April 2008
Volume XXXVII
Number 4
A Publication
of the
American
Translators
Association

The ata CHRONICLE

In this issue:

Public Relations

Multilingual Emergency Response

Interpreting for the Candidates

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April 2008
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American Translators Association
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E-mail: Chronicle@atanet.org • Website: www.atanet.org

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The ATA Chronicle enthusiastically encourages members and nonmembers to submit articles of interest. For ***Submission Guidelines,*** log onto www.atanet.org/chronicle. *The ATA Chronicle* is published 11 times per year, with a combined November/December issue. Submission deadlines are two months prior to publication date.

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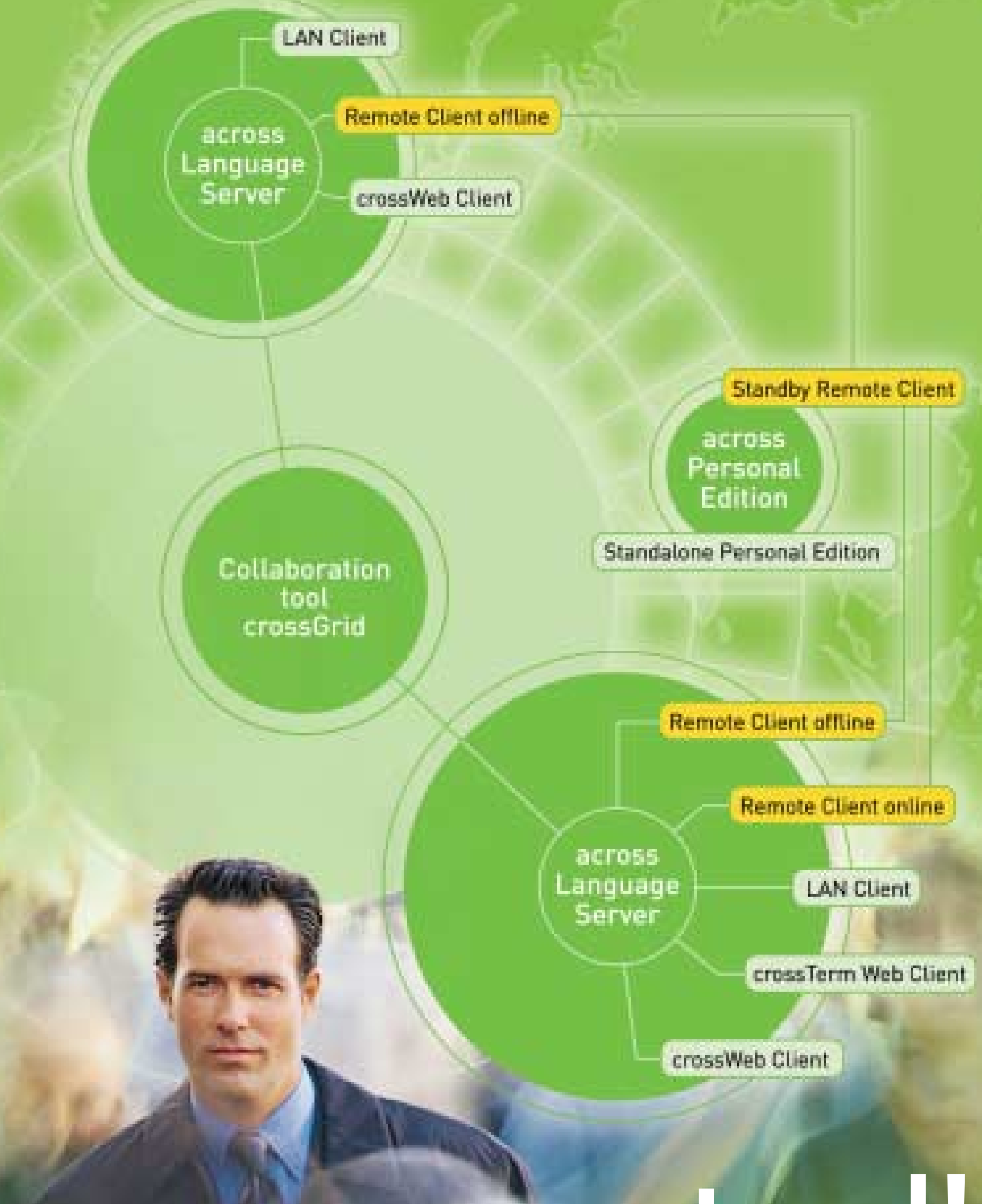
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Our Authors | April 2008

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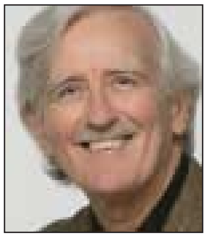

Tony Beckwith was born into an English family living in Argentina, and grew up in a multicultural milieu in Uruguay. He became a translator and interpreter after spending many years working with international advertising agencies in various parts of the world. He has lived in Austin, Texas, since 1980, where he works as a freelance interpreter, translator, and writer. He is currently the director of communications for the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association. Contact: tony@tonybeckwith.com.

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New Bill Proposed for the Creation of an Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education and an Office of International and Foreign Language Education

U.S. Representative Rush Holt (New Jersey), a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, recently introduced H.R. 5179, the International Leadership Act of 2008. The bill would create in the Department of Education an Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education and an Office of International and Foreign Language Education. The Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education would provide leadership in directing efforts aimed at international and foreign language education.

For more information, go to **www.house.gov/apps/list/press/nj12_holt/020708.html.**

From the President

Jiri Stejskal

President@atanet.org

Public Relations

The very first objective stated in ATA's bylaws is to "promote the recognition of the translation and interpreting professions." This objective is directed outward: we want the outside world to know who we are and what we do. There are various ways to promote our profession, and we do this every day by doing our jobs and talking about our work. In order to reach a wider audience, however, we need to have a presence in the media. This is where ATA's Public Relations (PR) Committee comes in.

Since its inception, ATA's PR Committee has been charged with the following tasks:

- To promote ATA and the translation and interpreting professions through public awareness activities.
- To analyze, develop, and coordinate media communications for the Association.
- To respond to media inquiries about the translation and interpreting professions and the industry as a whole.
- To advise ATA's Board on internal communications and public relations.
- To support career development through informational material and publications.

The PR Committee, which is co-chaired by ATA spokesman Kevin Hendzel and ATA Board member Alexandra Russell, has performed admirably in all of these areas. ATA appears regularly in the major national media, as well as in local publications and television and radio programs. In addition, the committee has developed a very successful School Outreach program, headed by Lillian Clementi, and spearheaded a number of pro bono projects. It also localized the U.K. version of Chris Durban's booklet *Translation: Getting it Right* for the U.S. audience, making it available to members and their clients. The committee also created a video on ATA's PR initiative, which is shared with sister associations around the country and around the world to help promote the profession using ATA's model.

> **We want the outside world to know who we are and what we do.**

The PR Committee works with an outside media consultant, Wendy Greenwald. Wendy has extensive experience in media outreach, and coaches ATA's leadership on how to work with reporters in order to deliver a consistent message when communicating with the media. Our message is that translation and interpreting mistakes can be costly, or even disastrous, and that you must have a qualified, professional translator or interpreter to get the job done right. This message has been communicated repeatedly to reporters, with considerable success.

"What's in it for me?" you may ask. Having the Association's name mentioned in major media outlets benefits the profession as a whole and establishes ATA as the authority on the subject of translation and interpreting. There are rarely any immediate and tangible results, but the media outreach will have a positive impact in the long run. This initiative will also serve as a springboard for efforts that are more directly related to our daily work and that positively affect the bottom line for each of us. The PR Committee is now shifting its focus to such efforts and exploring ways of providing you with tools that you can use to promote not only the profession, but your business as well. Stay tuned for the new PR business outreach initiatives!

