up with a few ways to deal with this terrible uncertainty and my own feeling of powerlessness, plus my empty calendar, that you might also find useful.

Do Something Nice for Others: Our profession is a very supportive under normal circumstances, but now we’ve become even more supportive, which is great. I go beyond our profession every day, including: ordering books from a small independent bookstore that’s been hard hit by the virus, making cookies and delivering them to a friend’s house, writing a letter of recommendation for a colleague, becoming a peer mentor in Corinne McKay’s free MOOC-style course for beginning translators, helping find clients for a colleague who wanted to get into remote interpreting, and doing a video chat a day with a colleague or friend who wants to talk. The possibilities are endless, and helping others feels good. You can’t control what the virus does, but you can certainly control what you do for others.

Exercise and Yoga: Studies show that exercise may actually strengthen your immune system. With my yoga studio and gym closed, I’ve found new ways to exercise. I’ve been running outside more (keeping a safe distance from others), gone on walks with one friend at a time, taken live Zoom classes with yoga instructors (helping to support them as their businesses have collapsed), and grown to love yoga videos on YouTube.

Virtual Book Club and Happy Hours: To retain some sense of normalcy, I’ve moved my book club online and am doing at least one happy hour a week via some form of video chat. We each grab snacks and a favorite drink and chat away. It’s almost as good as the real thing.

Learn Something New: I’ve filled my usually packed calendar with webinars, MOOCs (on coronavirus through Coursera), and have learned about new software, how to translate virus-related terms, how to teach remotely more efficiently, etc.

Catch Up on Your To-Do List: While I’ll never get to inbox zero, I’m currently closer than ever. I’ve shredded a box of old documents, started going through my photos that were in dire need of a clean-up, and tackled some drawers I should have organized a long time ago. These are small successes that do wonders for my mood and motivation.

Don’t Reduce Your Rates: Finally, while it’s very tempting to do so, I would resist the temptation of lowering rates and working conditions, as it will be challenging to reverse them once things are better. We might have to temporarily relax standards a bit, but just for now. For example, I had always declined over-the-phone consecutive interpreting for depositions, but I did accept a few during the crisis. But we do need to make sure we safeguard our rates and working conditions, now more than ever.

We’re all in this together, dear colleagues and friends. Now is the time for even more kindness and support. Let’s help each other through this. What can you do to help someone today or in the near future?

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This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to judy.jenner@twintranslations.com.
What Are Translation-Specific Tool Providers and Developers Doing to Assist Translators During COVID-19?

In light of the current situation, it was suggested that I write something connecting technology with our all-consuming health crisis. None of us can predict what things will be like when this column goes to print, but it’s safe to say that our lives will not have returned to normal—whatever “normal” is now.

I really liked the idea, so I asked the same question of the technology vendors themselves. (Since I had to limit myself, I asked only computer-assisted translation tool or translation environment tool providers and developers.) This is the message I sent:

I’m working on an article about what vendors of translation-specific tools are doing to respond to the coronavirus. Clearly, these are very, very difficult times for all of us, personally and professionally. I’m aware that you may see a significant decrease in sales in the next few weeks and maybe months as much of translation life slows down. Still, this is a good opportunity to reach out to translators with offers specifically geared toward this crisis, including training, digital meetings, and other kinds of engagement. What are you planning in this regard?

You won’t be surprised to hear that virtually all vendors replied to outline their efforts. I’ll list them here in alphabetical order. (I edited the answers to cut text that seemed too promotional or offers that listed special sales of existing products. Also, nearly all respondents mentioned that staff members are working remotely while ensuring the operation of all services and necessary uptimes required.)

Please keep in mind that the timelines for these offers might have changed since the initial responses were received, so make sure to consult the websites listed. I just wanted to provide a snapshot of how vendors responded to the gravity of the situation to offer support to translators and interpreters during a difficult time. It’s just another example of how our industry is pulling together to do what they can.

**ATRIL**
www.atril.com

ATRIL has been trying to help our customers and partners face this difficult situation. For example, in China, where we partner with a large number of universities, we’ve equipped university staff and students with free DVX3 Pro licenses so they can still study and learn while being at home.

For translators who are already using DVX3 but need an additional license for another computer during this crisis, we’re providing them with temporary activation codes.

**MEMOQ**
www.memoQ.com

The top priority of memoQ is ensuring a safe and remote working environment for our employees, as well as providing our users with professional solutions and supporting life science companies during the pandemic. To this end, we have:

- Provided local and international organizations and software development companies that are fighting COVID-19 with free server licenses during the crisis.
- Provided free server licenses for non-governmental organizations and life science companies that are fighting COVID-19 and dealing with crisis communication.

