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As an association with members around the globe and a wide variety of interest groups, programs, and events, ATA might seem like somewhat of a puzzle to members. That’s why ATA’s Membership Committee began to consider how it could provide an easy-to-digest snapshot of everything ATA offers so members could choose where to get involved and avoid feeling lost. Our answer: the ATA Member Orientation sessions!
A Sense of Hope: Interpreters/Translators Share Their Vaccination Journey

As the vaccination distribution program kicks into high gear in the U.S., we asked interpreters and translators what getting vaccinated means to them both personally and professionally. We also asked them if the advocacy efforts of translator and interpreter organizations had an impact on their eligibility for early vaccination.

6 Ways to Stop Self-Sabotaging Your Online Marketing Efforts

We’ve all been guilty of self-sabotage at some point during our entrepreneurial journey. We often make online marketing much harder than it really is. The stories we tell ourselves about why we can’t do something can cause us to stall our marketing efforts, whether we realize it at first or not. The key is to make your marketing feel like you.

Getting Started with Terminology Management

Terminology management makes or breaks the success of globalization and localization efforts in terms of both budgets and sales. Despite its strategic value, however, many are unaware that terminology is key to producing solid, well-performing products. And once they are aware, many don’t know where to start. If you find yourself needing a little help in this area as well, then read on for some guidelines for getting started with terminology management.

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Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns are found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.ata-chronicle.online!
The Vital Work of ATA Committees

If ATA divisions are our members’ “home within a home”—the place they go to be with other “family members” who work in the same fields and language pairs—then ATA committees could be considered their “offices”—the place they go to work on behalf of ATA.

ATA has 18 standing committees with 163 member volunteers who work on a wide range of issues of importance to the Association and its members. Standing committees are “permanent” because they have indefinite lives. In contrast, special committees are temporary in nature and automatically cease to exist when their task is completed and a final report is issued.

Five of the 18 committees are mandated by ATA’s Bylaws: the Executive, Finance and Audit, Ethics, Membership, and Nominating and Leadership Development Committees. As is evident from their names, these committees are responsible for issues that are common to most associations.

As can be expected in an association of ATA’s size and scope, the vitality and activity of specific committees can ebb and flow over time due to internal and external changes. The pandemic has undoubtedly been one such change. It has not only changed how committees work (e.g., online video meetings), but driven some committees to take on new tasks.

Here’s a brief recap of some of the vital work done by just a few of ATA’s committees.

The Business Practices Education Committee attracted over 200 registrants and 100 live participants during its first virtual Brainstorm Networking meeting on March 31!

Certification: One significant example of a pandemic-driven change is the Certification Committee’s initiative to provide online remote certification exams, which will have a major and permanent impact on the Association. The committee is currently testing a remote delivery system and hopes to conduct its first remote exam sitting before the end of the year. If successful, this will greatly expand the availability of certification exams as candidates will no longer have to travel and incur additional expenses to take the exam.
The pandemic has not only changed how committees work (e.g., online video meetings), but driven some committees to take on new tasks.

Advocacy: The Advocacy Committee has worked diligently, often under very tight deadlines, to advocate for safe working conditions for in-person interpreters during the pandemic and for early access to vaccinations. It has also continued to advocate for the proper classification of professional practitioners of translation and interpretation as independent contractors where appropriate.

Business Practices: The Business Practices Education Committee was recently restructured by bringing the former Mentoring Committee and the Savvy Newcomers initiative under its umbrella. It has also started a Mastermind program to provide in-depth business education to ATA members. The committee held its first virtual Brainstorm Networking meeting on March 31, which attracted over 200 registrants and 100 live participants. The committee is also working to meet the needs of more experienced members by launching a new blog for advanced practitioners called Next Level: The ATA Business Practices Blog, which is ready to be launched on ATA’s new website. The committee has worked closely with the Membership Committee on many of these initiatives, which is just one example of the increased cooperation and communication between committees that has resulted in increased mission accomplishment, better communication of offerings, and more valuable benefits to members.

Speaking of the new website...

I would like to thank the members of the Ad Hoc Website Committee, who put in countless hours working on the site’s redesign, a task that was made even more difficult by the abrupt departure of the original website redesign company. The new website is visually appealing, much more user-friendly, and has been exceptionally well received by the membership. So, special thanks to Karen Tkaczyk (chair), Jamie Hartz, Madalena Sánchez Zampaolo, Catherine Christaki, and Michèle Hansen, as well as the unheralded committee and division members who had to review thousands of pages of content (literally!). And my extra special thanks to Teresa Kelly, our website manager and graphic designer at ATA Headquarters, who was the central point of contact (and the recipient of all the complaints) during this long project.

Membership: The Membership Committee has also been very active in fulfilling its mission of recruiting and retaining members. The committee recently completed a new e-book, the ATA Guide to Starting Out as a Translator, and planning has begun on a companion volume for interpreters. The committee is continuing its work on a membership survey, which will also include questions to obtain diversity data that will allow us to better serve the entire membership. Other new “products” from the committee include a new video on the reasons for joining ATA aimed at recruiting new members. Those new members are now being offered member orientation sessions and instructional videos on member benefits, both of which should increase member satisfaction during their first few years in ATA. These initiatives should also help improve our retention rate.

I don’t have sufficient space to report on all the activities of every committee carried out by all the volunteers who work so hard on behalf of the Association. The majority of members may not even be aware of some committees like the Chapters Committee or the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, as the nature of their missions is not member-focused. But I can assure you that these unheralded committees also play a vital role in ATA’s mission of being “The Voice of Interpreters and Translators.” Visit the committee page on the website (www.atanet.org/about-us/committees) to learn more about the work of our various committees. And consider volunteering for a committee as part of your contribution back to your community and your fellow translators and interpreters.
Either in Person or Virtual, ATA62 Will Not Disappoint!

The call for proposals for #ATA62 closed on March 1, with more than 320 proposals for this year’s hybrid conference. Whether you choose to attend in person or virtually, there will be something for everyone!

The hotel block for the conference is now open, and discounted rates are available at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis until October 1 or as space allows. The hotel staff are working with us to make sure we feel safe throughout our stay. I’m already looking forward to seeing many of my closest “word friends” in person this fall! Until then, let’s take a look at what to expect in Minneapolis and virtually this year.

In-person attendees will note COVID-19 protocols and precautions throughout the conference venue. At this time, attendees will be required to wear masks, maintain social distancing whenever possible, and use sanitizing stations throughout the hotel. Our Welcome Celebration and networking events will have highboy tables instead of the typical round tables, plexiglass partitions where necessary, and accommodations for social distancing. We’ll let you know if any of these precautions are adjusted by the time we meet in Minneapolis.

We’ll have 120 educational sessions from Thursday through Saturday. All 120 sessions will be recorded and available after the conference for long-term access. Each session room will have a limited capacity for attendees (due to social distancing guidelines), so make sure you arrive on time or early! If you can’t make it in person to a session, you can also attend via livestream from anywhere you wish.

There will be 30-minute breaks between sessions to allow hotel staff to clean the rooms. In the Exhibit Hall, you can expect to see more space between exhibitor booths, as well as a cap on the number of people allowed in the Exhibit Hall at one time. You can take advantage of the Exhibit Hall in person or gather information from exhibitors virtually. We’ll have to-go options for meals in addition to the restaurants in the area. There will also be two in-person certification exams offered, one on Wednesday afternoon and the other on Saturday morning.

Here’s a quick breakdown of each day’s events:
**Wednesday**

We’ll offer 16 Advanced Skills & Training (AST) sessions by an outstanding group of presenters. All AST sessions will be livestreamed and recorded for later viewing except for the two certification exam preparation workshops for English<>Spanish. Virtual attendees will have the option to attend the Buddies Welcome Newbies and Stronger Together Networking events, while in-person attendees can attend the onsite Buddies Welcome Newbies event and the Welcome Celebration.

**Thursday**

We’ll have a full day of events on Thursday, starting in the morning with Zumba and Mindful Movement, followed by Breakfast with the Candidates for in-person attendees. The Annual Meeting of Voting Members will be livestreamed so all Voting members can hear from this year’s candidates for three director positions and three officer positions before casting their votes. As usual, all Voting members will be able to cast their votes online via proxy. The day will continue with 30 educational sessions, Brainstorm Networking for virtual attendees, and Stronger Together Networking for those attending in person.

**Friday**

Zumba and Mindful Movement will take place again bright and early on Friday, followed by Breakfast with the Board (for those attending in person). The Annual Meeting of All Members and the Annual Awards Ceremony will be livestreamed again this year. This year, the Honors and Awards Committee will select winners for the Dynamo, Outstanding Mentoring, and Rising Star Awards. We’ll also honor individuals for the Ungar German Translation Award, the Student Translation Award, and the ATA62 American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI) student scholarships. For more information on all the awards, please see the link in the sidebar.

We have 40 educational sessions scheduled in the morning and afternoon, as well as a lunchtime Job Fair event for in-person attendees. We’ll wrap up the day with Brainstorm Networking (for in-person and virtual attendees), the Literary Division’s After Hours Café (for virtual attendees), and Speed Networking (for virtual attendees).

**Saturday**

Finally, on Saturday, we’ll finish off the week with our morning movement sessions followed by the ATA Military Veterans Circle Meetup, a great opportunity for fellow military veterans and defense language professionals to gather and network. Saturday will also be our longest day of educational sessions, with 50 presentations on the schedule. As always, we’ll gather on Saturday afternoon for our Closing Session, celebrating our time together and looking ahead to next year’s Annual Conference in Los Angeles! The Closing Reception will follow for in-person attendees.

We’ll have 120 educational sessions from Thursday through Saturday. All 120 sessions will be recorded and available after the conference for long-term access.

No matter which way you attend the Annual Conference this year, I know you’ll enjoy our time together. Watch for registration to open in July!
Board Meeting Highlights

The ATA Board of Directors held its Spring Board meeting virtually April 24–25, 2021. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

Budget
The Board approved the July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022 working budget and the 2022–24 draft budgets. The proposed $2.6 million working budget provides an interim financial framework. Treasurer John Milan will work with the ATA Headquarters staff to update the projections and incorporate feedback from the Board. The final budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

Proposed Bylaws Revisions
The Board discussed five proposed Bylaws amendments that are mostly housekeeping in nature.

- Codify that the president and president-elect are not ex officio members of the Ethics Committee. (This change is in line with Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, our governing parliamentary authority. The president and president-elect are ex officio members of all ATA standing committees except the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee.)
- Clarify and ensure consistency in what requires a two-thirds vote of Board members.
- Replace “chairman” and “head” with “chair,” which is in line with our nomenclature for the volunteer in charge of a committee.
- Allow all individual members to serve on committees. (The Board will still approve all appointments to the committees.)
- Remove the use of “membership facilities” under member benefits. (This mention was a holdover from having a library. Members are always welcome to stop by ATA Headquarters.)