Don't Miss

May 10, 2008
American Translators Association
Business Seminar
Los Angeles, CA

June 21-22, 2008
American Translators Association
Court Interpreting Seminar
Chicago, IL

November 5-8, 2008
American Translators Association
49th Annual Conference
Orlando, FL

For more information about ATA seminars and conferences, log onto www.atanet.org

From the Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

Volunteers and More

Volunteers: April is National Volunteer Month. ATA's success ties directly to the outstanding cadre of volunteers over the years who have made the Association what it is today. ATA is very much a volunteer-driven organization—from the speakers at the Annual Conference to the contributors to *The ATA Chronicle* to the graders in the Certification program to the leaders on the Board, committees, divisions, and local groups. So, thank you to all of ATA's hundreds of volunteers. There is always room for one more. If you would like to get more involved in your association, please let me know.

Translation: Buying a Non-Commodity, How translation standards can help buyers and sellers: Speaking of volunteers, ATA Director Alan Melby and Public Relations Committee Member Chris Durban collaborated to write and produce a new brochure to help educate clients in using translation standards when buying translation services. It is a complementary piece to *Translation: Getting it Right,* a guide to buying translation services, which Chris co-produced.

To view the new brochure, which is currently only available online, please check out www.atanet.org/docs/translation_buying_guide.pdf.

Upcoming Events and the ATA Homepage: April and May are probably the two busiest months for translation and interpreting events. To stay on top of what is scheduled, please keep an eye on ATA's website. The ATA homepage has been redesigned to call out "Upcoming ATA Events." In addition, ATA's calendar, www.atanet.org/calendar, offers comprehensive coverage of scheduled events and contact information for ATA and ATA divisions, chapters, and affiliates, as well as for other translation and interpreting groups around the world.

ATA's Online Services Directories Top 10 Stats

(From July 1 — December 31, 2007)

Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services

Top 10 Language Combinations

1. English into Spanish
2. Spanish into English
3. English into French
4. English into Chinese
5. English into Japanese
6. German into English
7. English into German
8. French into English
9. Japanese into English
10. English into Russian

Top 10 Areas of Specialization

1. Medicine (General)
2. Law (General)
3. Pharmaceuticals
4. Business (General)
5. Engineering (General)
6. Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights
7. Industry and Technology (General)
8. Computer (General)
9. Economics and Finance
10. Health Care

Directory of Language Services Companies

Top 10 Language Combinations

1. English into Spanish
2. Spanish into English
3. English into All
4. French into English
5. English into French
6. All into English
7. English into Chinese
8. Chinese into English
9. Russian into English
10. English into Japanese

Top 10 Areas of Specialization

1. Medicine (General)
2. Law (General)
3. Business (General)
4. Education
5. Health Care
6. Engineering (General)
7. Arts and Humanities (General)
8. Stock Market
9. Software Localization
10. Electrical Engineering

Add/Update Your Profile in the Services Directory: The online *Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services* and the *Directory of Language Services Companies* continue to be actively used by customers looking to buy translation and interpreting services. One of the easiest ways to market your services is to add your profile. If you already have a profile, be sure to keep it updated. You may also want to consider modifying your listing to see if you can increase the number of contacts you receive. To get some ideas of the market, take a look at the box on page 8 that shows the most searched on language combinations and areas of specialization for the second half of 2007. Directory listings are only available to ATA members.

Thank you for being an ATA member, and Happy Volunteer Month.

Don't get hung out to dry

Tips for cleaning up your online profile

A listing in ATA's online *Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services* or the *Directory of Language Services Companies* can be one of your most valuable member benefits. With more than two-million plus hits in 2007, consumers and businesses have clearly learned to look to ATA's directories first when shopping for professional translation and interpreting services.

Six Tips to Help You Make Contact

1. Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
2. Update your contact information, especially your e-mail address and phone numbers.
3. Use the "Additional Information" field, noting education and career experiences, unusual specialties, and any dialects you can handle. By using a "keyword" search, clients can find your services based on a set of very specific skills and experience.
4. List your areas of specialization.
5. Review your listing monthly to experiment with different wording or add new information that may set you apart from others.
6. List non-English-to-non-English language combinations, such as Portuguese into Spanish and French into Italian.

Make those updates online at www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories/update_profile.php.

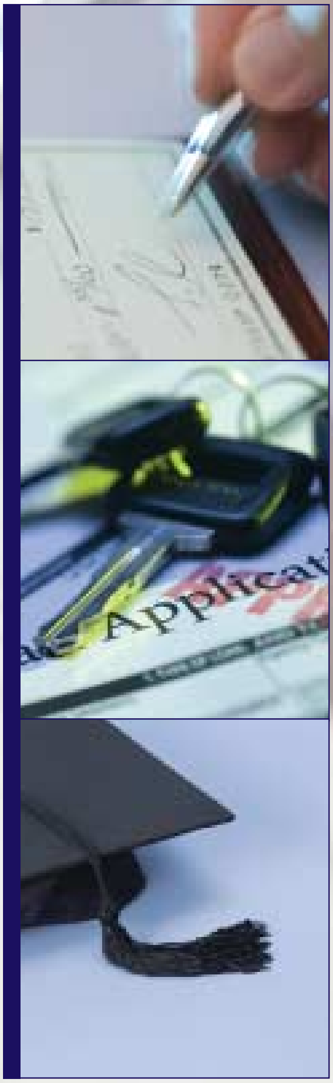
New ATA Member Benefit

Organization of American States Staff Federal Credit Union

Individual ATA members can now join the OAS Staff Federal Credit Union and benefit from a wide range of banking services, typically with lower fees and better interest rates.

Services Include:

- Interest-bearing checking accounts
- More than 25,000 worldwide surcharge-free ATMs
- Discounted wire transfer fees
- Auto, mortgage, and personal loans
- Home equity line of credit
- Free identity theft protection
- Bilingual customer service



OAS Staff Federal Credit Union is a non-profit, full-service financial cooperative, organized and chartered in 1962. It is regulated by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), a U.S. government agency that insures individual member deposits up to $100,000 per account.

Unlike a bank, a credit union is established to serve members of a particular community, profession, or organization. Only individuals within that defined field of membership are eligible to join.

For additional information: www.atanet.org/creditunion.php

ATA Business Seminar

Professional Development for Translators and Interpreters

Hilton Los Angeles Airport Los Angeles, CA May 10, 2008

Make plans now for a full day of **in-depth, high-quality sessions** presented by **experts in their fields**. This seminar is targeted at experienced translators and interpreters, who are seeking **advanced-level continuing education**.

- **Gain insight from successful members of the translation and interpreting fields**—a senior project manager, an owner of a language services company, and a seasoned freelance translator.
- Take part in exercises to **sharpen your negotiating skills**.
- **Learn the practical aspects of contractual agreements** by analyzing real contracts that are currently used.
- Discover how to **start and maintain a successful relationship with a translation company**.
- **Witness the unveiling of the hiring process** from the résumé to billing procedures.

Saturday, May 10	ATA will provide a **full day of sessions**, including a continental breakfast, a **Job Marketplace**, and a **Networking Session**.
Continuing Education	**Earn up to 6 CEPs** for the ATA Certification Program.

Registration Form

First Name Middle Initial Last Name ATA Member#

Employer/School (only list employer or school if you want it to appear on your badge)

Street Address Suite/Apt

City State/Province Zip/Postal Code Country

Telephone Email

Registration Rates	**ATA Member**	**Nonmember**
Early-Bird (by May 2):	$160	$280
After May 2 & Onsite:	$195	$315

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Join ATA and Save!

Join ATA when registering for this seminar to qualify for the ATA member rate. Contact ATA for an application or **join online at www.atanet.org/membership/join_now.php**.

