PREPARING DOCUMENTS FOR TRANSLATION
More than six months since a national health emergency was declared, our lives continue to be shaped by the global pandemic. We’re all eagerly awaiting the development and distribution of an effective vaccine and a return to normalcy. In the meantime, ATA’s dedicated volunteers and staff continue to work on your behalf.

Registration for a fully virtual ATA61 is open and work on the conference is in the final stages. See President-Elect Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo’s column on page 4 for an update and details on this history-making event. Given the extremely affordable total cost of attendance for this virtual event thanks to the elimination of travel and lodging expenses, I wouldn’t be incredibly surprised if we even set a record for the number of first-time attendees and nonmember attendees.

It’s possible ATA61 could be the largest ATA Annual Conference in history. It will almost certainly change the nature of the conference, as it’s hard to imagine that future conferences will not have at least some virtual component going forward.

The Annual Meeting of Voting Members will be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference. In addition to the election of three directors, there are two proposed Bylaws amendments on this year’s ballot. Both amendments would have a major impact on ATA if approved, so I encourage all voting members to educate themselves on the proposals and vote. You can read the statements from this year’s candidates and the proposed Bylaws amendments on pages 7–12 of this issue. (I’ll note for the record that two additional member-proposed Bylaws amendments failed to make the ballot because the minimum signature requirement was not satisfied.)

Also on the governance front, the Board of Directors held a virtual meeting August 1–2 and dealt with a number of important topics and passed quite a few resolutions. One of the first items taken up was ATA’s finances. The Board discussed the treasurer’s report and ATA’s financial outlook. Due to the major economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic, the Board took the unusual step of approving a final budget for the next fiscal year only. Each year, the Board normally approves a final working budget for the next year and draft budgets for the next two subsequent years.

On a related issue, the Board also discussed the economic uncertainty faced by our members and took two actions to ease their financial burden somewhat. First, the Board voted to waive an automatic dues increase that would have gone into effect on January 1 under the existing policy that links dues to the rate of inflation. Dues for 2021 will therefore remain at the current level. In addition, the Board approved offering renewing members an option to pay their dues in two installments instead of all at once. While these two actions are relatively minor in the big scheme of things, they demonstrate that the Board is always thinking about our members and how we can help them professionally.

The Board also approved several other resolutions, some of an administrative nature such as setting the date of record for eligibility to vote in the 2020 election and appointing an inspector of elections. More substantive resolutions concerned revisions to the Board Guidelines for Board Members, the Member Resolutions Policy to eliminate some inconsistencies and streamline the process, and revisions to the Elections Policy to clarify the responsibilities of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee.

The Board also agreed to allow members to attend the Fall 2020 Board meeting even if it’s online (as expected) and to develop guidelines for members observing such online meetings by addressing some technical and legal issues arising from virtual meetings.

The Advocacy Committee, which I chair, was very busy the past few months working to obtain an exemption to California’s AB 5, which has been disastrous for freelance translators and interpreters in California. Several bills have been introduced to address the issue and ATA has worked closely with the Coalition of Practicing Translators and Interpreters of California (CoPTIC) to have professional translators and interpreters exempted from the ABC test and placed under professional services. On August 17, the day I wrote this column, I, along with more than 50 other language professionals, called into a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee to speak in opposition to AB 2257 unless it’s amended to provide just such an exemption.

As we go into the second half of a year that has presented us all with unprecedented challenges, ATA will continue its work on your behalf promoting our vital profession and helping you advance your career. I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who selflessly donate their time to make ATA the Voice of Interpreters and Translators. ●

NOTES
ATA 2020 Election: Candidate Statements
Calling all Voting members! Participating in ATA's annual election is your opportunity to help shape the future of the Association. Learn what this year's candidates for ATA's Board of Directors have to say! Remember, the Annual Meeting of Voting Members will be held October 22, 2020.

Member Opinions: Discussion on Two Proposed Bylaws Amendments
Member feedback is very important to the growth of the Association. In this issue, we present opinions, both pro and con, regarding two proposed Bylaws amendments on this year’s ballot for Voting members: 1) clarifying the rights and privileges of membership, and 2) having multiple candidates for each elective position of the Association.

5 Strategies to Improve Your Online Presence during and after COVID-19
There are potential clients out there right now searching online for services like yours, with more to follow in the coming months as businesses begin to ramp up activity. You need to be ready for them with a solid online presence that will capture their interest and showcase your work to the best advantage.

Preparing Documents for Translation
Preparing documents for translation should never become a luxury we cannot afford or a casualty of tight deadlines or budgets.

An Introduction to Translation in Market(ing) Research
Whether it's the launch of a new mascara, refrigerator, car, or a revamped corporate image after a crisis, the results of market and market(ing) research are all around us. Here's a look at the processes and terminology of market and market(ing) research from a translator’s perspective.

Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns are found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!
ATA61: Virtually Anywhere for Everyone

ATA61 is right around the corner and there’s a lot to be excited about! While we’re all itching for the time when we can once again gather in person, this year’s Annual Conference (October 21–24) will be more accessible than ever. No matter where you are in the world, you can join colleagues right from your home office to make the most of an event that we look forward to all year.

All conference attendees will have access to the 120 educational sessions for at least six months, possibly longer, after the conference ends. We’re working out the technical details to make the sessions available on ATA’s server for longer-term access. A huge perk of attending a virtual conference is the ability to catch up on any sessions you miss or that don’t work for your schedule simply by accessing them later on demand. You would be hard pressed to find another event with this level of education at your fingertips. So, why not check out the conference website (https://ata61.org) and register today!

Here’s what else you can expect

AST Sessions and Buddies Welcome Newbies: We’ll kick off pre-conference activities on Wednesday with 16 Advanced Skills and Training (AST) sessions presented by some of the top speakers in our professions. There are a variety of workshops related to interpreting, translation, and business skills. At the end of the day, first-time conference attendees will have the opportunity to meet veteran conference goers as part of the Buddies Welcome Newbies experience.

Mindful Movement and Zumba: Each morning we’ll get the day started right with two options for healthy movement before a day of meetings and sessions. I would like to thank Eva Stabenow and Cris Silva for agreeing to share their energy with us again this year as they lead the virtual Mindful Movement and Zumba workouts.

Annual Meeting of Voting Members and Meet the Candidates: On Thursday morning, attendees will be invited to attend the Opening Session, followed by the Annual Meeting of Voting Members. Members who are unable or do not wish to attend the conference can still attend the Annual Meeting of Voting Members and the Annual Meeting of All Members. We’ll have the chance to hear from the seven candidates running for three director positions this year. As usual, there will be time for you to ask questions of the candidates. If you would like to spend some additional time getting to know the candidates, I invite you to attend the Meet the Candidates event while sipping your morning coffee or enjoying an afternoon cup of tea—wherever you are in the world! (Don’t forget to check out the candidates’ statements on pages 7–11 of this issue and their interviews on The ATA Podcast.) All voting will take place via proxy this year. You can choose to vote prior to the conference or wait to hear the candidates’ speeches on Thursday morning. Proxy information will be sent to all Voting members so watch your inbox!

Sessions, Brainstorm Networking, and Stronger Together: We’ll hold 30 of the 120 educational sessions on Thursday afternoon. Don’t forget to wrap up your day with colleagues during the Brainstorm Networking event, hosted by the Business Practices Education Committee, or attend our new evening networking event,
Stronger Together. Details about these and all networking events and sessions can be found on the conference website.

Coffee with the Board and the Annual Meeting of All Members: Join the Board on Friday morning during Coffee with the Board, or fit in some more movement with Eva Stabenow and Cris Silva before the Annual Meeting of All Members. This meeting is when you’ll hear from ATA leadership about the Association’s activity for the year, including the treasurer’s report, advocacy efforts, and more. As always, attendees will be able to share questions and comments.

In addition to networking events and conference sessions, attendees can take advantage of the Job Fair throughout the conference to connect with those looking to hire freelance translators for specific language pairs and specializations.

Six New ATA Awards: Following the Annual Meeting of All Members, we’ll have a short break before coming together to celebrate this year’s honors and awards recipients. In addition to the long-standing awards, ATA is kicking off six new ATA awards this year. The Honors and Awards Committee has put together a wonderful program to honor our colleagues. You don’t want to miss it!

More Sessions, More Networking, and the After Hours Café: After the Awards Ceremony, there will be 40 educational sessions before a second round of the Stronger Together networking event and the popular After Hours Café, hosted by ATA’s Literary Division.

Closing Session: We’ll kick off the last day of the Annual Conference with a slightly later start. You’ll get one more opportunity to attend Mindful Movement or Zumba before selecting from the final 50 educational sessions. As always, we’ll end the conference with a brief Closing Session to celebrate another successful event and the opportunity to come together, in addition to sharing what’s to come next year in Minneapolis for ATA62.

Exhibit Hall and Job Fair: In addition to networking events and conference sessions, attendees can take advantage of the Job Fair throughout the conference to connect with those looking to hire freelance translators for specific language pairs and specializations. Access the Exhibit Hall throughout the conference weekend, interacting with exhibitors and gathering information about the tools, products, and services they offer.

GET SET FOR AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE!

While nothing beats the in-person experience of a conference in a fun city, I look forward to seeing you—even if from a virtual distance—very soon!

USEFUL LINKS

ATA61 Advanced Skills and Training Day https://ata61.org/astday
ATA61 Conference Home Page https://ata61.org
ATA61 Conference Registration https://ata61.org/register
ATA61 Continuing Education Credit Information https://ata61.org/cccredit
ATA61 Conference Sessions https://ata61.org/sessions
The ATA Podcast (Interviews with Board Candidates) www.atanet.org/resources/podcasts.php
Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met online August 1–2, 2020. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

Final Budget: The Board approved the final budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021. This $2.5 million budget reflects a significant drop in certification exam revenue and expenses, as well as lower conference revenue and expenses.

No Dues Increase: The Board approved foregoing the scheduled dues increase for 2021. The Board established a Membership Dues Policy in 2015 that sets procedures for instituting smaller dues increases as a means of keeping up with inflation. The policy ties any dues increase to an increase in the Consumer Price Index-Urban Wage Earners, which is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, on March 31 of each year. Any increase equaling $2.50 or more triggers a $5 increase in dues. (This March there was the equivalent of a $3.11 increase in the CPI-U.) In making this decision, the Board recognized the financial challenges many of our members are currently facing.

Professional Development: The Board approved the appointment of Veronika Demichelis as chair of the Professional Development Committee. The Professional Development Committee oversees ATAs webinars, seminars, and related learning experiences. Veronika managed the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association’s professional development program and helped start and host Slovo, the podcast of ATAs Slavic Languages Division.

Governance Issues: The Board approved revisions to several governance policies: Board Election Policy, Board Guidelines, and the Member Resolutions Policy and Procedures. In addition, the Board approved putting forward to the membership a resolution requiring multiple candidates for elective office. (This resolution is one of two proposed Bylaws amendments on the ballot this year. The other deals with member rights and privileges. Please see pages 11–12 in this issue.)

American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI) Board: The ATA Board approved the appointment of the AFTI Board: Geoff Koby, president; Caitilin Walsh, vice president; Allison Bryant, director; Jennifer DeCamp, director; Marian S. Greenfield, director; Celeste Klein Malone, director; and Ted Wozniak, director. ATA’s Board is required to approve at least 60% of the members of the AFTI Board. AFTI is ATAs 501(c)3 charitable arm.

Board Meeting Feedback: After some discussion, the Board consensus was to open the next virtual Board meeting to all members. More information on accessing the meeting will be announced closer to the meeting.

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for October 31–November 1, 2020. The Board will meet online.
ATA 2020 Election: Candidate Statements

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election during the upcoming virtual 2020 ATA Annual Conference to elect three directors for a three-year term. In addition, members will vote on two proposed amendments to ATA’s Bylaws. The Annual Meeting of Voting Members will be held October 22, 2020.

DIRECTOR | Three-Year Term

ROBIN BONTHRONE, CT
rb@robinbonthrone.com

I’m honored to be nominated for a position on ATA’s Board of Directors. My first direct experience with ATA was in 1997, when I attended the 38th Annual Conference in San Francisco. I subsequently gave my first ATA conference presentation in St. Louis in 1999. Since then, I’ve presented 11 regular sessions and 10 preconference/Advanced Skills and Training Day seminars, as well as several sessions at ATA’s Financial Translation Conferences in 2001 and 2005. I’m also an ATA-certified German>English translator.

I’ve been training translators for most of my 31-year career as a professional German>English financial translator, not only for ATA, but also at workshops, seminars, and conferences in many European countries—mainly in Germany, where I lived for over 30 years. I trained in-house translators at the specialized translation boutique in Germany I co-owned for 20 years and taught financial translation to students in the legal translation MA program at City University, London.