In addition to these initiatives, memoQ organizes virtual events to further develop their users’ project management skills and provide both memoQ and non-memoQ users with valuable information on how to improve their translation and localization workflows.

**SDL**
www.sdltrados.com

The skills of the professional translation community are in high demand at the moment. As such, SDL has taken the following actions:

- Provided free access to machine translation for health science professionals (see x8.link/SDLHealthcare)
WHAT ARE TRANSLATION-SPECIFIC TOOL PROVIDERS AND DEVELOPERS DOING TO ASSIST TRANSLATORS DURING COVID-19? continued

- Increased the allocation of free machine translation characters to SDL Trados Studio users. There may be a greater need for urgent translations at this time. Some businesses may also be suffering from staff reductions. Therefore, for SDL Trados Studio customers who are currently on a neural machine translation package provided by SDL Machine Translation, we’re doubling the number of free characters per month until the end of May—and we might extend further depending on the global situation. This change shall be automatically applied to customer accounts and should help them cope with any surge in demand.

- Provided new virtual events and additional educational activities. To ensure that we continue to deliver content, virtual networking opportunities, and educational activities that contribute to our customers’ continued professional development, we have digitized a number of our in-person events. Check: xl8.link/SDLWebinars.

SMARTCAT
www.smartcat.ai
Smartcat has always provided its core technology stack at no charge to freelancers, so this will not change. We also provide free access to getting work through our marketplace. We’ve found that the issue that most concerns our freelance users during this economic downturn is confidence in timely payments, so here’s what we have to offer:

- Payment insurance by Smartcat for projects contracted through and carried out on the Smartcat platform.

- Prioritized Payment: Guaranteed payment within 30 days of project completion, regardless of the standard payment schedule of an end buyer.

- Enhanced support to provide answers to user request within 12 business hours.

- We’ll also cover those who have issues working with customers because of AB 5.

For language services providers, Smartcat is eliminating per-user licenses, while offering reduced payment fees and enhanced vendor-sourcing options. You can find more information here: smartcat.ai/freelancer-offer.

TEXT UNITED
www.textunited.com
Some of our clients are from industries that have suffered a major hit due to COVID-19 (e.g., hospitality, travel, and automotive). We’re trying to ease the financial impact for them by delaying their subscription payments by two to three months. Also, we’re offering these clients free use of our translation management system until the end of June 2020.

To those outside our client base, we’ll provide media channels support in the translation of articles and video subtitles. This will help them reach a wider and international audience to ensure that as many people as possible understand the situation and the precautions they need to take.

TRANSLATED (MATECAT AND MODERN MT)
To help our community of customers and translators, we’ve decided to offer our best adaptive machine translation service, ModernMT, for free until May 30. We will not limit usage. The only limit will be the capacity of our infrastructure (hundreds of graphics processing units). Visit www.modernmt.com to see the range of application programming interface plans we have for enterprises and professional translators. Pick the plan that best fits your needs and add a credit card (to avoid spam—you will not be charged).

WORDBEE
www.wordbee.com
Now more than ever, it’s important that health-related information be available to all in as many languages as necessary. To assist the health care industry in its efforts, Wordbee is launching a support initiative by offering Wordbee Translator, our cloud-based translation management system, for free for two months. Wordbee Translator includes everything needed to translate, revise, and manage projects. Five users can work simultaneously, and these users can include in-house managers, editors, and external freelance translators. In addition, the Wordbee team will offer free online training to help kick-start your translation efforts.

These exceptional conditions will apply for those working in hospitals, scientific or diagnostic laboratories, pathology clinics, residential health facilities, nursing homes, companies that produce biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and other scientific services. Also eligible are medical device manufacturers and non-governmental organizations that help support the delivery and financing of health care services among large segments of the population.

WORDFAST
www.wordfast.net

- We implemented, early in the pandemic, a measure for employed translators who must comply with containment measures and work from home. We amended the terms of our end-user license agreement to move in-company licenses to translators’ personal computers for free.

- We remain committed to granting free technology to humanitarian and relief efforts. During the COVID-19 emergency, our offer is extended to government-backed efforts, not just non-governmental organizations.

- We’re working on a project management extension for our online translation environment, Wordfast Anywhere, that would greatly help translation workforces get up and running overnight.

