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 ATA ADVOCACY

 **ATA Advocacy Committee Update**

 Educating government officials and the public about the role of translators, interpreters, and language access in our society is a central part of ATA’s mission. These efforts are led in part by ATA’s Advocacy Committee. Here are two important items the committee has been working on.

 **Welcome to the Magic City!**

 From restaurants to art galleries, our T&I colleagues in Florida are eager to show off their home city to attendees of ATA’s 64th Annual Conference, October 25–28. A member of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (a proud ATA chapter and our local host), provides some excellent tips to take advantage of everything Miami has to offer!
The Importance of Keyword Localization in International SEO: Attracting Global Customers with Culturally Appropriate Search Terms

If businesses want to attract website visitors in foreign-language markets, they need to invest in localizing keywords. Read on to learn what keyword localization is and what goes into providing this service.

5 Tips for Making the Most of the Experience Section of Your LinkedIn Profile

Did you know that LinkedIn uses the “Experience” section as one of the main areas of your profile to comb for key information when people conduct searches for professionals in a specific industry or field? That means it’s really important.

Terminology Work in the Age of ChatGPT

Terminology work covers a variety of tasks. Let’s see whether ChatGPT can help us perform some of them. One task could be term extraction.

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Certification Forum

Make sure to check out the Chronicle-Online website for online extras and bonus features, such as Humor and Translation and important announcements. Visit www.ata-chronicle.online!

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It seems that everywhere you look these days someone is talking about artificial intelligence (AI). Most recently, the buzz surrounds the latest version of ChatGPT. I see it in my inbox at least a few times a week, plus on social media, in the news, and in everyday discussions. And for good reason. AI continues to change the way people think about the possibilities and future of work, especially in knowledge-based professions like ours.

I recently attended the ACES: Society for Editing Annual Conference in Columbus, Ohio, and can tell you that editors and writers are also buzzing about tools like ChatGPT. So, while it’s nice to know we’re not alone in this global trend toward AI changing the way we work, it’s also a bit unnerving that we don’t fully know what’s ahead. That’s why I’m glad to see ATA offering so much content for our members to learn about the technological changes taking place and those that are expected to continue to arise.

Now, more than ever, the conversations we have about AI and its continued impact on our roles as translators and interpreters will be vital so we can continue to have a say in the future of our profession. With technology changing at breakneck speed, we’re wise to pay attention to what’s currently available and what’s in development. But that doesn’t mean AI is taking over our professions tomorrow. Sure, these tools are impressive in terms of output and the speed at which they work, but they don’t have the intelligence of humans and often produce fake and inaccurate content instead of simply offering users an “I don’t know.” result. (See Jost Zetzsche’s article in the March/April issue of The ATA Chronicle for an example of this.)

It will be important to continue refining our skills as professionals and specializing in fields that require advanced education and knowledge. ATA is here to continue helping you acquire this knowledge and expertise through our Professional Development Program’s virtual events and webinar series.

It will also be important to become certified in your language pair—or, if your language pair isn’t yet offered by ATA’s Certification Program, it will be important to work with colleagues to establish a new certification language combination and then sit for the certification exam. ATA is here to help you become and remain certified.

And it will be important to stay abreast of the tools and technologies available, the ones that are developing, and the ones that are yet to be developed, as well as how you choose to use them—or not—in your work to become more efficient and differentiate and elevate your business. ATA is here to help you with this, too. Check out our recent ATA TekTalks, post questions about tools to the Business Practices Education listserv, and keep watching for more tech-related content in Jost Zetzsche’s “GeekSpeak” column and the “Resources Review” column in The ATA Chronicle.

Finally, ATA recently held a one-day virtual conference—Translating and Interpreting the Future: Empowering Professionals to Innovate and Thrive—to inspire and educate members on the latest (and upcoming) trends in technology for our profession. If you didn’t have the opportunity to attend, don’t worry. We’re planning an equally impressive lineup of speakers on T&I and technology as part of the session program at ATA’s 64th Annual Conference in Miami (October 25–28). The full conference program will be available this summer, so stay tuned. I hope to see you there!
As you’re reading this, we’re just a few months away from ATA’s flagship event: our 64th Annual Conference in Miami, October 25–28, 2023. The conference planning team is working hard on making our annual reunion the best one yet. Here are some updates on what you can expect at ATA64.

**Educational Sessions**

We received over 340 proposals for regular conference sessions at ATA64 and choosing only 168 was not an easy feat. I’m very grateful to all the volunteers who participated in the proposal review process and helped me make the final selection. I would also like to express my gratitude to those who submitted a proposal this year. ATA Annual Conferences are known for the high quality of continuing education opportunities, and we couldn’t do it without our amazing speakers who generously share their knowledge and elevate our professions. If your proposal was not accepted this year, I hope you’ll submit again in the future. In the meantime, please consider sharing your expertise by offering to present an [ATA webinar](#) or submitting an article to [The ATA Chronicle](#).

As usual, we’ll kick things off with our Advanced Skills and Training (AST) Day on Wednesday, October 25. We have a phenomenal lineup of AST courses for you taught by expert instructors—from financial translation to interpreting skills, building and scaling localization programs, forensic transcription—translation, demystifying artificial intelligence and neural machine translation, automation tools, productivity, branding, successful client relationships, and more. You can add any of the morning or afternoon AST courses to your conference registration for an additional fee.

We also received many impressive proposals for our new ATA Professional Forums, MicroTalks, and Committee Forums. (For more details on each of these, see my column in the January/February issue.) I foresee very inspiring conversations and lively discussions, and I hope you’ll enjoy these new formats.

The full conference program will be available this summer, so stay tuned!

**Networking Events**

As I shared in my previous columns, we’re looking to change things up a little and revamp some of the conference events and networking opportunities we’re used to seeing at ATA’s Annual Conference.

As you join the Welcome Celebration at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25, you’ll notice the absence of designated tables for ATA divisions. You’re free to join any table, enjoy a taste of Miami, and interact with colleagues no matter which ATA division you belong to. Then, immediately after the Welcome Celebration, we invite you to bring a beverage and proceed indoors for a Divisions & SIGs (Special Interest Groups) Mix and Mingle, which will be held from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. This will be your opportunity to connect with members of ATA’s divisions and find out what SIGs have to offer. (To learn more about the SIG initiative, please read ATA President Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo’s column in the January/February issue.)

Apart from the educational sessions Thursday through Saturday, you’ll have ample time to visit the Exhibit Hall, participate in the Job Fair, and join the Stronger Together Networking or Brainstorm Networking events. We’ll hold our Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Election on October 26 at 8:30 a.m., and the Annual Meeting of All Members on October 27 (also at 8:30 a.m.).

We have a lot more in store for you than what can be covered here! I’m personally excited about the possibility of having a local live band perform at our ATA64 Closing Social. We’re still working on...
the details, so stay tuned! In the meantime, you can get a sneak peek at the schedule of conference events on our conference website.

**Dictionary Exchange**
Throughout the conference, we’ll host our annual Dictionary and Book Exchange. A huge thanks to Jost Zetzsche for initiating this event, which has now become a much-anticipated part of ATA’s Annual Conference. So, if you have dictionaries, monolingual resources, or any fiction or nonfiction books you no longer need and would like to pass on to others, please bring them. Your books and dictionaries will find a new loving home, and you might be able to pick up some new treasures for your bookshelf.

**T&I Book and Resource Fair**
Also new this year, we’re opening the ATA64 T&I Book and Resource Fair to colleagues who double as book authors and to T&I professionals who have podcasts and blogs or offer training courses and resources for translators and interpreters. If this sounds like you, don’t miss this opportunity—book a table at the T&I Book and Resource Fair when you register for the conference.

**Start Planning Your Trip**
The full schedule and registration will be available this summer, so keep an eye on ATA announcements and register for ATA64 early to take advantage of the early-bird registration rate.

In the meantime, remember to book your hotel room! The conference hotel is always the best option—nothing beats unwinding in your room between conference sessions and events. Plus, you don’t want to miss all the conversations, friendly banter, and laughter that happens after the conference events in the hotel lobby, hallways, restaurants, and bars. Our room block is filling up fast, so I encourage you to take advantage of the special ATA64 rate and book your hotel room early.

Our conference hotel, the Hyatt Regency Miami, is in a safe and vibrant neighborhood with so many great restaurants and activities nearby. The foodies among us should be ready for some amazing dining options within walking distance or a short cab ride away. The hotel is located on the Miami Riverwalk, a popular walkway along the Miami River, which I know many of you will enjoy. And don’t forget there’s a hop-on/hop-off ferry boat to Miami Beach that leaves directly from the hotel on weekends. You can purchase your tickets in the lobby.

As always, we’re working with the hotel to make sure all our conference attendees feel safe and welcome. As you get ready for your trip, check out the Miami Travel Guide on our conference website. We’ll be updating it with more information as we get closer to our event.

See you in Miami in a few months!
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Transitioning to New Heights!

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met May 6–7 in Alexandria, Virginia, in conjunction with the Certification Committee and Language Chairs meetings. Highlights of the meeting included an update on the internal operations, staffing changes, and future needs of our Headquarters offices in Alexandria.

Additions to Our Headquarters Team:
In the past six months, ATA Headquarters has experienced much transition, including changes within our team. While you’ll certainly already be familiar with some of the names listed below, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce you to the newly expanded Headquarters team:

- Adrian Aleckna, CMP
  Director, Professional Development and Events
- Maddie Mayuga
  Specialist, Membership Administrative
- Caron Bailey, CAE
  Manager, Certification Program
- Trenton “TJ” Morgan
  Coordinator, Social Media and Communications
- Kathryn DeVito
  Manager, Membership and Communications
- Jamie Padula
  Manager, Chapter and Division Relations
- Stacy Fowler
  Manager, Information Systems
- Jeff Sanfacon
  Manager, Publications
- Cat Kenol
  Coordinator, Professional Development and Events

I noted in my last column that membership is essential to any association and can provide an invaluable avenue to contribute to its growth. I’m excited to bring together a beautifully blended team of professionals with more than 40 years of combined experience in association management, marketing, communications, and more. They bring to ATA their enthusiasm, creative spirit, and industry experience to meet our members where they are.