This brings me to the strategy I believe must be anchored at the heart of ATA’s mission in the years to come: education, education, education.

COVID-19 has changed everything—not just our lives and our profession but also ATA. Compounding the other challenges we’re facing, including AB 5, neural machine translation, and remote interpreting technologies, the pandemic has exposed the urgent need to refocus ATA as an agile, responsive, and intelligent learning organization that challenges its members to actively embrace continuing (and continuous) professional development (PD) and supports them across all stages of their journey.

As a member of ATA’s Professional Development (PD) Committee, I drafted a PD roadmap containing several very ambitious proposals. I hope it will serve as a basis for discussion for significantly reshaping our PD activities and positioning ATA as the go-to leader in specialized/subject area training in particular. ATA’s stated position is that specialization is key to future professional success, and we now have an opportunity and a duty to help our members acquire the specialized knowledge they need to safeguard a sustainable future and remain competitive and financially secure.

In 2019, I urged ATA to step up its public opposition to AB 5 in California, and my ATA activities this year have focused on encouraging members to apply for federal funding programs, in particular the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). In addition to keeping members informed on the Business Practices listserv, I authored a guide to PPP and other federal assistance programs for ATA members and presented a webinar on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act/PPP for the New York Circle of Translators, an ATA chapter. This is tangible evidence of my efforts to provide valuable support to ATA members.

I also proudly serve as a member of ATA’s Finance and Audit Committee and Business Practices Education Committee and represent ATA as co-chair of the International Federation of Translators’ International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Standards Committee, in which capacity I authored the “ISO 17100 FAQs for Freelance Translators.”

I’m asking for your vote so I can focus firmly on the future of ATA in a rapidly changing world. Working with fellow Board members in the interests of all ATA translators and interpreters, I will be a strong, principled advocate for embedding PD at the heart of ATA.
VERONIKA DEMICHELIS, CT  
veronika@veronikademichelis.com

I’m honored to be nominated to run for ATA’s Board of Directors.

Since 2016, ATA has been my home and my community that helps me grow and inspires me. All the events that have unfolded this year have shown us that now is not the time to stand still and that we need to be creative and proactive to shape our future and the future of our profession. It would be my honor to help do that for ATA.

My Background
I’m an ATA-certified English>Russian translator based in Houston, Texas. I have an MA in linguistics and intercultural communication, an MBA in human resources management, and a certificate in translation and interpreting. I’m an adjunct professor in the Translation and Interpretation program at Houston Community College, where I teach localization and audiovisual translation and serve on the program’s advisory board.

Before starting my freelance career, I worked in the oil and gas industry for 18 years in such areas as human resources, communications, ethics and integrity, risk management, and social responsibility. This experience shaped my specialization, skills, work ethic, and values.

My Volunteer Experience
I enjoy giving back to the translation and interpreting community. I served as the professional development director for the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA) from February 2018 until June 2020, and continue to serve HITA by creating a mentoring program for its members. I helped ATAs Slavic Languages Division start its own podcast, which I co-hosted until November 2019. As a volunteer on ATAs Membership Committee, I help ensure that membership in ATA is valuable and highly regarded. As chair of the Professional Development Committee, I focus on offering ATA members a variety of relevant, high-quality professional development opportunities that strengthen their skills and professional future.

My Goals
I believe that volunteering is not just about good intentions, passion about our profession, and great ideas. It’s also about being willing to put in time and effort, engaging in dialogue and understanding other people’s opinions, and working hard to strengthen our association and bring value to our members.

More importantly, I know that being a Board member is not about what I think is right, but what you as members want ATA to represent—both for you, for our profession, and for the outside world.

If elected, I will continue to live up to these values and beliefs and work tirelessly to strengthen ATA. To this effect, I would focus on:

- Making ATA a trusted source of excellent professional development opportunities that help members improve their skills and grow their businesses.
- Offering our members the services and resources they need.
- Advocating on behalf of members, with their best interests at heart, and increasing awareness of translation, interpreting, and localization.
- Helping integrate ethics and social responsibility into the processes and best practices of our profession.

I would be honored to get your vote, represent you on the Board, and use my expertise and skills for the benefit of ATA.

ANTONIO GUERRA  
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During the past three years, I’ve been privileged to serve as an ATA director. None of us on the Board could have anticipated the demands of governance in these unprecedented times during the pandemic. However, we tackled this enormous challenge as a team. We’ve remained focused on our mission and priorities while responding to the constantly changing parameters of the crisis.

In the midst of this disruption, never has unity, clarity, collaboration, and deliberate visionary resolve been more important for the survival of our great association. The Board and ATA Headquarters consist of a brilliant, thoughtful, and committed group that continues to work tirelessly to make certain we weather this storm successfully, much stronger, and with a well-grounded path to ensure ATA’s prospects. We’ve all been deeply impacted professionally, socially, economically, and personally, both physically and mentally. As such, ATA’s role as the voice of interpreters and translators is now more important than ever.

COVID-19 has affected all ATA Board activity and committee work, from initial response time, to short-term planning, and ultimately long-term financial, structural, and organizational forecasts. The following are essential to ATA’s future:

Adaptation/Flexibility: We must accommodate the “new normal.” For example, the Board voted unanimously to hold ATA61 virtually and conduct Board meetings online.

Vision: This means facing the pandemic head-on and strategically anticipating the outlook for the industry, calculating members’ needs, and meeting the shifting professional development requirements in the depths and eventual wake of the pandemic.

Economic Solvency: The substantial financial losses for ATA as a result of the modified Annual Conference platform requires judicious and sound financial stewardship, which the Board has carefully calculated and will implement.

Advocacy: Members look to ATA to represent their interests and concerns to the general public. ATAs Public Relations (PR) Committee, on which I serve, continues to actively promote our profession.

Information: Because this pandemic is as unpredictable as it is potentially lethal,
ATA is the reliable source for accurate, relevant, and current updates that inform ATA members.

Membership: Economic hardships for some may result in a drop in our numbers. However, the value and benefit of being invested in ATA's community is a lifeboat in perilous times.

With 20 years of experience in the industry, and as a former director of interpreting services as well as a practicing interpreter, I’ve made significant contributions to ATA’s Board. Besides serving as an ATA director, I’m proud of the results of my work on various committees, bringing fresh ideas and new initiatives as chair of the Chapters Committee and my involvement on the Mentoring and Membership Committees and PR Committee’s Speakers Bureau. Previous volunteer efforts have included two terms as assistant administrator of the Medical Division, as well as serving on the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, and Professional Development Committee.

I’m told by colleagues that I’m an open communicator, an innovative thinker, and a diplomatic consensus-builder. I’ve based my standards and Board actions on the core values of ATA’s mission statement and a true passion for this profession. I ask for your vote and appreciate your consideration.

DIRECTOR | Three-Year Term

MANAKO IHAYA, CT
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One of the first things I did after immigrating to America in 1995 was finding out about the American Translators Association, requesting information (by mail, back when that was still the norm) and wondering if I had a future as a translator in my new country. I was a mother of three with a fourth on the way and totally dependent on my then-husband, having left my job in Japan as an English-language journalist. I couldn’t even afford the ATA membership fee then, but the fact that there was a huge professional association of would-be colleagues who specialized in translating their respective languages was encouraging and comforting. It took some time to build up enough experience and confidence, but in 1999 I became a member and an ATA-certified Japanese->English translator. Now, more than 20 years later, I am humbled and honored to be nominated to run for ATA’s Board of Directors.

I grew up uniquely bilingual, moving around in Japan and the United States before graduating from Tokyo’s Sophia University with a BA in English literature. I learned to make friends everywhere I went to school, a trait that became invaluable for networking later in life. While I started out mainly as a translator, now that my children are grown, I have been working primarily as an interpreter, traveling wherever my assignments take me. I also act as an agency when I have large projects requiring multiple interpreters. In addition to ATA, I became a member of the Japan Association of Translators, serving on its board of directors from 2006 to 2010 and as president for two years.

While a member of ATA, I made use of my experience as a staff editor and writer at The Japan Times Weekly to serve as the editor of the JLD Times, the newsletter of the Japanese Language Division, when it was still in print form. I have also been involved in the Certification Program, serving as a grader of the Japanese->English exam since 2008 and as language chair since 2019. I am also a member of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators and International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters.

If elected, I want to help make sure ATA remains the reassuring presence it was for me when I first contemplated becoming a translator in America. These days, that will mean more than just being a welcoming body for newcomers. With pressing issues affecting our livelihood such as the California AB 5 law that redefines and threatens independent contractors and the pandemic that has turned our world upside down, we will need ATA more than ever to advocate for our profession, offer guidance, and provide a venue where we can all work together. With your support, I hope very much to have an active role in this effort by serving as an ATA director.

DIRECTOR | Three-Year Term

ELENA LANGDON, CT
elena@acolalang.com

It’s an honor to run again for ATA’s Board of Directors after serving on it for the past three years. When I first ran, I campaigned on three main issues: interpreting, policy, and training. I think I’ve been able to make a difference in those areas (see below).

The Guidelines for Board Members state that the main duty of the Board is to “define the Association’s policies” through “collective decisions,” and during my first term this has rung very true. Discussions at our quarterly Board meetings are lively, respectful, and often full of diverging opinions. We are able to take action on even the most controversial issues and listen to each other’s perspectives. My term has not been without surprises nor external pressure, and yet we have accomplished much in the name of our members. For this I’m proud and encouraged to serve again.

Here are some examples of what I’ve accomplished while on the Board.

Interpreting: I strengthened the voice of interpreters with my input at Board meetings and with direct actions. As the webinar chair on the Professional Development Committee, I procured five presenters who spoke directly to interpreters—roughly 40% of the webinars presented during my short stint. Beforehand, the bulk of webinars focused on translators—there were two webinars for interpreters in 2017, one in 2013, and nothing else in between. I wrote the first draft of a position paper about remote interpreting and published five articles about interpreting for our Public Relations Writers Group. I helped revise the new ATA client-facing guidelines on hiring interpreting services. I was interviewed by three media outlets about the effect of the pandemic on interpreters and the people they serve. Director Melinda Gonzalez—
Hibner and I co-hosted an episode of The ATA Podcast for interpreters.

**Policies and Procedures:** The Board has been very active recently in terms of change and revision. I was particularly involved with opening certification to nonmembers, revising policies on elections and conflict of interest, issuing a statement on racism, and helping reduce the cost of webinars.

**Training:** I helped organize a legal seminar in 2019 and started a roadmap for the future of the Professional Development Committee. I recruited new committee members and co-organized a seminar for conference interpreters that was canceled because of the pandemic. I spoke at multiple professional events and networked with educators across the country.

As a child, I moved from the U.S. to Brazil and grew up between the two countries. Code switching and bicultural negotiation were constants for me. In my mid-twenties, I started translating for a living. Only when I became actively involved with professional associations, and especially with ATA 16 years ago, did I see myself as a translator and soon after as an interpreter. Along with certification and a master’s degree in the field, membership in this organization has kept me alive and kicking, continually opening up new paths and connections.

It would be an honor to continue to represent ATA members on its Board of Directors. Thank you for your consideration.

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**DIRECTOR | Three-Year Term**

**LORENA ORTIZ SCHNEIDER, CT, CI**

I was born in Ecuador and raised in Mexico, Spain, England, France, and California. I earned an MA in translation and conference interpreting from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey in 1992.

I’m an ATA-certified Spanish>English translator (since 1996), an ATA credentialed interpreter, and a California state-certified administrative hearing interpreter. I’ve worked for the U.S. Department of State as a liaison and seminar interpreter, as a conference interpreter for private industry, and as a community interpreter in mental health and workers’ compensation settings, at Social Security hearings, and for the California Employment Development Department and the Department of Motor Vehicles. I’m also a licensed interpreter trainer and have helped over 120 curious bilinguals learn about our profession.

I served two terms as assistant administrator of ATA’s Interpreters Division and I’m currently a member of ATA’s Advocacy Committee. I also served on the board of the California Workers’ Compensation Interpreters Association effecting legislative changes that provided for improved working conditions and remuneration for California interpreters.

I’m the founder and lead advocate of the Coalition of Practicing Interpreters and Translators of California, an organization that helped earn an exemption from AB 5, a California law that misclassified all translators and interpreters as employees unless proven otherwise.

While serving on the board of a Waldorf School (dedicated to nurturing the whole person through an experiential, age appropriate, and academically rigorous approach to education), I began practicing a collaborative, empathic approach to reaching consensus. I’ve brought this approach to all my other relationships in life because it’s essential for agreement on the simplest to the most divisive issues we encounter.