At the next Board meeting, the Board will vote to approve putting these revisions, and their respective explanatory commentaries, forward for approval by the membership at the Annual Meeting of Voting Members, October 28, 2021, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Certification
Certification Committee Chair Michèle Hansen and Deputy Chair Larry Bogoslaw updated the Board on the progress in getting online exam sittings set up. All is on track for offering sittings this summer. (We’ll continue to offer in-person exam sittings as well.)

Position Papers
The Board reviewed and discussed two draft position papers. The Board approved putting forward to the membership for review and commentary a position paper on remote interpreting. Once the 30-day comment period has closed, the feedback will be reviewed and incorporated into the final version that the Board needs to approve.

The Board then discussed the first draft of a position paper on best practices in localization and gave its feedback. The volunteers working on this position paper will take the feedback and submit the next version to the Board for its review.

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for August 7–8, 2021. The meeting will be in person. The location is to be determined.
IN MEMORIAM

S. Edmund Berger

Namesake of the S. Edmund Berger Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation

(No,ember 13, 1922–December 13, 2020)

(The following is based on information provided by The Buffalo News and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

S. Edmund Berger, a longtime ATA member and past recipient of the Association’s Alexander Gode Medal, died on December 13, 2020. The S. Edmund Berger Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation¹, awarded by ATA and the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI), is named in his honor.

Berger was born in Osijek, Yugoslavia (Croatia) in 1922. He received a doctorate in chemistry in 1946. A Holocaust survivor², he emigrated to the U.S. in 1949. He worked as a researcher, first at Harvard Medical School (forensic chemistry) and then for a chemical corporation in Buffalo, New York. He focused on basic and applied research in areas such as polymers, food chemistry, surfactants, fluorocarbon solvent applications, and polyurethane coatings. He also worked as a freelance translator in the chemical and biomedical fields for over 50 years. Colleagues described him as a “quiet mentor and a superb role model who earned the respect of experienced and beginning translators alike.”

He joined ATA in 1961 and was an ATA-certified translator (French>English, German>English, and Italian>English). In 1999, he was awarded ATA’s Alexander Gode Medal, the Association’s most prestigious award presented to an individual or institution in recognition of outstanding service to the translation and interpreting professions. In 2002, his family established the S. Edmund Berger Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation to recognize excellence in scientific and technical translation by an ATA member.

He was married to Benis Berger and the late Sultana Berger. He is survived by his children Ruth (Rob) Goldston, Daniel (Bethann Johnston) Berger, Steven (Mary Anne) Chernoff, and Debra (Larry Rubin) Chernoff, as well as nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

NOTES

¹ For more information on the S. Edmund Berger Prize for Excellence in Scientific and Technical Translation, see www.atanet.org/award/s-edmund-berger-prize.

The voices of ATA members were heard on Capitol Hill this spring at not one, but two virtual advocacy events focused on the language enterprise. In February, as the new administration and Congress were just settling in and cabinet members were awaiting their confirmation hearings, the annual Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL–NCLIS) Language Advocacy Days took place, joined a few weeks later by the Association of Language Companies’ ALC On the Hill event. Several representatives from ATA were present at both events, ensuring the interests of all our members—from individual practitioners to corporations—were well represented.

Language Advocacy Day (which was extended to two days this year) is an anchoring event for the entire language enterprise, bringing together educators, policy makers, and the language industry. This big-picture approach allows us to connect the dots for our representatives and senators on how language learning and access support our national security, as well as domestic and international economic growth in the United States. Every year, ATA lends its voice as one of the advocates from the language professions to meet with Congress and request legislation and funding in support of language education and industry priorities. In addition to numerous language educators, several translator and interpreter sister organizations participate. This year’s virtual event saw a jump in attendance, with participants from every state for the first time.

A definite highlight was when ATA Director Lorena Ortiz Schneider was named the recipient of the 2021 J. David Edwards Power of Advocacy Award, which recognizes extraordinary advocacy efforts carried out at the state or federal level that contribute to the JNCL–NCLIS mission and serve to expand access to languages other than English. In addition to serving on the Board, Lorena chairs ATA’s Advocacy Committee.

ATA’s Virtual Advocacy Trip to CAPITOL HILL

The pandemic couldn’t stop ATA members from participating (virtually) at not one, but two advocacy events, ensuring the interests of all our members—from individual practitioners to corporations—were well represented.

By Caitilin Walsh
A LC on the Hill

The Association of Language Companies (ALC) is a U.S.-based organization that promotes the professional stature and economic position of the language services industry through advocacy and the professional development of language company owners and senior management. The ALC on the Hill event in March was their second foray into direct advocacy and was entirely focused on industry issues. Though the event was smaller in terms of participants, this was an opportunity to reinforce many of the messages congressional staffers had heard a few weeks before during Language Advocacy Days. ALC was also able to bring the unique perspective of small business owners to the forefront.

Two Events with a Unifying Focus

There were many issues on the agendas of both events, with some overlap, but the unifying focus was on the foundational need to support language education and the work of interpreters and translators in this country. Not surprisingly, the pandemic and language access loomed large, as did legislation relating to our business models. Here are some of the initiatives discussed (see the sidebar for more information on some of these):

- Address independent contractor/employee classification issues in the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PROAct) by altering or removing the ABC test (Senate only; PROAct already passed the House)
- Co-sponsorship of the Coronavirus Language Access Act (once re-introduced)
- Co-sponsorship of the Health Equity and Accountability Act (once re-introduced)
- Task the U.S. Government Accountability Office to report on the implementation of regulations related to the acquisition of knowledge-based services
- Raise the small business threshold for language schools
- Invite members of Congress to join America’s Language Caucus, a bipartisan and bi-cameral caucus
- Co-sponsorship of Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow’s Workforce, which allows savers to use 529 funds to pay for professional certification preparation, testing, and re-certification (including continuing education) (once introduced)
- Funding (via appropriations) for the World Language Advancement and Readiness Act
- Co-sponsorship of the Bilingual Education Seal and Teaching Act (once introduced)

The biggest change this year, besides the new administration, was that both events were held virtually. There was some concern that not being able to personally visit the hallowed marble hallways and imposing architecture of the U.S. Capitol building would result in smaller events. In fact, the opposite was true. With the hurdle of travel and the costs associated with it removed, both events saw record attendance. Congressional staffers were also working from home, many still reeling from the violence of January. Much of the formalities fell away with the virtual format, and there was a palpable eagerness to get back to the business of governing.

Making Connections while Strengthening Our Voices

The primary benefit of these events is not the one-off meetings. It’s the connections that we build year on year—the same connections that allow A T A to continue its advocacy efforts throughout the year. If you want to make sure your own voice is heard, we urge you to visit the JNCL-NCLIS website (www.languagepolicy.org) and sign up for the newsletter and action alerts, which will help you with messaging and targeting that message to your state’s congressional members. Also, be sure to bookmark the A L C website (www.alcus.org) to read more about the many ways they are supporting language services companies of all sizes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

America’s Language Caucus  
Association of Language Companies  
www.alcus.org
ATA Advocacy and Outreach  
Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Languages and International Studies  
www.languagepolicy.org
Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Languages and International Studies Legislative Action Center  
Protecting the Right to Organize Act  

Caitilin Walsh, CT  is an ATA-certified French>English translator who delights in producing publication-quality translations for the computer industry and food lovers alike. A past president of A T A, she currently chairs A T A’s Education and Pedagogy Committee. She also serves as president-elect of the Joint National Committee for Languages. She teaches ethics and business practices at the Translation and Interpreting Institute at Bellevue College. She is also chair of the Translation and Interpretation Advisory Committee for the Puget Sound Skills Center. She is a graduate of Willamette University and the Université de Strasbourg.  

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ATA MEMBER ORIENTATION: A Bird’s-Eye View of All ATA Has to Offer

By Jamie Hartz and Meghan Konkol

Even members who have been involved in various capacities over the years may not be aware of all that’s going on in ATA at any given time!

ATA’s Member Orientation sessions are a new initiative organized by the Membership Committee in 2021 to give members a chance to learn about the Association’s opportunities, programs, and initiatives in a brief, one-hour session. Although it’s geared toward translators and interpreters who are newer ATA members, longtime members have commented that they’ve learned useful information in the orientation as well. Here’s an overview of what these sessions cover.

As an association with members around the globe and a wide variety of interest groups, programs, and events, ATA might seem like somewhat of a puzzle to members. New and veteran ATA members alike often have questions about how to navigate the Association and get the most from their membership. With strong volunteer teams powering our Board of Directors, committees, and divisions, plus support from a dedicated staff at ATA Headquarters, the Association keeps busy rolling out initiatives and activities for its members year-round. Even members who have been involved in various capacities over the years may not be aware of all that’s going on in ATA at any given time!

The sheer magnitude of activity within ATA got those of us on the Membership Committee thinking about how we could support members who aren’t sure what ATA programs best fit their interests, or what benefits to take advantage of. Members may not have time to comb ATA’s website on their own to figure out what membership benefits are best suited for their needs. With this in mind, the committee began to consider how we could provide an easy-to-digest snapshot of everything ATA offers, including how to access benefits and programs, so that members could choose where to get involved and avoid feeling lost. Our answer: the ATA Member Orientation.

Orientation sessions are held every two to three months in webinar format, and presenters cover a number of topics of interest to any member, including ATA’s basic organizational structure, major initiatives...
and programs, and the many benefits available to
members. We provide links
to all the resources members
may be interested in and
demonstrate where to find
important information
on ATA’s website, as well
as basic instructions for
updating your profile in the
online Language Services
Directory.1 The session
introduces programs
members can get involved
with right away, such as the
School Outreach Program
and Contest. For additional
networking opportunities,
we also encourage attendees
to look up ATA chapters and
divisions of interest to them.

Although the sessions
were originally designed with
new members in mind, we’ve found that
the information and resources we’ve shared
have been drawing interest from
longtime members as well.

From the presenters’
perspective, one of the
most enjoyable parts of the
sessions we’ve held so far
has been seeing members
engage with the Association
and each other! We reserve
time for Q&A at the end of
the session and have been
encouraged by members’
enthusiasm for what ATA
has to offer. Attendees have
also enjoyed networking
with fellow members
via the chat function, as
they share where they
are tuning in from and
make connections with
colleagues who have mutual
languages and interests.
(“This session made me
feel less overwhelmed
and more informed as a
new member,” shared
a participant from our
March orientation session.)
Although the sessions
were originally designed
with new members in mind, we’ve found that
the information and resources we’ve shared
have been drawing interest from
longtime members as well.

Our hope is that these
sessions will serve as an
informative and welcoming
event for new and veteran
members alike, and that
members will be encouraged and empowered to take
full advantage of their
membership through a
better understanding of the
opportunities they have
as members of the ATA
community.

Additional ATA Member
Orientation sessions
are scheduled for July,
September, and November
2021. Keep an eye out for the
link to register in
Newsbriefs
and on ATA’s website!

The Membership
Committee welcomes all
feedback on what you would
like to see included in future
orientation sessions. And if
you’re an experienced ATA
member who is familiar with
ATA’s range of programs and
benefits and would like to
to volunteer to co-host an
upcoming orientation
session, please get in touch
with Membership Committee
Chair Meghan Konkol
(meghan@fr-en.com).