As we prepare to launch our new association management system this summer, we’ll concentrate on the full membership experience by enhancing our communication tools, expanding our technology capabilities, and bringing new ways to engage online. Mentoring programs, spotlighting our members and what they’re doing in the T&I industry, will bring a renewed sense of belonging to ATA for our members. Expanding membership outreach to universities and enhancing our existing affinity program are just a few areas of concentration. The team will continue to engage with committee members this summer to get to know leadership and help execute committee goals this year.

Membership Matters: Our mid-year membership campaign will launch in June. I challenge you all to contact a previous ATA member and encourage them to rejoin this summer. As we begin planning for Strategy Day, which coincides with the next Board of Directors meeting in August, I hope to hear more ideas from you that can help retain members and bring new ones to ATA.

Virtual Conference Kudos:
I’d like to thank the Virtual Conference Committee who successfully hosted ATA’s first one–day Virtual Conference on May 20th. Committee members Andy Benzo, Robert Sette, and Nora Diaz spent the past five months preparing for a full day of networking, education, and insightful conversation that resulted in some new ATA members as well as returning members! Their programming provided great insight into what members want, and bringing a virtual conference to life was proof that meeting our members where they are is crucial to membership retention. With an initial goal of getting 200 registrants, they exceeded that number with more than 500 total registrants from all over the world. Kudos to the entire Professional Development Committee and the Virtual Conference team for your vision and flawless execution. We look forward to seeing a summary article in an upcoming issue and making plans for a future Virtual Conference.

As always, your support of ATA and the Headquarters team is valued and appreciated! I encourage members to reach out to the Headquarters team with any questions or if you need assistance.
ATA Advocacy Committee Update

Here are two important briefs regarding ATA’s advocacy efforts, which are led in part by ATA’s Advocacy Committee.

Update on Oregon Senate Bill 584

In late February, ATA’s Advocacy Committee submitted a letter to Oregon Senators Deb Patterson and Cedric Hayden of the Oregon State Senate Committee on Health Care opposing Senate Bill 584. The Advocacy Committee issued this letter after careful consideration due to the likelihood the bill would unintentionally harm language access in the state. All testimony, including ATA’s, may be read here. SB 584 would have directed the Oregon Health Authority to create an online scheduling and payment platform for all health care interpreting in Oregon. At the same time, it would have also restricted the pool of health care interpreters in the state to the point where a shortage of qualified (and certified, where available) interpreters would have been likely.

The Advocacy Committee’s position was not without opposition, and industry news outlets (including Slator) covered the nuances of our letter. Hundreds of interpreters weighed in on the bill, both in favor and in opposition. On April 11, 2023, it became widely known that the Oregon Senate would not vote on SB 584.

In 2021, there were more than two million health care interpreting encounters in Oregon in more than 150 languages. As written, the bill did not provide details about how the Oregon Health Authority would effectively fulfill all interpreting requests in the state, especially in language pairs with no qualified interpreters residing in the state. ATA and leading language access experts pointed out that there are not enough interpreters in the state registry to meet the current need. We called on legislators in Oregon to work closely with a broad coalition of health care interpreting experts and limited-English-proficient stakeholders to draft legislation that builds upon the existing foundation of meaningful language.
access for Oregon’s most vulnerable residents.
ATA welcomes any opportunity to provide such expertise and connect our experienced members with legislators drafting legislation related to language access. To get in touch with the Advocacy Committee, email advocacy@atanet.org.

ATA Signs Amicus Brief for Landmark Remote Interpreting Case
In April, ATA joined forces with the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Jersey to draft an amicus brief in an urgent matter related to language access and the use of remote interpreting in a high-stakes jury trial. The brief was filed April 28, 2023.

The State v. Juracan-Juracan
The case at hand involves a criminal prosecution against a defendant who speaks Kaqchikel, a rare Indigenous Mayan language originating in what is now Guatemala. The trial court was unable to find a Kaqchikel>English interpreter and needed to resort to relay interpreting with a Spanish>English interpreter and a Kaqchikel>Spanish interpreter. Even though the Kaqchikel>Spanish interpreter told the judge they could not adequately interpret remotely, the judge decided to order remote interpreting for the upcoming trial.

Meaningful Language Access and Interpreter Ethics
The defendant is appealing that ruling, arguing that the lack of in-person interpreting violates his right to participate effectively in his own defense. Attorneys filed a motion with the New Jersey Supreme Court and received a stay of the trial, pending the resolution of the matter of court interpreting. You can read the entire motion here.

The amicus brief, which you can read here along with ample supporting documentation here, leverages the collective expertise of our associations and relevant literature. We demonstrate why resorting to remote over in-person interpreting at trial could prevent the defendant from participating meaningfully in his defense and that compelling interpreters to work in less-than-ideal conditions could violate their code of ethics.

ATA and NAJIT were represented by the ACLU of New Jersey, which drafted the friend-of-the-court brief and filed it on our behalf.

ATA Advocacy Hard at Work
ATA’s Advocacy Committee is proud to have been able to lend our collective expertise on language access and interpreting to this important effort. Oral arguments in this case could begin in June. We’ll keep our members abreast of any further developments.

Learn More about ATA’s Advocacy Efforts
Educating government officials and the public about the role of translators, interpreters, and language access in our society is a central part of ATA’s mission. These efforts are led in part by ATA’s Advocacy Committee, which works on behalf of ATA members—and all language professionals for that matter—to specifically tackle policy and legislative language issues. The committee is asked to do the following:

- Monitor the activities of local, state, and national legislative and regulatory bodies.
- Provide recommendations for responding to requests from these bodies.
- Provide information regarding government activities to the Board and the general membership.
- Address international regulatory issues, as appropriate.

ATA’s advocacy campaigns have included supporting interpreters seeking fair pay in Nevada, working with a coalition to restore language access rights in the Affordable Care Act, warning the Santa Maria City Council (California) about the risks of unqualified interpreting services, advising Oregon that its plan to require credentialed interpreters is flawed, and urging the Department of Labor to reconsider its proposed changes to the classification of independent contractors.

Visit ATA’s Advocacy and Outreach page for more on these efforts. You can also learn about the Advocacy Committee by listening to Episode 58 of The ATA Podcast.
Welcome to the Magic City!

By Itzaris Weyman

Work hard at ATA’s 64th Annual Conference but take the opportunity to experience what makes Miami a Magic City!

As excitement builds in Miami’s translation and interpreting community for ATA’s 64th Annual Conference, October 25–28, I felt inspired to share my favorite things to do in the Magic City.

Although I was born in Panama and have lived in several countries, I’ve called Miami home for almost 30 years. My family and I have entertained many visitors from various countries during this time. (“Everybody wants to come to Miami!” they tell us.) As savvy travelers ourselves, we know it’s not easy to please different age groups and interests. However, Miami will surely not disappoint! Whether you’re coming just for the conference and only have a few hours to spare or plan to extend your trip and make it into a vacation as well, Miami has something for you!

The “magic” of this cultural melting pot is rooted in its vibrant history and multicultural residents. In the 16th century, the Spanish Conquistadors claimed this land from its original Native American inhabitants, the Tequesta people. The Miccosukee and Seminole tribes, African American slaves, Bahamian wreckers, and Miami’s founding pioneer families converged here in the 19th century. The extension of the railroad by Henry Flagler laid the foundation for the city of Miami. Today, Miami’s residents still hail from many backgrounds and cultures. From Little Havana to Overtown to Little Haiti and Little Venezuela, Miami has become the gateway to the Americas. In the words of historian Arva Moore Parks: “Now no longer at the end of something, we have become the center of everything—the connector of the Americas, the center of the New World. Today, Miami is rapidly emerging as a world-class, 21st-century city.”

Surf and Sun

“Miami and the Beaches” are the words you see plastered on every billboard driving from the airport. While there’s more to Miami than its beaches, if that’s what you love, Miami boasts amazing beaches near the conference hotel! Clearly, the most famous one is South Beach, south of 17th Street in Miami Beach—a beach to see and be seen. Start your day with some surf and sun and then head over to Lincoln Road Mall and get a bite to eat (and people watch), shop, or catch a show. Sip cocktails overlooking a stunning view of the city at Juvia, an iconic rooftop restaurant!

If you crave shows and entertainment, check out the program at the small but beautiful Colony Theatre, an art deco gem. Alternatively, head to a concert or movie at the world-renowned New World Symphony Center, home to promising young musicians from across the country! Peruse their online event calendar and you might even be able to catch one of their (totally free) WallCast Concerts! These concerts are held in the Miami Beach Soundscape on an enormous projection wall with a surround-sound system. You can even take (or order) picnic fare to enjoy while listening to glorious music!

If trendy isn’t your style and you’re just looking for a beautiful beach in a more tranquil setting, head out to Bill Baggs Cape Florida National Park in Key Biscayne. Explore the lighthouse and relax and enjoy lunch at the Lighthouse café!
Everglades National Park

For the nature enthusiast, Florida’s Everglades National Park is a must-see! The “River of Grass” (a nod to Marjory Stoneman Douglas’ 1947 nonfiction book about the Florida Everglades) is a unique ecosystem considered to be the largest subtropical wilderness in the U.S. The park itself has several entrances. The closest one to downtown Miami is Shark Valley (about an hour away from the conference hotel with no traffic). This area consists of a 15-mile loop (you can walk, bike—rentals available—or take a guided tram tour). There are also a few short trails.

October is just about the time when the weather starts changing in Miami (from super hot to hot but less humid), so you’ll see abundant wildlife, including birds, turtles, and lots of alligators! Plan to bring your own picnic lunch as there are no eating facilities. If you have more time, you might want to explore the Royal Palm or Flamingo entrances, where canoe, bike, and boat tours are also available. Or you might want to head all the way down south to beautiful and funky Key West!