While I continue to interpret and translate daily, I’ve run a successful small business for 20 years. I’ve benefited from seeing things from the perspective of both a practitioner and business owner. This informs my belief that we are part of a symbiotic relationship—we need one another to thrive. This has never been more salient than it is now, when our professional independence is threatened by government regulation and venture capital-funded companies that know little about our industry.

I maintain deep relationships with colleagues in almost every association representing both translators and interpreters. As such, I’ve been able to form alliances amongst stakeholders with competing interests to achieve common goals, tap experts in specific fields, and share the knowledge I’ve acquired along the way for the benefit of all. I will bring this community-building ability to benefit ATA’s Board. I plan to bring ATA members closer together, working in concert toward the same objectives. Some of these objectives are to continue to raise the profile of what we do as professionals, promote respect among one another regardless of the chosen field of practice, increase awareness with the public and government around the work we do, and advocate for the importance of choosing professional language services.

I’m honored to have been nominated to run for a seat on ATA’s Board of Directors and hope you will vote for me in October to represent you.

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**DIRECTOR | Three-Year Term**

**ROBERT SETTE, CT**

I’m pleased to accept the nomination of my colleagues as a candidate for ATA director. I’m ATA-certified from Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Italian into English and also work from Catalan into English. Recognizing the importance of our credential early on, I earned my Spanish and French certifications in 1989 at the start of my 30+ year career as a professional translator. I’ve lived in Denver, Colorado since 2013, and currently serve as secretary of the Colorado Translators Association, an ATA chapter.

As an ATA volunteer, I previously served on the Board of Directors and have been a frequent presenter at ATA conferences and at events hosted by the European Language Industry Association. I’ve served as a member and chair of ATA’s Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, a grader for the Spanish>English certification exam, and a mentor.

I’m a firm believer in client education. Providing tools to educate direct clients and end users of our work about best practices for contracting translators is...
Proposed Amendments to the Bylaws to be Presented to the Membership for Voting

In addition to electing Board directors, Voting members will also vote on two proposed Bylaws amendments. The proposed changes appear below and are posted online at www.atanet.org/bylaws_change.php. Please note that material proposed to be deleted is struck through; material proposed to be added is underlined. ATA's Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the voting members.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS: RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

Proposed Amendment to Article III, Section 3—Rights and Privileges

a. Active members have the right to attend any of the Association's membership meetings, use all of its membership facilities, and receive all of its regular publications free or at special membership rates. They also have the right to take certification examinations, to vote, to hold Association office, and to serve on the Board of Directors and all committees of the Association. They also have the privilege of free or reduced rates for use of the Association's membership resources, including professional development events, certification examinations, and all of its regular publications.

[...]

d. Institutional and Corporate members have all the rights and privileges of Active members except the right to vote, to hold Association office, to serve on the Board of Directors or standing committees, and the privilege to take certification examinations. The rights and privileges shall be exercised through a person appointed by the organization holding the membership. This appointment does not confer individual membership on the designated person.

Amended clause of the Bylaws without markup:

a. Active members have the right to attend any of the Association's membership meetings, to vote, to hold Association office, and to serve on the Board of Directors and all committees of the Association. They also have the privilege of free or reduced rates for use of the Association's membership resources, including professional development events, certification examinations, and all of its regular publications.

[...]

d. Institutional and Corporate members have all the rights and privileges of Active members except the right to vote, to hold Association office, to serve on the Board of Directors or standing committees, or the privilege to take certification examinations. The rights and privileges shall be exercised through a person appointed by the organization holding the membership. This appointment does not confer individual membership on the designated person.

The ATA Board of Directors recommends approval.

Commentary

The ATA Bylaws state that the Association shall support "programs of accreditation and certification for translators and interpreters who meet specific standards of competence." Best practices among certifying associations allow nonmembers to take certification examinations. Allowing nonmembers to acquire certifications enhances the recognition of such certifications and eliminates potential perceptions that a certifying association may be
controlling the supply of certified individuals. Allowing nonmembers to take the ATA certification exam would also raise awareness of ATA certification in the translation industry, recognize the competence of professional translators regardless of their membership status, generally increase the credibility of the translation profession, and enhance the credibility of the ATA certification examination.

The Board of Directors therefore considers it in the best interest of the Association to open the ATA certification exam to nonmembers of ATA. The wording of the current Bylaws allows differing interpretations regarding the right to take the ATA certification exam and the Board of Directors’ authority to set policy in that regard. Clarity with respect to both issues is desirable and necessary to avoid disputes and to obtain the benefits described above.

This amendment eliminates ambiguity about the right to take the certification exam, clarifying that a reduced rate for the certification exam is a privilege of membership and that the exam may be offered to nonmembers.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS: MULTIPLE CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE

Proposed Amendment to Article VII, Section 2 d. 2):

2) The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee shall propose multiple candidates for each elective position of the Association, including at least two (2) candidates for the position of President-elect when that position is up for election. The names of the candidates proposed, whose written acceptances must have been obtained by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, shall be presented to the Board of Directors for publication to the members.

Amended clause of the Bylaws without markup:

2) The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee shall propose multiple candidates for each elective position of the Association, including at least two (2) candidates for the position of President-elect when that position is up for election. The names of the candidates proposed, whose written acceptances must have been obtained by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, shall be presented to the Board of Directors for publication to the members.

Commentary

An uncontested slate is not in the best interests of member participation and involvement. Historically, ATA Nominating Committees regularly offered members a choice of candidates for both officer and director positions. An effective nomination process produces a balanced slate of candidates that is not only representative of the membership but also presents a plurality of candidates for critically important leadership positions. The Association is strengthened when members make meaningful choices in their votes for leadership positions. This proposed Bylaws amendment would remove reliance on the “nomination by petition” process (Article VII, Section 2 d. 4) of the ATA Bylaws) to ensure that choice. While the Elections Policy may be revised from time to time, or even from one Board meeting to the next, it is appropriate for its fundamental aspects, namely the assurance that members will have a choice when voting for officers, to be guaranteed in the Bylaws.

The Board of Directors chose not to take a position on the above amendment, but the Board notes that, if approved, this amendment will require that at least two candidates be proposed for each officer and director position up for election each year. This means at least six candidates for three open director positions and two candidates each for secretary, treasurer, and president-elect when those positions are on the ballot.
MEMBER
OPINIONS

Discussion on Two Proposed Bylaws Amendments

We received a variety of opinions, both pro and con, regarding two proposed Bylaws amendments on this year’s ballot: 1) clarifying the rights and privileges of membership, and 2) having multiple candidates for each elective position of the Association.

DECOUPLING:
IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO
Ted R. Wozniak, CT
ATA President
ATA-certified (German>English)
New Orleans, Louisiana

The issue of removing membership as an eligibility requirement for taking the certification exam (aka “decoupling”) has been around for at least 20 years now. ATA’s Board of Directors is proposing a Bylaws amendment that, if approved, would clarify that taking the certification exam is not an exclusive right of membership. (The proposed amendment appears on page 11 of this issue.) This would allow ATA to move forward with decoupling as approved by the Board in 2013.

Arguments and statements both in favor of and against decoupling have been published in The ATA Chronicle. If you have not read them, I encourage you to do so. I won’t repeat all the arguments in favor or against here. But I will present what I personally believe to be the most pertinent reasons why decoupling membership from the certification exam is the right thing to do.

First, however, I would like to comment on the arguments made by opponents of decoupling. Opinion pieces and letters to the editor arguing against opening the exam to nonmembers were published in the January/February 2020, March/April 2020, May/June 2020, and July/August 2020 editions of The ATA Chronicle. In every instance, these concerned members presented rebuttals to the pro-decoupling arguments and made arguments for why decoupling is not a good idea. Some asked valid and pertinent questions about ATA’s Certification Program. I can even acknowledge that some of their rebuttal arguments may have some validity. But not one of these members presented a single argument or statement on why membership is a valid eligibility criterion for taking the exam.

And that’s the crux of the matter. Membership is not a valid eligibility requirement. This is why the Hamm Report specifically recommended that “the current membership-based requirements for eligibility should be eliminated” and why the recently commissioned opinion by Lenora Knapp, another certification specialist, stated that “requiring ATA membership is contrary to, and inconsistent with, current, accepted practice and quality standards pertaining to professional certification programs.”

Both statements were based on principles and standards for eligibility requirements for certification programs. When applied to the certification exam, these principles require that eligibility requirements should be directly linked to the ability to translate from the source to the target language. There is no direct link between membership and the ability to translate—as Hamm stated, “paying dues…has nothing to do with one’s knowledge, skills, or ability.” These standards also require that eligibility criteria should not be used to limit the number of applicants or exclude qualified candidates. A membership requirement does just that.

Most important to my mind, however, is the fact that limiting the exam to members only is inconsistent with, if not directly contrary to, our Bylaws. The first objective stated in our Bylaws is “to promote the recognition of the translation and interpreting professions.” They go on to say that ATA shall strive to meet its objectives by “supporting programs of accreditation and certification for translators and interpreters who meet specific standards of competence” (emphasis added). They do not say that ATA should support certification programs for ATA members only. Membership in ATA is not a “standard of competence” and therefore...
The issue of removing membership as an eligibility requirement for taking the certification exam (aka “decoupling”) has been around for at least 20 years now. Restricting certification to members only flies in the face of our Bylaws. Restricting the Certified Translator designation to members only is something one would expect from a protectionist-based medieval guild composed of “masters” and “journeymen,” not a modern professional association such as ATA. Based on our own Bylaws and recognized standards and principles for valid certification programs, membership should be eliminated as an eligibility requirement for the certification exam. It’s the right thing to do. I therefore urge you to vote in favor of the proposed Bylaws amendment so that ATA can follow its stated objectives and adhere to current, accepted practice and quality standards of professional certification programs.

NOTES

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED DECOUPLING BYLAWS AMENDMENT
We, the undersigned former officers and directors of the American Translators Association, do hereby voice our support for the Bylaws amendment proposed by the Board of Directors clarifying that taking ATA’s certification exam is not an exclusive membership right and that, therefore, nonmembers may be allowed to take the certification exam in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Board of Directors.

We urge all Active and Corresponding Members of ATA to vote FOR the proposed Bylaws amendment.

Ann Macfarlane
President/President–Elect (1997–2001)

Corinne McKay
President/President–Elect (2015–2019);
Director (2012–2015)

David Rumsey
President/President–Elect (2013–2017);
Director (2008–2013)

Jiri Stejskal
President/President–Elect (2005–2009);
Treasurer (2001–2005)

Caitlin Walsh
President/President–Elect (2011–2015);
Director (2007–2010)

Thomas West III
President/President–Elect (1999–2003);
Director (1996–1999)

Rudy Heller
Secretary (2013–2014)

Jane Maier

Alan Melby

Boris Silversteyn
Secretary (2011–2015); Director (2005–2011)

Beatriz Bonnet
Director (2000–2005)

Robert Croese
Director (2001–2004)

Evelyn Yang Garland
Director (2013–2019)

Jean Leblon
Director (2003–2006)

Odile Legeay
Director (2009–2015)

Jacki Noh
Director (2005–2008)

Frieda Ruppaner-Lind

Faiza Sultan
Director (2012–2018)

Izumi Suzuki
Director (1997–2000)

Liliana Valenzuela
Director (2005–2008)

Madeleine Velguth
Director (2001–2002)
A MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION OR A WORLDWIDE CREDENTIALING BODY?

Jessica Hartstein, CT, CI
ATA-certified (Spanish>English and French>English)
Credentialed Interpreter Legal (Spanish)
Houston, Texas

Burden of Proof: The first sentence of our Bylaws describes ATA as a “membership corporation.” The onus is on ATA to make a convincing case that our membership corporation should open its exam to nonmembers. General, nice sounding statements that decoupling (i.e., opening the exam to nonmembers) will positively impact the profession and ATA have been provided without evidence, but some very real risks to the Association have also been presented.

Are members missing out on concrete opportunities because only ATA members can take the certification exam? For most, probably not. ATA has not provided the names of any large freelance translation buyers who do not recognize ATA certification due to this. No indication has been made that decoupling membership with certification has hurt our credibility among any large segment of translation buyers. We have a credible and valuable program thanks to the hard work of so many.

Members Decide on the Future of the Certification Program: Thanks to the Certification Program being established in the Bylaws as a member right, the future of the program is in your hands if you choose to vote in this year’s election.

Bylaws Amendment Wording Is Indirect: I expected that when members were asked to vote on decoupling, the proposed Bylaws amendment would say what it means and mean what it says. I thought the Bylaws amendment would be presented as follows:

Article III, Section 3—Rights and Privileges
a. Active members have the right to hold Association office, and to serve on the Board of Directors and all committees of the Association.