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NOTE
1 Bodeux, Eve, and
Madalena Sánchez
Zampaulo. “Are You
Getting the Most from
Your ATA Directory
Profile?” The ATA
Chronicle (September/
October 2019),
INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS SHARE THEIR VACCINATION JOURNEY

As the country turns to vaccination to end the pandemic, translators and interpreters discuss what receiving the vaccine means to them.

In the months before every adult in the U.S. became eligible for the vaccine, the decentralized structure for getting needles in arms resulted in disparity at the local and state levels. Because it was left up to state and local health authorities to make the final determinations as to who qualified as essential personnel for purposes of the vaccine, many frontline interpreters found themselves excluded from Phase 1 vaccinations.

Following the release of the U.S. COVID–19 Vaccination Program recommendations, ATA sent a letter last December, co–signed by 20 other organizations, petitioning the CDC to explicitly include on–site medical interpreters among the listed examples of health care personnel eligible for Phase 1 vaccinations.1 In January, ATA sent another letter urging the CDC to explicitly list on–site interpreters in medical, court, and other settings among the listed examples of frontline essential workers eligible for Phase 1 vaccinations.2 ATA encouraged its members to share the letters with their state and local public health departments, hospitals/clinics, and health care providers. Members were also asked to send the letters to their district’s legislators, reminding them about the vital function interpreters and translators perform for their constituents. The message was clear: translators and interpreters are essential workers in the fight against the pandemic.

Now, with the country’s vaccination distribution program kicking into high gear, we asked interpreters and translators what getting vaccinated means to them both personally and professionally. We also asked them if the advocacy efforts of translator and interpreter organizations had an impact on their eligibility for early vaccination. Here are their stories.

Maria Baker
Madison, Alabama

I’m primarily a conference and health care interpreter. I work about 20 hours a week at outpatient clinics in our local hospital system. I received the vaccine in February through the hospital.

I was excited to see the letter ATA wrote to the CDC requesting that interpreters receive the vaccine. After sending a copy to the Alabama Department of Public Health, the COVID–19 task force, and the agency I work with, I believe it was the agency that made the difference in terms of my eligibility. They talked to the hospital on behalf of their interpreters. As a result, we
were able to get appointments starting in February. I believe receiving the vaccine will bring about some changes, but this will take time. For now, we’ll continue taking the same precautions while working in person as we have been for over a year now. We’ll also continue working in compliance with health care authorities in each state and following the requirements of each facility.

It’s essential that our professional organizations defend our well-being and safety at work. This advocacy can equip us with the right tools to, in turn, advocate for ourselves and our colleagues. I’m personally grateful for ATA’s efforts in this area and proud to belong to an organization that makes advocacy a priority.

To me, getting the vaccine means hope. Hope that other interpreters will be able to receive it. Hope that other minorities will be able to receive it. Hope that we will all be safer at work, especially patients. It means the hope that, sooner rather than later, we’ll be able to hug our family and friends tightly and turn the current crisis into a mere memory.

Katerina Borghi
Irvine, California
My practice as a freelance federal and state court Spanish interpreter in the private civil market can take me anywhere from a swanky high-rise law office to the lot of an industrial warehouse, and even to the intimate examining room of an orthopedic surgeon. After years of field experience honing this craft, I’ve come to recognize the element of variety as a unique privilege of owning a small business; that is, the flexibility to choose where the job will take me. As the pandemic set in, the ability to offer my clients an in–person option became more unfeasible and more dangerous for myself and those around me.

On February 22, I received my second dose of the Pfizer vaccine as part of California’s Phase 1A, which included medical and other on-site interpreters. Being vaccinated is an assurance that I’ll be able to better protect both myself and those I serve wherever and whenever my work is needed. As remote events remain and we inch closer to herd immunity, vaccination along with masks are crucial precautions that afford me greater flexibility to support the clients and limited–English–proficient population that depend on my services.

The advocacy efforts by ATA and others are key toward recognizing and safeguarding the vital work of professional interpreters like me across so many sectors. I encourage those of my colleagues who have the desire to get the vaccine to do so. I’m deeply thankful to ATA, and to all those associations and stakeholders who advocated for our vaccine eligibility. Our profession merits protection in the crucial work that we do so that we may continue to do that work safely.

Nina Gafni
McLean, Virginia
I’m a freelance French, German, and Italian into English translator, interpreter, editor, and language coach focusing on legal, financial, medical, and genealogy matters. Most of my interpreting is focused on medical, but also legal matters. I spend a lot of time in hospitals interpreting for doctors, nurses, and patients. I also interpret in school settings for meetings with teachers, students, and parents. Some of what I do can be done virtually, but other things must be done in person.

To me, getting the vaccine is one small step on the road to normalcy. Vaccines save lives. They protect me, my family, and everyone else I come into contact with.

I was eager to get the vaccine because it meant I could accept jobs I would not have felt safe accepting before. Back in December, I had to turn down a request to interpret because I feared I might get infected. I don’t like turning down requests to help people, but I had to think about what might happen to my family if I got COVID. Now, I feel I can be part of the solution, not the problem.

I qualified for the vaccine because, as a medical interpreter, I’m considered a health care worker. I also later qualified in Virginia, where I live, because parents of disabled adults qualify as unpaid caregivers. (I have an adult daughter on the autism spectrum.) However, getting an appointment was a complete nightmare!

When I first tried to get an appointment, ATA had not yet written the letter to the CDC. I tried calling a major health care system in my area, since I often interpret at their hospitals. However, I was told that only people in their system would get vaccinated and that I would have to go through my service provider. When I called my service provider, I was told they had not been given any information about medical interpreters getting the vaccine and that I should call my doctor. I then called my doctor and was told the practice did intend to offer the vaccine to its patients once it was authorized to do so.

Once Fairfax County set up its vaccine appointments, I immediately signed up. However, when I talked to a scheduler, I was informed that, as a medical interpreter, I didn’t need to get the vaccine since I “only did virtual appointments.” I quickly enlightened the scheduler that I had recently interpreted for two appointments at major area hospitals. I explained that I was in a room with doctors, nurses, and patients during those appointments. However, it wasn’t until I also mentioned I had recently been asked to interpret for people getting tested for COVID that the scheduler agreed I definitely qualified to get the vaccine.

I applaud ATA’s efforts. I think the letter to the CDC is a major stride. However, there’s still a lot of work to be done.
For starters, people need to realize just what a medical interpreter does. We provide a vital communication link. Skilled doctors and nurses don’t always mean skilled communicators. Patients with limited English proficiency have the legal right to receive interpreting and deserve to be treated with dignity. As interpreters, we know how to convey the doctor’s (or nurse’s) message in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. As such, we’re part of the medical team, and like the doctors, nurses, and patients, we need to be protected. We should never have to justify why we need a vaccine.

We do the same work as in-house interpreters, and breathe the same air as the doctors, nurses, and patients. Giving vaccines to in-house personnel but denying them to freelance interpreters is the functional equivalent of sending a freelance interpreter into a battle zone with no protection. Why would you protect certain members of the medical team but not others? We freelancers need to be treated in the same manner as everyone else. ATA is a highly respected organization that can definitely play a vital part in our society.

Before the pandemic, I averaged about 100 flights a year, and most of them were for interpreting assignments. All my work travel came to a halt at the end of the first quarter of 2020, and I can count the number of in-person interpreting assignments I did that year on one hand. After November 2020, I ventured outside as little as possible until I could get vaccinated, which happened early in January 2021.

I had been active in trying to figure out when it would be my turn to receive the vaccine and had closely monitored the governor’s Twitter feed. But it was a colleague, fellow Nevada court certified Spanish interpreter Debbie Silvera, who also happens to be a virologist, who let me know I was eligible (under the “community support frontline staff court/legal” category as defined by the governor). She gave me a link to a vaccination clinic. I entered all the information pertaining to my court interpreting work, including that I wanted to go back to interpret in prisons, courtrooms, and law firms. I was given an appointment for my first Pfizer shot the very next day.

To say I felt like a million dollars after receiving the second dose (side effects and all) is probably still an understatement. I’m grateful for modern medicine and the Herculean effort it took to get a vaccine in less than a year.

Even though ATA’s advocacy efforts didn’t lead to me getting the vaccine, it’s so fitting that a colleague’s efforts did. We really do look out for each other in this profession, and as I’ve said many times before, we’re stronger together. As I write this, I’m getting ready to meet Debbie for dinner. I also have my first in-person interpreting assignment in a federal prison in a few weeks.

Judy Jenner
Las Vegas, Nevada

Before the pandemic, I averaged about 100 flights a year, and most of them were for interpreting assignments. All my work travel came to a halt at the end of the first quarter of 2020, and I can count the number of in-person interpreting assignments I did that year on one hand. After November 2020, I ventured outside as little as possible until I could get vaccinated, which happened early in January 2021.

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Ryan Le
Los Angeles, California

I’m a freelance Vietnamese interpreter and translator. Along with other colleagues, I saw a big reduction in work due to the pandemic in early 2020.

Getting vaccinated is important because it not only protects me and those around me, but also contributes to the goal of reaching herd immunity so life will return to normal. Getting vaccinated has not changed the way I work on an on-site interpreting assignment. I still wash my hands, wear a mask, and maintain social distancing in public. However, I do feel more confident when being requested for on-site assignments.

I qualified for the vaccine because I’m a medical interpreter and part of the Phase 1A allocation (health care personnel). Even though I didn’t have to mention ATA’s letter to the CDC when talking to a Kaiser representative on the phone to make the appointment for my first dose, the effort and dedication of ATA and other professional organizations in our field played a big role in this quest. The moment I mentioned I was a medical interpreter, I was given the green light to schedule the appointment. It shows that the work of interpreters is recognized by others as essential to help prevent the spread of the virus and treat COVID-19 patients and beyond. Continuing to advocate about what we do is so important not only to get us recognized, but also to show how necessary it is to provide interpreting services for underserved communities in our society.

Antoni Maroto
Salt Lake City, Utah

I’m an ATA-certified English-Spanish translator who has been providing translation services since 2004, and interpreting services since 2018. While I’m originally from Barcelona, I’ve been calling the U.S. home for the past five years. Relocating prompted me to start specializing in the health care and medical industries. I mainly work with clinics and hospitals to bridge language barriers with Spanish-speaking patients.

As a Salt Lake City resident, I’m a member of the Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA), an ATA affiliate. Thanks to them, independent medical interpreters were granted early access to the vaccine in January 2021. I had been rejecting in-person assignments due to safety concerns since March 2020. I’m happy I can take those on...
again thanks to the protection the vaccine offers!

To schedule my vaccine appointment, I showed one of my clients—a medical interpreting agency—both ATA’s letter to the CDC and UTIA’s statement confirming that in-person medical interpreters qualified as health care workers in Utah. My client then issued a letter as proof of my eligibility. I had to show that letter and my identification badge at the pharmacy where I got the vaccine. Nobody questioned me or asked for additional proof.