Hotel Information

The **Hilton Los Angeles Airport** is located at 5711 W Century Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045, offering easy access to **world famous beach locations** including **Marina Del Ray** and **Manhattan Beach**.

A block of rooms has been reserved at **$114 single/double a night**, plus tax. Take advantage of this special rate, **by making your reservations by April 9**.

Call the Hilton at **(310) 410-4000** and be sure to ask for the ATA rate.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations received in writing by **May 2, 2008** are eligible for a refund. Refunds will not be honored after May 2. A $25 administrative fee will be applied to all refunds.

3 Ways to Register

- Register online at **www.atanet.org/pd/business**
- Fax registration form to **+1-703-683-6122**
- Mail registration form to **ATA**
  225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
  Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA

Don't Forget

- Include payment with your form
- Make your hotel reservations
- Tell a friend about this event

To learn more about the ATA Business Seminar, visit www.atanet.org/pd/business
or contact ATA at +1-703-683-6100 or ata@atanet.org

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An ATA Professional Development Event

Advertisement

An Industry Perspective with Josef Zibung – CEO, STAR Group

With 42 companies and 850+ employees in 30 countries, along with over 2,000 certified freelance translators around the world, STAR Group is a global player.

Mr. Zibung, what motivated you to start STAR Group 24 years ago, how did you choose that name and is it true that you were somehow involved when CAT or translation memory was first conceived? Is there a common link between Transit and Trados?
Before founding STAR, I was responsible for sales at a translation company in Lausanne, Switzerland for eight years. At that time I was involved in localization projects for IBM, which was also distributing the early versions of DOS developed by Microsoft.

While in those days word processing was generally handled by mainframe systems or special hardware for word processing, the IBM localization projects, in which we were involved, were already utilizing personal computers. The three founders of Trados were hired by me as freelance translators on the same IBM projects. As a result of the needs which became apparent during the work on those projects, three translation memory products emerged – Transit, IBM's TM2 and Trados, all three developed in the small town of Böblingen, Germany.

Inspired by the exciting possibilities opening up for application in the information and language business due to the innovative development of software running on the PC, my partners and I decided to found STAR at Stein Am Rhein, Switzerland. The name **STAR** is made up of the first initials of the town **ST**ein **A**m **R**hein, and incidentally also stands for **S**oftware, **T**ranslation, **A**rt Work and **R**ecording, the core activities of STAR from the beginning.

Josef Zibung – CEO, STAR Group

In many cases, translation considerations come about later in a product's life-cycle. When in a product's life-cycle is the optimum time to make translation considerations?
Companies developing and manufacturing low-tech products tend to look at translation only at the end of the product development, whereas companies focusing on high-tech products consider localization much earlier due to the strategic importance of development results and documentation. Therefore the localization process may be initiated earlier in order to reduce the time to market.

Translation is all about making information available in different languages. Over time, more and more information itself is becoming the product. For example, software products or the software controlled configuration of the performance of many hardware products, such as engines, machines, or electronic devices. That's why STAR focuses its business on managing the entire information life-cycle, from content (text and picture) creation to publishing in any language and for any media.
So STAR works more and more closely with R&D departments, already during product development.

How has your passion for the business changed over the years?
In the beginning I was challenged by all the possibilities offered by the new world of personal computers. Today my passion is focusing more on right principles and concepts in information management than on new software and hardware technologies. Once solutions are based upon healthy principles, you only have to take the time to continuously improve performance and market presence. Trying to avoid viewing business as running on a treadmill, STAR prefers to accept limits to scalability and to concentrate more on long-term relationships with our customers, employees and partners.

Do you expect the pace of change in the translation marketplace to stay about the same or to quicken in the future?
It will get faster and become more diversified.

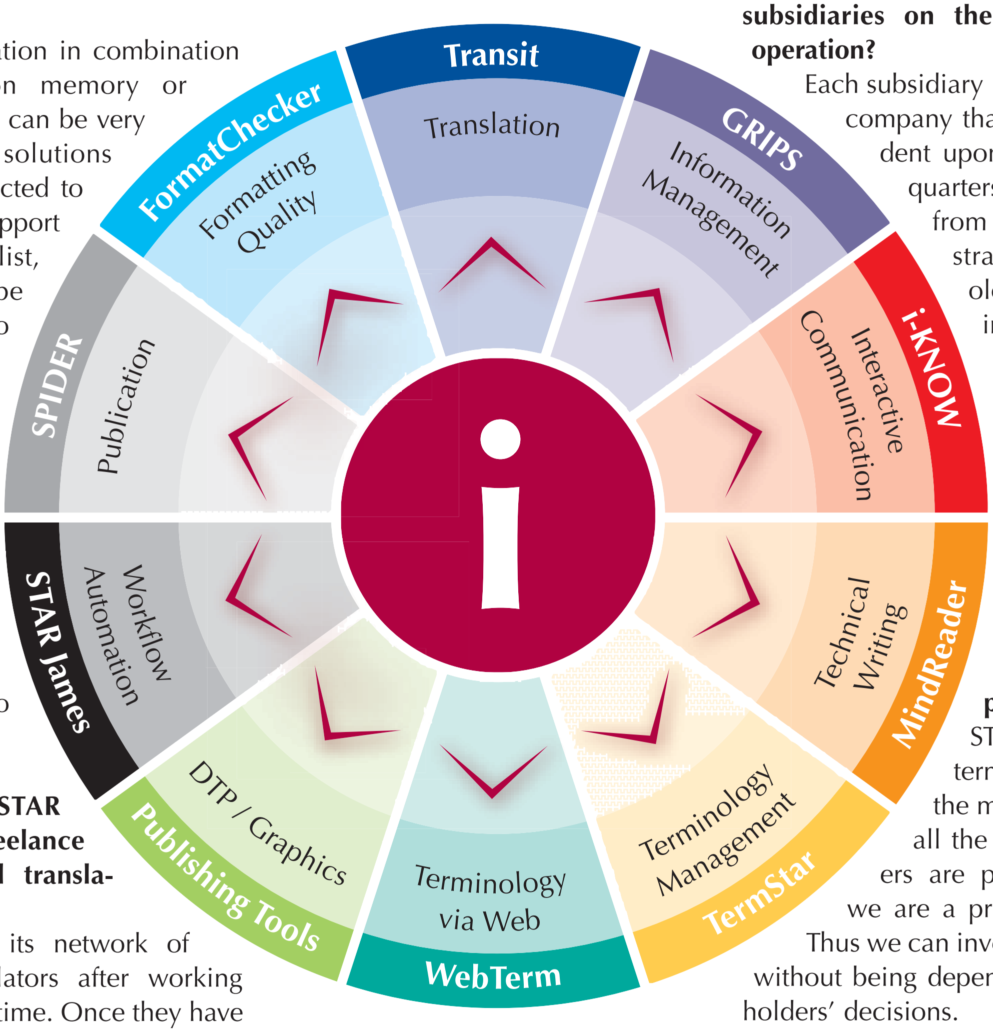
Where is the world of the professional translator headed?
The technology-driven pace of change will drive the market demand for higher quality transla-

tions. Most translators have tools, but not a single tool is any good without the quality translator. Many translators get translation jobs because of the tools they have available, but these tools alone are not a guarantee for quality translations. The successful translator not only knows how to use software tools in order to increase his productivity, but is first and foremost a specialist in the subjects and the languages of his projects.

What do you think about machine translation?
Machine translation in combination with translation memory or good translators can be very helpful. Such solutions should be restricted to the role of support for the specialist, but cannot be relied upon to provide effective solutions for translation projects on their own. As long as the quality of the translation is not a priority, machine translation will do just fine.