With this wording, we would know exactly what we were voting for: opening the exam to everyone.

I was disappointed to see that the actual amendment that will be presented to members includes several other (arguably unnecessary) changes, making the intention and impact of the amendment less obvious. Members should not have to read between the lines of the amendment wording to know what they are voting for. Certainly, some members will only look at the wording of the amendment and carelessly miss the fact that a vote to give members the privilege to take the test “at a discounted price” will be considered by ATA as a vote in favor of opening the exam to nonmembers. This is a very indirect way of presenting this issue.

For your information, the Board takes an AGAINST vote to mean “I do not want to open the exam to nonmembers.”

Opening the Exam Does Not Directly Help Most Members: I have yet to see ATA provide a clear, logical, and specific example of how the average member who supports themselves with translation and interpreting work will directly benefit from opening the exam to nonmembers. I would like to share some things that otherwise happy members who have not been participating in these public discussions have told me: “What would be the point of ATA, then?” “I’ll be the first to leave if they do this!” “This will not help my business.” These members don’t see tangible benefits for the Association or their own businesses. If the fact that members expect ATA to prioritize the professional lives and Association benefits of paying members seems outlandish or in conflict with our purpose, perhaps we need to rethink our purpose. Are we fundamentally a credentialing entity or a membership association?

I recently saw longtime ATA Spanish Division members with decades of translation experience discuss leaving the industry because they are unable to support themselves. I wish we were having this passionate debate about what we, as an association, can do directly to change this. We have limited resources and opening an exam to nonmembers does not seem like the most direct route to positive change.

I want to recognize that ATA has presented the first concrete example of one subgroup of ATA members who would directly benefit from decoupling: active members of the armed services. Their employer, the Department of Defense, would pay for their exam if we decoupled. ATA’s Government Linguist Taskforce has been hard at work recruiting active members of the armed services and ATA has recently offered military personnel 50% off their first two years of membership.

Are we fundamentally a credentialing entity or a membership association?

Experts Weigh In: ATA’s Certification Program Needs Eligibility Criteria for the Sake of Credibility: Lenora Knapp, a credentialing expert, wrote in the July/August issue of The ATA Chronicle that eligibility requirements should not “be such that unqualified individuals can earn the credential simply by passing the exam.” With no educational or experience requirement to take the exam, ATA is not currently able to prevent non-translators from taking it. Thus, it is not ensuring that its exam candidates are “translators and interpreters who meet specific standards of competence,” as stated in ATA’s Bylaws.

In my opinion piece in the January/February issue of The ATA Chronicle regarding opening the exam to nonmembers, I reported that Michael Hamm (a credentialing expert engaged by ATA 20 years ago) also made the case that educational/experience eligibility requirements were essential to credibility. If this exam is aimed at mid-career professional translators, candidates would be able to meet certain educational/experience requirements. Why don’t we bring these requirements back?
DISCUSSION ON TWO PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS continued

\[\text{Law school graduates are expected to provide proof of eligibility for the Texas Bar exam. We clearly want to protect the credibility and integrity of our credential just as other organizations do. Eligibility criteria (and preventing people from fraudulently misrepresenting our credential) should not be considered administrative burdens because they have a bigger impact on our credibility than decoupling.}
\]

I love best practices, but the argument that coupling membership is not a best practice loses strength when there are other very significant credentialing best practices that we are ignoring. Please read my opinion piece in the January/February issue to learn more about this and the unknowns of opening the exam.

**Antitrust Is Not Applicable:** Doctors are required by law to have a medical license; ATA-certification is optional. There are 350 languages spoken across the U.S.\(^6\) We offer certification in about 20 languages. The vast majority of translators earn their income without ATA certification, so there is really no concern that ATA is preventing anyone from working.

**Conclusion:** I’m so thankful to ATA’s Certification Program for its hard work in creating a well-respected credential. ATA has not shown that this amendment will directly help most members, so I hope you’ll vote “AGAINST.”

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**NOTES**


2. ATA’s Bylaws can be found here: www.atanet.org/docs/p_bylaws.pdf.


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The vast majority of translators earn their income without ATA certification, so there is really no concern that ATA is preventing anyone from working.

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**MULTIPLE CANDIDATES BYLAWS AMENDMENT: SUPPORT COMPETITIVE ATA ELECTIONS**

**Patricia C. de Ribes, CT**

**ATA-certified (French->English)**

**San Marcos, Texas**

In every ATA election, voting members have several important decisions to make. In addition to voting for three director positions in 2020, we will vote on two Bylaws amendments.

The first Bylaws amendment is a Board initiative to decouple ATA certification from membership and open the certification exam to nonmembers. An “Against” vote on this amendment will ensure that our certified translator credential remains tied to ATA membership and will preserve the member right to take certification exams.

The second proposed amendment, the Multiple Candidates Bylaws Amendment, is the result of a member-initiated petition. A “For” vote on this amendment will require the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) to propose at least two candidates for each ATA officer position: president-elect, secretary, and treasurer. This Bylaws amendment would ensure that elections are competitive.

**The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee**

The NLDC has proposed more than one candidate for an officer position on just three occasions since 2005. Although the Bylaws do provide for candidacy by petition, this should not be the sole means for providing a choice of candidates. While election by acclamation is the policy at the ATA division level, elections for officers should make it possible for members to vote in competitive elections to elect those who will best represent ATA and its members.

The NLDC chair and committee members are appointed by the Board. Since 2005, in the absence of competitive elections, the five members of the NLDC, rather than the majority of ATA voters, have been effectively selecting ATA’s officers and setting the course for the Association. When a secretary and treasurer are elected, they will serve for the next two years. Once elected, the president-elect serves two years in that position, followed by two years as president.

**Elections Policy**

ATAs Board Elections Policy was revised in August 2019 to read: “It [the NLDC] shall propose at least two candidates for each officer position (president-elect, secretary, and treasurer) and at least two candidates for each director position.”

This short-lived version of the Elections Policy was superseded in October 2019 by one that characterized multiple candidates for each position as merely an option rather than a requirement: “It [the NLDC] shall propose preferably two candidates for each officer position (president-elect, secretary, and treasurer) and at least two candidates for each director position.”

In August 2020, the Board approved yet another revised Elections Policy. According to this version: “It [the NLDC] shall propose at least one candidate for each officer position (president-elect, secretary, and treasurer) and at least one candidate for each director position.”
Leadership Development Committee and some ATA past presidents—that the potential harm and practical challenges involved with such a permanent change may far outweigh any theoretical benefits. We are not opposed to multiple candidates competing for officer positions, but requiring the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee to put forward multiple candidates is not considered good practice for good reason.

The current Nominating and Leadership Development Committee includes members from the leadership of divisions, certification, chapters, interpreting, etc., representing a broad spectrum of the Association. The committee is also unique in that it is subject to a rigorous schedule from the time it is appointed each year until it must put forward a slate of candidates for the Board.

ATA nominates multiple candidates for directors every year, but while nominating multiple candidates for officer positions is also encouraged, it is not mandated. Mandating multiple candidates for all positions poses a number of particular challenges. The first challenge is a matter of numbers. In an ideal world, the treasurer, secretary, and president-elect will have had some Board experience, so that they are familiar with the current issues facing the Board. ATA’s Board of Directors consists of 12 members plus the president. If all three officer positions require at least two candidates, the committee would have to identify six appropriate candidates—half of the Board—who are willing and able to take on these additional responsibilities. In any given year, there may be Board members who are unable to run due to term limits or Board members who just started on the Board, which reduces the potential number of candidates for officers further.

Besides Board experience, the committee also employs a list of demanding qualifications for officers, who must demonstrate the right skills and be able to dedicate substantial time to their respective leadership role for a term of at least two years, or even four years in the case of the president-elect. While it is possible for the committee...
to seek candidates who do not have any Board experience, finding eligible outside candidates who have the necessary experience, abilities, and knowledge to step into high-profile officer positions involving significant amounts of volunteer time is very rare. As a result, the proposed resolution mandating multiple candidates forces the committee to potentially nominate candidates without Board experience, persons who may not have the time or skills to take on additional responsibilities, or who may simply accept the nomination with the intention to lose, which does not serve the membership or the Board member in question.

Moreover, our experience as committee chairs has shown that losing candidates are less likely to run again or increase their involvement in the Association’s affairs. Putting yourself in the spotlight of an election can be a harrowing experience that is quite different than the experience of actually governing. As a result, talented candidates with excellent administrative skills may be scared off from repeating the experience. This does not serve the Association’s interest in developing stable and competent leadership.

Ironically, the proposed resolution puts more power in the hands of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee vis-à-vis the membership. ATA’s Bylaws include a petition process that allows a member to be added to the slate by collecting the signatures of 60 voting members. In the case of the officer positions, if the committee is forced to put forward two or more candidates for each position, this significantly dilutes the chance of a petitioning candidate from achieving a clear majority of the votes cast. A three-way race can easily result in a so-called “false majority,” which can undermine confidence and trust in the system and the officers in question.

Although the committee tries to focus on the candidate’s skills rather than their stance on any particular issue, a more politically-minded committee in the future could also rig the slate with their preferred candidate and another candidate who has agreed to lose in order for the committee to achieve its aims. This is one of the reasons why the leading parliamentary authority, *Robert’s Rules of Order*, does not recommend mandating multiple candidates.1

Lastly, the resolution has no enforcement procedure. If the committee is unable to find a second candidate for a given position, what then? Is the ballot not valid? Is there no election until another candidate steps forward? Does it put legal liability on the committee members? These are additional challenges that need to be considered when applying such a permanent change through the Bylaws.

ATA operates as a nonprofit organization and not as a public utility, governmental office, or labor union. It is subject to different laws and customs. Within the world of association governance, using single officer candidates is considered best practice, although opinions and arrangements can vary widely among different associations.2

Nevertheless, ATA still maintains a flexible approach of encouraging the nomination of multiple directors and officers, as well as a petition option to ensure that any member has a path to the Board.

The committee is not opposed to having multiple candidates on the slate, and has done so in the past, but it is simply not always possible to achieve. Mandating a relatively permanent requirement through the Bylaws in the interest of having “multiple viewpoints”—which is not necessarily guaranteed or something that the committee considers—creates far more potential problems than it does solutions.

While the proposed resolution may be well intentioned in the present, it is not considered best practice and may prove to be detrimental to the good governance of the Association in the future. We strongly recommend voting against the resolution mandating multiple candidates for officer positions and staying with the existing elections policy, which has served ATA well over the years.  

1 *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (11th edition, page 433, lines 22–28): “Although it is not common for the nominating committee to nominate more than one candidate for any office, the nominating committee can do so unless the bylaws prohibit it. It is usually not sound to require the committee to nominate more than one candidate for each office, since the committee can easily circumvent such a provision by nominating only one person who has any chance of being elected.”

2 “Building Better Association Boards: Advancing Performance through Nomination, Recruitment, and Selection Processes.” (American Society of Association Executives, page 6): “Officer elections holding noncompetitive elections for officers is considered a leading practice. Having either the nominating committee or the board do the vetting reduces the likelihood that unselected members in competitive elections become disengaged, and also results in a competency-based system. In noncompetitive elections, the leadership slates officers based on alignment of competencies with desired strategic needs. Officer positions are filled by someone who has recently sat on the board, commonly current board members.” See: http://bit.ly/ASAE-boards.
5 Strategies to Improve Your Online Presence during and after COVID-19

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that a solid online presence is more important than ever, especially for translators and interpreters.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that our online presence is more important than ever. Not only has just about everything moved to a remote setting during this crisis, but the “new normal” has also served as a bit of a forced reminder for most people that they can search for just about anything they need online. In addition, due to the stay-at-home orders that were issued around the world earlier this year, businesses have quickly pivoted their offerings to accommodate their clients online.

So, how has the pandemic made having a solid online presence even more important for translators and interpreters?

First, we have to remember the fact that most of us work with clients from various places, even interpreters who tend to work in their own cities or regions. Our clients can hire us from anywhere, and most of us, especially translators, can work from anywhere. That means that the easiest way for clients to find us is online.

While I would never say that in-person events are not valuable, the pandemic has shown us that travel plans, conferences, trade shows, and gatherings of any kind can go out the window very quickly. We can’t control this. But what we can control is how we show up online: our online presence, the platforms we use, the content we create and share, and the ability to reach our clients wherever they are.

You own your online presence, especially your website. Events and networking opportunities may get canceled, but no one can take your online presence from you, pandemic or not. There are potential clients out there right now searching online for services like yours, with more to follow in the coming months as businesses begin to ramp up activity. You need to be ready for them with a website that will capture their interest and showcase your work to the best advantage. How? Here are five strategies you can use to help achieve this goal.