I’m very grateful for the advocacy efforts of ATA and UTIA on behalf of medical interpreters. As health care workers, we shouldn’t be risking our health without protecting ourselves accordingly. After a challenging year, I’m happy that work will continue to pick up thanks to this vaccine. I’ve even decided to become a certified medical interpreter to continue to give more to my community!

**María Rosana Mestre**
Avon, Indiana

As a sworn translator and interpreter, getting the vaccine was a huge relief for me. In my family, we were concerned about my mother who lives with us. (She is 68 with a heart condition.) When the pandemic began, I decided to reduce the risk to her by putting my interpreting services on hold and accepting only translation assignments.

When vaccinations started for essential personnel in Indiana, I immediately confirmed through the health care system that I would qualify since I provide medical interpreting services. They were very welcoming when I registered. Language services are essential at any time, and this pandemic will confirm to society how important it is for any human to communicate in their language, to be understood, and to be able to express themselves.

I think of how medical records from around the world detailing the observance of COVID symptoms and the evolution of the virus can contribute to science. Patients’ experiences (narrated in their language) are also essential for advancing studies about the virus. I imagine many doctors trying to get relevant information from patients and the patients being unable to describe their symptoms due to a language barrier.

One positive change we’ll see after the pandemic is the rising demand in language services. There will also be increased importance as a freelancer to be part of an association like ATA, advocating for our rights when the time comes. As freelancers, we love freedom and working remotely, and being part of a network of fellow interpreters and translators makes it easier for the profession.

We’re in a globalized society, where you can have a work conference from anywhere with people around the world with a common purpose. Remote work will continue to be a part of the post-pandemic world, expanding opportunities for translators and interpreters to act as communication intermediaries.

**Madeline Ríos**
Claremont, California

As a certified translator and interpreter, I’ve had the good fortune of being able to mostly work from home during the pandemic. Unfortunately, mostly doesn’t mean always.

Some of the cases I’ve worked on in the federal court system since prior to the COVID-19 crisis still have a need for on-site interpreting, in particular at corrections facilities. Though, as a freelancer, I can turn down such assignments, I have, in fact, worked from time to time at institutions plagued by the virus. I’ve taken precautions, donning two masks plus a face shield long before Dr. Anthony Fauci so advised the public.

Yet my family and friends take little comfort in my assurances that many new safety precautions are now in place. Indeed, my reports to my loved ones conveniently left out minor details, such as a defendant’s mask that constantly slipped down below his mustache, or the time when I was informed at the last minute that an interviewee was currently under quarantine.

**Jennifer Santiago**
Garden Grove, California

I’m a freelance certified health care interpreter based in Orange County, California. I’ve been interpreting professionally for more than 11 years. I also work in immigration, community, and legal settings.

A few days before Christmas 2020, after emailing ATA’s letter to the CDC to my county’s vaccine task force and mentioning that I serve on
I believe the advocacy efforts of ATA and other professional organizations (particularly the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters’ social media campaign) have empowered interpreters with knowledge and encouragement to self-advocate for their own vaccination. This has not always been an easy process, as some states and regions did not prioritize interpreters as readily as mine did.

Getting vaccinated against COVID–19 was a momentous occasion for me. The experience evoked a sense of gratitude, solemnity, and responsibility. I was also eager to share my story with colleagues and friends to inspire hope.

Being aware of CDC equity guidelines, I took it a step further and called Kaiser to find out if they were offering the vaccine to non-member health care personnel. Sure enough, they were. I shared this good news with a few local language services companies who then notified their networks. Numerous colleagues reached out to me for input regarding what steps they needed to take to get vaccinated.

Being fully vaccinated gives me more confidence to continue providing in-person interpreting services, whether in medical clinics, city council meetings, and eventually in other community settings.

Lorena Ortiz Schneider
Santa Barbara, California

I’m a full–time professional interpreter working in mental health and workers’ compensation medical treatment and evaluation settings, among other areas. I qualified for the vaccine by reaching out in January to the local clinic for whom I do translations and asked if they might help me and my colleagues in the area qualify for the first round of vaccinations. After showing them ATA’s December 2020 letter to the CDC, the clinic immediately went to work. They realized that covering face-to-face interpreters was important, given the work we do to communicate with their LEP population. By simply asking, I managed to help get 12 interpreters vaccinated in early January!

Being eligible for the vaccine in the first round was a big deal for me. Not only did it keep me and others safe, but it also provided peace of mind and gave me the confidence I needed to perform my duties fully. While the medical facilities I frequent are taking stringent precautions and my assignments are still primarily remote, there are occasions when nothing but an on-site interpreter will do. Knowing I have less of a chance of bringing COVID-19 home and infecting my loved ones than before I was vaccinated is a huge relief.

As chair of ATA’s Advocacy Committee, I know that advocacy efforts on behalf of translators and interpreters are very important. Educating the public and government officials about our role in society is something that must continue if interpreters are to be afforded equal status with other parties within the medical team.

Carol Shaw
Garland, Texas

For years, most of my interpreting assignments have been depositions and the occasional hearing at a small municipal court. I also train staff interpreters for a nearby school district. All three settings involve multiple people interacting in a small room. In March 2020, the pandemic slammed the door on all those in-person settings.

So, along with my colleagues around the world, I learned to do the online thing. Depositions, hearings, classes, and everything else went virtual. When vaccinations began, I was encouraged by ATA’s advocacy for health care interpreters. It meant I could stop worrying about some of my colleagues. Eventually, my county began offering vaccines on a broader basis, and I signed up as soon as it was an option. I was fortunate as my reaction to each of the shots only lasted a day or two.

Being fully vaccinated doesn’t mean that my calendar will suddenly fill with in-person assignments. My clients are being cautious, which I applaud. Besides, most of them have adjusted to Zoom depositions and may never fully return to in-person proceedings. It will be a few months before the municipal court hearings and interpreting classes return to in-person.

But having gotten the vaccine now means I’m more likely to be healthy when clients do come calling.

Getting vaccinated also meant that when asked to serve in-person at a youth facility, I was able to join a host of my colleagues and accept. It feels like those doors that slammed shut last year are finally letting a sliver of light shine through.

NOTES
1 Read ATA’s December 17 letter to the CDC requesting Phase 1 eligibility for medical interpreters, http://bit.ly/ATA-CDC.
2 Read ATA’s request to the CDC to explicitly list medical interpreters and other on-site interpreters as essential workers, http://bit.ly/ATA-CDC-interpreters.
When you feel stuck or lack confidence regarding your next move, it’s time to draw a line in the sand and make a change.

We all have stories we tell ourselves about why we can’t do something in our business. Whether we chalk them up to impostor syndrome, perfectionism, or something in between, we’ve all been guilty of self-sabotage at some point during our entrepreneurial journey.

No one is immune. Our reasoning behind why we can’t do something is powerful, especially if we’re avoiding taking an action we know would be good for our business but that also feels overwhelming.

Now, everyone’s stories are different, but here are a few I’ve heard recently from colleagues related to marketing their businesses online:

1. The market is too saturated. There’s no way for me to stand out to clients online.
2. I don’t know where to start/what to do, so I don’t do anything to market my business online.
3. What will people think if I put myself out there?
4. I don’t want to stand out or toot my own horn.
5. I would like to market my business, but then impostor syndrome sets in. I’m afraid to be criticized.
6. I can’t sell (myself).
7. I’m a perfectionist, and I don’t feel my ________ is good enough yet to market my business.

The stories we tell ourselves can cause us to stall our marketing efforts, whether we realize it at first or not. The concerns expressed above are all legitimate. However, they shift from concerns to self-sabotage when we let them stop us from achieving more, whether it be finding better clients, tapping into a new specialization, or simply updating areas of our online presence like our website or digital profiles.

If we’re not careful, our businesses can remain stagnant for years, we earn less than we’re capable of, we work for clients who don’t pay well or respect our boundaries, or worse...we burn out altogether because we haven’t taken care of ourselves or our businesses.

How to Stop Self-Sabotaging Your Online Marketing Efforts and Start Taking Action

When you feel stuck or lack confidence regarding your next move, it’s time to draw a line in the sand and make a change. Here are six ways to stop self-sabotaging your online marketing efforts.

1. Ask for help.

None of us can know everything, do everything, or be everything in our business. When you’re feeling stuck or stalling out on something related to your online marketing, talk to a colleague, mentor, business coach, therapist, former professor, or someone who can relate and provide a different perspective. It’s okay to ask for help, to not have all the answers, and to recognize when you need support. If you feel like your online marketing efforts are constantly hanging over your head, talk to someone who can help you start down the path to reach your goals.

2. Flip the script.

Limiting beliefs are real. Similar to the stories we tell ourselves, we all have limiting beliefs. Recognize yours and make a concerted effort to shift these beliefs to a more positive and abundant mindset. Sometimes a mindset shift is all you need to start working on your website, polish your LinkedIn profile, or start sharing about your business on the social media sites where your clients are active. The sidebar on page 20 provides some examples of how to reframe your limiting beliefs.

3. Recognize that it’s okay to be uncomfortable sometimes.

When something worth doing is uncomfortable, it’s easy to make excuse after excuse about why we can’t do it. If marketing our businesses came naturally, we would all be steadily marketing year-round. Instead, I see many freelancers going to the opposite end of the spectrum: not marketing at all.

The key is to make your marketing feel like you. Don’t follow what everyone else is doing. Learn from others about what works and what doesn’t, then tweak these strategies to fit your business and personality. Create some email and LinkedIn templates you can use to reach out to potential clients and try to send a few messages to potential clients a week. The more you do this, the more comfortable you’ll feel reaching out to prospects. You
can apply this tip to any area of your online marketing.

4 Make a focused plan.
When you start to feel overwhelmed with online marketing, it’s time to make a focused plan. Don’t stop yourself before you start because your sense of feeling overwhelmed is running the show. Instead, take some time to think about how to make your marketing efforts consistent and focused. This kind of planning and follow-through over time will lead to results.

5 Remember that no one was born knowing how to market their business.
It’s true that everyone has to start somewhere. Think about the colleagues you know, including those you admire from afar. How did they get where they are? How do they market their businesses with grace and confidence? How do they seem to achieve so much on a consistent basis? Just like everyone else, they took the first step. And then they took another and another. Don’t let not knowing exactly how to do something stop you from taking the first step.

6 Start small.
Reduce that feeling of being overwhelmed by breaking marketing tasks or projects into smaller, more digestible to-do items. You don’t have to do everything at once—that’s impossible for anyone! By taking this approach to online marketing, you’ll slowly build a sustainable, reliable approach to get new and better clients over the long-term.

Even small progress is worth the effort. Take it from our colleague, ATA Past President Corinne McKay, who shared this via Twitter:

Freelance tip: Honestly, 90+% of freelancers: a) do little to no marketing, while b) lamenting that everyone else makes more money, gets better clients, or does more interesting work. Even a moderate amount of proactive marketing will get you into the other 10%. (@corinnemckay)

We often make online marketing much harder than it really is. The stories we tell ourselves are strong enough to stop us before we ever get started. Work on taking a proactive approach and setting aside a few minutes a day. You can slowly increase the amount of time you put into marketing your business. But starting small is a step in the right direction.