How does STAR manage its freelance translators and translation vendors?
STAR expands its network of freelance translators after working with them over time. Once they have proven themselves with STAR technology, methodology and customers, STAR will engage them as contractors, or even employees. In the same way, translation vendors have become STAR subsidiaries, or have become part of the STAR network. We prefer to continue to work with the same people to cultivate experience between customers and translators. This process sometimes even takes years.

Globalization resulted in the displacement of workplaces to less expensive countries, what do you think about this?
In our experience, qualified intellectual work is often more expensive and more difficult to be realized in countries considered as low-cost.



> **"… STAR's products and services are focused on the entire information life-cycle – not just on translation."**

Often, the technical background or the profession is non-existent and has to be developed through costly training and time-consuming project experience, in order to achieve satisfying long-term results.

How dependent are the individual subsidiaries on the headquarters operation?
Each subsidiary is a stand-alone company that is not dependent upon STAR's headquarters. They do profit from a common strategy, methodology, investment in software tools development and the STAR network.

What distinguishes STAR from the other translation tools and services companies?
STAR takes a long-term approach to the market. Whereas all the other big players are publicly traded, we are a private company. Thus we can invest a lot in R&D without being dependent on shareholders' decisions.
STAR's products and services are focused on the entire information life-cycle – not just translation. ■

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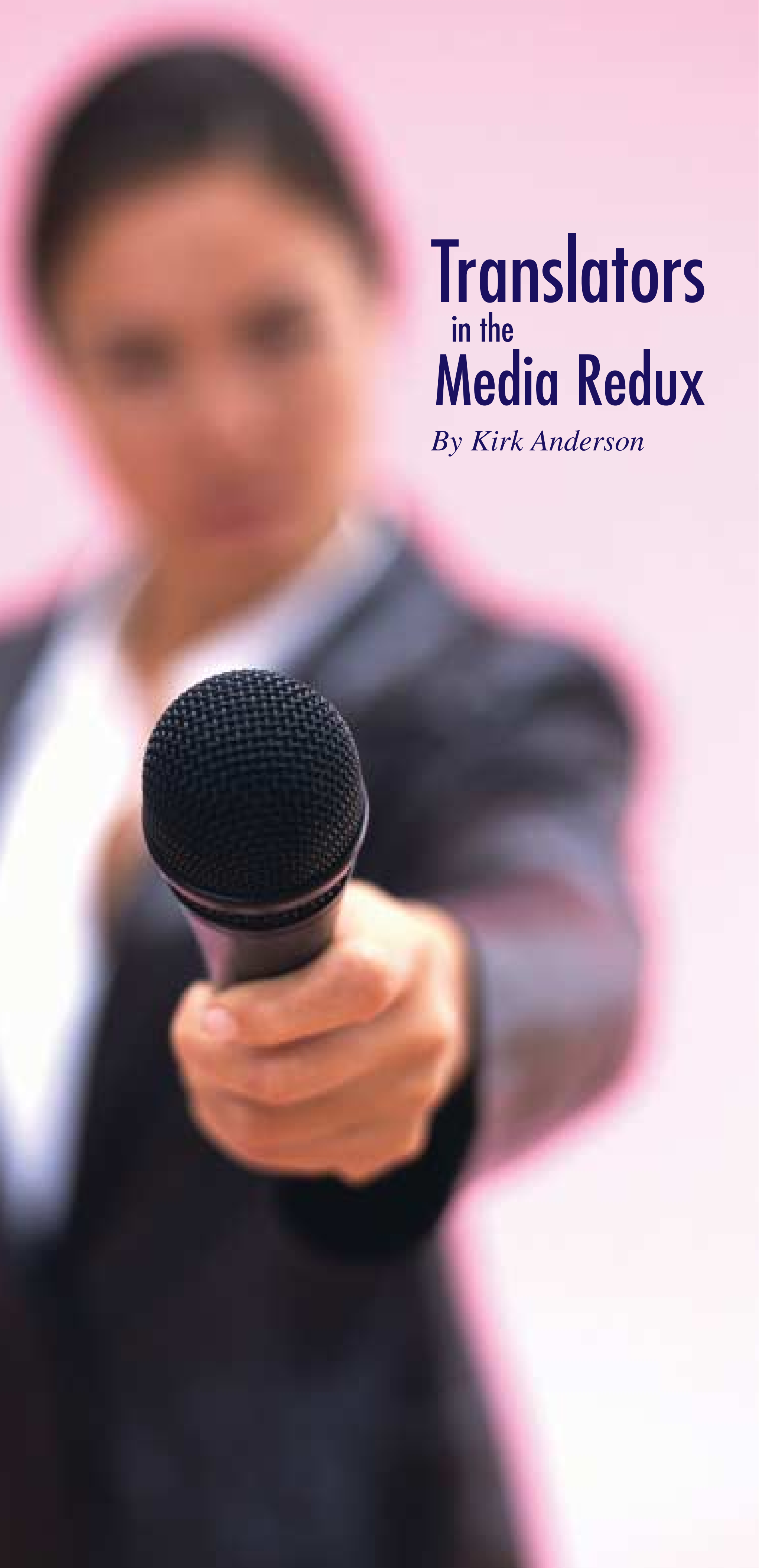


Translators in the Media Redux

By Kirk Anderson

The following originally appeared in the April/May issue of MultiLingual *(www.multilingual.com).*

In November 1999, ATA's 40th Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, was the venue for a fascinating event entitled "Translators and the Media: A Public Forum to Examine the Image of Translation and Translators in the Popular Media." It featured former White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers and such translation industry luminaries as Kevin Hendzel, Chris Durban, Janet Fraser, Manouche Ragsdale, and Neil Inglis. The purpose of this event was to assess how translators and interpreters are portrayed in the media, how this relates to how we are perceived by society in general, and what we, as translators, interpreters, and language industry professionals, can do about it. A transcript of the session can be found in the *Translation Journal* at http://accurapid.com/journal/11media.htm.

This event marked a historical turning point in ATA's—and arguably, the entire translation industry's—approach to public relations. What I hope to do with this article is to show some indicators of how far we have come in the past eight years, and to consider how we can continue to leverage our success to enhance our industry's growing visibility.

The 1999 session opened with some clips from a few films featuring translators and interpreters, including *Fail-Safe* (1964), *The Killing Fields* (1984), *Stargate* (1994), and *Ed's Next Move* (1996), charting a change in how language professionals were portrayed in the last third of the 20th century.

To this list we could add some of my favorites, including *Three Days of the Condor* (1975), *The Last Wave* (1977), *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), *Thunderheart* (1992), and *The Godfather Part III* (1990), as well as some TV clips, like this segment from *I Love Lucy* ("A Matter of Translation," currently available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OACIfwkg7ns), and novels, including Ward Just's *The Translator* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991) and Barbara Wilson's *Gaudi Afternoon,* which was first published by Seal Press in 1990, and later turned into a film in 2001 (along with her entire Cassandra Reilly Mystery series).

> **As *The Interpreter* proved, the cinema is a powerful force in shaping public and industry opinion.**

Since then, a number of new works have been released in media ranging from film, to television, to literature. The above compilation lays no claim of even approaching anything nearly complete or comprehensive, but I think it does begin to show a trend.

How Far Have We Come?

Of course, a major landmark for translators and interpreters in the media occurred with the 2005 release of *The Interpreter,* starring Nicole Kidman. Much has been written about the impact of this film in our industry's media. See, for example, http://translorial.com/2005/09/01/at-the-movies-reviewing-%e2%80%9cthe-interpreter%e2%80%9d/ and http://translorial.com/2005/05/01/action-behind-the-scenes-at-the-interpreter/, among other articles. The consensus seems to be that despite the fact that the film did not delve terribly deeply into the inner world of professional linguists, it did represent a great leap forward in raising awareness of who we are and what—on a very basic level—we do. I would also add that many of the smaller details of Nicole Kidman's portrayal of Silvia Broome rang true to me as a linguist, and the film's website (www.theinterpretermovie.com) includes some interesting features, including interviews with real United Nations interpreters, and even a game entitled "Interpret This!"