Our offer is valid for the duration of the crisis worldwide. We’ll extend that by three months after the crisis ends. Of course, no one can put a specific date on that, but we’ll count the economic aftermath as part of the crisis. Which means, as far as things go, it’s until Dec 31, 2020.

The Wordfast team appeals to machine translation providers, such as Google, Microsoft, and DeepL, to grant free access during the COVID-19 crisis for translators working from home.

Jost Zetzsche is chair of ATA’s Translation and Interpreting Resources Committee. He is the author of Translation Matters, a collection of 81 essays about translators and translation technology. Contact: jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
How a Deeper Knowledge of Basic Tools Can Up Your Game

During the years that I’ve worked as a translation project manager, I can recount many times when I’ve been consulted on technical issues—anything from formatting a document properly to transitioning from a PC to a Mac (or vice versa). Sometimes I’ve heard translators express something along the lines of, “I’m a linguist—I didn’t sign up for all this techie stuff!”

I can also remember many occasions after I would teach a new function or a shortcut in MS Word or PowerPoint when a translator would tell me—sometimes years later—that my shortcut made their life easier and helped them work a lot faster over the long run. On these occasions, I can’t help but wonder—how much more productive could that translator have been with just a few more techie tricks up their sleeve? While we as translators can sometimes be reluctant to delve into the technological side of our computer tools, deepening our understanding of the programs we use on a daily basis can help streamline the way we work.

Benefits

You may be surprised at the number of features you already have at your disposal that could help you work better and more efficiently. Taking some time to learn those functions might just help you to get through that next cumbersome translation, or speed up your work so that you’re able to meet that deadline. Why bother to learn some of the features that your computer’s software offers? Here are three outcomes that I’ve personally experienced:

Increased Productivity: It goes without saying that the more you know your software, the easier it will be to work with your word processor, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tool, or other online platform. Building your technical skills and deepening your knowledge will allow you to work faster and more efficiently.

Keeping Ahead of the Game: The better you know your software, the easier it will be to work to a newer version of that program once an update rolls out. Also, understanding one type of software program might very well make it easier if you need to transition to another similar program, such as switching from one CAT tool to another.

Becoming More Attractive to Potential Clients: If a client knows you can work in MS Word and handle styles or text embedded in images without any help, that client will be more likely to call on you again for similar projects. These are value-added skills that can only enhance your marketability as a translation service provider.

How do you go about learning to use software more effectively? With the availability of online video tutorials and social media user groups, learning new tricks or even deepening your knowledge of the programs you already use can be quite painless. I belong to a Facebook group for users of Adobe InDesign, which is the software I use most for multilingual desktop publishing work. Sometimes people will post solutions to situations I’ve encountered and been unable to solve. Other times, I’ll discover that a problem I’ve been experiencing isn’t my fault at all, but rather a problem with the software awaiting a bug fix. Several CAT tool platforms also have similar user groups.
HOW A DEEPER KNOWLEDGE OF BASIC TOOLS CAN UP YOUR GAME continued

on social media where translators can commiserate about their difficulties or share ideas and solutions with each other.

THREE PRACTICAL TIPS

There are plenty of features and techniques to help you get the most out of your software, but here are three useful ways that can allow you to become more of a power user in any program with which you’re already familiar.

Shortcut Keys: Shortcut keys are just that: quick ways to get around the often cumbersome process of using dropdown menus to find the command you’re looking for. Shortcut keys are key combinations that cause a specific command to be executed. Most programs include them to help increase speed and productivity.

These shortcuts typically combine the Ctrl, Alt, or Windows keys (on Windows) or the Command, Option, or Control keys (on a Mac) plus a letter. Sometimes hovering the mouse pointer over an icon will reveal the key combination. Also, on Windows, hitting the Alt key once can reveal the shortcut letter to be used together with the Alt key to access that function. Try googling the name of any program along with the words “shortcut keys” and your operating system (Windows or Mac), and you’re bound to get a long list of useful shortcut keys to incorporate into daily usage.

Using shortcut keys particularly for repeated functions like copy (Ctrl / CMD + c) or paste (Ctrl / CMD + v), or to move between programs (Ctrl / CMD + tab) not only saves time, but using them can be a lot easier on your wrist than clicking away on a mouse, especially when sitting at the computer for hours on end. In MS Word, try Ctrl/CMD + Shift + c to select the formatting of any selected text, and then Ctrl/CMD + Shift + v to apply that same formatting to another selected text. This is great for copying font sizes or colors, typefaces, or even indenting over to another part of your document. Then there’s the handy “undo” function (Ctrl / CMD + z), which in many programs erases the last change made—a life-saving function if that last change you made was an error. (See Figure 1 on page 35.)