We can control how we show up online: our online presence, the platforms we use, the content we create and share, and the ability to reach our clients wherever they are.

1. Decide what you want to be known for when it comes to your professional work.

Consider other translators you know who specialize in certain areas and/or languages. When you hear about jobs that fit their expertise, you immediately think of them, right? That’s what you want your colleagues and clients to do as well when it comes to your own professional work.

For example, what do you want to be known for when it comes to:

■ Your specialization(s);
■ Your language pair(s);
■ Your work style and ethic;
■ Your expertise related to the translation or interpreting assignments you take on; and
■ The value you provide to those you serve?

Once these points are clear in your mind, think about how you can share them with your clients and colleagues.
so that you become known for and associated with them. Yes, this is related to marketing. But you can become known for certain characteristics or fields of expertise by showing up as someone with a professional identity that reflects those characteristics or fields.

Here are a few ideas on how to market yourself as an expert translator or interpreter:

- **Speak about topics in your field of expertise.** (Even though in-person events are not happening at the moment, there are plenty of opportunities to share your knowledge via online professional development events.)
- **Attend lectures, workshops, conferences, trade shows, and other events** that are being offered virtually.
- **Write articles or share news about issues** in your field.
- **Volunteer for professional associations** in your specialization(s) or special interest groups within a larger translator/interpreter association that fit your specialization(s). (Think ATA divisions!)
- **Connect online with other colleagues** in your specialization(s) and language pair(s) who you can network with and share ideas on a regular basis.

While I know it’s not always easy to talk about yourself, you have to consider that if you don’t tell people what you do, how will they know? You need to talk to people and engage with them. These are the best ways to become known for the professional work you do.

**Choose the most strategic places to showcase your professional work for your ideal clients.** Hands down, the number one place to showcase your work is through your website. You must build your online home—your website—first and the roads leading to it—social media, search engine optimization strategy, etc.—second. Once you have a website in place that you’re sure speaks to your ideal clients in a way that appeals to them and specifically portrays the type of work you want to do in the long term, you can work on other areas of your online presence to complement it.

So, what are those roads leading to your online home? Here are a few paths I would recommend you start paving first:

- Your LinkedIn profile;
- Professional directory profile listings; and
- Social media accounts on platforms where your clients are hanging out and actively engaging on a regular basis.

**While I know it’s not always easy to talk about yourself, you have to consider that if you don’t tell people what you do, how will they know?**

First, let’s start with LinkedIn. This is perhaps one of the most overlooked tools professional translators and interpreters can use to their advantage. In fact, after your website, I would say it’s the most important piece of your online presence to get right. Why? Because LinkedIn is a massive search engine used by professionals to find other professionals. Professionals are on LinkedIn to do business. 1

Second, your professional association directory listings should feature information similar to what one would find on your LinkedIn profile and website. Now, before you think this is overkill, hear me out. When customers need a translator or interpreter and don’t know where to look, they turn to professional associations. If your profile is up to date, clear and concise, contains your contact information (and please link it to your website!), and stands out from others in your language pair(s) and area(s) of specialization, clients will be more inclined to reach out to you instead of someone else whose profile is not as comprehensive.

Finally, we come to social media. I don’t push social media a whole lot when it comes to marketing your professional translation and interpreting services. This is because most clients are more inclined to look at the other three pillars of your online presence first: website, LinkedIn profile, and professional directory profile listing. That said, if you know your clients are hanging out on Instagram or Facebook, then by all means be active there! Here are two examples:

- A translator who regularly works on marketing texts for fashion and cosmetics is more likely to find their ideal clients on Facebook. Why? The fastest growing demographic on Facebook tends to be users age 65 and older. 2 So, it makes sense to invest in some Facebook ads to target a group like this if you’re already active on Facebook with a company page for your professional services.

And of course, there are those of us who work in fields where our ideal clients are simply not looking for professionals on the mainstream social media platforms. That’s okay. We have our websites, LinkedIn, and professional association directory profiles where they can find us.

**It’s easy to get excited about improving your online presence, but it can quickly become overwhelming if you don’t have a plan.**

**Determine how much time you have to work on the various platforms where you will have an online presence.** It’s easy to get excited about improving your online presence, but it can quickly become overwhelming if you don’t have a plan. Ask yourself these questions.
■ How much time can you realistically devote to making improvements?
■ What can you do to make the time you spend more efficient?
■ What actions can you take to see the biggest return over time?

Look at your weekly schedule and figure out a time when you can fit in an hour or so to work on your online presence, whether it’s making updates to your website, searching for articles clients might find useful that you can share throughout the following week, or engaging with colleagues and clients on social media platforms.

4 Clarify how you will engage with others online. Part of honing your online presence is determining how you’ll engage with others online, including clients and colleagues. While clients and colleagues are two different audiences, both are essential to growing your career. That said, they are different so the way you engage with them online should be authentic and effective. Here are some questions to help you brainstorm how to do this:
■ What can you share with clients to help them in their daily work?
■ What can you share with colleagues that will help them but still reflect your professional expertise?
■ What are the best places to engage with these groups online?
■ How can you support clients and colleagues and their goals when you engage with them?
■ What do you want clients and colleagues to remember about their experiences engaging with you online?

A few colleagues have told me that they don’t believe you should connect with other colleagues on social networks like LinkedIn, but I could not disagree more. By engaging professionally and in a supportive way, your colleagues can be the source of some of your greatest “helping hands,” referring you for new projects, new clients, and other opportunities.

However, it’s important to know where to delineate what you share with clients and what you share with colleagues and the purpose behind both. For example, if you write a blog aimed at colleagues, don’t put it on the same website where you would direct clients. Blogging for colleagues on a client-facing website can cause confusion for clients. After all, the goal of a client-facing website is to appeal to your clients, not your colleagues.

Part of honing your online presence is determining how you’ll engage with others online, including clients and colleagues.

5 Choose one to three platforms and commit to them. While it would be nice to show up everywhere online for your clients, it’s also true that we’re busy professionals who are pulled in many directions. By choosing one to three platforms and devoting time and effort to them, you have a much better chance of reaching your ideal clients in a noisy online world. These platforms (one of which should be your website!) should all be client-facing. Once you determine which platforms are the most strategic places for you to show up for clients online, then you can also devote time and effort to engage with colleagues. While it’s good to be in touch with colleagues and nice to interact with them online, they are not usually the ones who pay your invoices. So, be mindful of how much time you spend engaging with colleagues versus clients.

START SMALL AND BUILD ON YOUR FOUNDATION
Take these strategies and implement them in small steps. This will ensure you have a better chance of following through on your plan and creating a sustainable online presence you can continue to refine over time.
■ Start with your website (your online home) and work on the other pieces (the roads leading to it) next.

■ Your online presence is something to continuously refine. It’s not a one-and-done project or effort.
■ Your website will continue to need updates to fit your ideal clients (who may evolve over time). Your LinkedIn profile should reflect the same changes you make to your résumé or the “About” page of your website. Likewise, your professional association directory profile should be a reflection of your website and your résumé.

To summarize, a solid online presence is a cohesive image of your expertise and a clear message of what it’s like to work with you. Continue to experiment with your online presence and make updates as your business and client base evolve.

It’s more important than ever to make sure you have a strong online presence, and that’s not going to change anytime soon! How do you plan to improve your presence? What’s already working for you and what would you like to tackle this year?

NOTES
1. If you need a little LinkedIn jumpstart, check out my article, “Four Things You Didn’t Know LinkedIn Could Do for Your Business,” http://bit.ly/LinkedIn-strategies.

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Preparing Documents for Translation

Here is a reminder of the importance of preparing a document before translation as part of a standardized quality assurance workflow, including a step-by-step review of the process.

Translation technology such as computer-assisted translation tools and machine translation has dramatically changed current productivity, budget, and quality expectations. Under increased pressure to shorten turnaround times and reduce costs, freelance translators working with direct clients and language services providers (LSPs) are sometimes tempted to rush jobs into production. As a former production director and a full-time translation editor and consultant for over 30 years, I continue to believe in the importance of standardized quality assurance workflows to ensure that the client’s requirements are satisfied.

The first phase in a quality assurance workflow is to prepare the project for translation (or “prepping” as we used to call it at the LSP where I worked). During this step, project specifications are defined, written down, and communicated to all team members so they can perform the assigned task successfully.

Given the high degree of complexity of some translation projects today, it’s even more critical not to skip the “prepping” phase. The following is meant to refresh our knowledge on this basic and crucial step in the translation process.

WHY SHOULD WE PREPARE DOCUMENTS FOR TRANSLATION?

If the document prepper doesn’t understand something, chances are the rest of the team won’t either. While translators, editors, and proofreaders are expected to perform some research, certain information about client requirements or preferences can only be provided by the client or LSP. Translation team members need this information to perform their tasks correctly.

To achieve this, the prepper can identify questions or concerns upfront and address potential problems ahead of time. If delivered in a timely manner, complete and accurate information about a project might help avoid costly mistakes.

If the person preparing the document doesn’t understand something, chances are the rest of the team won’t either.

WHO SHOULD PREPARE A DOCUMENT FOR TRANSLATION?

When preparing a document for translation, neither the direct client nor tech savvy staff at an LSP can substitute for an experienced language professional. Direct clients know their own company and industry better than the translation provider, but they are not linguists. Tech savvy staff can navigate through the most complex translation technology software, but many are also not linguists.

A good document prepper must:

■ Have a clear understanding of the client’s needs and the specifications agreed upon between the client and translator or the LSP’s sales/marketing team.

■ Be able to examine the document from the perspective of each team member in order to write clear
instructions for everyone involved. The goal is to ensure each team member can complete their task correctly and in a timely manner to make it easier for everyone else down the quality assurance workflow.

- Research problems and provide suggestions/solutions to any issues.
- Have excellent communications skills. When questions and problems arise, the preparer must be able to discuss these in a polite and effective manner with the client or team.

**HOW DO YOU PREPARE A DOCUMENT FOR TRANSLATION?**

Follow these steps when preparing a document for translation:

1. **Gather the approved specifications, documents, and reference material.** It’s important to work with the final versions of documents. Making changes during the translation process may impact cost and/or turnaround time. If changes are ongoing, a process to track and document them must be implemented.

   Clients don’t always understand what type of reference material to provide, so the preparer must be specific about what could be helpful. Reference material might include information on previous jobs, translation memories, customized machine translation engines, brochures, videos, podcasts, webinars, photographs, glossaries, specialized dictionaries, or a list of relevant databases.

2. **Read and “survey” as much of the document(s) as possible and mark the sections where the preparer has questions.** The preparer should ask themselves the following:

   - What type of document is it and what is it for? For example, is it for informational or marketing purposes? Is it a manual, marketing material, a script, software strings, a materials safety data sheet, or a website?
   - Who wrote the document? Was it written by a lay person, a specialist, or a manufacturer?

3. **Identify potential problems.** Every language poses different problems, but the preparer must be on the lookout for issues in areas such as:

   - Terminology: Is there a lexicon/glossary? Should some terms be left in the source language?

4. **Research potential problems and find solutions.** Ideally, each person on the team should solve the problems they encounter during their phase in the production workflow. The reality is that oftentimes issues are simply ignored. There are many reasons for this, including tight turnaround, lack of a timely response from the client or project manager, or simply that the team member assumes somebody else down the line will fix the problem. Therefore, it’s the responsibility of the preparer to spot potential issues and solve as many of them ahead of time as possible so as not to disrupt the workflow or budget.

   Once they’ve identified what they don’t understand, the preparer must determine if they can research the problem themselves or need clarification from the client. How?

   - Start by checking the reference material (especially if this is a repeat client). If the reference material doesn’t provide the answers, the preparer must begin their research. We’re extremely fortunate to live in an age where information is readily available.
   - Become an expert at refining searches.
   - Set up a preliminary online resources list.

If clarification is still necessary, the preparer should set up a meeting (in person, telephone conversation, videoconference, etc.) with the client and prepare ahead of time.
PREPARING DOCUMENTS FOR TRANSLATION continued

- Be aware of the client’s personality, linguistic understanding (if any), and/or potential stressful issues about this particular project.
- Have a basic understanding of the client’s line of work and full knowledge of the project specifications that were agreed upon.
- Write down questions/concerns ahead of time. Always be diplomatic and polite. Questions should not contain judgments or criticisms.
- Make the meeting short and to the point.

If delivered in a timely manner, complete and accurate information about a project might help avoid costly mistakes.