In children's television—an intriguing market for shaping the future perception of our professions—Playhouse Disney's *Higglytown Heroes* featured a translator hero in its first season (2004), voiced by Nathalia Hencker, best known as the Spanish-language voice of Pocahontas in the Disney film of the same name.

On U.S. prime time television, translators, and especially interpreters, are now making regular bit-part appearances on many of the legal dramas, including *Boston Legal* and the various *Law & Order* programs, among others. I have been told that even *The Osbournes* and *America's Next Top Model* included episodes featuring interpreters. Though I have not been able to track it down, I also recall an episode of one of the legal dramas featuring a literary translator/serial killer. Not exactly the image we are looking for, but still…

British television also has a couple of contributions to the comedic interpreter genre. (See www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zdf2eLeCLHI and www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiLkQT2L5YU&mode=related&search=.)

As *The Interpreter* proved, the cinema is a powerful force in shaping public and industry opinion. Among other recent films featuring translators and interpreters, we have Liv Schreiber's *Everything is Illuminated* (2005), which includes a hilarious portrayal of a strangely endearing yet utterly unprofessional Ukrainian interpreter (called "translator").

The Year of the Yao (2004), purportedly a documentary about Houston Rockets Chinese basketball sensation Yao Ming, actually focuses just as much on the trials of his interpreter, Colin Pine. The film offers some intriguing insights into the specialized aspects of interpreting for professional athletes, and the demands placed on those who work for "stars."

Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003) put the word "translation" in Oscar's vocabulary, and at least brought audiences a hint of the mystery behind what we do. I am referring specifically to the scene where Bill Murray's character is understandably baffled by an incredibly concise translation of what sounded in Japanese like an elaborate critique of his performance in a whiskey commercial.

And there are more, including the short film *The Translator* (2000), *Spanglish* (2004), and *Kill the Messenger* (2006).

Most interesting to me, however—probably because I am hopelessly addicted to books—have been two novels that popped onto my radar screen in the past year. The first was *Travesuras de la niña mala* (Alfaguara, 2006), by Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, and wonderfully translated by Edith Grossman as *Bad*

Girl (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). I got wind of this book through a Peruvian colleague who works as an interpreter in Spanish, English, and Polish. On assignment in Poland, she told me she once had the opportunity to interpret for Vargas Llosa, and during some downtime, she asked him why he had not written a novel about translators. Well, here it is. In the novel, the main character, Ricardo Somocurcio, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization translator, interpreter, and ultimately literary translator, lives out his lifelong obsession for a bad girl who wanders recklessly in and out of his life, from Lima and Paris to London and Tokyo, against a backdrop of contemporary history.

As in the case of the Just and Wilson novels, having a translator or interpreter as a protagonist makes for an interesting read as a professional linguist. On the one hand, you revel in the fact that one of us has the lead role, but on the other, you also cannot help but find fault with details or flaws that may actually have more to do with character development than with the author's attempt (or lack thereof) at portraying the profession. In *Bad Girl,* Ricardo's only ambition is to live in Paris, and his work as a translator allows him that dream. Although he is apparently quite good at his job, the reader seldom gets a glimpse of his prowess or insight into how his profession has shaped him.

The second novel is John Le Carré's twentieth, *The Mission Song* (Little, Brown and Company, 2006). This is the story of Bruno "Salvo" Salvador, the son of an Irish Catholic missionary and a Congolese woman, who becomes a top interpreter of African languages for British intelligence. Here, Bruno is sent on a top secret mission that forces him to delve into his own past and identity. The novel deftly weaves Le Carré's own obsession with betrayal into the translator's dilemma.

> **The more we give a face to what it is that we do, the more people will value it, and the more it will be worth.**

Although reviews of this novel have been all over the map, from a translator and interpreter's viewpoint, it has many redeeming features, not least of which is the insight it provides into the actual detective work required of linguists in our daily labors. It also sheds some intriguing light on how interpreters assume the personae of those for whom they interpret, and raises thorny ethical dilemmas capable of haunting linguists for a lifetime.

A few other books featuring translators have also crossed my desk in the past year or so, including Adam Nicolson's *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (HarperCollins, 2003), the story of what may well have been the world's longest-running translation project and most acute project management headache. The book is absolutely fascinating. I am currently reading *Corazón tan blanco* by Javier Marías (Anagrama, 1992), which was also translated into English by Margaret Jull Costa as *A Heart So White* (The Harvill Press, 1995, New Directions, 2000). It won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 1997 for the best novel published worldwide. Also featuring a translator as its main character, this book may well be the best one of them all.

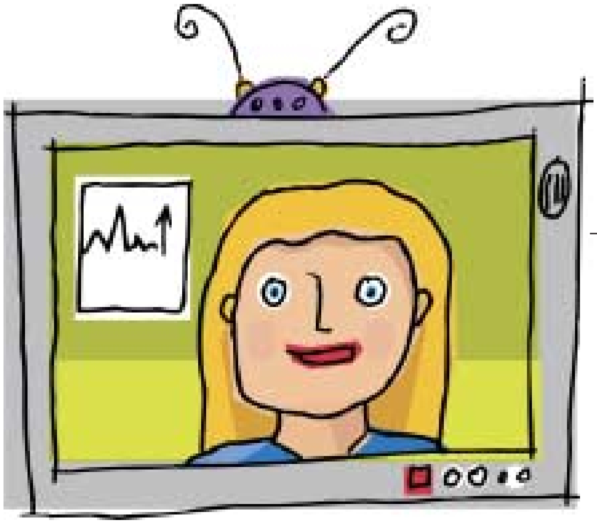
I have not even mentioned Ann Patchett's highly recommended *Bel Canto* (HarperCollins, 2001), or two more novels entitled *The Translator,* the most recent by Leila Aboulela (Grove, 2006), and another by John Crowley (Harper Perennial, 2003 reprint, William Morrow, 2002) to go along with Ward Just's 1991 novel of the same name.

Where Do We Go from Here?

It seems clear that the 21st century is off to a good start in terms of the image of translators and interpreters in the media. The world is starting to take a keener interest in what we do, and there is mounting evidence that this curiosity is on the rise.

How can we, as professionals, leverage this increased attention we are getting and further its growth? First, of course, by reading these books (and their translations—or translating them, if necessary), seeing the films, watching the shows, and then letting publishers, stations, producers, and studios know if their depictions are inaccurate (or even accurate—showing an interest never hurts). You might even land a gig as a consultant in the process.

These media offerings can also be the subject of reviews in periodicals of all kinds (trade, academic, and gen-



A Quick Look at Kirk's Media Shelf

Films Featuring Translators and Interpreters

Fail-Safe (1964)
Three Days of the Condor (1975)
The Last Wave (1977)
The Year of Living Dangerously (1982)
The Killing Fields (1984)
The Godfather Part III (1990)
Thunderheart (1992)
Stargate (1994)
Ed's Next Move (1996)
The Translator (2000)
Gaudi Afternoon (2001)
Lost in Translation (2003)
Spanglish (2004)
The Year of the Yao (2004)
The Interpreter (2005)
Everything is Illuminated (2005)
Kill the Messenger (2006)

TV Clips

A segment from *I Love Lucy* ("A Matter of Translation," currently available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OACIfwkg7ns)

British television also has a couple of contributions to the comedic interpreter genre:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zdf2eLeCLHI
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiLkQT2L5YU&mode=related&search=

eral interest), subject matter for letters to the editor, or simply inspiration for stories, films, or blog entries of our own. We can also encourage all of our friends and colleagues in film, television, and publishing to address our professions in their work. I think we now have solid proof that a well-placed depiction of our professions can have a significant impact on our visibility. I recently shared a few translation anecdotes with a student in his final year of film school, and was pleasantly surprised to learn that his graduation project addressed the issue of translation head-on.