Questions to Ask Yourself to Move Forward
The next time you find yourself making an excuse about why you can’t or don’t want to work on your online marketing, stop, take a step back, and assess why you feel this way. What brought you to this place where you think you can’t or don’t want to share your expertise with clients you know could benefit from your services? What’s stopping you from updating your website or reaching out to some potential clients on LinkedIn?

Sometimes the answers to these questions bring up uncomfortable feelings about who we believe ourselves to be or what we believe our capabilities are. Challenge those feelings and thoughts and push through them to find a way to take consistent action, even if it’s just one step. After all, that’s usually the hardest one to take.

NOTES
1 Impostor syndrome is the fear that we aren’t good enough at something we set out to do or that we’re asked to do, coupled with a fear of being called out as a “fraud.”
Getting Started with Terminology Management

Terminology management requires a certain initial investment of time and resources that will not be immediately recovered. But don’t let that deter you from incorporating this best practice into your localization efforts, and the sooner the better!

By Alaina Brandt

Terminology management makes or breaks the success of globalization and localization efforts in terms of both budgets and sales. Identifying and standardizing terminology reduces the need for expensive queries management and rework on jobs. Terminology is also a crucial aspect of user experience design. Despite its strategic value, however, many are unaware that terminology is key to producing solid, well-performing products. And once they are aware, many don’t know where to start.

If you find yourself needing a little help in this area as well, then read on for some guidelines for getting started with terminology management. You’ll learn about key concepts, strategies for unpacking how the meaning of terms will be interpreted, and ways to write new terms to increase the likelihood that the audience will adopt the intended messaging.

Important Theory to Terminology Work

Theory is intimidating for some, but it doesn’t have to be that way. Learning a few key concepts is a great way to get started in this highly sought-after specialization. It also enables practitioners to better sell terminology strategy in terms that key decision makers will understand (usually in terms of money). At the core of terminology management is an understanding of how people conceptualize objects and ideas and how that can be leveraged to influence audiences and lead them to take action.

To illustrate, let’s turn to the semantic triangle, which explains how terminology impacts people’s mental processes. (See Figure 1 on page 22.) Each point of the triangle represents an aspect of how meaning is identified in language. In the left corner, we find “objects,” which, according to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard ISO 704 Terminology Work—Principles and Methods, are “anything perceived or conceived.” In the top corner, we find “concepts,” or, as defined by ISO 704, “mental representations of objects.” In the right corner, we find “designations,” or the labels in language people use to represent the objects they perceive and abstract in their minds into concepts.

The shared designations for objects used by communities of speakers...
are what makes human communication within societies possible. In English, for example, if we didn’t all understand that the word “triangle” refers to a three-sided, three-cornered, one-dimensional shape, we certainly wouldn’t be able to discuss abstract concepts such as the semantic triangle, much less carry out a basic conversation on shapes. That said, it’s important to remember that just because communities of speakers use common language doesn’t mean that those speakers share the exact same conceptualization of each object that’s designated.

For instance, an often-considered example within terminology management is the conceptualization of a table. The traditional definition of a table that most people think of is a flat surface upon which humans eat and work. It’s an object that stands on four legs. Yet, that definition is not accurate because sometimes tables have three legs, sometimes six, sometimes the flat surface isn’t set upon legs at all but upon a pedestal, and sometimes the table doesn’t touch the ground but is suspended from a ceiling. If asked to draw their conceptualization of a table, no two individual speakers of a language will draw the same one from the mental inventory of those they’ve encountered or imagined in their lives. This is significant because those outside the language services and localization professions assume that meaning is held within the designation, but words themselves are arbitrary and empty. Meaning truly is in the eye or brain of the beholder. As such, we need to be careful about assuming that everyone shares the same understanding of what constitutes an object, especially when the objects being referred to are abstract concepts like quality assurance in translation.

**How Terminology Influences Human Perception**

The ISO 704 standard is fundamental to terminology work. The standard undergoes regularly scheduled reviews, which is common practice for all ISO standards. This review process is doing exactly what standards are designed to do—spurring passionate discussion among participants from worldwide markets and a competition of ideas. These are great activities that push innovation forward. One piece of advice in ISO 704 that I’ve always particularly enjoyed is found in the discussion of objects:

>“In the course of producing a terminology, philosophical discussions on whether an object actually exists in reality are unproductive and should be avoided. Attention should be focused on how one deals with objects for the purposes of communication.”

This advice may seem funny, but I can say from experience that when getting started with terminology work it can be easy to stray into metaphysical discussions about objects that—while enjoyable—may not necessarily push the terminology work forward. Advice I would make explicit from the above is that terminology work is at the forefront of the evolution of human language. That said, the politics behind language must also be acknowledged when conducting terminology work. In certain cases, you’ll want to be prescriptive about terminology use. Prescribing the words speakers should use, rather than describing the words commonly used by speakers, is a strategy used when establishing company slogans, branding, and product names. In other instances, just because a term isn’t acknowledged doesn’t mean that the associated concept doesn’t exist, though the results of that lack of acknowledgement often include inequality and discrimination.

Gender is a great example of the use of prescriptive and descriptive language in the 21st century. Legal recognition of non-binary gender identity is increasing around the world, including in Argentina in 2012, in...
Germany, Taiwan, and in U.S. states like California. ATA member Ártemis López, who has been translating and interpreting for queer, trans, and non-binary communities since 2011, addresses this topic in the article “You, Me, Hir, and Non-Binary Language,” published in *Intercambios*, the newsletter of ATA’s Spanish Language Division. López notes that the translation and interpreting industry will certainly need to learn how to respond to the natural shifts in language taking place as people become legally required to use language that promotes inclusivity and as societies become increasingly less accepting of the use of language to exclude and deny people’s existence. (Note: Language practitioners will need to keep up to date with the terminology to accurately handle assignments involving civil status documents.) Just as women won the right to officially have their marital status disassociated from their form of address with the addition of Ms. to Mrs. and Mr. in English vocabulary, the fight for progress in the terminology surrounding identity has resulted in language that serves the function of describing rather than prescribing people’s gender identities. (See Figure 2.)

**How Terminology Leads to Action**

Now that we’ve covered some important definitions, let’s re-examine the semantic triangle to better understand how terminology leads to action. By turning the semantic triangle on its side, we can see how the relationships among objects, concepts, and designations help achieve the desired result.

Using the illustration provided in Figure 3, we’ll work with the concept of “coffee to go,” represented by coffee beans and Styrofoam cups. Now let’s think about the idea of “coffee to go” in reverse order. In other words, not as something that someone sees and then attaches a concept and a label to, but as something that someone thinks about without having to see the related object.

Here’s the scenario: You’re out running errands after the children kept you up late. You think, “I need to get a few more things done today, but I could really use a bit of a pick-me-up. I need to keep moving and a coffee to go would sure help.”

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**Figure 2** Gender Identities: Prescriptive versus Descriptive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescriptive</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr., Mrs., Ms.</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mx., Ms., Mrs., Mr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3** Terminology to Action

Object

“Let’s go get a Starbucks.”

Concept “coffee to go”

Designation
When I think of coffee to go, I think about Starbucks, and I’m sure I’m not the only one. For me, the idea of “coffee to go” is mapped onto the term “Starbucks,” where Starbucks may be shifting in its lexical function. This shift is also referred to as a coinage. “Just like new things are constantly invented, so are new words. The process of inventing a completely new word is referred to as coinage, and the same term is applied to the result of that process. Coinages often enter the language as trade names for commercial products, and over time they become general words referring to any version or variation of the original product. Examples of coinages that are used as terms: aspirin, nylon, kleenex, teflon, xerox; to google, to photoshop.”

Although the brand name Starbucks is not a coinage yet, it’s starting to become easy to see how the company has, through brand recognition, conveniently made me and many others around the world associate the concept of “coffee to go” with the designation Starbucks. This results in many Starbucks products in the hands of customers and many millions of dollars in sales. That’s powerful.

Establishing Specifications for Terminology Workflows
To establish terminology workflows that drive results, the key is customization. Still, certain aspects of your workflow will always be the same, like the need to define the specifications for your project. (See Figure 4.) Here are some steps to help in this process.

**STEP 1** Define the subject field. The subject field (or subject area, domain, vertical, or whatever you choose to call it) will always need to be defined. For example, the letters ICE stand for very different things by simply changing the domain from engineering (internal combustion engine) to immigration (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Associations with the word impact perception. Thinking of ice cubes in a refreshing soda certainly has a different effect than if “ice” makes you think of the polar ice caps melting.

**STEP 2** Define the languages and audience. The audience and languages also need to be defined. This may seem obvious, but if we’re preparing terminology for a project intended for an American audience, it will make a big difference if the label “American” is used to refer to someone from the Americas or to someone from the U.S. For example, estadounidenses (Americans) might seem like a specific enough label to use in marketing terminology geared toward a Spanish-speaking audience, but we also need to be aware that both Mexico and the U.S. consist of united states. Once we consider this, we realize that the label estadounidenses is not specific enough. Choosing English as the only target language for a project for an “American” audience is inaccurate. For starters, Spanish is an important American dialect for the U.S., but so are the hundreds of other languages spoken in this country. The important takeaway is that no matter the language chosen, individual Americans are more likely to purchase products geared specifically to them (i.e., marketed using familiar language they use every day at work and at home).

**STEP 3** Define the purpose of the project. Different strategies will be followed depending on whether the terminology is being collected for a specific subject field (e.g., technical terminology that a community of specialists use to communicate with one another about their craft) or a specific company. If the purpose of the project is not defined, unhappy results are more likely.

Build a Representative Universe of Texts
Once specifications have been established, corpora of technical texts within a specific domain are collected. It’s important that these texts are written by subject matter experts (SMEs) who are native speakers of each of the project languages.

When identifying texts written by “native” speakers,
The politics behind language must also be acknowledged when conducting terminology work.

a major challenge and source of bias is the use of stereotypical identification methods that too narrowly define who gets to be considered “native.” For instance, a person with the last name Smith may or may not speak English as a native language. They may also speak Spanish as a native language, or any other language spoken on the planet. Assuming who a native speaker is based on superficial data like people’s names does not and should not suffice for professional terminology work.

Here are some tips to achieve well-formed corpora free of bias:

Concentrate on the volume of words. To substantiate whether a term is indeed part of the special language used by a community of SMEs, a wide variety of texts is needed. Terminologists should look for an unbiased sample of texts, size being one indication of this. According to Khurshid Ahmad, professor of computer science at Trinity College Dublin, and Margaret Rogers, professor of translation and terminology studies and director of the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Surrey, empirical studies suggest that the vocabulary used in special-language texts is much smaller than the vocabulary in general-language texts. Therefore, starting off with a small corpus in a technical field is a good way to avoid bias.5

Make sure the texts included are not translations. Why is it important not to include translations in your corpora? According to Mona Baker, emeritus professor of translation and intercultural studies and modern languages and cultures at the University of Manchester, universal characteristics of translation include the tendency to lean toward explicit communication, simplified language, and a safe middle between covert and overt translation.6 These characteristics mean that translations do not replicate the way SMEs communicate together in a single language and are therefore not good candidates for corpora intended to produce technical terminology. (When producing client-specific terminology based upon past translations, however, a successful project is not possible unless past translations are consulted.)