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

One of my favorite parks in South Florida is John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, the first undersea park in the U.S., located about 90 minutes away in famous Key Largo (yes, where the classic Humphrey Bogart movie Key Largo was filmed!). Snorkeling and glass bottom boat tours are available so you can explore the coral formations and gorgeous marine wildlife in this gem of a park! Last but not least, no visit to Key Largo would be complete without a stop at the original Key Lime Pie Factory in Tavernier. Don’t leave Florida without trying a slice of Florida’s famous dessert! (The jury is still out on meringue or whipped cream for the topping….)

Sports

Miami is home to many sports franchises, so if you’re a basketball, football, soccer, or baseball aficionado, make sure to catch a game while you’re here! Head out to Marlins Park to enjoy a baseball game or to the Kaseya Center and cheer on our three-time NBA Champion Miami Heat! The Kaseya Center is minutes away from the conference hotel, so you can enjoy dinner at the arena itself or at the Bayside Marketplace next door. Bayside has several restaurants (including a Hard Rock Café), and you can catch sightseeing tours off Biscayne Bay from there.
Food and Culinary Diversity

Last but not least, if you enjoy food and culinary diversity, Miami has an exciting array of eateries for every foodie! The restaurant choices mentioned below are completely subjective, as I’m only pointing out places my friends, family, and I have visited and enjoyed. Miami’s famous Joe’s Stone Crab is a compulsory stop during any visit to Miami. For over 100 years, the guest list has included the likes of Al Capone, J. Edgar Hoover, and many past and current celebrities. The Wynwood neighborhood and the adjacent Design District have an eclectic restaurant scene—from food trucks to hip restaurants such as KYU. Stray a little south to Coconut Grove and try the delicious Indian cuisine at Bombay Darbar or a farm-to-table burger from Lokal. Coral Gables also offers some wonderful restaurants, including Talavera for authentic Mexican cuisine, the hip vibe of Bulla Gastropub, or the traditional Cuban cuisine of Havana Harry’s. Enjoy Miami’s fabulous craft brewery scene at Wynwood Brewing and J. Wakefield Brewing.

A trip to Miami would also not be complete without a visit to “Calle Ocho” (Little Havana). Have a meal at the iconic Versailles or dance the night (or day) away at Ball and Chain to the Latin sounds of salsa, bachata, merengue, mambo, rumba, etc.

The Miami Experience

I hope the tidbits of information above will pique your curiosity and entice you to venture beyond the conference hotel. Remember all work and no play make Jack a dull boy! So, work hard at ATA’s 64th Annual Conference but take the opportunity to experience what makes Miami a Magic City!

Itzaris Weyman, CT is a freelance translation editor and production consultant for small to mid-size translation companies. She is ATA-certified (English>Spanish). In addition to ATA, she is a member of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF), an ATA chapter. itzarisweyman@americaslanguagebridge.com.

Florida Travel Links

Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau
Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County
Colony Theatre
Design District
Florida State Parks
Frost Science Museum
Joe’s Stone Crab
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
Kaseya Center
Key Lime Pie Factory
Lincoln Road Mall
National Park Service: Everglades
New World Symphony
Pérez Art Museum Miami
Sports Spots in Miami
Ziff Opera House and Knight Center
The Importance of

KEYWORD LOCALIZATION

in

INTERNATIONAL SEO

Attracting Global Customers with Culturally Appropriate Search Terms

By Marion Rhodes

With more global businesses realizing the importance of a solid international search engine optimization strategy, it’s a niche that offers a lucrative earnings potential for language professionals.

The pandemic has changed the way we shop. When the world shut down, retail companies across the globe experienced a rising demand for web-based buying options. With malls and brick-and-mortar stores closed, people turned to the internet to buy anything from toilet paper to televisions. As a result, online retail became more competitive than ever and businesses had to up their game in the fight for customers. Their weapon of choice: a solid SEO strategy. SEO, or search engine optimization, involves content adjustments and technical work to ensure a website ranks higher on the search engine results pages (SERPs) of search engines such as Google or Bing. When these measures involve global websites, we’re talking about international SEO, or iSEO. To attract potential customers in various countries, businesses must tailor their website content to their target audiences in these markets. This includes strategies such as creating culturally appropriate content, using hreflang tags to indicate language and regional targeting, and implementing international domain and URL structures. (Hreflang tags are HTML attributes that specify the language and geographical region a web page is targeting so search engines can serve the correct version to users in different markets.)

One thing that’s often overlooked when businesses try to expand their global reach is the importance of localizing the SEO keywords used in their foreign-language web content. Whether it’s copy for a
Keywords are central to getting eyeballs on a web page. They're the link between a user's need and a company's offering. To connect the right people with the right product or service at the right time, keywords need to be specific and relevant. They need to reflect what people in the target market are actually searching for on the web. For these reasons, keywords should never just be translated.

**What Is Keyword Localization?**

Localizing keywords means adapting search terms and phrases to come up with foreign-language equivalents that people in the target market are likely to use when searching the web. The fact that many people in the U.S. are searching for “baby shower gifts” doesn’t mean you should simply translate this keyword into other languages. To help a website rank well and drive traffic, a localized keyword must capture the meaning of the source keyword and be culturally appropriate, relevant, and engaging.

In France, for example, there's no measurable search volume for the literal translation of the search phrase “baby shower gifts” (cadeaux pour la fête de bébé). That's because France has different traditions to celebrate the birth of a child, and baby showers aren't popular. Here, the search term “cadeaux de naissance” (birth present) would be a much better keyword to use on a website. (See Figure 1.)

Here's another example. Imagine a business selling giftable items made of recycled materials or using sustainable resources. According to the SEO tool Ubersuggest.com, in Germany, there are more than twelve thousand people searching for “nachhaltige Geschenke” (sustainable gifts) each month. In the U.S., the demand for sustainable gifts is much smaller, with less than three thousand people searching for this keyword. (See Figure 2.)

Keyword localization requires an understanding of the target customer's mindset. In Germany, sustainability is a very important topic, and highlighting the environmental benefits of a product can be an important selling point that wouldn’t necessarily be a consideration here in the U.S.

**Consider Competitiveness**

In SEO, competitiveness (also known as SEO difficulty) means how hard it will be to rank for a given keyword in an organic search. Tools such as Ubersuggest, SEMRush, and Ahrefs provide a score
for each keyword to indicate how much competition there is for it online. If many other websites are targeting the same keyword, it will be much harder to achieve a high ranking for it, especially if the competitor websites are established businesses with high authority in their fields.

Have you ever typed “translator” into Google and looked at the search results? You’ll see many familiar names, from Google Translate to the American Translators Association, on the first page. This keyword is very competitive, and it would be nearly impossible for a freelance translator to rank on page one for it. When choosing keywords for localized content, this is an important consideration. If a keyword or phrase is very popular and brings up lots of well-known business names, you may be better off targeting a less competitive alternative, even if it isn’t a one-to-one translation of the source keyword.

Check Local SERPs

It’s important to check the SERPs in the target market for every keyword to see the websites that are ranking for it, as well as what type of content shows up in the top spots. In the “translator” example I mentioned above, most of the results in Google were for online translation tools and dictionaries. Google knows most people who search for the term “translator” are looking for this type of website; they’re not actually looking for a human translator. Therefore, it prioritizes websites that meet the assumed intent behind the search. No matter how well-optimized a blog post might be for the term “translator,” it will likely never make it to the top of the list because the type of content isn’t in line with people’s expectations for this search query.

Whether it’s copy for a direct-to-consumer site such as Nike.com or an online marketplace such as Amazon, keywords are central to getting eyeballs on a web page.

But how do you check what type of content ranks for a specific keyword in the target market if you’re not physically there to perform the search using a local IP address? Tools such as Google Location Changer allow you to set your location and will display the results page as if you were performing an in-country search. You want to make sure that the type of content that ranks high for a chosen keyword in the target market is in line with the type of content you’re optimizing. If you’re working on a landing page but the top search results all point to YouTube videos, your chosen keyword is likely not going to cut it.

Target the Right Search Engine

While Google is the clear market leader across the globe, it’s by no means the only tool people use to search the web. If you’re localizing keywords for China, for example, you’ll likely need to familiarize yourself with Baidu, which has the largest market share there. In Russia, both Google and Yandex are popular, but Yandex has a slight lead. Different search engines use different algorithms, so knowing the ranking factors used by the target search engine is important to find the best keywords. (Figure 3 on page 16 shows the popularity of different search engines around the world.)

If you’re localizing keywords for online retail or social media platforms, which are search engines in their own rights, you need to use keyword research tools that are platform-specific, such as Helium 10 or Jungle Scout for Amazon.

What Does the Keyword Localization Process Look Like?

Finding good keywords is a multi-step process that involves research, data analysis, and the ability to think like your target audience. Every SEO specialist has their own system, but the following steps are common components of the workflow.

1. The Brief: Keyword localization typically starts with a client brief, which should spell out the following parameters:

   - Target audience, such as age, gender, B2B vs. B2C, etc.
   - Campaign goals, such as raising awareness, gathering leads, or making a sale.
   - Targeted regions, which can influence word choice based on local dialects.
   - Specific keywords or phrases to target (or avoid).
   - Tools to use, and whether the client will provide access or expect the translator to use their own tools.

2. Initial Brainstorming:

   Before you zero in on exact terms and phrases, you’ll want to get into the minds of your target audience. What are they looking for? Here are a few useful tools during this part of the research process:

   - Google: Use the search engine’s auto-complete function to provide ideas regarding what people are searching for. The “People also ask” and “Related searches” sections on Google’s SERP are also useful for finding insights.
   - Answer the Public: This free tool analyzes autocomplete data from search engines and provides a comprehensive overview of useful phrases and questions people are asking in relation to a specific topic.
   - Forums: Online discussion forums such as Quora or Reddit can provide interesting insights into people’s thoughts and pain points.
Customer Reviews: These are particularly useful if you’re localizing keywords for e-commerce sites. People tend to search the way they speak, so analyzing reviews will give you a good idea of the language they use.