And just being visible ourselves will also make a difference. Let your college alumni magazine know you are a top-notch translator or interpreter. Give a talk on the subject at your local community center, at your child's school, or at a local university. Join a panel discussion on multicultural communities in your town. Who better to talk about these issues than someone who makes their living at the precise point where cultures collide? Just using these works as fodder for conversation among friends will help draw attention to what we do. The more we give a face to what it is that we do—making it something tangible, valuable, intelligible—the more people will value it, and the more it will be worth.

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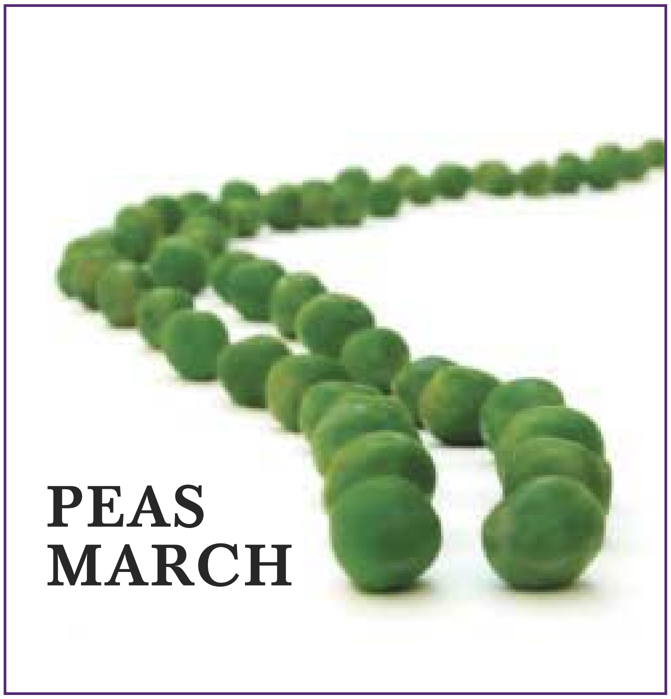

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Iowa's Multilingual Emergency Response Network

By Loren Bawn and Colin R. Peterson

Communities of all sizes throughout the U.S. have become increasingly diverse due to immigration, refugee relocation, educational opportunities, and the expansion of overseas businesses into local markets, among many other factors. This has resulted in a steady demand for language services. (The U.S. Department of Labor projects a growth of 24% from 2006 to 2016 in employment for interpreters and translators.[1])

While these demographic trends bring numerous opportunities for growth and learning, they can also present challenges. One of the biggest challenges facing states with increasing limited-English-speaking populations is providing equal access to programs and services at all levels. Communication barriers can lead to misunderstandings and to the marginalization of entire groups of people within their adopted communities. In this environment, the underlying foundation of a strong community—shared interests and identity—can be damaged. In some instances, such as emergency preparedness, a state's ability to communicate effectively with its limited-English-speaking population can mean the difference between life and death.

In this capacity, professional interpreters have a unique opportunity (some would say responsibility) to get involved and use their expert knowledge of languages and cultures to help bridge the linguistic and cultural divide to get valuable information out to all those in need. By volunteering their skills within their own neighborhoods, interpreters are making an invaluable contribution toward building understanding and cultural respect.

The following article details the efforts the State of Iowa has put forth to harness the talent of the professional language community in order to reach out to its various ethnic groups. By identifying qualified personnel to deliver potentially lifesaving information, the state is also helping to strengthen its communities through its volunteers.

Reaching Out

The Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (IDHRC) brings together representatives from interfaith, voluntary, and governmental organizations that are active in disaster services for the purpose of fostering a more effective response and recovery in times of disaster. The concept for IDHRC was developed at the request of the Iowa Emergency Management Association. IDHRC's mission is to "coordinate a holistic approach to disaster recovery by maximizing public and private resources, thereby providing an efficient system that can address the immediate and long-term physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of impacted citizens."[2] To help meet its goals, IDHRC formed a special needs committee responsible for developing a plan to strengthen Iowa's capacity to meet the disaster preparedness and response needs of Iowans with limited English proficiency. This resulted in the formation of the Multilingual Emergency Response Network (MLERN).

The two principal agencies involved in the creation of MLERN's task force are the Iowa Council for International Understanding (ICIU) and the State of Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services. ICIU is a nonprofit organization based in Des Moines that facilitates exchange and education programs in addition to

Through a wide array of services, the bureau helps refugees and communities adapt to the challenges they are facing.

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providing professional interpreting and translation services in Iowa. Since 1975, the Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services has been working with the U.S. Department of State to assist refugees from other countries escape persecution and resettle in the United States. Through a wide array of services, the bureau helps refugees and communities adapt to the challenges they are facing.

MLERN Volunteers

Volunteers play a crucial role in Iowa's disaster response plan, supplementing the efforts of emergency responders who provide immediate relief and care to individuals and communities following a disaster. MLERN's initiative asks leaders of Iowa's many ethnic communities to serve as "ambassadors" for the project. The goal of the ambassador program is to encourage bilingual (or multilingual) members of the community to serve as volunteers. Ambassadors learn more about MLERN, provide input to the project's ongoing planning efforts, and share MLERN's vision with others in their communities. Once volunteers are identified, their contact information and language skills are entered into a database that MLERN officials can access in times of crisis. Volunteers will be contacted as needed to assist in providing emergency information to community members. Through MLERN's program, volunteers can participate, at no cost, in training sessions to help them better respond to disaster/emergency events. Volunteers can also act as interpreters for trained emergency responders as needed. Iowa's network currently includes speakers of Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish, and more languages are being added all the time.

Juan C. Cadenillas, an ambassador with the program, sums up MLERN's mission this way:

> "Emergency situations do not discriminate. Everyone in the community could be affected, including limited-English-speaking residents. As a person involved in public health, as well as an immigrant from Peru, I feel that it is my responsibility to use my communication and bilingual skills to provide a community service that could save lives and/or facilitate the access to services after a disaster. Being a volunteer for MLERN is a great opportunity to serve and to motivate others to apply their skills for the well-being of the community."

Joyce Flinn, IDHRC coordinator for the Iowa Department of Homeland Security, says:

> "Volunteers are involved and committed to their community. They know their neighbors. Volunteers are a resource to emergency management, whether they are involved in the day-to-day planning that must be done or are providing important services during events. Volunteers are part of the community that is working to recover after an event occurs. Multilingual volunteers will provide a critical service by helping to bridge an identified language gap. As Iowa becomes more diverse, it is important to embrace this diversity so all citizens can be a part of the emergency management system from planning to recovery."

Swallow Yan, executive director of the Chinese Association of Iowa and an MLERN ambassador, says, "Volunteers make our history and remake our community."

By volunteering their skills within their own neighborhoods, interpreters are making an invaluable contribution toward building understanding and cultural respect.

What's in It for Interpreters?

Why are people compelled to volunteer? What will volunteer interpreters gain from offering their expert skill set free of charge to emergency response personnel? Most people consider volunteer work to be a selfless act that may make these questions seem inappropriate. However, as Robert Coles explains in his book, *The Call of Service,* volunteerism engenders legitimate rewards and satisfaction and adds crucial value to the time an individual spends volunteering. Coles focuses on five main types of rewards volunteers gain from their service: accomplishing a task and reaching people; moral purpose; personal affirmation; stoic endurance; and boosting professional success.[3] Iowa's MLERN program provides volunteers with all of these rewards.