Include many authors, and make sure those authors are SMEs writing for other SMEs. Why is this important? Well, if Microsoft documents are the only documents included in a corpus intended to produce IT terminology, the term extraction results will be biased toward Microsoft jargon rather than producing the shared special language used by IT professionals no matter their company affiliation. Additionally, SMEs employ simplified language in texts in which they explain their trade to lay people. When SMEs address other SMEs, they use the special language of their trade naturally, so corpora should be filled with documents produced with this audience in mind to more accurately produce the technical terminology of a trade.

Terminology Extraction: Human Validation Required

Terminology extraction is more successfully conducted when one can critically engage with the types of challenges being navigated, which machines cannot do at this point. To understand these challenges, we’ll start by looking at how extraction is carried out by a machine. During machine extraction, the large batch of words in the corpus is analyzed for groups of words that follow the patterns of how terms are normally expressed in that language. Most terms are nouns. Those nouns are single words or compounds. So, when teaching a machine to carry out extraction for English, the machine would be taught to identify frequent occurrences of single words or compounds that follow these patterns (among others): noun + noun; noun + noun + noun; noun + of + noun, etc.

Despite claims about the ability of artificial intelligence to replicate and even replace humans, it’s important to keep in mind that automatic extraction results are currently far from a point at which they can be used without human validation. For languages in which the patterns used to construct terms are well identified and have been taught successfully to machines, automatic extraction produces many collocations, or groupings of words that frequently appear in a corpus but are not actually terms. Figure 5 on page 26 shows the results from a very small corpus of computer-assisted translation (CAT)-related documentation. The results include a number of invalidated terms, including “in the document” and “the number of” among additional collocations. As you can tell, the configuration that produced the extraction results has simply not yet been refined by a qualified human to produce higher quality results.

At the core of terminology management is an understanding of how people conceptualize objects and ideas and how that can be leveraged to influence audiences and lead them to take action.

Out-of-the-box term extractors are currently not widely available in all languages. Anecdotally, I’ve observed poorer results from automatic extractions for languages like Korean and Thai, if extraction is
available at all. On the bright side, plenty of invigorating linguistic analysis still needs to be done and then taught to the machines to reach greater levels of automation, and that will keep specialists working far into the future. On small projects, or when carrying out term extraction for the first time, a great way to get started is by manually eliminating any words from your primary content that you know for sure are not special terms. This will help you develop “stop lists,” which you can use to teach your term extraction tool to automatically filter these words out from your results. A resource like this is obviously one with great potential for robust growth over time. Here’s an example of a selection of text within the domain of localization and the sub-domain of CAT technology that has undergone this process. Repetitions are highlighted using various colors. Synonyms appear in orange (one pair), and potential terms that were discarded are crossed out in red.

“The Translation memory net rate schemes have four categories: Repetition: A segment repeated in a document; In-context match: A segment which matches a segment already stored in the translation memory, including its context, the preceding and following segments, or context keys match: A segment which matches a segment already stored in the translation memory; Fuzzy match: A segment which partially matches a segment already stored in the translation memory; Fuzzy matches can range from 99% down to zero. Fuzzy matches below a 75% match rate are considered “new words and are newly translated.”

“Net Rate Schemes” by Memsource

This selection of text produces the following list of terms. All terms in the list are presented in singular form and lowercase (unless the term is a proper noun), in keeping with terminological best practices. The relationships and hierarchy among the terms are indicated with bullets.

- segment (7)
- translation memory (4)
- match (n.) (5)
  - 100% match—type of match
    - repetition (1)—type of 100% match
    - in-context match (1)—type of 100% match; prevent variation (i.e., “in context match” and “in-context match”)
    - context keys match (1)—type of “in-context match”
  - “fuzzy match” or “75% match”—synonyms
    - new word (1)—per Memsourse, type of fuzzy match

The list above contains compound nouns, a major challenge in terminology work. According to the Simplified Technical English specifications of the AeroSpace and Defense Industries Association of Europe, compound nouns longer than three words should generally be avoided. This is because they impede understanding as readers have to pause to unpack the modifications taking place. In this case, it will be fairly clear to specialists that the five-word compound phrase in the text actually consists of at least two compound nouns: “translation memory” + “net rate scheme.” Then again, it could also consist of three nouns: “translation memory” + “net rate” + “scheme,” where “scheme” is modified by both the terms “translation memory” and “net rate.” This identification is not something that’s easy for a machine to get right. Someone who isn’t qualified might also misinterpret this grouping or translate it inconsistently throughout a document, which will result in costly rework in later stages of production. Determining whether terms refer to unique concepts or are synonyms for other terms is another challenge within terminology work, especially because each
language tolerates linguistic variation differently (one of many unconscious language preferences associated with languages). As those of us in the industry are aware, both “fuzzy match” and “75% match” can refer to the same concept. Unqualified humans and machines can very easily misinterpret this and translate each of these terms using words from their language that refer to entirely different concepts for each term in the pair. If different translators don’t correctly identify these two terms as synonyms, inconsistencies in meaning will be introduced in the target content that will ultimately impede user understanding.

When compiling terminology from client content, capture these important term types first to prevent downstream issues and the cost that results from unplanned rework:

- Key technical terms and any synonyms for those terms
- Abbreviations and acronyms
- Neologisms, such as product names or features
- Ambiguous words, including homonyms
- Inconsistent terms (check for and standardize the preferred spelling variation)
- Company names, slogans, and trademarks

While the process of finding equivalents for terminology in one language is referred to above as translation, it’s important to note that terminology work is an entirely different linguistic process. For terminology work conducted under ideal circumstances, the process of building corpora, extracting terminology, and understanding concept relations would be carried out independently in each language to prevent the structure of any one language from dominating the structure of meaning conceptualization. In the real world, tight deadlines and limited budgets mean that terminology work is often treated more as a process of translation, with English as the lingua franca source language within the technical fields.

To ensure that concepts are adopted, borrowing from languages like English when introducing new technologies in developing markets allows for linguistic voids to be filled quickly. Still, the adoption of terminology over time may not be as successful as it would be if terminology were formed according to the structures of the “target” language. Note that terminology work should also start long before localization efforts are underway.

Compiling Terminology into Databases

When starting to compile collected terminology into databases, a frequent source of rework is the incorrect fusion of terminology work with what lay people sometimes refer to as “dictionary work.” This is also known within specialized communities as lexicography. Lexicography is the practice of compiling all the known concepts included among the meanings of a word into a single entry. Terminology works in the opposite direction. Terminography is the practice of compiling all the words used to denote a single concept in a single entry. For example, in lexicography, the following concepts would be collected in the entry for key (n.): key for a lock, piano key, key of music, etc. In terminography, the following synonyms would be collected in the concept entry for encryption key (n.): key, cypher, code. In terminography, the concept (not word) entry collects all the different words (terms) used to name that concept.

The information associated with term entries in terminological databases is organized according to a hierarchy with three information levels: entry (or concept) level, language level, and term level.

- The entry level contains the information that applies to the entire entry regardless of language. (Remember, we’re working with a single concept in each terminology record.) The subject field is a good example of the type of data stored at the entry level. Since every term in the entry refers to the same concept or meaning, the subject field applies to every term. We store that information once at the entry level, rather than repeating it in lower levels of the hierarchy.
- The language level contains information that only applies to a specific language. Each term entry may have records in any number of languages. The area for each language is sometimes called a “language block.” A definition in the specific language is a good thing to store at this level.
• The term level contains the information that applies only to that specific term. A language block may contain many term blocks, but at least one term block for the head term plus as many blocks as needed for any synonyms. At this level we collect information like the gender and number of the term in question for Romance languages.

Here’s an example of what this hierarchy might look like:

Termbase
• Concept 1—<subject field>
  • Language—definition
    • Term—definition
  • Language
  • Term
• Concept 2—<subject field>
  • Language
    • Term—full form
    • Term—short form
    • Term—deprecated—do not use
  • Language
    • Term
  • Language
  • Term
• Concept 3—<subject field>
  • Language
  • Term

This hierarchy warrants emphasis given the impact that the proper hierarchical setup can have on the scalability of individual terminology resources and overarching terminology campaigns. When the information in the database follows this structure, with data points captured at the appropriate level and in conformance with the ISO 30042 Termbase Exchange standard®, your termbase will more easily transfer among CAT tools. This means you’ll be able to make your resource more robust over time. Your terminology journey will likely start with some sort of an Excel database. Once you’re ready to start building custom termbases within CAT tools, look for products that have incorporated the ISO 30042 standard, such as Wordbee.

Terminology Management: Dispelling Common Misconceptions
Ultimately, terminology management is about education. It’s true that the practice requires a certain initial investment of time and resources that will not be immediately recovered. But don’t let that deter you from incorporating this best practice into your localization efforts, and the sooner the better. Start small and polish your terminological processes and databases until you’re confident that the structures produce the intended results. Then build out robust resources over time.

To conclude, consider this final example: the car name Chevy Nova. “Nova” is a term that can either leave you seeing stars or snickering about a car that “doesn’t go.” (The words “No va” translate to “[It] doesn’t go” in Spanish, so it’s an unfortunate name for a car.) So, make sure your worldwide product and language service launches are Go’s instead of No go’s. Be sure to incorporate terminology management in your localization workflows.

NOTES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Introduction to TermBase eXchange (TBX), www.tbxinfo.net.
Translation Commons, https://translationscommons.org. If you want to learn more about terminology management, take the "Introduction to Terminology Google Classroom" course by Translation Commons. Access the course for free by registering on Translation Commons and visiting the Learning Center.

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Teamwork:
The Pros and Cons of Being a Lone Wolf or a Pack Animal

From the outside looking in, most translators probably seem like lone wolves, happily working at their desks all day with hardly any social contact. In fact, many freelancers highlight being their own boss and making all the decisions as one of the main reasons they pursued a self-employed career.

But the reality can be quite different, even if you don’t work in an agency’s office. That’s because translators are increasingly realizing the benefits of working together on projects and sharing their knowledge.

In a Group Translation Chats (GTC) session on Zoom in January, hosted by Ellen Singer, we talked about the pros and cons of teamwork and how and when we can work better together.

Let’s start by highlighting some of the advantages.

Pros
First, it’s great to have a sparring partner you can have discussions and even disagreements with as this helps clarify your ideas. In a revision relationship, revisers not only spot errors that might have slipped through despite your checks, but they also make suggestions to turn a good translation into a great one. And a polished final text of printable quality will keep clients coming back for more.

You can also combine your expertise with specialized colleagues. For example, if your technical project contains a few paragraphs or pages of legal content you find difficult, you can ask a legal translator to do it for you instead of struggling yourself.

Sharing work with another translator also means you can produce a higher volume. Instead of refusing a large project, you can split it with one or more trusted partners. Dividing a translation can also help you meet tight deadlines when it’s impossible to negotiate extra time. If you work as a team, you can complete the entire project (i.e., translation, editing, and proofreading) instead of focusing on just one phase.