5 Write and provide guidelines for team members. All jobs should include basic information about the project (see questions under Number 2 above). The preparer must be able to determine whether or not a project requires additional instructions. These may range from none to minimal or lengthy and complex. No instructions or excessive instructions can both lead to confusion, interminable requests for clarification, or, even worse, grave mistakes. Guidelines should include the following:

Basic information:

a. A short description of the type/purpose of the project, word count, and desired quality. Example: A 4,000-word adult-informed consent for the clinical trial of medication XYZ for publication purposes.

b. Project information such as source and target language, deliverables, target audience, tone, start date, and turnaround time for each team member.

Additional instructions (if necessary):

a. Specific issues grouped under categories (e.g., terminology, target-language mechanics, formatting, etc.).

b. Style guidelines are common for large-volume clients and must be easily searchable and cover all client preferences applicable to the project. It’s important to provide specific and comprehensive examples.

6 Ask the team for feedback.

Encourage team members to ask questions and give feedback. For example, is there anything they don’t understand or need to clarify?

PREPARATION SHOULD NOT BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Preparing documents for translation should never become a luxury we cannot afford or a casualty of tight deadlines or budgets. A big-picture approach suggests that most clients would be happy to extend a deadline by an hour, a day, or even a week to ensure they receive the quality (however the client defines it) they require. So, save yourself some stress, extra work, and possibly losing a client by getting it right the first time!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


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An Introduction to Translation in Market(ing) Research

Market(ing) research is an integral part of every business venture and its results impact our everyday lives. This very diverse sector offers plenty of interesting opportunities for translators.

Whether we’re aware of it or not, the results of market(ing) research are all around us. The products we use, commercials we watch, and logos we see—all of these and much more have been analyzed and tested with market research to measure their effectiveness before the companies behind them make major decisions or large investments in product development and advertising.

This can be a very exciting sector for translators with plenty of interesting job opportunities. Because the material is so diverse, within the span of a week you may be translating about moisturizer, pizza, dried fruit, the off-label prescription practices of physicians, and opinions about fracking (i.e., hydraulic fracturing, which is the process of drilling into the ground before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside).

Before jumping in, however, it’s vital to have a thorough understanding of what markets, marketing, market research, and market(ing) research are. I’m using (ing) here when discussing market(ing) research to emphasize that there’s a great deal of overlap between it and market research. It’s almost impossible to create separate and accurate descriptions of these concepts because even various experts use them interchangeably. So, let’s break down the terminology.

Market: This can be a physical or virtual place to buy or sell something. It’s also an identified category of buyers or potential buyers, like the snack foods market or the market for arthritis medication.

Marketing: Describes the activities and processes that promote products or services, including communication, advertising, and distribution.

Market Research: The process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information about a market, product, or service, the customers it targets, and the place where customers obtain it.

Market(ing) Research: The collection of data related to marketing, which is then analyzed and interpreted before use in marketing decision-making. It generally incorporates market research and product and consumer research.

What kind of data is collected in market(ing) research? So, let’s say a major U.S. potato chip manufacturer decides to see if the market in another country is viable for them. The initial step would be finding someone to collect and analyze information on the following in that country:

- The snack foods market in general, along with the potato chip market;
- Potato chip buyers and consumers;
- Pricing structures;
- Competitors already on the market; and
- Specific potato chip flavor preferences, including any that are unique to the target country.

WHY IS MARKET(ING) RESEARCH NECESSARY?

A business cannot be successful without obtaining accurate and comprehensive information before making major financial investments. Every aspect of the products you use (e.g., packaging, color scheme, varieties, size, price,
taste, etc.), every ad you see, and every slogan you read may (or should) have undergone market(ing) research.

Today’s business environment is a volatile one, resulting in a new generation of companies that are unique and innovative (e.g., Uber). There are many reasons businesses fail but a large number of them can be avoided by implementing market(ing) research, including ascertaining whether there is an actual need for a product and addressing such issues as competition, bad or insufficient marketing, not reacting to customers’ needs or changes in the industry, and overexpansion.

THE TWO TYPES OF MARKET(ING) RESEARCH

Market(ing) research can be broken down into two basic types: primary and secondary research. Primary research is information gathered through surveys, interviews, and other direct contact with people in the target group. Secondary research, also called desk research, is information gathered from sources that have already been published, such as company reports, trade association materials, and articles in industry journals. Market research reports are also available for purchase from companies specializing in this area. For example, if a German dog food company wants to move into the U.S. market, a first step might be to purchase a report on the industry before investing in more expensive customized research. This is where a translator could be involved if the company wants the purchased report translated into German.

There’s a large variety of work for translators in the primary research sector, so that’s what I’ll focus on here.

PRIMARY RESEARCH STAGES AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR TRANSLATORS

Purpose: Before anything can happen, the research objective must be defined. For example, is there a new concept or product? Is the existing product being changed (e.g., new logo, new positioning, or new package)? Does the product placement at the point of sale need to be determined or changed? Does brand recall need to be improved? Do people remember the advertising?

Let’s say a manufacturer of dip mixes and chips decides to change their existing products by successively removing certain additives. This means that the new recipes need to be tested to see if current users like the resulting products as much as the old ones. The testing could also examine how the new products fare against the competition, whether the positioning of the products has changed, and whether new marketing opportunities emerge.

For translators, this step could involve translating a proposal. The client may also request rough cost estimates for different parts of the study to help the end client make budget decisions.

A business cannot be successful without obtaining accurate and comprehensive information before making any major financial investments.

INSTRUMENTS AND APPROACH:

The next stage is deciding on the research instruments and planning the research approach. There are two major kinds of primary research: qualitative and quantitative.

- Qualitative research provides an initial understanding (e.g., how people respond to a new, innovative concept) and requires subjective interpretation. Methods used here include focus groups, online journals, and in-depth interviews.

- Quantitative research is typically conclusive and intended for recommending courses of action such as a product launch. Computer-assisted telephone/personal interviews, mobile apps, and questionnaires with primarily closed questions are examples of quantitative methods. The results of qualitative research are often followed by quantitative research analysis.

Several qualitative or quantitative methods may be used jointly, and many institutes/agencies develop and use proprietary methods, apps,
panels, and more for this purpose. The research study may be ad hoc (one-off) or a tracking study (continuous/repeated at certain intervals). During this step, possible tools are selected and developed (such as the interview guide, focus group guide, screener, and questionnaire). In addition, the research sample and possible quotas are defined. For example, who will be surveyed—users, non-users, the general population, men, women, or households with children?

This stage could involve a lot of potential work for translators, the nature of which will vary depending on the research approach used. Translations of various questionnaires, focus group guides, concepts, storyboards, or ancillary documents such as confidentiality agreements, data privacy and protection documents may be needed.

**Fieldwork:** Once the research approach is determined and the instruments are ready, it’s time for the fieldwork stage. This is when the data is collected, which means there might not be a need for much translation at this point. Changes to the questionnaire may be needed quickly if, for example, the target group proves difficult to find. Verbatims (answers to open-ended questions) and transcripts may need to be translated successively during this stage. Interpreting may also be needed during this stage if focus groups or interviews are observed by clients who don’t speak the language of the country being studied.

**Analysis and Reporting:** After the fieldwork has concluded, the results are analyzed using all the input collected. In qualitative research, for example, this can include verbatims, interview transcripts, or focus group recordings. In quantitative research, it usually includes the tabular results of data collected from the closed questions in questionnaires, where respondents choose from possible responses. (For example, when testing a dried fruit snack, there may be a question regarding the softness of the product using something called a Likert scale: Was it much too soft, somewhat too soft, just right, somewhat too hard, much too hard?) Responses to open-ended questions in quantitative research are sometimes categorized into what are called code frames. For example, if the subject of the research is pizza, there may be an open-ended question asking if there was anything the respondent particularly liked about the pizza (Likes), followed by one asking if there was anything the respondent didn’t like (Dislikes). The results will likely include a large number of responses about the crust being crispy or chewy, too hard or soft, the tomato sauce being properly seasoned or bland, and the pizza having too much/too little sauce, not enough cheese or toppings, and so on. These answers are combined and categorized into what is called a code frame, which shows the number of times each item was mentioned.

After analysis, the results are prepared for the end client as a presentation or report, sometimes preceded by preliminary results or one-page summaries. For the translator, this stage means possible translation of the code frame, preliminary results, one-page summary, presentation/report, and the most important part of the study, the overall summary and recommendations.

**Taking Action:** In the final stage, the market research institute provides the results, including the summary and recommendations, to the end client, who now uses this information to take action, potentially collaborating with the institute for future research. This may entail further research on the same issue (e.g., if the previous research was qualitative, it may now be time for a quantitative survey). The research also might have to be repeated after reworking the recipe, package, slogan wording, or ad. At this point, it’s important for translators who have been working with the market research institute or end client to signal their availability for future projects and to be prepared to provide cost estimates.
MARKET(ING) RESEARCH

INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

According to a 2019 global market research report by the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR), the global industry for research and insights was valued at $80 billion in 2018.1

There are basically four types of market(ing) research providers: major international firms like AC Nielsen or Kantar, national institutes in each country, small institutes sometimes called boutique institutes, and freelancers.

Major companies generally have their own internal market research departments, which tend to use a number of different institutes. The rate of employee turnover at institutes is often high, but, at least in my experience, satisfied clients who switch jobs tend to take their translators along.

Working in the market(ing) research industry gives you plenty of opportunities to expand your own network, as there is a lot of crossover with, for example, advertising agencies, creatives, public relations, transcribers, and graphic designers.

There are also a large number of market(ing) research associations. The largest and most significant global one is ESOMAR, a membership organization for market, social, and opinion researchers founded in 1947. The majority of reputable research institutes are also ESOMAR members. Most countries have their own associations, such as the Insights Association in the U.S. (formed by the merger of the Marketing Research Association and the Council of American Survey Research Organizations) and the U.K.’s Market Research Society. Germany has the Berufsverband Deutscher Markt- und Sozialforscher e.V., Japan has the Japan Marketing Research Association, and Austria has the Verband der Marktforscher Österreichs, to name just a few. These associations are a good source when it comes to finding out what market(ing) research institutes are in your country.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD MARKET(ING) RESEARCH TRANSLATOR?

We’ve come to know the saying “A jack of all trades is a master of none” as having a negative implication. The complete and original saying, though, was actually “A jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one.” Its intention was praise, meaning that a person is a generalist, versatile, and skilled at many things. This best sums up translation in this industry, because although market(ing) research has its own terminology, the research topics vary immensely. The list is endless, from eyewear to yogurt packaging to new Alzheimer drugs, which makes excellent research skills, a broad knowledge base, flexible thinking, and an interest in continuous learning a must.

CAN MARKET(ING) RESEARCH TRANSLATORS BE REPLACED BY MACHINE TRANSLATION?

In my opinion, translation in this sector will most likely not be taken over by machine translation in the near future for a few reasons. The first is due to data protection and privacy—confidentiality plays a major role here. In addition, texts in this field often require sensitivity, creativity, and context-specific knowledge. Translators also frequently deal with text fragments from face-to-face interviews or focus group transcripts, where a respondent may stop halfway through the sentence, necessitating (human) common sense, intuition, and extrapolation.

MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to find out more about market and market(ing) research, you can visit www.marketresearch.com and www.mymarketresearchmethods.com. The Marketing Research Kit for Dummies, by Michael R. Hyman and Jeremy J. Sierra, is also a very helpful book for finding out about market research.2 Some associations also have a newsletter you can subscribe to.

To learn the English terminology used in this field, you can refer to the glossary of market research terms compiled by Modern Marketing Partners3 or the market research glossary compiled by SIS International Research4, or download ESOMAR’s master marketing research glossary.5 Websites with information about market research exist in many languages, so use those research skills to find them!

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5. ESOMAR’s master marketing research glossary can be downloaded as a pdf at http://bit.ly/ESOMAR-master-glossary.

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What I’ve Learned from Remote Court Interpreting

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ince passing the Colorado French court interpreter certification exam almost exactly a year ago, I’ve been interpreting two to four times a week in the Colorado state courts. I love the work, and I’m not saying that just in case one of my managing interpreters reads this. At first, my goal was simply to pass the court interpreter certification exam to prove to myself that I could do it (hello, imposter syndrome). But lo and behold, I find court work both fascinating and fulfilling. I love learning about the legal system and feeling like I’m serving as a bridge between French speakers and the legal system. I just love everything about it.