Accomplishing a task and reaching people: MLERN volunteers ➡

Want to learn more?

Iowa Disaster Human Resources Council
www.iowahomelandsecurity.org/asp/programs/idhrc.asp

Iowa Emergency Management Association
www.iowahomelandsecurity.org

Iowa Council for International Understanding
www.iciu.org

Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services
www.dhs.state.ia.us/refugee

know that their work interpreting for emergency response personnel will be fulfilling in terms of accomplishment as well as rewarding through reaching people in need. Regardless of cultural identity and language skills, people impacted by disasters are at a very vulnerable time in their lives. The volunteer interpreter not only helps people get potentially life-saving information and resources, she or he creates a bridge between cultural groups by offering assistance that is blind to language proficiency and cultural heritage.

Moral purpose: Oftentimes individuals are compelled to undertake volunteer work out of a sense of moral purpose. Following large-scale disasters, there is often an outpouring of compassion, donations, and empathy for those who have been impacted. Through their voluntary efforts, MLERN interpreters show that they value community and the right of individuals to have equal access to emergency services and information.

> From working firsthand with professional interpreters, emergency response personnel will see how critical it is to have information that is complete and accurate.

Personal affirmation: MLERN interpreters volunteer their time with a strong sense that what they are doing is important. In an emergency event, they can see that their professional skill set has an impact and value far beyond themselves, thus making them feel a part of something bigger.

Stoic endurance: Stoic endurance as a satisfaction gained from volunteerism can be a little tougher to grasp. The idea is that those who have experienced a number of personal challenges in their own lives may feel compelled to undertake volunteer work in order to help those with even greater needs. This helps volunteers to place their own challenges into perspective. Many interpreters know the challenges firsthand of living in a place where the dominant language is not their own. They can empathize with the experiences of the individuals they are helping, and find in that a desire to give of themselves.

Boosting professional success: Finally, MLERN interpreters may be compelled to volunteer because it is a service that will ultimately add value to their professional résumés. Through their work engaging with emergency response personnel, they are able to build upon their professional contacts, which can lead to future paid work in other settings. The volunteer work of MLERN interpreters also builds visibility for the importance of the interpreting and translation industry. From working firsthand with professional interpreters, emergency response personnel will see how critical it is to have information that is complete and accurate.

Leading the Effort

MLERN's task force is a part of ICIU's mission to build cultural respect at home and around the world, one person at a time. Helping Iowans with limited English proficiency prepare for and respond to emergency situations is an important community service as well as an outlet for ICIU interpreters to give back to their communities.

Notes

1. U.S. Department of Labor—Bureau of Labor Statistics (January 23, 2008), www.bls.gov/oco/ocos175.htm#outlook.
2. Iowa Disaster Human Resources Council, www.iowahomelandsecurity.org/asp/programs/idhrc.asp.
3. Coles, Robert. *The Call of Service: A Witness to Idealism* (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1993), 68-94.

Backstage at the Debate

By Tony Beckwith

Our interpretation was being listened to by millions of Spanish-speakers in real time.

As a freelance interpreter, many of my assignments begin with a phone call. In this case, an agency in Miami called to ask if I was interested in being part of a team of interpreters needed for the Democratic presidential candidates' debate to be hosted by Univisión, the Spanish-language television channel, in early September 2007. Well, of course I was!

I did have to ask why they were calling me, in Austin, Texas, especially when there are scores of English-to-Spanish interpreters in Miami. The agent explained that Univisión was insisting that those selected should not only be qualified interpreters, but must also have broadcast quality voices. The agency had found my name in the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association directory, which led them to my website, where they saw my voice talent credentials. From there they were able to link to my agent's site, listen to my demos, and decide that I had the kind of voice they were looking for.

I found this interesting, as I am usually hired either as an interpreter or as a voice talent, but have never made the cut based on both qualifications. I mention this to underscore the importance of listing all of our talents on résumés and websites, since freelancers never know precisely what might catch the eye of a potential client.

Audition

Next came the audition, which is a normal step for a recording gig, but not necessarily for an interpreting assignment. It was scheduled for the following day in Miami: could I be there? My mind raced and then my heart sank. I already had commitments. "Let me see what I can do," said the agent, and called back in a little while to ask if I could be at the Univisión affiliate's studios in Austin the following evening. I told him I could, and was thrilled to be back in the running.

The affiliate's technician set me up in front of a monitor showing footage of previous debates, which were the same videos being shown to the other interpreters auditioning at the Miami studio. After watching a few loops we were each given our assignment, and I was told to "do Richardson." The tapes ran again, this time with no sound, and every time Bill Richardson spoke I interpreted his words into Spanish over the phone. This exercise was repeated several times, and ➡

each time we were told to "voice" a different candidate (Kucinich, Obama, etc.), except the women, who took turns voicing Hillary Clinton. After an hour or so, I was told, "Thank you very much, and we will let you know." I went home, to pace the floor, and toss and turn, then pace some more, for several interminable days.

Getting the Call

On Wednesday morning, an e-mail suddenly arrived announcing that I had been selected and would soon receive my ticket for a flight to Miami on Friday. Rates for the project had already been negotiated prior to the audition. The agreement was for a rehearsal on Friday night, a possible second rehearsal on Saturday, the actual event on Sunday evening, and the flight home on Monday. My wife does not usually accompany me on assignments, but this was no ordinary trip, so she agreed to come with me. (You would think that an airline would be so happy to fill an empty seat on a flight leaving in two days that they would sell it at a discount, but that is not the case. They actually charge somewhat more than an interpreter with a broadcast quality voice gets paid for a full day's work!)

We landed in Miami on Friday afternoon, and as we approached the baggage carousels I saw a man in a dark suit holding up a sign with my name on it. Being picked up by a limousine at the airport can really make your day. (It can also do wonders for your wife's opinion of your importance in the overall scheme of things.) We were whisked off to a hotel in Coral Gables that was conveniently located across the road from the University of Miami, where the debate was to take place. It was a gloriously sunny September day, under a perfectly blue Florida sky. Everywhere we looked we saw palm trees, which I love because they make me feel as though I am on vacation. Of course, this was no vacation.

Preparations

There was barely enough time to check in at the hotel, freshen up a little, then rendezvous at the university for the first rehearsal. The debate was to be held in the arena, and there was a small fleet of huge trucks parked outside, all with their engines running. This was to be a remote broadcast, so Univisión had tons of equipment standing by, both in the trucks and inside the building. A stage was in place at one end of the arena, and cameras and lights were positioned at the other end and on both sides. Folding chairs had been arranged in rows in the center facing the stage. There were cables everywhere, and I picked my way carefully over to a group of people standing beside a pile of electrical equipment. I asked where the interpreters were supposed to be and they pointed to the top of the bleachers, way up in the darkness at the other end of the vast auditorium.

It was up there that I finally met the agent who had hired me and the other five interpreters with whom I would be working on Sunday evening. Our team consisted of one woman and five men: one Venezuelan, two Cubans, one Chilean, one American, and me, an Anglo-Argentine who grew up in Uruguay. The rehearsal was mainly a technical one, and we sat hunched over a long table in the dark, each facing a small monitor on which we could follow the action on the stage far below us. The candidates were not there, of course, but the university had provided students to stand in for them while the anchors asked random questions and the techies tested microphones, feeds, and connections for hour after hour into the night.

> Panic is an interpreter's worst enemy, but if we can control it, we can do anything.

To everyone's amazement and delight, the Saturday rehearsal was cancelled, so my wife and I spent the day roaming around Little Havana and South Beach, exploring the lovely art deco area and dining at A Fish Called Avalon. As the sun went down, we sat on the terrace overlooking the ocean, toasting the varied and interesting life of a freelance interpreter and all that that entails.