Now let’s think about some of the disadvantages.

Cons
Although deadlines are meant to be sacred in our business, you might come across some timing issues if you work in a team. Some colleagues are not team players and don’t do what they’ve agreed. Instead, they let you down by sending you their work at the last minute or late. Waiting for others to complete their part could have an impact on when you complete the next phase in a project and ultimately delay delivery to the client.

And while having a sparring partner to bounce ideas off is an advantage, differences of opinion on methods and terminology can quickly spoil a relationship. A colleague can look like a great choice on paper, but if how they approach the work doesn’t suit you, teaming up will not be satisfactory. For example, they could use
speech recognition software to translate but then not iron out the problems, leaving you with more than your fair share to do in the editing phase.

Other disagreements can arise regarding workloads, deadlines, payment terms, rates, etc., just as they can with agencies and other clients. There can also be communication issues. When a project has been divided among two or more translators, it’s often because the deadline is tight and the client can’t wait for it to be completed by just one service provider. As time is of the essence, communication needs to be succinct and only when strictly necessary. But at the same time, the tone needs to stay friendly and professional even when the approaching deadline increases stress and nerves can begin to fray.

Many attendees at the GTC session highlighted incompatibility as a reason why they’re lone wolves. Getting along with some individuals in a team setup can prove quite challenging and irksome, for example, if you’re a planner working alongside a colleague with a more relaxed approach. They don’t miss others’ input because they enjoy being their own boss and prefer to be in full control of all decision-making. For others, subcontracting is something they actively avoid because they’re risk-averse and find it hard to trust colleagues.

Even if you don’t like working with other people, you can ultimately learn a lot from working with someone whose approach and skills differ from yours.

Working as a Pack
When you work on a project as a team, you’ll need to decide how to go about it and put a system in place. A good first step is selecting a team leader. The choice may be obvious (i.e., the person who landed the client and the job, or the translator with the most knowledge of the type of text involved).

You’ll also need to decide how to communicate with each other. A constant toing and froing of emails while the project is in progress is not helpful as it interrupts everyone’s workflow. Instead, the team can schedule a meeting at certain points throughout the project to discuss any issues that arise. Or you can use Slack or another project management tool.

The team also needs to agree on how to deal with terminology across the split-up parts of the translation. This is especially important if one or more of the members is not quite up to scratch (a relatively new translator, not well-informed with the subject matter, etc.). One way is for the most experienced translator (possibly the team leader) to create a terminology database, for example, listing source and target terms in Excel and asking everyone to agree upon them in advance of translating.

The same is true for style. If the client hasn’t given any specific instructions, the team will either have to decide which style manual to follow or draw up their own guidelines. When your work is going to be revised, if you have an issue with a term or a style question, you can highlight it or add a comment so the reviser knows you’re unsure about it. Again, it’s best to agree in advance, or let the reviser/team leader decide, how to go about indicating this type of problem.

The GTC attendees were divided about whether the person(s) creating the glossary should be paid extra for this task. If they are remunerated, then you need to decide whether they’ll be paid per word, term, or hour. This might depend on whether they negotiated the job and, therefore, are already receiving extra for admin, marketing, and coordination. Attendees remarked that this mark-up can vary widely across the profession, as it depends on the client, the size of the job, and other factors, with agencies taking from an
estimated 15% to 40% of the total price.

Although it’s certainly easier if everyone in the team uses the same software, it shouldn’t be a prerequisite. Computer-assisted translation tools are largely compatible these days and you can usually easily adapt to other systems.

**Finding Your Pack**

It’s probably best to be on the lookout for potential partners long before a large project comes along. Finding the right people to team up with is trial and error. And to make it work, you all need to know and trust each other and be engaged at the same level.

The GTC attendees mentioned several possible ways of meeting and evaluating future collaborators.

- Try mentoring. Although as a mentor you’re the more seasoned translator, you may find your mentee has the skills and mentality you’re looking for, especially after receiving your input for a few months. This is another good reason to give mentoring a try both as a mentor and mentee.
- Set up a RevClub (mutual revision group) with a few other translators in your language pair. I meet with my fellow RevClubbers twice a month. One week we critique each other’s translations (an excerpt of around 350 words) with a view to improving them and providing general tips we can apply in the future. And another time we all translate the same text (a type of mini translation slam) and compare notes.

**Finding the right people to team up with is trial and error. And to make it work, you all need to know and trust each other and be engaged at the same level.**

- Set up an Edit Club. It’s similar to a RevClub except each member has a different language pair. My Edit Club gets together twice a month (in the weeks when I don’t have the RevClub). As there are four of us, we review two translations (only looking at the target) every time we meet. The feedback and contributions in both clubs are invaluable.
- Many master’s degree courses make you partner up for some exercises. This collaboration is not only good teamwork practice, but it could also last beyond the MA as a permanent partnership.
- You may spot a future collaborator during a translation, editing, or copywriting course or workshop you either teach or attend.
- Go to other in-person events, such as conferences, whenever possible, as talking to other attendees can give you an idea about whether you’ll be compatible working together.
- Ask to see the translator’s past work. And obviously be wary of anyone who gives you excuses not to do so.
- Avoid people who are constantly on social media. They’re probably not working on in-depth projects if they have so much free time.
- However, despite the above, how someone behaves on social media in their responses to others’ posts could give you an indication of what they might be like to work with.

**Summing Up**

Even if you don’t like working with other people, and many of the GTC members attending this hosted chat said they were not keen on teaming up, you can ultimately learn a lot from working with someone whose approach and skills differ from yours. Although you don’t know in advance how the teamwork will pan out, vetting the translators beforehand using some of the ideas outlined here may help you achieve a better outcome than randomly picking someone from an online database.

**NOTES**


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“Business Practices” will alternate in this space with “The Entrepreneurial Linguist.” This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors.
**To Be or Not to Be Certified:**
The Dilemma for Non-Spanish Interpreters

In an industry where the majority of professionals are freelancers and where subject matter expertise cannot be easily judged by clients or intermediaries, certification remains the gatekeeper to quality. Hiring a translator or interpreter without verified qualifications or certification is a very risky endeavor. The result may cost a limited-English-proficient (LEP) individual their life, a hospital thousands of dollars in unnecessary procedures, or a defendant in a court proceeding delayed justice or even their liberty.

(The following was originally published on the blog of ATA’s Interpreters Division, www.ata-divisions.org/ID/blog.)

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On the other side of this dilemma stand thousands of interpreters who need certification to make a living and compete in the U.S. market. It’s a challenging position, especially for interpreters who work in languages where certification is unavailable. (For these languages, interpreters can only be considered qualified.) The following focuses on languages other than Spanish in which interpreter certification is available. Despite this availability, however, obtaining certification remains a challenge for many interpreters for various reasons.

**Motivation:** For many interpreters, there may be little motivation to become certified. This is especially true in health care interpreting. The status quo dictates that if there is no certified interpreter available, a qualified interpreter may be appointed. Unfortunately, some language services companies have little interest in hiring certified interpreters as long as they can make do with providing qualified interpreters. Their reasoning is that paying the higher rates certified interpreters command will lower profit margins. I know interpreters who have expressed concern that agencies would drop them if they became certified and increased their rates.

**Prohibitive Costs:** The cost of certification can be prohibitive for many freelancers. Attending training and exam preparation sessions, paying application, practice test, and exam fees, and purchasing exam preparation materials (if they are even available in their languages) add up to a significant financial investment. This is especially true for interpreters in low-demand languages whose income is quite limited. In addition, interpreters may need to pay to take the exam more than once since passing on the first try is not that common. After obtaining certification, renewal costs are also not insignificant.

**Preparation Material:** Although there are plenty of preparation materials in
Spanish for court and medical interpreters, the same cannot be said for certain languages. For example, there are very limited resources for court interpreting in languages such as Arabic, Vietnamese, and Russian, be they glossaries or practice interpreting scenarios. While material in English can be useful in training for the simultaneous part of the exam, bilingual material is needed to practice consecutive interpreting. Differences in the judicial systems of various countries add another layer of difficulty. Court materials from other countries, which can be found online, are not very useful for an interpreter trying to get certified in the U.S.

Having more certified interpreters in as many languages as possible is a win-win situation for all stakeholders.

For health care interpreting, the situation might be less difficult. While there is very limited material available to use for consecutive practice, some material, although not originally prepared for interpreter training, is available online in languages other than English and Spanish. However, even if some practice scenarios were created specifically for interpreter training, these are often very primitive and inadequate for certification exam preparation.

Training: Although some training opportunities are language-specific, mostly in Spanish, the majority of available court and health care interpreter training is language neutral. The same often applies to training offered during conferences.

Interpreting is a profession that relies heavily on core skills and less on soft skills. Although there is valuable learning to be had from attending training focused on codes of ethics or cultural equivalence, it’s skill-based training that actually prepares us for interpreting in our language or passing certification exams that test those core skills. An additional compounding factor is the issue of having very few qualified trainers who can offer training specific to certain languages.

How Do We Overcome All This?

If we’re serious about offering quality language access in all the languages spoken by LEP communities, then major players such as certification bodies, state judicial departments, and health authorities need to step up their efforts. They need to motivate interpreters and agencies alike to provide resources and support for non-Spanish interpreters who want to be certified.

Funding is also needed to support initiatives aimed at building language-specific training materials. Such materials could be in the form of online training or books with accompanying audio files offering practice interpreting scenarios at various levels of difficulty. These materials could also include different dialects in languages where training materials are scarce.

It’s also crucial to offer training in languages other than Spanish. This support could come through scholarships to attend training sessions for trainers, or through mentoring and observing practicing trainers in language neutral or Spanish trainings.

Regarding existing language neutral training and continuing education opportunities, arrangements could be made so interpreters for a specific language could work together in small groups and practice in their language of expertise.

In terms of certification costs, offering more scholarships to attend trainings and waiving some of the exam fees for first-time exam takers might encourage more interpreters to take the exam and work hard to pass it the first time.

Advocacy efforts for the profession and certified interpreters might also help the industry overcome existing challenges to obtaining certification. Such advocacy could be in the form of client education or increased communication between certification bodies and interpreters.

A Win-Win Situation

Having more certified interpreters in as many languages as possible is a win-win situation for all stakeholders. However, the existing obstacles make this goal quite far from being realized. It’s only with concerted efforts from all those concerned that we can step closer to quality language access in the near future.

Note: Thanks to Russian interpreter and trainer, Svetlana Ruth, for her valuable input during the preparation of this column.

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Interpreters are a vital part of ATA. This column is designed to offer insights and perspectives from professional interpreters.
Automating Computer Tasks Is Easier than You Think

Whenever I face a repetitive task, I wonder if there’s a way to automate it to make it go faster. This weekend, for instance, I had to spot over 600 subtitles (i.e., set the times when a subtitle will appear and disappear from the screen). This involved the following steps:

1. Select a portion of audio from a waveform in Subtitle Edit.
2. Switch over to the file containing the script in Notepad++.
3. Select the subtitle text.
4. Copy the selection to the clipboard.
5. Switch back to Subtitle Edit.
6. Click the right mouse button.
7. Select the second option from the context menu to create a new subtitle and then paste the contents of the clipboard in it.