The last in-person interpreting job I did was on Monday, March 16: a fairly lengthy hearing in a little town out on the Colorado plains. Pandemic-wise, things were heating up. Everyone had to wash their hands before entering the courtroom and the clerks were religiously bleach-wiping every surface in the room. Still, we either didn’t really know or didn’t really want to accept what was coming down the pike. I sat right between the defendant and the public defender, handing pens and papers back and forth and certainly not social distancing. Since then, I’ve still done a few court interpreting assignments every week, but they have all been remote: either over the actual telephone or using Webex. Most of these have been brief hearings, first appearances, or status conferences. The Colorado state courts have put all jury trials on hold, and even longer proceedings like motions hearings have mostly been postponed until sometime this fall.

Pre-pandemic, I had some questions about the Colorado courts’ emphasis on in-person interpreting. Court interpreters here are paid for travel time (at half rate) and mileage, and there are only three certified French court interpreters in the state, so in some cases I’m driving an hour or more each way, sometimes for an appearance that might last five minutes. I sometimes wondered, is this really necessary? Might some of this be better handled remotely?

In some cases, remote court interpreting has worked really well, and it certainly expedites things. The court staff work really hard to keep things running smoothly, and in most cases the remote systems work well enough that the hearings can happen. It’s a far better option than delaying everything until it’s safe to go back to the courthouses in person. However, I’ve now become a much bigger fan of in-person interpreting. In fact, I cannot wait to get back to in-person interpreting, for various reasons.

■ **Unable to hear:** I’ve interpreted for people who were driving, sitting outside in public places, or in a house with a lot of background noise, making it incredibly hard to understand them.

■ **People talking over each other:** Especially when you’re on the phone with no video, there’s really no way to get someone to stop talking, other than to try to tell them to stop or to start talking over them.

■ **Remote process doesn’t expedite everything:** An example is when people call in to a Webex conference on the telephone rather than from a computer, so their phone number appears instead of their name on the meeting ID. This then requires someone (usually a court clerk or the judge) to go through each phone number, read the number out loud, and ask the person to un-mute themselves and say who they are (“Calling from 333-333-3333, this is Jack Smith and I’m the father of the victim in the Jones case.”).

■ **Confidentiality:** I’ve interpreted for a few family court hearings that clearly would have been confidential if they were happening in person. In one case, one of the parties’ children were clearly visible in the background of the video call while custody issues were being discussed, including details that the children really should not have been hearing. Children are prohibited from courtrooms, but I don’t see how it would be possible to require a party to a case to get childcare to take a video call.
WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM REMOTE COURT INTERPRETING continued

- **Appearances**: Lots of people don’t show up to remote hearings; anecdotally, the no-show rate seems much higher to me than the no-show rate for in-person hearings. Which raises the question: If you don’t show up to a remote hearing because your phone battery died or you can’t figure out how to use Webex, should that constitute failure to appear? Neither option seems like a good one: if it does constitute failure to appear, is it really fair for someone to face an additional charge because their phone battery died? If it doesn’t constitute failure to appear, what prevents people from simply not showing up and claiming that they couldn’t log on to the remote system?

- **Public participation and oversight**: The fact that most court cases are public is a really important component of the U.S. legal system. I spent hours sitting in court and taking notes when I was studying for the court interpreter exam, and you see all kinds of people (reporters, family members, law students, court reporting students, and interpreting students) observing in court. Family court cases and some others are closed to the public, but in my experience it’s quite common to see people watching court proceedings just for their own interest or education. In a remote system, it’s not always clear how or if the public can participate.

- **People not being in the same room**: On several occasions I’ve needed to sight-translate things like plea agreements. Those have to be sent by email, sometimes through multiple people instead of being passed across a table. Then the defendants have to sign the agreements via Docusign, which can be complicated since they’re often using a phone rather than a computer. To maintain the proper flow of information (defendant-interpreter-district attorney-interpreter-defendant), the interpreter has to interpret all of those technical questions (“I don’t see where I have to sign.” “There’s no yellow box.” “The submit button isn’t working.”) rather than someone helping the person right there.

In many situations, I think that remote court interpreting falls into the “better than no interpreting” category. If everyone is patient and the technical side works out, things can go pretty well. Using a purpose-built remote simultaneous interpreting platform, which at least some court systems are looking into, the interpreter has to interpret all of those technical questions (“I don’t see where I have to sign.” “There’s no yellow box.” “The submit button isn’t working.”) rather than someone helping the person right there.

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Query Sheet Management for Project Managers and Translators

Everyone will probably agree that one of the most important aspects of a successful translation project is communication—with the client, project manager, and linguistic team. To facilitate organized and effective communication between everyone involved in a project, a query sheet will sometimes be provided. These sheets are especially important in large, complex projects where there needs to be a central location for all questions and comments. The most important benefit of having a query sheet is that translators are provided with an organized system for asking questions and receiving answers from the client, thus promoting collaboration and communication.

The query sheet is usually an online form or spreadsheet that can include columns with heading such as:

- Project Number
- File Name
- Segment Number
- Language
- Source Text
- Proposed Translation
- Questions
- Client Feedback
- Status

Because multiple people can collaborate on a query sheet, there are some important aspects to consider to design a sheet that’s well organized and useful. The following are some tips for designing effective query sheets for both project managers and translators.

FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

Use the Cloud: The first aspect that should be considered is to make the query sheet available as a collaborative document in the cloud using a tool such as Google Sheets. With a web-based spreadsheet, you can collaborate with anyone you grant access to and see their changes automatically in real time. This is particularly important when there are more than two parties involved in the project. You’ll want to avoid sending and receiving the same files over and over again. Not only is this time consuming but sending files back and forth multiple times increases the chances of information getting lost.

Create a Single Collaborative Sheet for All Languages: If you’re managing or participating in a project involving several linguists and multiple languages, I highly recommend creating a sheet in which translators can see everyone’s questions. Depending on the scope of the project, I would discourage creating a separate sheet for each language involved. It’s useful for translators to be able to see all the questions in one place so they don’t ask something that’s already been addressed. If there’s something especially obvious, like an error in the source text or lack of context, it’s likely that every linguist, regardless of their language combination, will want to ask about that. Sometimes you’ll see an answer to a question that you either forgot or didn’t think to ask. By creating a collaborative sheet for all languages, everyone can learn and apply what others are asking. You’ll also avoid having to answer the same type of question more than once.

If the query sheet gets too long and difficult to sort, I recommend adding filters so you can easily show or hide information. The filters can be added in an online sheet or in Excel: select the row you want to filter and chose a filter per value, color, icon, etc. Some of the fields to consider filtering would be the language and the status of the query (e.g., open or closed).

This is a good way to keep everyone in the loop regarding different aspects of the project and for translators to learn how their colleagues are approaching the translation. A query sheet also makes it easy to see which changes have been made and by whom and allows for a more organized system.

FOR TRANSLATORS

Catch (the Correct) Phrase: As translators, we first and foremost must keep in mind what the query sheet is used for: asking questions. It’s important to always structure your query as a clear and concise question. I’ve seen numerous times that these sheets are used by translators for making comments such as “This is untranslatable,” or “This would make no sense in the target language.” As language specialists, we should phrase our concern in a way that’s helpful to the client, perhaps even providing some guidance and advice. For example, if we encounter something that’s “untranslatable” we could say, “This sentence would not make sense in the target language for X reason. Would it be okay to transcreate it entirely so that...
it fits the target audience? For example, we could use ___ instead.” Phrasing the query this way offers a possible solution and positions us as experts. Clients will appreciate this helpful attitude and it will save everyone time in the long run.

When possible, I highly recommend asking closed-ended questions that can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” Clients generally don’t have time to answer something that’s not clear and doesn’t allow for a simple answer. By asking questions clients can answer easily and quickly, we might obtain the answer we’re looking for faster.

**There’s No Such Thing as a Stupid Question, but:** This might sound obvious, but it’s important to make sure we do our due research before jumping in to ask a question. The first place to look for an answer would be the style guide, if the client has provided one. If the style guide is comprehensive, it will usually contain the answer to many of your questions. Make sure you read it carefully before using the query sheet. The second place to look for answers would be the project instructions. These instructions could have been provided in the initial email with the project assignment or inside the translation package. I would say not reading and following the instructions is one of the most common mistakes I see linguists make.

The last thing to do before inserting your question on a query sheet is to do some online research. Put your investigative spirit into practice (or as I like to say, take out the Sherlock Holmes magnifying glass) and research your query online, as the answer might be a click away on a search engine.

By asking questions that were already checked against the style guide, the project instructions, and thorough online searches, you show the client that you’re responsible and trustworthy. You show that you’re a true professional who cares about quality and is respectful of their time. On the other hand, don’t avoid asking questions because you don’t want to “bother” the client. Translation projects usually require linguists to ask plenty of questions. If translators ask smart and well thought out questions, it’s a clear indicator that the project is in the right hands.

**By asking questions that were already checked against the style guide, the project instructions, and thorough online searches, you show the client that you’re responsible and trustworthy.**

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**FOR EVERYONE**

**Mind Your Manners:** This item cannot be stressed enough. Even if you’re working on the most complicated project and your patience is being tested, you should always be polite in your communication with your peers and the client. Believe me, I understand frustration can sometimes run very high, especially when dealing with disorganized project management. However, we must always maintain our best professional self. When asking a question, make sure you use “please” and “thank you.” I often see query sheets with entries such as “What is this?” There’s probably a much better way to phrase this question, such as “Could you please provide more context here?” or “Could you please clarify what this refers to?” This will make a significant difference in the way the client perceives the services you’re providing and how serious you are about the quality of the work, which will lead to a great working relationship!

**Be Flexible:** If done right, query sheets can be immensely helpful to the success of a project. However, sometimes they can fall short, in which case the team might need to communicate in some other way. Communication is not a one-size-fits-all approach. As a team, it’s important to have flexible ways to communicate between project managers and linguists, from email to chat to face-to-face video conferencing when necessary. Make sure you provide, and are provided, a space to consult outside the query sheet. The success of the project will be highly dependent on the team’s ability to communicate well and work together to accomplish the best possible quality.


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Business Diversification?

I love the way some languages and cultures count. What speakers of European languages call “twenty” is rendered in the Papua New Guinea language of Mairasi—and many other languages—as “one person” (with all 20 fingers and toes combined). As someone who is not naturally mathematically inclined, my early calculating life would have been so much easier with access to such vivid practical images.

Though that is now water under the bridge, I still think I must have talked about TAUS, the Translation Automation User Society, at least one person times, so I’m not going to go into a long explanation of what TAUS is and what it does. A short explanation might be: TAUS is interested in helping its members, typically large translation buyers and large language services providers, to employ machine translation (MT) more successfully by offering the services of a think-tank and exchange forum for that particular sector of the translation world, and by exploring ways to optimize MT usage.

You won’t be surprised to hear that not everyone loves everything TAUS stands for. But while I often disagree with its positions, I have appreciated engaging in dialogue with its team, including accepting invitations to participate in TAUS events, such as “Reinventing the Translation Industry,” a virtual conference held in June. I have also greatly appreciated that for years now TAUS has freely supplied translators with one of the best terminology tools as part of its Data Cloud ecosystem. And this is exactly where this story starts (but hopefully does not end).

A few weeks ago, many of us received a notification that the complete TAUS data ecosystem (the TAUS Data Cloud) was going to transition to a new platform and system (the TAUS Data Marketplace). As part of that process, the above-mentioned Data Search would be retired by October 31.

The TAUS team understood that my pleas were heartfelt, not simply as a reflection of my personal desires but also representative of many of my colleagues as well. They agreed to think about it again. If they agree, they would offer continued access in the form of a legacy system, meaning it wouldn’t be updated with new data but could still be accessed at the old, or a similar, location. Let’s hope they do that.

But that’s not all we talked about. Jaap and his team also gave me an introduction to their new system and asked whether this is potentially something interesting for translators as well.

So far, TAUS has offered credits for bilingual data that they receive from anyone, including translators, language services providers, and translation buyers. In exchange for those credits, one could download data for one’s own purposes. TAUS found that while this kind of offer might be interesting for some companies, it was, by and large, irrelevant for translators. The team hopes that this new system—a true marketplace where anyone can offer data and actually be paid any time someone else purchases that data—might be more relevant for a wider variety of stakeholders.

Let’s back up for one second, though. This whole system—which, by the
BUSINESS DIVERSIFICATION? continued

way, is partly funded by the European Union—is based on legal assumptions described in a white paper that TAUS recently published in cooperation with a legal and consultancy firm. The central sentiment of the white paper might be summarized in this statement: “But, at the end of the day when the lawyers have gone home, we as professionals in the translation industry have to use our own common sense and do what’s right. We have to ask ourselves very practical questions and follow a set of simple rules to reduce regulatory risk and enhance our compliance.”

The paper examines the legal situation according to laws, how jurisdictions have responded to the use and sharing of language data and translation data (the term “translation data” is used to refer to metadata within translation memories), and actual practice across the board. While this might not appear relevant to everyone, if your clients are particularly concerned about privacy and the use of their data, it seems to be a reasonable approach.