Context Menus and Task Panes: The Context Menu, also known as the “right-click menu,” offers several handy options that sometimes aren’t readily visible on the top or side toolbars on your screen. These menus are most often accessed by pressing the right click button on your mouse or by clicking with two fingers on a trackpad. (See Figure 2 on page 35.)

Virtually all programs, whether they be Microsoft, Adobe, or CAT tool software, offer several handy functions in the context...
menu, and these menus can change depending on where your cursor may be or what you’ve selected. Try right-clicking to access the context menu when you’re in different screens other than the default, or when you have other function windows open. If the context menu offers options with which you’re unfamiliar, try them out or google what they do. Just be sure you save your document before doing so, and remember Ctrl / CMD + z in case you unintentionally change something.

If you’re like most translators and generally work with Microsoft documents, become familiar with Microsoft’s task panes, such as the Navigation or the Reviewing Panes in MS Word or the Animation or Selection Panes in PowerPoint. Sometimes the key to navigating through a long document or formatting your translation in the exact same way as its source lies in a function buried somewhere in a task pane, and learning how to use them more effectively can be as simple as googling a tutorial video. (See Figure 3 on page 36.)

Update, Update, Update: Keeping your software updated may seem like a cumbersome task, and also possibly a frustrating one, especially if you’ve become very comfortable with the layout and functionality of your current version. The danger in holding onto older versions of software and not updating is that older versions can run slower or may not be compatible with the documents a client may send you.

Several companies such as Microsoft and Adobe have moved to subscription-based platforms for their software so that users can continuously have access to the most updated versions (and also charge a monthly subscription price). If you’re hesitant about updating, check out online forums to see what others are saying about updating to the latest version of your software.

As translators, the computer hardware and software we use are the main tools of our trade, and investing the funds to keep them updated and the time and effort to learn how to use them effectively will certainly pay off in the long run. You don’t have to be an IT geek to use your software effectively. Whether it be by way of online tutorials or discovering for yourself new functionalities through submenus, fly-out panes, and help categories of your most often used software, improving your tech-savviness only ups your game as a translator and makes you more attractive to potential clients.

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.

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COVID-19 and Certification

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on ATA’s Certification Program has been and remains profound. Although the situation continues to unfold, here are how things stand at this writing (early May).

■ All exam sittings scheduled for March, April, and May have been cancelled. Registration for future sittings is on hold while ATA Headquarters and the Certification Committee assess the situation. Moreover, ATA is not accepting requests from chapters and local groups to schedule sittings later in 2020. This shutdown will continue to be evaluated week-by-week.

■ The Certification Committee meeting and the Language Chairs meeting scheduled for mid-April in Alexandria, Virginia, were cancelled. The committee held a Zoom meeting instead.

■ ATA is refunding registration fees for those whose sittings were cancelled, and will apply a liberal refund policy to existing registrants for the rest of the year. Even if sittings resume later in 2020, registrants can receive a full refund if they prefer not to risk traveling or sitting in a room with other candidates.

The Certification Program is stepping up efforts to offer candidate preparation sessions online. Besides the obvious benefit of allowing high-quality instructional content to be disseminated safely, offering sessions remotely and thus free of geographic constraints also opens the door to workshops for language pairs other than Spanish.

Speaking of online offerings, conferences and other events that have been moved online are still eligible for the ATA58 recording recently made available for free to the membership (https://bit.ly/ATA58-virtual). For more information about CEPs, visit https://bit.ly/ATA-CE-points.

One aspect of the program that remains unaffected is the practice test. In the absence of exam activities, this is a great time to take one or more practice tests. These are retired exam passages that the candidate purchases online, translates, and returns for grading and feedback. For more details, visit http://bit.ly/ATA-practice-test.

As in so many other areas of life, the realities of social distancing and stay-at-home orders are motivating the Certification Program to think about ways to alleviate similar situations in the future. One obvious focus is on ways to administer the exam remotely (i.e., allow candidates to take the exam from home). It has been five years since ATA last considered options in that regard, which at the time were found lacking from the standpoint of logistics and, most of all, security. But five years is a long time, and the pandemic is no doubt spurring the development of all sorts of new solutions for functioning remotely. The Certification Committee intends to keep a close eye on possibilities in this area.

David Stephenson, CT 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.
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