Keyword Evaluation: Once you’ve compiled a list of potential terms and phrases to use, it’s time to check whether they have any search volume associate with them. This is where keyword research tools come into play. These tools will not only provide the data for each keyword you’re typing in, but also suggest related terms and phrases for you to consider. The goal is to find localized keywords that offer the best compromise between:

- Having good search volume.
- Being specific and relevant.
- Search difficulty (i.e., how competitive a keyword is).

What’s considered “good search volume” depends on the client and the type of product or service. A company selling consulting services to the tune of several thousand dollars per client may be happy with a dozen inquiries each month. For a retailer selling a $20 product, a dozen new customers would be a drop in the bucket, so lucrative keywords would need to have a monthly search volume in the hundreds, if not thousands.

Delivery: Once you’ve come up with local equivalents for the requested keywords, you’ll likely need to explain your selections to the client. In many cases, the client doesn’t speak the target language, and since you’re providing equivalents rather than literal translations, you’ll need to include back translations and comments to explain your reasoning for choosing a particular term or phrase.

How to Charge for Keyword Localization Services

As you can see, keyword localization is a time-consuming process that cannot be remunerated on a per-word basis. Instead, either charge an hourly rate or offer a flat project fee. Remember that most professional keyword research tools come with hefty price tags, so if your client doesn’t provide access, you’ll need to consider this expense in your fee structure.

You’ll also need to be mindful that keyword research can turn into a time warp. Any time you’re doing research online, it’s easy to go down a rabbit hole, so set yourself a timer and cut yourself off at some point. Otherwise, you may find yourself realizing you just spent an entire hour on trying to find one perfect keyword. If you’re interested in offering keyword localization as a service, there are many online courses and webinars to get you started, such as International Keyword Research for Translators on Udemy.com. With more global businesses realizing the importance of a solid international SEO strategy, it’s a niche that offers a lucrative earnings potential for language professionals.

For someone who enjoys the thrill of the hunt and isn’t afraid of data, it’s an additional income stream that’s fun and rewarding.

Marion Rhodes, CT is a bilingual English>German copywriter, ATA-certified English>German translator, and search engine optimization specialist. In addition to running her own business, Integrated MarCom Translations, she is employed as a senior copywriter for NP Digital. Prior to starting her translation career, she worked as a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald in Nebraska and as a freelance writer for various news publications in the U.S. and Germany. She has a bachelor’s degree in journalism and a master’s degree in integrated marketing communications. A native of Germany, she now lives in San Diego, California. marion@imctranslations.com

Figure 3: Popularity of some of the world’s most widely used search engines according to gs.statcounter.com
TIPS for Making the Most of the EXPERIENCE SECTION of Your LINKEDIN Profile

By Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo

Most professionals have a LinkedIn profile these days. Yet, more than 45% of people¹ who have one admit theirs has become outdated.

It happens. Luckily, there’s a way to resuscitate your LinkedIn presence. Perhaps surprisingly, it might be worth starting with one section of your profile that many people put little time into.

Most people know their profile headline—the section that appears under your name as a title and describes what you do—and the “About” section are important to get right. However, the “Experience” section is one that’s often left to collect dust. Many people forget to update it or aren’t even sure what’s relevant or important to include in this section.

But it’s time to pay more attention to it!

Many recruiters and clients hiring contractors will quickly scroll through your About section and skip down to the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile. In fact, did you know that LinkedIn uses this section as one of the main areas of your profile to comb for key information when people conduct searches for professionals in a specific industry or field? That means it’s really important.

My goal here is to provide you with several ways to update and improve the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile. These tips are simple and should take very little time to implement. Okay, let’s give this section a little facelift together!
Instead of simply listing where you worked and sharing the bare minimum, offer potential clients a glimpse of the impact your work had and the good things you achieved while you were there.

1. Skip to the good stuff. Include only relevant jobs or positions that speak to your skill set as a translator or interpreter and the kind of work you want more of in the future. It’s nice that you had other jobs in the past, but if they don’t support the kind of work you want to do you might not need to list them. For example, I’ve taught at three universities, and while I don’t want more of this type of work, these were all jobs that speak to my skills and background in languages. This is why I keep them on my profile right after my current job/work under my Experience. However, I didn’t list the jobs I had in college working at a local restaurant or smoothie bar. These two positions are completely different than the work I want more of and irrelevant to my potential clients, so they’re best left out of the mix.

2. Elaborate. Instead of simply listing where you worked, your title, and the number of years you held a position, elaborate. Tell people what you did and the types of results you brought to the company or organization while you were there. Rather than sharing the bare minimum (see Figure 1), offer potential clients a glimpse of the impact your work had and the good things you achieved while you were there.

Now look at the updated job descriptions under my Experience section in Figure 2 on page 19.

Notice I talk about my work in the first person. This is your time to share what you’ve done and reiterate your expertise in a given area. As you develop the descriptions of your previous experience, portray the results of your work with confidence. When possible, share statistics or specifics so clients get an idea of your effectiveness and drive.

3. Use keywords. Keywords are weighted heavily in the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile, so it’s important to make good use of them. That doesn’t mean you should stuff every available keyword in the profile, though. Instead, pinpoint the natural search terms your potential clients would use and include them in your profile, and especially in the Experience section.

Take another look at the example shown in Figure 2. My potential clients might search for one of my working languages (Spanish or Portuguese), or they might be looking for someone who writes or speaks these languages. They could also be looking for someone who has an advanced level of fluency in one of these languages. Knowing this, I’ve written my experience descriptions to reflect my work while using potential keywords that could help my profile rank higher in search results for these terms. Figure 3 on page 19 shows another example with the description of my current work/position.

4. Include what’s most important to your potential clients. When you’re highlighting your experience, make sure you talk about what would be important to your ideal clients. You don’t need to write a laundry list of every task you ever took on in your previous positions, but make sure you talk about your work in a way that allows clients to get a sense of how your experience and working style can benefit them!

5. Be friendly, be yourself. Make your Experience section friendly to read, not stiff. This section of your profile shouldn’t read like an autobiography. Keep it succinct—don’t make your potential clients work to find what they’re looking for. Conversational copy is the norm these days. It’s easier
to read and digest. So, write to your clients like you were speaking to them or sending them an email.

Mention what you enjoyed about the jobs in your Experience section and include visuals where possible. Currently, LinkedIn allows you to upload the following file types: .pdf, .ppt/.pptx, .doc/.docx, .jpg/.jpeg, .png, and .gif (up to 100 MB in size). You can write up to 2,000 characters in the Experience descriptions, so use this space well and make it count. Remember, however, that you want to keep potential clients engaged, so if you can say more with less, that’s okay, too!

Above All, Be Unique

Finally, make your Experience section feel like you. The point is to be unique, stand out to your clients, and not sound like the next person who offers similar services. And don’t forget to keep updating your profile and experience! Even if you’ve been freelancing for 20+ years, your profile could use a tweak from time to time to appeal to the types of clients you’d like to work with more in the future.

What areas of the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile could use an update? Do you have any additional tips you can share with our colleagues? Feel free to reach out and let me know!

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**Figure 2**

**Instructor of Portuguese**  
California State University, Fullerton  
Aug 2018 - Dec 2019 · 1 yr 5 mos

As an instructor of Portuguese in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, I planned, developed, and taught Portuguese classes online, using modern teaching methods and preparing my students to read, write, and speak in Portuguese.

**Skills:** University Teaching · Portuguese · Language Teaching · Brazilian Portuguese

**Lecturer of Spanish and Portuguese**  
The Ohio State University  
Aug 2009 - Dec 2012 · 3 yrs 5 mos

During my years in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at The Ohio State University (OSU), I taught numerous courses in Spanish and Portuguese at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. My teaching ranged from the traditional classroom setting with 20-30 students at a time to the Center for Individualized Instruction, where I spent time teaching students one-on-one. I helped grow the Portuguese language program at OSU by promoting our courses to students in other fields of study. Several of my students went on to study, live, and work in Brazil.

**Lecturer of Spanish**  
University of Louisville  
May 2008 - May 2012 · 4 yrs 1 mo

Following my Master’s Degree Program in Spanish in the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, I taught for several years as a lecturer of Spanish, both in the classroom and online. I worked with the program coordinator to develop curriculum and exams for our students while improving students’ output in terms of writing and speaking in Spanish.

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**Figure 3**

**Experience**

**ATS Spanish- and Portuguese-to-English Freelance Translator / Health & Wellness Freelance Writer / Owner**  
Accessible Translation Solutions  
May 2010 - Present · 12 yrs 1 mo

I help clients with sensitive medical content and pharmaceutical research by crafting professional translations that help them meet their goals. With over 14 years of experience as a professional Spanish and Portuguese to English medical translator, I am well versed in researching and writing about health- and wellness-related topics and communicating the heart of your message in a way that your audience will appreciate and comprehend. I am also certified by the American Translators Association (ATA) for Portuguese to English translation.

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**NOTE**


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**Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo, CT** is the president of ATA. A Spanish and ATA-certified Portuguese>English translator, she is also the owner of Accessible Translation Solutions and Pure Language Services. With more than 15 years of experience in the language professions, she shares her knowledge and years of research to help freelance translators and interpreters improve their online presence by refining their professional profiles to attract their ideal clients while collectively elevating and promoting our professions. She is also the author of *The Online Presence Roadmap: A Practical Guide to Confident Online Marketing for Translators and Interpreters*.  
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Two years ago, the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) asked a few of us terminology experts what the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on terminology management would be. With a few very vague predictions here and there, we agreed that terminology management is more important for AI than the other way around.