TAUS also discovered that it’s often not particularly helpful to look only at “translation data” (i.e., the data that describes the translated bilingual language data if you want to buy it for a certain purpose). Instead, the team developed algorithms to look more deeply into the existing language data and filter out what’s useful for a particular purpose.

So, while it will still be possible to buy bilingual data that matches certain criteria, such as "English>Romanian software localization data," it will also be possible to have the tool look through the entire English>Romanian corpus and filter out the segments it identifies as helpful for a certain set of documents it was supplied with to find that data. Any provider of the data would be paid based on the number of segments used from their own contribution. The data will be used almost exclusively for MT training. (It could, of course, be used for translation memory purposes as well, but TAUS’s experience has taught it that it's unlikely).

Also, any data that's offered for purchase is cleaned. For instance, this would include the deletion of source duplicates with different targets, reflecting different stages of editing (recognize that problem??), as well as large amounts of tags being deleted, the reduction of obvious erroneous entries, and so on. This cleaned translation memory will then be offered on the marketplace, but it's also likely to be handed back to the original data provider as an added incentive.

When Jaap asked me whether this would be an interesting proposition for translators, I gave an answer I know many of you won’t be happy with. I said that six months ago, I wouldn’t have necessarily thought so. But now, in the midst of the crisis? Maybe.

Clearly, there has been a lot of talk about diversification among translators. There has been the realization that while specialization is really important, it might just as be important to have more than one (so you won’t be completely without work overnight if your specialization doesn’t meet the needs of a time like we’re in right now). But there’s also been a lot of talk about diversification beyond that.

I have always encouraged everyone to have some kind of professional offering beyond “just” translation. Not so much for business reasons, mind you, but more for reasons of sanity. For many of us, of course, the “business” reason now stands in the foreground.

Might data trading be an additional business for some of us? You tell me. TAUS will be able to add to that conversation in the months that follow the unveiling of its new system in October.

NOTES

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English-Czech COVID-19 Glossary

One way to say “to do one’s bit” in Czech is “přispět svou troškou do mýna,” which means “to contribute one’s little bit to the mill.” For me, the mill was the global COVID-19 pandemic and the little bit I contributed was my English-Czech glossary of terms related to it.

No need for me to paint the situation in much detail since we’re all too familiar with it. It was mid-March and international borders were closed, the kids returned home from college, and we were sewing face masks. As I thought of my elderly relatives isolated in their homes and teared up looking at the faces of nurses and doctors ravaged with welts from endless shifts wearing tight-fitting respirators, goggles, and face shields, I realized that I, too, am a part of this community of humans trying to protect the vulnerable, help the sick, and preserve the way we function as a society. It seems almost funny in retrospect that the best thing I could think of doing was to create a glossary.

It wasn’t just the novel coronavirus that was spreading rapidly. There was an outpouring of information about the virus, the virus-altered reality we found ourselves in, the measures taken to mitigate it, and the research done toward overcoming it. Reading up on all this, I started to do what comes naturally to most translators and interpreters—asking myself if I could express those thoughts and name those concepts in my other working language.

I work in English and Czech and focus on the medical and pharmaceutical domains. My daily routine involves reading about developments in these fields. With the pandemic, major newspapers were chock-full of medical and scientific information. What is this virus? How do we defeat it? What tools do we need? The volume of information was, and still is, enormous. Creating the glossary was my way to get a grip on this information and prepare for the translation work that was sure to come my way. I decided not to keep this as my own personal asset (we translators tend to be pretty protective of our glossaries under normal circumstances). Instead, I’ve made the glossary available for free to anyone who might need it.

### THE GLOSSARY AT A GLANCE

At the time of this writing, the glossary contains a collection of over 600 terms posted on my blog. I first posted 100 terms, which tripled and then doubled in size with subsequent updates. The blog posts contain a table with the English and Czech terms (see Figure 1 above) and downloadable .pdf and .tbx files that facilitate using the glossary according to the user’s needs (such as importing it into a computer-assisted translation [CAT] tool).

I have great respect and admiration for the work professionally trained terminologists do and feel compelled at this point to explain that my collection of terms is not a proper terminology database but rather what I call a glossary of the “translator’s friend” variety. It’s merely a well-researched list of language equivalents in current use to serve as a starting point for terminological research based on the context of the actual source text.

### CHOOSING MY SOURCES

My primary starting point is the Czech and English newspapers I read daily. I read the majority of articles related to COVID-19 and follow the links provided or research terms that catch my eye. This often leads to hours of terminological fun! I also read recommendations/guidelines published by major international and national health care organizations (in English, I tend to limit myself to sources from the U.S., U.K., and European Union). I also monitor legislative documents from the European Union. The major advantage of these documents for terminology research is that they are bilingual, which greatly accelerates term acquisition. I systematically look for all COVID-19 related legislation published at EUR-Lex, download the English and Czech versions, and do terminology research over these documents.

In addition, I find it important to listen to podcasts and TV/radio interviews. One of the emphases for me was to capture the language as it’s actually used by...
ENGLISH-CZECH COVID-19 GLOSSARY continued

both in English and in Czech and the European Union legislation, I use automated term extraction. To do that, I first align the documents to create a bilingual (.tmx) file. There are a number of tools allowing us to do this but my tool of choice is LogiTerm Pro by Terminotix, which I find very fast, accurate and quite painless to use. (See Figure 2 at left.) (As an aside, I learned about this tool at ATAs Annual Conference in San Diego in 2012 and am still congratulating myself on attending that conference and that particular panel discussion where I was introduced to it.) I then use SynchroTerm, also by Terminotix, to identify term candidates that I’ll evaluate and then extract those terms I find suitable. (See Figure 3 at left.)

FINDING EQUIVALENTS IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE

I wanted to start this section with “And now for the fun part!” but actually the term extraction and the source reading prior to it were fun as well. But really, this part is when glossary creation gets to be its most interesting.

When I have enough terms identified in individual languages (in the first iteration of my glossary, this was 100 terms and the next two updates were several times larger), I treat the lists of terms as translation projects. I have a COVID-19 translation project created in my CAT tool (I use SDL Trados Studio), one for each language direction (English>Czech and Czech>English). I add the lists of terms into these projects as translatable files and start “translating.” (See Figure 4 on page 37.) This allows me to use the functionality of the translation tool, such as concordance search and termbase connectivity. Termbases are shared by the projects regardless of language direction, and I have my COVID-19 glossary assigned as a termbase to my translation projects and update it often, which allows me to see right away if I have already researched a certain term.

One tool I must mention here is IntelliWebSearch, which greatly increases the speed of web searches. I can easily do several dozen searches when researching each term. If I didn’t have this tool with its automatic customized search medical professionals. For example, what a protective gown is called by a national standard for personal protective equipment might be completely different than what medical professionals actually call it.

A great stream of good sources for terminology research also comes from my wife, who is a nutrition therapist and stays informed of the latest developments as a part of her work. She forwards me interesting articles she comes across for me to read and research the terminology. I find this a great help because identifying good sources can be quite time-consuming as there is so much out there.

EXTRACTING TERMINOLOGY

I usually use the manual method: when I see an interesting term, I simply copy it into an Excel spreadsheet. I don’t do terminology research at the time of term extraction, so this spreadsheet has rows of Czech terms without English equivalents and vice versa.

If I come across bilingual sources (notably international guidelines available

Figure 2: Working on file alignment using LogiTerm Pro

Figure 3: Automated term candidate identification in SynchroTerm
was very good. I saw my hitherto sleepy website go from single-digit visitorship in most months (mostly myself and Teo, I suspect), to around a thousand new visitors after my glossary was published.

HOW TO USE THE GLOSSARY IF CZECH (OR ENGLISH) ISN’T YOUR THING
Chances are very good Czech is not one of your working languages. I hope this article might encourage you to delve into glossary building beyond the obligatory Excel spreadsheet or (the horror!) jotting down terms in a notepad or (should I even go there?) on sticky notes destined to peel off the wall behind your monitor and fall into a dust-bunny inhabited terminology limbo.

If you’re interested in creating your own COVID-19 glossary with English (or Czech) as one of the languages, you can take my glossary as a starting point. Just get rid of the Czech (or English) and use the resulting monolingual list of terms as a starting point to provide your language equivalents. To make this easy, I have published the Excel spreadsheet with my glossary on my blog as well.

LET’S KICK THIS PANDEMIC BY WORKING TOGETHER
This is not a great time we’re going through right now. We do have, however, a chance to reassess and to come closer together in response to the challenges we face. My glossary is a tiny attempt to go in that direction. I can see a culture of more robust sharing and participation emerging in our profession and I strongly hope this is also a trend for humanity as a whole.

NOTES
1. You can access the blog at www.czechtrans.com/blog.
2. https://eur-lex.europa.eu
4. Special footnote for my children (on the off chance they ever read this). Okay, this does sound a bit nerdy.
5. www.sdltrados.com
6. www.intelliwebsearch.com

Tomáš Barendregt is a medical and pharmaceutical translator working in Czech and English. He has over 25 years of experience as a freelance and in-house translator and interpreter. Tomáš lives in the Driftless area of southwestern Wisconsin, an ideal place for someone living the dual life of family man and ice-hockey enthusiast. He has lived half his life in the U.S. and half in the Czech Republic. He works as a Czech localization specialist at Blueprint Technologies. Contact: tomas@czechtrans.com.

Remember, if you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzsche at jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
Decoupling and the Certification Committee

Over the past several years, the Certification Committee has been called on to answer several questions related to opening the certification exam to nonmembers (also known as “decoupling”). Although the Certification Committee manages and administers the Certification Program, it was not directly involved in the decision on whether to eliminate the membership requirement for certification. That decision was made by the Board based on what is known as the Hamm Report, which the Board commissioned over 20 years ago. Among that report’s specific recommendations was that certification credentials are generally more credible if they are not linked to membership in an organization. Once the Board made the decision to decouple several years ago, the Certification Committee was called on to provide specific information.

One important question was whether the Certification Program would have the staffing to cover any increase in the grading workload if there were a surge in exams after decoupling. The answer was a resounding yes. Every language pair has its own grading team (that is, English>French, for instance, has a separate team from French>English) consisting of at least three graders. Many grader teams handle only a moderate number of exams each year, and some have very low volume. These teams would certainly welcome the opportunity to process more exams. Meanwhile, Spanish>English and English>Spanish, which account for more than half of the exams administered, have larger teams that are well prepared to handle any surge in exams.

Another question was whether graders would have any concerns about grading nonmember exams. The answer here is mostly not. The vast majority of graders feel that grading exams is a service to those who are happy to provide, regardless of whether the candidate is a member or not. (Note that while graders are paid to grade exams, they also spend volunteer time on other certification duties such as training and passage selection.) A few graders are opposed to eliminating the membership requirement, while others think of grading as a service to the translation profession as a whole, not just to ATA members. So, the bottom line here is that, if and when decoupling does occur, there will be plenty of willing graders to do the work.

Two and a half years ago, the Certification Committee suggested that it was time to have the Hamm Report revalidated, and earlier this year the Board commissioned a firm with expertise in certification (Knapp & Associates) to produce such a review. Here are some of the key findings:

- “Most of the Hamm Report recommendations (and rationales for the recommendations) remain pertinent today.”
- “The Certification Committee has been making great strides in strengthening the Certification Program.”
- “In our review, we noted a number of additional improvements that could be made in the Certification Program. Some of these would bring the program into compliance with certification industry standards, while others may be beneficial or advisable from an operational or customer satisfaction perspective.”

Regarding decoupling specifically, the Knapp Review indicates that the Hamm Report recommended “removing membership as a criteria” and states: “This is required by standards and advisable for a variety of reasons as outlined in the separate statement provided by Knapp on this topic.”

The full text of that separate statement appeared in the July/August edition of The ATA Chronicle.

The Knapp Review contains 35 recommendations for improving the Certification Program, of which decoupling is only one. The Certification Committee met virtually in July to review these recommendations and classify them into short-, medium-, and long-term priorities. Over the past several weeks, the committee has been working on the short-term priorities, including creating a more definitive statement describing the level of performance targeted by the credential and developing a comprehensive policies and procedure manual for the entire Certification Program. Over the coming weeks and months, the Certification Committee will continue to work on many of the other recommendations, such as a discipline policy, evaluating the pass rate, grader selection policies, training for graders, and improving record-keeping.

Whether or not decoupling is implemented is outside the purview of the Certification Committee, but we’ll continue to maintain and improve the high standards of testing quality that make being “ATA-certified” the respected translation credential it is today.

NOTES

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