These steps needed to be repeated for each subtitle—so, 600 times. Clearly, this was a perfect opportunity to automate a repetitive task. I could have sped up the process had I combined at least some of those steps into a customized macro (i.e., a saved sequence of commands that instructs the computer to perform a given task). With a single click or keyboard shortcut, I could have activated the macro and saved repetitive clicks and key presses.

This is only one example of the many times during my work as a translator when I’ve found myself wishing I had a macro to save time. Since discovering AutoHotkey, however, I’ve gone from wishing there was a way to speed things up to actually making it happen.

What Is AutoHotkey?
AutoHotkey is a free open-source scripting language for Windows that allows users to create macros to automate all kinds of repetitive computer tasks in any Windows application. AutoHotkey scripts can be used to launch programs, open documents, and emulate keystrokes, Unicode characters, and mouse clicks and movements.

The best part is you don’t need to be a programming whiz to take advantage of AutoHotkey and start using it right away. While it’s powerful enough to allow advanced users to create complex automation processes, it also allows non-programmers like myself to quickly learn the basics and start creating simple scripts to suit our needs.

What you’re looking at is a text expansion triggered by a hotstring. It means that AutoHotkey will automatically appear on my screen. The syntax for a hotstring is a pair of colons, the abbreviation you want to use to trigger the expansion, and another pair of colons. After the second pair of colons, you enter the expanded text you want to see when you type the abbreviation. Here’s another example:

::addr::1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500, United States

In this example, typing the hotstring “addr” followed by an ending character (a space, a punctuation mark, or the Enter key) will cause the address of the White House to be typed out.

Creating a Hotstring Script
Now, where do you put these hotstrings so you can use them? You put them in an AutoHotkey script. Follow the steps below to create your very first script. (Tip: If you’re like me, you’ll soon have a large number of scripts, so it makes sense to create a folder just for AutoHotkey scripts.)

1. In your selected folder, right-click and select New—AutoHotkey Script. Name your script anything you want. (Note that the extension of the new file is “.ahk”.)
2. You need to add the hotstrings to the script. This is done in a plain text editor. I suggest using Notepad++, which
is also free, so if you don’t have it, head over to notepad-plus-plus.org to download and install it.

2. In the folder where you saved the script, right-click on the file and select Edit with Notepad++. The file that opens contains four lines of text, which is the “skeleton” of an AutoHotkey script. (See Figure 1.) The text that appears after the semicolon on each line explains what the line does. In Figure 1, you’ll see I’ve placed my cursor in line 5, which causes it to be highlighted. Although line 5 is the first line where we can start entering our hotstrings, I usually leave it blank to create space between the first four default lines and my own.

3. Place your cursor in line 6 and enter the sample hotstrings from the previous examples I gave (::ak::AutoHotkey and ::addr::1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500, United States), each on its own line. (Remember the hotstring syntax: a pair of colons, followed by the abbreviation, another pair of colons, and the text to be expanded.) Now your script will have seven lines, two of which are hotstrings. (See Figure 2.)

   Of course, you can add more hotstrings to your script. In Figure 3 on page 36 you’ll see I’ve added a third hotstring for my email address in line 8.

4. Save your file. Now before you can use your hotstrings, you’ll need to activate the script.

5. To activate a script, go back to the folder where your script is saved and double-click it. This will “load” the script, which means it will be enabled from now on, unless you unload it or restart your computer. You’ll know that the script is loaded because a green square icon with a white “H” in it will appear in the system tray.

   Now you’re ready to start using your hotstrings. Go to any program where you can enter text (e.g., Notepad++, Word, a web browser, your computer-assisted translation (CAT) tool) and type one of your hotstrings followed by a space, a punctuation character, or the Enter key, and see the expanded text you created appear automatically on your screen.

   When you’re ready to add more hotstrings to your script, open the file again in Notepad++, add new lines, and save it. After doing this, you’ll need to reload the script.
for the new changes to take effect. To do this, go to your system tray on the bottom right corner of your screen, find the green icon with the white “H” in it, right-click it, and select Reload This Script.

Hotkeys
Now that you understand the basics of creating a script and loading it, it’s time to try something a bit more advanced: hotkeys.

Hotkeys are sometimes referred to as shortcut keys because of their ability to easily trigger an action (such as launching a program or keyboard macro). Before we look at an example, consider the following AutoHotkey basics:

- ! is the Alt key.
- ^ is the Control key.
- + is the Shift key.
- The hotkey (key combination) needs to be followed by a pair of colons.

• The word Return is always the last line in a hotkey script, and it indicates the end (i.e., where the script will stop).
• The word Send is a command indicating that keys will be pressed.
• Key names need to be enclosed in curly brackets.
• The word Sleep is a command indicating wait time. It’s usually used to give the computer time to complete a command before moving to the next one.

With this information, you’ll be able to understand the script below.

!x::
Send ^{Left}
Sleep 200
Send +{Right}
Sleep 200
Send +{F3}
Sleep 200
Send {Right}
Return

Don’t worry if this still isn’t clear. Let’s break it down.

Since discovering AutoHotkey, I’ve gone from wishing there was a way to speed things up to actually making it happen.

Understanding the Script

!x::
This is the hotkey (or shortcut) that will be used to trigger the sequence of actions. You can select the hotkeys you want to use. For this example, I chose Alt+X, but you can choose anything you want. Notice the pair of colons that designates this as the hotkey. This is important because, as I mentioned earlier, the hotkey (key combination) needs to be followed by a pair of colons.

Send +{Right}
This line will press Shift and the Right arrow key, which will cause one character to be selected to the right of the cursor.

Sleep 200
This tells the computer to wait another 200 milliseconds before executing the next line.

Send +{F3}
This line will press Shift and F3, which will cause the selected character to change case.

Sleep 200
Wait another 200 milliseconds.

keys will be pressed (not physically, but rather programmatically). In Word or in a CAT tool, for example, this will send the cursor to the beginning of the current word if the cursor is in the middle of a word, or to the beginning of the previous word if the cursor is already at the beginning of a word.
Send {Right}
This command presses the Right arrow key to move the cursor one character to the right and deselect the previous character.

Return
This signifies the end of the script. When all the actions between the hotkey and the Return line have been executed, the script will stop, and any lines in the script file below the Return line will not be executed as part of this hotkey.

You don’t have to be a programmer to automate repetitive computer tasks. Save time and work more efficiently by learning the basics of AutoHotkey.

I use this script to quickly change the case of the first letter of any word my cursor is resting on. Whenever I’m editing a translation and see that a word needs to have an initial case change, instead of manually going to the beginning of the word, deleting the lowercase letter, and typing in the uppercase one, or vice versa, all I need to do is press Alt+X. Sometimes I’ll keep my right hand on the mouse to click anywhere on the appropriate word and use my left hand to press Alt+X to quickly make the edit. As simple as this sounds, it’s a huge time saver.

Creating a Hotkey Script
To create a hotkey script, follow the same steps you used to create a hotstring script:
1. Right-click in your folder.
2. Select New—AutoHotkey Script.
3. Name your script file.
4. Right-click on the script file and select Edit with Notepad++.
5. Enter your script in Notepad++.
6. Save the file.
7. Load it by double-clicking the name of the script. (See Figure 4.)

Once you’ve done this, go to Word or your CAT tool, place your cursor in the middle of any word, press Alt+X, and watch the initial letter of that word change case. Another way you could do this instead of creating a new script file is to add the new lines to the existing hotstring script and save and reload it. In other words, you can combine several hotkeys and hotstrings into a single script file, or you can create separate script files.

Final Words
There’s a lot more to learn about AutoHotkey, such as triggering hotstrings without an ending character, making scripts program-sensitive, and sending mouse clicks, but I hope this brief introduction will pique your curiosity and inspire you to learn more. For complete information on all the concepts discussed here, please check out the extensive reference section on the AutoHotkey website: www.autohotkey.com/docs/AutoHotkey.htm.

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The What and Why of Certification Exam Conditions

As we move toward an online version of ATA's certification exam, some long-standing exam conditions will be changing—things like bringing your own dictionaries and laptop to the exam sitting. Others, however, will remain the same. Here's a review of the latter, with an explanation of why they’re applied to our testing program.

Three–Hour Time Limit:
Most translators work under deadlines. Exam passages are approximately 250 words each, and candidates are required to complete two of them. This works out to fewer than 175 words/hour, which should be adequate for practicing translators to produce a good text, including time to proofread their work.

No–Return Exam:
Certification exam passages take many hours to prepare in order to maintain a consistent level of difficulty from year to year and parity between the various language pairs tested. To preserve the integrity of these carefully vetted texts, we need to keep them confidential. Exams are therefore not returned and source text passages may not be copied or saved by candidates.

Open–Book but with Website Restrictions:
Access to resources is generous but not unlimited to ensure the work submitted is the translator’s own. (See the link in the sidebar for more information on what’s permitted and what’s not.) If you’re wondering if a favorite online resource is permissible, the rule of thumb is to check if it has a forum to ask questions or allows chatting. If the answer to either is “yes,” it may not be used during the exam.

No Spelling or Grammar Checkers: Many candidates are surprised to learn that these common word processing tools are not allowed. Spelling and grammar skills are fundamental to proper language use, and professional translators should be well-versed in how to apply them. Candidates are encouraged to check spelling or points of grammar in online resources.

No Machine Translation or Other Automated Tools: There’s no question that machine translation is increasingly part of translators’ professional lives. The view of the Certification Program is that we need to know how to translate a text ourselves first in order to properly use or assess a computer-generated version. Our exam is designed to test a candidate’s own ability to employ translation techniques and transfer meaning without assistance from MT.

Use of a Code Number rather than Your Name:
A key feature of our program is candidate anonymity. Graders never know who produced the texts they receive. Please be sure to follow the instructions about using this code, and not your name, on your exam materials.

Continuing Education Points (CEPs) Post–Certification: A hallmark of most certifications across a variety of sectors is that they are not “one and done.” Practitioners must continue to demonstrate that they’re using their skills and maintaining their knowledge of their field. ATA requires 20 CEPs every three years, and offers CEP credit for a variety of activities. Specific information on these categories and point values can be found on our website.

The Certification Program frequently hears that the exam conditions don’t mirror real–life working conditions, which is true. Other translator and interpreter organizations, such as the United Kingdom’s Institute of Translation and Interpreting, take a different approach in their credentialing process. Our position is that exams by their very nature are not examples of actual work conditions, and that we need to control the testing setting to maximize the validity of our methodology. We’ll continue to assess our system as we move into online testing but are confident that our exam conditions are appropriate for evaluating the skills we measure.

Michèle Hansen, CT is chair of ATA’s Certification Committee. An ATA-certified French>English translator and editor since 1990, she specializes in the health-related international development, medical, and pharmaceutical sectors. She previously served as administrator of ATA’s French Language Division. michele@globalhealthlanguage.com
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