It seems that ChatGPT does relatively well extracting short pieces of information (e.g., terms) and really well providing the equivalent in another language, but it doesn’t perform well with the simple task of extracting contexts.

By Barbara Inge Karsch
used correctly (mostly by humans).

Either we were a pretty unimaginative bunch or we simply didn’t want to admit how nice it would be if we had someone, rather something, write definitions for us. Sure, as part of my PhD research 20 years ago, I envisioned that a definition could be compiled automatically from frames. In other words, that a definition could be compiled from predefined concepts. Well, we’re there. Almost. Because of ChatGPT.

But definition authoring is one of the main tasks of a terminologist. So, let’s focus first on how translators who do terminology work as part of their job might benefit from ChatGPT. One task could be term extraction plus context extraction.

Additional research is necessary to establish more refined guidance to use ChatGPT as a research tool, identify pitfalls, and teach prompting.

Term Extraction
As part of a translation I’m working on, I wanted to learn the difference between digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation. I found an article in Forbes that discussed the differences and thought I would let ChatGPT do the work. Here are the instructions, known as prompts, I gave it: “Extract terms and definitions from this article in Forbes: Bloomberg, Jason. ‘Digitization, Digitalization, and Digital Transformation: Confuse Them at Your Peril,’ Forbes (April 29, 2018).” Here are the results for terms.

Terms:
- Digitization
- Digitalization
- Digital Transformation

As a start, that’s pretty darn good. Considering the article contained many other terms, it’s somewhat remarkable that ChatGPT extracted the three in which I was interested. But maybe I was just lucky.

Before we look at the definitions, let’s examine another extraction test. I submitted 627 words of a text from the Association for German Terminology with the following instructions: “Please extract the 20 most important terms from the following text.” Here are the results:

The 20 most important terms extracted from the text are:
1. Fachkommunikation (technical communication)
2. Wissenstransfers (knowledge transfer)
3. Terminologien (terminologies)
4. Begriffen (terms)
5. Fachleute (experts)
6. Daten (data)
7. Informationsquellen (information sources)
8. Wissensmanagement (knowledge management)
9. Begriffssysteme (conceptual systems)
10. Datenbankverwaltung (database management)
11. Prozessuntersuchungen (process analysis)
12. Fachsprache (technical language)
13. Terminologieextraktion (terminology extraction)
14. Fachgebiete (fields of expertise)
15. Terminologieammlungen (terminology collections)
16. Fachwörterbüchern (technical dictionaries)
17. Äquivalenzstudien (equivalence studies)
18. Sprachliche Hilfsmittel (linguistic tools)

Additional research is necessary to establish more refined guidance to use ChatGPT as a research tool, identify pitfalls, and teach prompting.
19. Corporate Language (corporate language)

20. Sprachplanung (language planning)

Wow! Granted the text is super dense in technical terminology, so maybe I shouldn’t be surprised that ChatGPT extracted only terms and not one word. There’s no noise in this list. But how did it assume I also needed the terminology in English? I suppose it added that service because I provided instructions in English. I could see where receiving the English terms might be annoying at times, especially if you didn’t request them. It was impressive in this case, however, because all the English terms were correct equivalents for the concepts represented by the German terms.

There are issues, of course. Thirteen of the German terms on the list are not in canonical form. (The canonical form is the most basic or standard form of a term. For example, the canonical form for common nouns in English would be singular and lowercase.) So, the second term (Wissenstransfers) is in the genitive case and the fourth term (Begriffen) is in the plural form and in the accusative case. And if you think I could have simply told ChatGPT to list the canonical form, that didn’t work. (I haven’t managed in other tests either.) When I asked it to list them in their base form, I received the results shown in Figure 1. (I think ChatGPT was telling me I got too greedy.)

**Research and Formulation of Definitions**

Now let’s have a look at definitions. For a definition to be a useful terminological definition, it must start with the parent concept, specifically the generic concept (i.e., the one that tells us what something is). It must be followed by delimiting characteristics (i.e., the aspects that make the concept different from related concepts). How did ChatGPT do? The results are shown in Figure 2 on page 23. I’ll analyze the results for the three terms—digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation—below, which were generated as part of my initial term extraction test with the instructions listed in Figure 1 (“If you don’t know the canonical form, give them to me in their base form.”).

**Term 1:** In the example below, I think the first sentence provides us with what we need: the superordinate “process” and the delimiting characteristics are correct.

“Digitization: The process of converting analog information into digital format. This involves converting physical data into a digital format that can be processed by computers or other digital devices.”

As for the rest, I would wonder what “physical data” is and how ChatGPT came up with it. The only reference to “physical” in the Forbes article is the “physical world.” That means either ChatGPT has a mind of its own or at least draws on other resources. Note that in other tests it provided a one-sentence definition when instructed to do so. Simple instructions seem to work.

**Term 2:** Now let’s examine the second concept, “digitalization.” In the resulting text below, I would accept “use of digital technologies” as superordinate. Actually, I think ChatGPT did a good job extracting the characteristics of the concept of this term, even though the author of the Forbes article provides a pretty extensive discussion of the term from various angles that’s not entirely as clear as he might like it to be.

“Digitalization: The use of digital technologies to improve existing business processes, services, or products. Digitalization involves the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, including operations, customer service, and marketing.”

**Term 3:** The article’s discussion of this third concept is even less clear.
than the one he provided for “digilization,” so our definition authoring helper did a pretty good job in sifting through and extracting the core points. I’m not sure about “holistic,” though I can see why ChatGPT chose it on its own. I also agree with the rest of what it extracted. Again, I would just tell ChatGPT to condense it into one sentence.

“Digital Transformation: A holistic and strategic approach to integrating digital technologies into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how it operates and delivers value to customers. Digital transformation is a long-term process that involves reimagining business models and processes to leverage the full potential of digital technology.”

Overall, I would say this is pretty useful. From my perspective as a terminologist, what’s provided is a good starting point, so I would only need to validate and possibly correct the information. I won’t get too excited, though, as ChatGPT definitely messed up superordinates in another test in a way that would take more than a quick glance to identify the mistake and repair it.

### Extracting Contexts
As translators, if we don’t have time or the absolute need to research a definition, we often at least document a context. A “context” is a technical term for the concept defined as “text that illustrates a concept or the use of a designation for a given situation.” A context is a sample sentence or paragraph that contains the term in question. I told ChatGPT what a context was (“text that illustrates a concept or the use of a designation for a given situation”) and asked it to extract terms and context sentences. In the first test, every example was modified in some form. (One of the requirements of a good context is that it be verbatim.) I then changed my instructions to “must be a verbatim quote, be one-two sentences long, and contain one of your extracted terms.” And still, all sentences were modified in some form. That’s not acceptable.
ChatGPT: A Gold Mine or Landmine?

Based on the tests above, I have the following initial conclusions. It seems that ChatGPT does relatively well extracting short pieces of information (e.g., terms). In fact, it did really well providing the equivalents in another language. It also did quite well condensing information from one text (as far as I know) into definitions. But it doesn’t perform well with the simple task of extracting verbatim information.

After such a short set of tests, we can’t establish any clear advice or rules. We don’t know how ChatGPT would do in different domains or languages. We can say that results depend on the clarity of our instructions. We can say that it may be able to do term extraction relatively well, but we don’t know whether it’s better than term extraction tools with regards to recall and noise. Additional research is necessary to establish more refined guidance to use ChatGPT as a research tool, identify pitfalls, and teach prompting.

What we can say for sure is that we can never trust it blindly. It’s a tertiary source and anything we don’t already know to be true has to be validated in primary resources. But if you liked the title of this article and the heading of this last section, we can say that we can let it be creative with headers—a task I’m notoriously bad at.

NOTES

Barbara Inge Karsch is the owner of BIK Terminology, a terminology consultancy and training company. As a consultant, she works with companies and organizations on terminology training, terminology development, and the implementation of terminology management systems. She draws on her 14-year experience as in-house terminologist for J.D. Edwards and Microsoft. Since 2012, she has been teaching in the master’s program at New York University, where she was recently promoted to adjunct associate professor. As U.S. delegate to ISO TC 37, she led the revision of “ISO 12616, Terminology work in support of multilingual communication—Part 1: Fundamentals of translation-oriented terminography.” bikterminology@gmail.com
The summer before I entered fourth grade, I was invited to join a special summer program at a local community college. I had the opportunity to choose two classes from a range of offerings and, for reasons I no longer remember, chose drama and touch-typing. The drama class never did me much good; I learned mainly that I find singing and dancing in front of strangers excruciating. But the touch-typing class was worth its weight in gold. I can’t imagine how many hours it saved me during my school years as I wrote paper after paper for teacher after teacher. When I started translating, I found the limiting factor in my early career was the speed of my thought process, not the speed of my fingers. Twelve years later, I can think faster than I can type, but not by much.

Typing technique may seem like a pretty basic skill—too basic for established professionals. At least, that’s what I thought when I asked ATA’s Business Practices (BP) discussion list how many members knew how to touch-type. How wrong I was: interest, opinions, and stories flooded my inbox in the best way. Over 35 people weighed in—an astonishing number compared to everyday traffic on the list—to give me an unscientific picture of what touch-typing means to translators and interpreters.

Among the things they told me:
- Most of the respondents can touch-type, as touch-typing is traditionally defined: using a keyboard without looking at the keys. We can further assume that most touch-typists use all 10 fingers to type, rather than hunting and pecking or favoring a few fingers.
- Most of those who learned touch-typing studied it in middle school or high school, often on a typewriter instead of a computer keyboard.
- They generally agreed that their touch-typing class was one of the most useful classes they ever took.
- Those who can touch-type can’t imagine working in any other way.
- Respondents seemed to show a bit of an age gap: most of the touch-typists were in their 40s or older, while those who don’t touch-type tended to skew younger. There was some speculation that the advent of smartphones and typing on a small screen with two thumbs has contributed to the decline of touch-typing among younger individuals. A few of us mentioned our children, who are expected to use computers extensively in school but demonstrate idiosyncratic typing methods, with little to no standard touch-typing skill.

In Praise of Touch-Typing

The following was originally published on Next Level: The ATA Business Practices Blog. This initiative by ATA’s Business Practices Education Committee provides information for both freelancers and company owners to use in all aspects of their careers, from improving their privacy protections to planning for retirement.
Typing technique may seem like a pretty basic skill—too basic for established professionals. At least, that’s what I thought when I asked ATA’s Business Practices discussion list how many members knew how to touch-type.

All in all, when discussing the advantages of touch-typing, BP list members tended to agree with people in other industries, including typing trainers. Touch-typing is regularly credited for its benefits, including:

- **Increased Productivity:** This advantage is closely tied to typing speed. A hypothetical typist who must hunt for the letters on the keyboard may type about 20 words per minute. A 2,000-word document would take 100 minutes to type. After learning to touch-type, our typist’s speed may be up to 60 words per minute. That same 2,000-word document would be finished in just over 33 minutes. This is a conservative example; many of the BP list members reported typing speeds of 70–80 words per minute.

- **Ergonomics:** Since touch-typists use all 10 fingers, they are less likely to suffer an injury by overusing one part of the hand. Touch-typing classes also generally teach correct posture and hand position on the keyboard, which can help with comfort and lessen the likelihood of wrist strain and other issues.

- **Accuracy:** People who learn to touch-type well can generally also type more accurately, with fewer misspellings. Any misspellings that do slip through can be corrected more easily because the typist can look at the screen while typing and catch the errors immediately. This should help, at least marginally, when proofreading and running quality assurance steps during translation jobs. Fewer typos to catch will speed up spell checking.

- **Other Benefits:** Individual typists may find other advantages based on their personal situation. Personally, I appreciate the fact that touch-typing allows me to look away from the screen when I start feeling the effects of digital eyestrain. I can also type while monitoring my environment for disturbances—an important skill when the kids are supposed to be studying but are trying to disappear.

A few people in my informal survey expressed the opposite point of view: they don’t touch-type and it doesn’t bother them. Over the years they’ve developed their own systems, and they find that their typing speed and their translation speed are not closely linked. Their point is valid: if you have your own typing system, being able to touch-type the “right” way doesn’t matter. A personalized approach may indeed work for you, but if you’re not happy with your production, or if you struggle with sore wrists or fingers, consider learning to touch-type. You might discover hidden advantages.

Why not just use dictation software and not worry about typing skills? It’s true that dictation works well—for some people. Aficionados may love being able to dictate their work, but others struggle with the learning curve or, especially in our industry, language support and accent recognition. The professional version of Dragon Naturally Speaking, the frontrunner in speech-to-text software, is currently available in only six languages including English. Translators or interpreters working into any language that’s not supported will have an uphill battle and may find the program a waste of money. Even dictating in English can be a struggle if the software doesn’t work well enough with your microphone or other factors, including your accent.

As far back as 2018, two voice recognition companies claimed they had used artificial intelligence to help close the “accent gap” for their software. That gap, however, was not fully closed; it just became not quite as big as it used to be. In 2021, the gap persisted in most voice recognition applications,
including personal assistants like Siri and Alexa. Large swathes of users find these systems buggy or unusable if their speech is too far from the accents the systems are trained on. Researchers have warned that failure of voice recognition systems to recognize particular accents could perpetuate discrimination. And our work, which is much more nuanced than asking Alexa to turn on the TV, faces the same problems. Dragon may not be able to parse your accent, even if you’re a native English speaker. Google Voice Typing supports many more languages than Dragon’s six, but it only works if you’re using Google Docs or Slides in a Chrome browser, and it accepts dictation only, not voice commands, if you speak a language other than English. Voice commands work only when using voice typing in English; mixing English commands with dictation in another language is not allowed.

When dictation is not a viable option, you’ll need to rely on your fingers. If you would like to learn or get better at touch-typing, where should you start? Here are a few ideas:

- **Determine Your Starting Point(s):** Search online for touch-typing tests in your languages. You can find single-language tests in English, Spanish, and other languages, or you can try a typing test on the Key Hero website, which boasts a whole menu of language options. Compare your typing speed across your language pair or pairs.

You may find that one language flows easily from your fingers while another slows you down.

- **Find a Course:** If you have no touch-typing experience, a full class may be most helpful to you. It will teach you correct finger positioning and give you a well-structured way to pick up this new skill. Plenty of free and paid courses exist for typing in several languages, and a quick search should point you to something that fits your needs.

- **Create Your Own Drills:** If you’re like me, you may have years or decades of experience but still find yourself misspelling the same words or letter groups consistently. I can think of two options for fixing these problems. First, try keeping a log of common typing problems or words you type incorrectly on a regular basis. Then print out the correct versions on a sheet of paper and place it near your computer. Try typing each word correctly 20 times without looking at the keyboard. You’ll probably need to slow down to retrain your fingers with this method. The other option is easier: just program your spell checker to recognize and correct your common misspellings automatically.

- **Copy Someone Else’s Work:** Interpreters learning simultaneous interpreting often “shadow” audio recordings in their target language for practice. You can try something similar with typing. Choose a novel, story, or news article that interests you and retype it without looking at your hands or the screen. Keep your eyes on the source material. When you finish typing, check your work for mistakes and retype those sections a few times to train your fingers.

- **Put on Some Music:** A few of the BP list members remember working to music in their touch-typing classes. You might try a slower song if you’re just beginning to practice, then move on to a faster beat if you want to speed up.

- **Play a Game:** There are plenty of typing games available if you get bored with drills or retyping documents. You can defend Earth from aliens, simulate an Olympic-style 200-meter hurdle race, and even protect a cat from being hit with arrows by typing the correct letters quickly enough. One particularly intriguing website actually turns your computer into a piano. The notes on a piano keyboard have been coded to the letter and number keys on an English QWERTY keyboard. You can choose a song and, by hitting the right combination of keys in the right order, you’ll be able to play that song on your computer as if you were playing the piano. I enjoyed this site because the songs include chords, which must be played by hitting multiple keys at the same time. This forced me to think carefully about where the keys are positioned and made me move my fingers in new patterns.

- **Try a Different Keyboard:** If you’re typing in English on a QWERTY keyboard, you might like a Dvorak-style layout better. Or you may want to use an international keyboard to help you type in both or all your languages. I never set up my keyboard to allow me to type diacritics quickly. I always type the Alt+codes on the number pad to add accent marks. This slows me down severely when typing in Spanish or Portuguese, especially if I need to type a character whose code I haven’t memorized. Learning to set up my keyboard to type the diacritics with shortcut keys is now on my to-do list.

Do you have tips to share, especially for typing in languages other than English? Please let us know! 🎶

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Translators pride themselves on being excellent communicators, and so they should. After all, it’s their job! But sometimes even the best communicators can talk until they’re blue in the face and still not really communicate what needs to be said for lack of common ground with their audience. That’s exactly what happened in the time frame between neural machine translation technology’s entrance into the fray in late 2016 and six years later, when ChatGPT was released. During that period, translators had little to point to except their own experience, as the machines produced consistently great-looking text that, just as consistently, had significant problems—problems that were visible only to the experienced eye.

Now that virtually everyone has tried out tools like ChatGPT—or, at the very least, has been exposed to the frenzy of articles, podcasts, and social media postings about it—the subtleties between good and great and the not-so-subtle difference between amazingly accurate and sometimes hilariously wrong is visible to all. Not everyone can evaluate the accuracy of tools like Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, or DeepL between two or more languages, but anyone can ask an AI chatbot a question and scrutinize the answer in the same language.

The technology behind neural machine translation is not identical to the technology behind the likes of ChatGPT, but the principle is the same: a large neural network containing hundreds of millions of text units produces an output that mimics the data it contains incredibly well. In the case of neural machine translation programs, the output is geared toward mimicking input in one language with output in another language. AI chatbots also mimic, but their imitating capabilities have expanded into a large array of fields.

Two of the most common Google queries used to be “Is Google Translate accurate” and “Will machine translation replace translators.” It’s likely that these queries will cease once it’s widely understood that the mechanics behind AI chatbots are the same as those that produce translation suggestions from tools like Google Translate.

So, how good is Google Translate, and will machine translation replace human
translators? Here’s why Google Translate is good but not reliable and won’t replace human translators anytime soon.

1. **It doesn’t know what it’s doing.** That may sound rude but it’s spot-on true. Google Translate really doesn’t have a clue that it produces translation or text, let alone meaning. It’s simply responding to the (shockingly many) 0’s and 1’s to which your queries have been internally converted when you ask it to translate “How are you?” into German. And though it will most likely output an accurate “Wie geht’s?” that’s not the only way to ask that question in German. If that’s true for a short and simple sentence, imagine how many ways you could translate this very paragraph? That’s a number with a lot of zeros! So, is Google Translate accurate? That depends on whether you’d like an anodyne, generic translation suggested by a machine. Is what you have to say generic?

2. **The output of machine translation most often reads deceptively well.** You’ve probably read about ChatGPT output or have tried it yourself. What did it look like at first glance? It looked great—in fact, you could barely believe that it wasn’t written by a person, and certainly not in seconds! It may have still seemed fine on the second pass, but after digging a little deeper chances are the deceptive polish will have worn off. We see exactly the same thing with neural machine translation. If the machine is not familiar with a word or expression, it will either unceremoniously drop it altogether or replace it with something that, to the machine, sounds right. The problem is—it’s simply made up. Even if you can speak more than one language, you won’t notice these hallucinations unless you’re trained to detect them. But your target audience will, and that, at best, won’t make a good impression and, at worst, might unintentionally offend.

3. **It’s not creative.** We already mentioned that computers don’t possess our human capacity to comprehend meaning. The creative process, especially when it comes to translation, is the pinnacle of meaning. Human translators translate meaning, not words. The art of translation is understanding the meaning of the original text and then transforming it into something that communicates the same message (or evokes the intended emotion) but might not superficially look like an exact equivalent. And yet it may actually be an extraordinary translation because the translator understood the intended impact on the original audience and was able to recreate that impact—not the words, but what the words are supposed to do—for an audience that speaks a different language, lives in a different culture, and views the world in a different way. A computer simply can’t understand that concept, no matter how many words you feed it.

4. **Machine translation doesn’t care about consistency.** Not every language has such a treasure trove of synonyms for the English word “drunk” to fill a book written solely to list all 2,958 of them. But in many languages even a simple word like “truck” might require additional context. Is it a “pickup,” a “pickup truck,” or just a “vehicle”? Calling it a “rig” or a “semi” changes the meaning entirely. Or what about a “lorry”? Confusing, isn’t it? All these could be correct renderings of the German word “Lastwagen” but they carry different connotations and could each be plain wrong depending on the context. Synonyms exist in every language so it’s something you encounter in translation all the time. So, again we can ask: is Google Translate accurate? And again we must say: that depends. Machine translation will randomly choose a different yet deceptively accurate word each time you use it. Especially when consistency is needed to ensure your message comes across loud and clear, machine translation is a risk you should think twice about taking.

5. **It’s not secure.** Ever wonder how the Now that virtually everyone has tried out tools like ChatGPT, the subtleties between good and great and the not-so-subtle difference between amazingly accurate and sometimes hilariously wrong is visible to all.
Machine translation can help when it doesn’t count, but professional human translation is there for when it does.

Free versions of machine translation tools are profitable to their owners? There aren’t any in-app advertisements because it’s your data they’re interested in. Everything you enter in a free tool will be used to further train their algorithms. That might be acceptable if you’re translating a recipe or social media post, but when does it stop being okay? Your corporate data? Confidential private data? Data privacy is certainly a legal issue companies can’t ignore, so it’s probably best to put the sensitive stuff in the hands of a human translator.

Why and How Do You Engage Professional Translators?

Here’s what I would say to those who think AI is the solution to help them reach a new audience in another language. Both Google Translate and ChatGPT, as well as other tools like them, are amazing. And both are here to stay, with ongoing development and useful purposes. However, purpose is the key word here. If you’re debating machine translation vs. human translation, then consider the following differentiators. If your text’s purpose requires any of these criteria, you’ll want to work with a professional human translator.

Professional translators will understand the text. Unlike a computer program, a professional human translator will not only understand it personally, but they’ll consider the multitude of other ways the target audience could interpret it, not to mention your intentions—and will translate in a way that makes sense, resonates with the audience, and achieves your goals.

Professional translators are creative. Translation is more than just a transfer of words and grammatical rules. Often, the best translation solution is something that has never been done before. That’s exactly what a computer cannot and will not do.

Professional translators are sticklers for consistency. Human translators are highly attuned to consistently using the appropriate style and terminology throughout your projects. They train to do it well and use quality assurance tools that leave nothing to chance.

Professional translators leverage technology to do the job right. Humans have always relied on tools, and human translators are no different. They utilize a wide range of applications designed to prevent all the pitfalls already mentioned. These include terminology management, digital and, yes, specialized paper dictionaries, translation memory software, quality assurance applications, and even machine translation. How is the latter possible, given what we’ve just learned about privacy issues?

Professional translators will use either private, specialized machine translation tools or paid versions of cloud-based tools like Google Translate that guarantee them (and their clients) confidential data handling. And remember, machine translation programs are just one of the many tools in a professional human translator’s toolbox.

Is this the End of the Machine Translation vs. Human Translation Debate?

It will take some time before the novelty of AI chatbots is, well, no longer a novelty. Until then people will still query: “How good is Google Translate?” “Is Google Translate accurate?” “Will machine translation replace human translation?” or even “What is machine translation?”

But both now and then, professional translators are here to stay. Equipped with unique human skill and a toolbox full of tech, they’re ready to continue helping the world navigate the tricky business of multilingual communication—transporting messages appropriately, creatively, consistently, and securely to whatever audience clients aim to reach. In short: machine translation can help when it doesn’t count, but professional human translation is there for when it does.

Jost Zetzsche is a translation industry and translation technology consultant. He is the author of Characters with Character: 50 Ways to Rekindle Your Love Affair with Language.
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Finding Your Power in Ethical Decision-Making

How many times has a colleague approached you with, “The other day [fill in the blank] happened to me. What do you think I should have done?”

When confronted with an ethical problem—as opposed to an ethical dilemma, which is where one must choose between two conflicting ethical codes, inevitably transgressing one of them—one approach to answering the question “How should I behave?” is to emphasize your moral duties by identifying which ethical values you must uphold. Here, interpreters should refer to their code of professional responsibility to determine what their positive and negative duties are as well as what they can get away with. This may be a code of practice that regulates the profession, a code of ethics that sets out the ethical values that underpin the organization to which they belong, or a code of conduct that restricts their behavior. I call this the “Apply RFP” recipe in which interpreters must consider what is ethically Required, Forbidden, and Permissible. In other words, what you must do, what you must not do, and what you may do.

In a practicing profession such as interpreting, practitioners work in close contact with those who use their professional services within socially constructed dynamics. In these professions, it’s common to find that contextual factors interfere with the practitioner’s ability to adhere to their code of professional responsibility. Ethicist Robyn Dean places contextual factors into four categories: environmental (specific to the interaction between interpreters and consumers), paralinguistic (specific to the expressive language qualities of consumers), and intrapersonal (specific to the feelings and thoughts of the interpreter).

Problems and Pathways

The ethical problem described below demonstrates that there are contextual factors outside language and culture that impact the interpreter’s ability to adhere to their code of professional responsibility. This is an important point Dean makes in her presentations on the Demand Control Schema ethical theory. Another important factor in this theory is that interpreters have the power to apply controls (multiple instances where decisions must be made) that modify the outcome of an ethical problem.

Let’s examine a specific ethical problem and determine negative duties, positive duties, controls, and ethically permissible solutions.

“I just had a situation at a bench trial via WebEx today.”

- **Contextual Factor**: In remote trials, situations may arise that would not occur in an in-person trial.
- **Permissible**: You may accept the assignment if you can interpret accurately, hear all participants well, and effectively team up with your remote partner.
Addition Resources on Ethics


Panza, Christopher, and Adam Potthast. Ethics for Dummies (Wiley Publishing Inc., 2010).


One approach to answering the question “How should I behave?” is to emphasize your moral duties by identifying which ethical values you must uphold.

- **Negative Duty:** Don’t accept assignments that are beyond your skills.
- **Control:** Decline a remote bench trial assignment. By their very nature, trials are challenging assignments, and interpreting a trial remotely is even more challenging.

  “Yesterday, the coordinator from State A (not the one I reside in) told me the court had hired a second interpreter for today’s bench trial.”

- **Positive Duty:** You must interpret accurately.

  Simultaneous interpreting assignments lasting more than one hour require a team of interpreters to preserve accuracy.

  **Control:** Decline an assignment for simultaneous interpreting when there’s no second interpreter present. Since a second interpreter has been procured in this instance, you can accept the assignment.

  Now, we’ll move on to the core issue of the ethical problem.

  “I asked this second interpreter to contact me so we could go over the handover times and other logistics. Well, it turned out that the interpreter is not certified in another language and only qualified by State B for the language needed at the bench trial. I could tell this interpreter wasn’t fluent in the language needed. The interpreter asked me to take over in case she had difficulty and I said, ‘I can’t interpret by myself.’”

- **Contextual Factor:**

  The quality of court interpreters is not standardized at the national level. Depending on the state, there are certified, registered, and court-qualified interpreters. Certified court interpreters have had their transfer skills tested in the simultaneous, consecutive, and sight translation mode. Registered court interpreters have passed a language proficiency oral exam at ILR Performance Level 3 (a performance standard defined by the Interagency Language Roundtable) in English and the language other than English. However, there are some states where proficiency in the English language isn’t tested. The court-qualified interpreter category has few requirements to prove oral language proficiency in either language or transfer skills.

  “I reached out to the coordinator and reported that my teammate wasn’t fluent in the language needed.”

- **Negative Duty:** Don’t accept assignments for which you reasonably expect impediments to your performance.

- **Control:** Decline the assignment because the incompetence of your teammate will cause you to work more than your share, thus jeopardizing accuracy.

  **Permissible:** Inform the coordinator that the second interpreter is not fluent in the language needed.

  “I reached out to the coordinator and reported that my teammate wasn’t fluent in the language needed.”

- **Positive Duty:** Report impediments to your performance.

- **Control:** Report the expected impediment to your performance to the hiring entity. The ball is in their court now. It’s important for interpreters to document any instance of reporting obstacles to their ability to adhere to their code of professional responsibility.

  “The coordinator said she was going to talk to another coordinator. I have emails proving that I reported the impediment to the coordinator.”
The court didn’t change interpreters, and it was terrible.”

- **Positive Duty:** Document and report impediments to your performance and adherence to your code of professional responsibility.

- **Control:** At the beginning of the trial, state on the record that you have reported to the coordinator that your teammate is not fluent in the language needed, which makes teamwork rather difficult and, in turn, makes it hard for you to interpret accurately. Again, the ball is in their court now.

Welcome to the garden of the forking paths! The court may:

A) Decide to postpone the trial until they find a suitable teammate. You’re off the hook!

B) Order you to proceed assisting your current teammate and correct any mistakes. The ball is in your court now. Will you be able to interpret accurately despite your teammate’s incompetence?

- **Positive Duty:** You must interpret accurately and report impediments to your performance.

- **Control:** State on the record that simultaneous interpreting requires teamwork. Without a teammate, you can’t guarantee the accuracy of your interpretation and, therefore, must withdraw from this assignment. The ball is back in their court.

- **Permissible:** If ordered by the judge to proceed, then you must comply but you may interrupt the proceedings each time there is a substantial error in meaning.

C) Order you to proceed by yourself. The ball is in your court now. Will you be able to interpret accurately by yourself for the entire duration of the bench trial?

- **Positive Duty:** You must interpret accurately and report impediments to your performance.

- **Control:** State on the record that simultaneous interpreting requires teamwork. Without a teammate, you can’t guarantee the accuracy of your interpretation and, therefore, must withdraw from this assignment. The ball is back in their court.

- **Permissible:** If ordered by the judge to proceed, then you must comply but you may interrupt the proceedings each time there is a substantial error in meaning.

You may interrupt the proceedings each time there is a substantial error in meaning.

**Finding Our Power**

Ethical problems can be solved by identifying any contextual factors (e.g., interpreter coordinator not doing their job, interpreter not fluent in the language needed) that interfere with our ability to adhere to our code of professional responsibility. Interpreters are not powerless! We can control any problematic situation through our own ethical decision-making.

Speaking of power, here is an advocacy action item. We can ask professional associations, including ATA or the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, to lobby the National Center for State Courts and the Administrative Office of the Courts in each state to adopt standardized requirements and terminology for the different categories of court interpreters (certified, registered, qualified). And that is interpreters exercising our collective power.

**NOTES**

1 “Interview—Robyn Dean on Ethics: Metaphors or Values?” ATA Interpreters Division Blog (October 13, 2016).


3 ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Interpretation Performance (Interagency Language Roundtable).

4 Washington State General Rule 11.4(d)(2): “An interpreter working alone must be given a ten-minute (10) break after every twenty (20) minutes of interpretation.”

(Interpreters are a vital part of ATA. This column is designed to offer insights and perspectives from professional interpreters. This article was originally published on the blog of ATA’s Interpreters Division.)

**Milena Calderari–Waldron** is a state-certified (Washington State) Spanish court interpreter and has been certified by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Medical and Social Services as a Spanish medical and social services interpreter and translator (English>Spanish). She is a drafting and voting member of ASTM F43 Technical Committee on Language Services and Products. She is the co-author of the Standards of Practice and Ethics for Washington State Judiciary Interpreters. She is a former adjunct faculty member for Bellevue Community College’s Translation and Interpretation Certificate Program. milenacw@live.com
Recently, though, I stumbled on a collection of tools distributed by Microsoft that contains a lot of little tools I (and I’m sure many of you) have as little individual apps but not assembled in one place. Microsoft PowerToys provides that collector’s case.

As the name suggests, it’s a continuation of a tool offered by Microsoft for much earlier versions of Windows, with the difference that this collection, which is meant for Windows 10 and 11, has much more powerful tools than earlier versions. Plus, its individual tools are contributed by freelance developers who use it as a platform to showcase their tools and services.

You can download Microsoft PowerToys via the link in the first paragraph or through the Microsoft Store (it’s free). Here are my favorite features:

**Always on Top:** This utility lets you pin an assigned window on top of other windows even though you might continue or start working on app windows below. I think we can all think of helpful use case scenarios here, especially when it comes to digital dictionaries or other resources.

**Color Picker:** This isn’t really a translation-specific feature but is helpful nevertheless. It allows you to determine the color of an item or a section within a graphic your mouse cursor is currently on, copy its color coordinates, and use it elsewhere. This might be helpful, for example, if you want to match the color...
scheme of your website to your logo.

**FancyZones:** This is a screen estate app that supercharges and customizes the Windows Snap feature you probably already use (by pressing the Windows key and an arrow key you can send a window to either side or corner of your screen so you can have several windows displayed next to each other). FancyZones also does that, but in zones you can customize. This is great for the multi-tasked and/or multi-resourced translator.

**Image Resizer:** Here’s the feature that made me get Microsoft PowerToys in the first place (it used to be distributed by Microsoft as a stand-alone app). It’s not hard to resize images in a graphics program, but this allows you to do it to one or several images at once just by right-clicking on them in File Explorer. Note that it will not overwrite the original images but create copies with names that indicate their sizing.

**Keyboard Manager:** It used to be really difficult to remap your keyboard. Doable, sure, but cumbersome. And why would you want to remap your keyboard? Because of the many silly differences between keyboards of different languages, such as QWERTY vs. QWERTZ vs. AWERTY. Some translators’ fingers are agile enough to easily make those adjustments between keyboards. Mine are not, so I’ve always used a German keyboard that had the Y and the Z switched to the English QWERTY layout. I’m not going to fight you if your fingers don’t need such a switch (bless you!), but there are plenty of other ways you can add different or additional functions to your keys that might even help your super-smart fingers.

**Paste as Plain Text:** Easily my most often-used app (I have a stand-alone utility for that). It’s so helpful to be able to paste text between different programs or even within the same program and not carry over (and mess up) all the formatting. This is great for work in translation environment tools as well!

**PowerRename:** This is also something for which you used to have stand-alone programs. With this you can rename an entire batch of files in File Explorer. This is great, for instance, if you want to mark a batch of files for yourself or your client with the “_edited as filename_edited.extension” to let them and yourself know what’s going on.

**Quick Accent:** Remember how easy it is to access accented letters on your mobile device’s keyboard? Now you can do that in Windows by pressing the root letter and then hitting one of the arrow keys or the spacebar. Vôïlå!

**Text Extractor:** This extracts text from the screen even if it’s non-copyable (such as text contained in a graphic) by using optical character recognition (OCR). Windows actually installs OCR engines according to the languages you use. If you’re not sure which OCR engines you already have installed or which are available, you can find out how to do that here. This is a very, very helpful tool!

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Certification Pass Rates 2011–2021

It has been several years since statistics on the Certification Program’s pass rates have been published. The most recent previous set was 2004-2014. This article compares that set to the most recent set of 11 years of complete data (2011–2021).

To describe the results effectively and avoid distortion, the information has been divided into two groups: 1) languages with 40 or more exams in the reporting period; and 2) languages with extremely low volumes (ELV), defined as fewer than 40 exams in the reporting period.

The overall pass rate for ATA’s Certification Program for 2011–2021 was 19.90% (2004–2014: 15.45%). A total of 4,649 candidates (2004–2014: 5,463) took the exam in 31 language pairs (2004–2014: 29), and 925 exams were rated “pass” (2004–2014: 844). Of these language pairs, 17 had 40 or more exams over this period (2004–2014: 16). The Chinese>English and English>Arabic language pairs (which started being offered in 2016 and 2018, respectively) are both newly included in Table 1. The individual language pairs are also listed in Table 1 in alphabetical order with the number of exams and pass rate for both sets of data.

Table 1: Language Pairs with 40 or More Certification Exams (18 Language Pairs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Pair</th>
<th>Number of Exams</th>
<th>2011–2021 Pass Rate</th>
<th>Number of Exams</th>
<th>2004–2014 Pass Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic&gt;English</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>6.04%</td>
<td>211</td>
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<td>Chinese&gt;English*</td>
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<td>21.01%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>28.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish&gt;English</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>12.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total and overall pass rate, foreign into English: 1,975 21.92% 2,125 15.81%

English>Arabic*      | 55              | 9.09%               | N/A             | N/A                 |

English>Chinese      | 224             | 22.32%              | 246             | 13.41%              |

English>French       | 100             | 4.00%               | 165             | 9.09%               |

English>German       | 79              | 26.58%              | 106             | 27.36%              |

English>Italian      | 60              | 23.33%              | 91              | 28.57%              |

English>Japanese     | 82              | 29.27%              | 95              | 16.84%              |

English>Polish Now ELV | N/A             | 85              | 21.43%              |

English>Portuguese   | 130             | 14.62%              | 145             | 28.97%              |

English>Russian      | 134             | 14.18%              | 197             | 15.23%              |

English>Spanish      | 1,616           | 16.21%              | 2,040           | 11.76%              |

Total and overall pass rate, English into foreign: 2,480 16.85% 3,170 14.11%

Grand total and overall program pass rate: 4,455 19.10% 5,295 14.79%

*Notes: Chinese>English started testing in 2016. English>Arabic started testing in 2018.
Fourteen of the 31 language pairs each had fewer than 40 exams. (See Table 2.) Their combined pass rate is 42.2% (2004–2014: 35.88%). The results for these language pairs have been combined in the figures shown in Table 2. This is done because these language pairs cannot be averaged reliably due to their low volume. Another reason is that some languages were not offered for the entire period.

The graph in Figure 1 presents the data on the high-volume languages in 2011–2021. The dashed horizontal red line shows the mean pass rate. No standard deviation is provided for the pass rate percentages because the language pairs have widely divergent numbers of exams. Overall, Figure 1 shows that the pass rates differ for each language pair. The pass rates for the high-volume pairs range from a low of 4.00% for English>French to a high of 44.44% for Chinese>English. Newer language pairs, such as Chinese>English, may also show a higher pass rate initially due to pent-up demand that may decline in the future.

The average pass rate of 38.14% for the aggregated ELV languages (4.17% of all exams) represents 14 language groups averaging two or fewer exams per year. A slightly higher or lower number of ELV exams passing in any data set can greatly skew the individual average.

The pass rate for the high-volume Spanish>English language pair (19.40%) and English>Spanish language
David Coats, a longtime ATA member, died on April 18, 2023. David was the treasurer of the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association, an ATA chapter, which he helped found. He had worked as a freelance translator since 1986 and was ATA-certified (German>English). He specialized in medical, legal, and technical documents. David had also worked as a psychotherapist for 37 years in public and private practice, including 18 years as a social worker in the field of civil commitments, working closely with the probate court and the medical system. He had a master’s degree in social work (group and individual psychotherapy) from the University of Minnesota and an AB in sociology from St. Louis University.

Geoffrey S. Koby, CT is a past chair of ATA’s Certification Committee and served on ATA’s Board of Directors (2014-2020). He has been providing business, legal, and financial translation for over 25 years. He is ATA-certified (Dutch>English, German>English). Geoff@kobytranslation.com
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