The Main Event

On Sunday, I arrived at the arena a little after noon for another rehearsal. Security was tight, since all the Democratic candidates would be there later on, and we had to file through an airport-style checkpoint, stepping through a metal detector gate one at a time, emptying our pockets and presenting bags and purses for inspection. As I stood in line with a group of very chatty catering staff, I began to really think about what lay ahead and felt a familiar dryness in my throat. When I joined my colleagues up at our station, I noticed that they too were just a shade more serious ➡

than we had all been on Friday night. Our big moment was almost upon us.

We were supposed to rehearse for a couple of hours and then, after a break, return in the evening. But the security issue changed the plan, and we never left the arena. As the afternoon dragged on, I must have fallen asleep at one point, and was soon dreaming about a security checkpoint where I was challenged by syntax-sniffing dogs. One of them called to a security guard, saying, “Hey, over here, this one is carrying all kinds of false cognates and questionable synonyms!” I cried out and woke up, looking this way and that as one does when jolted unceremoniously from a nap.

As any actor knows, waiting around backstage before a performance can be difficult, since it gives one time to think, perchance to doubt. I now found myself thinking about my very early days as an interpreter, and I was suddenly transported back to my first professional assignment many years ago. My colleague on that occasion took the microphone first as I sat nervously by, trying to prepare myself to take my turn. I was nervous because I had not, at that point, had much hands-on experience with simultaneous interpreting other than the courses I had taken and the practice sessions in front of the television. When I finally took the microphone, the speaker’s voice suddenly became an incomprehensible babble that roared in my headset like waves crashing on a distant beach. I completely froze. My head pounded and my eyes felt like live coals in their sockets. My shirt clung to my wet skin as sweat gushed from every pore. My mouth was as dry as sand and my tongue felt bloated and useless. I could not breathe. Seconds ticked by and I said nothing. Somewhere in the screaming recesses of my brain I contemplated the idea of bursting into tears and running from the room. Then a man in the audience turned and looked toward the booth, gesturing at his headset, indicating that he could not hear anything. I realized that he thought there was a technical problem, and that if I could start speaking immediately nobody would ever know that the problem was me. That thought somehow cut through the panic, and I was able to start interpreting. I know I did not do a good job that day, but I got through it and then, bit by bit, got better with each assignment. I have never forgotten that experience, which taught me that stage fright is a normal part of what we do. Panic, on the other hand, is an interpreter’s worst enemy, but if we can control it, we can do anything.

As I sat in that darkened arena in Miami, I also thought about all that I have learned from the interpreters I have worked with over the years. There have been many, and they have all taught me something. Sitting with colleagues in a booth or on chairs at the back of a room has been a continuing education for me, and I knew that without them I would not be where I was on that day.

Sitting with colleagues in a booth or on chairs at the back of a room has been a continuing education for me.

Action!

When the time finally came, our team of interpreters settled into our chairs, adjusted our headsets, and gave each other the thumbs up. The seven candidates had arrived under heavy security a little earlier and had been sequestered in private dressing rooms. They were now ushered onstage and did what candidates always do, which is smile and wave and shake every hand in sight. They were then shepherded to their podiums and shown how their headset worked. Then there was silence on the set, then three, two, one, and show time!

The debate, which was actually more of a forum, was to last 90 minutes, broken into three half-hour segments. The questions would be asked by Univisión’s two anchors, who would speak Spanish throughout. The American interpreter’s job was to transmute the Spanish questions into English ones that the candidates would listen to through their headsets. The rest of us were assigned to one or more candidates, and each time one of them spoke one of us interpreted their answer simultaneously into Spanish, which went out live to Univisión’s audience. Initially, I was assigned to interpret for Senator Joe Biden and Senator Christopher Dodd, but as Biden did not make it to the event, I only voiced Dodd. The candidates could speak for up to a minute in response to each question, and they sometimes tried to cram into their 60-second answer everything they had ever wanted to say on that particular subject. At least it seemed that way at the time.

The questions had been submitted by Univisión viewers over recent weeks, and the interpreters were shown a rough draft of some of

➡

them about an hour before the event began. This was helpful to the one working into English, but not particularly so to the rest of us, since the videos of previous debates that we had been studying had already given us some idea of the probable topics. What we would have liked to have seen, of course, was the text of the candidates' answers, but that was not an option.

The pressure was intense right from the start, mostly because we knew that our interpretation was being listened to by millions of Spanish-speakers in real time. My wife, who was sitting off to one side on the bleachers, told me afterwards that it was fascinating to observe each interpreter's personal style. One waved his hands around like any self-respecting Latin American politician would have done. Another stood up and sat down and jabbed the air energetically with a finger. I curled up into a semi-fetal position and closed my eyes to keep all distractions to a minimum. At the end of each segment we stood and stretched and did the usual post-mortem of our performance. At the end of the program we leapt up and high-fived and embraced each other: proud, exuberant, and relieved.

Making History

I suppose something can always go wrong, but that night everything went smoothly and according to plan. Univisión kept referring to it as a "historic event," and indeed it was. This was the first time that presidential candidates of any party had ever "debated in Spanish" for the benefit of the U.S. Hispanic television audience. It was a memorable occasion in a number of ways. It was certainly one that I will never forget.

Do You Remember?

ATA's 50th Anniversary History Project

The year was 1959. The race for space was seriously under way as the Soviet Union's Luna 3 sent back the first photos of the moon's dark side and the U.S. announced the selection of its first seven astronauts. The United Nations responded by establishing a committee for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space. And in New York City a small group of translators and interpreters founded the **American Translators Association**.

Now, almost 50 years later, ATA is putting together a history of member memories and photos as part of a yearlong celebration in 2009. Anyone can take part in this trip down memory lane. Just e-mail your "remember when" story or "way back" picture to the ATA History Project.

For more information, contact Mary David, member benefits and project development manager, at mary@atanet.org.

Text-to-Speech Tools: A Helping Hand…er…Mouth for Translators/Interpreters

By Naomi J. Sutcliffe de Moraes

Most translators work solely by reading documents on paper or on a computer monitor and inputting their translations using a keyboard. Some are beginning to use speech-to-text tools like Dragon Naturally Speaking instead of a keyboard, but few know about text-to-speech (TTS) tools to replace reading. TTS tools convert text into audio, sending the audio either to the speakers or to an audio file (MP3 or WAV).

How can translators and interpreters use this kind of tool?

- To proofread their work by having the computer read the original or the translation, which is particularly useful for verifying numbers.
- To record lists of terminology when preparing for an interpreting assignment.
- To read aloud a text for interpretation and to practice simultaneous interpreting.

Table 1

Tool	File formats	Price	Languages
NaturalReader 6.5	Has a floating toolbar to read from any open document. Toolbar add-ins for MS Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Internet Explorer.	$39.50 with one premium voice	English, Spanish, French, German
ReadPlease Plus 2003	Must copy text to the program window. Can open TXT files directly.	$49.95 without premium voice	U.K., U.S. English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Continental Portuguese, Spanish (free voices)
Text2Go	Program works only from within Internet Explorer.	$25 for program + $35 for one voice	English (U.S., U.K., Australian, and Indian accents)
TextAloud	Can paste text to the main window, or open MS Word, PDF, or HTML files from TextAloud program interface.	$29.95 for program + $25 - $45 per voice	English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish (two accents for some languages).

- To read an original while translating. (I have not tried this, but it might work if used together with a speech-to-text tool to capture a first draft of the translation.)

How can anyone use this kind of tool?

- To record newspaper or magazine articles for listening while away from the computer, washing dishes, jogging, etc.

- To record study/reading material while taking courses on most subjects.

- To avoid excessive eyestrain by having the program read e-mails or other text while the listener does other tasks.

I work with a lot of scanned documents: medical reports, laboratory reports, and signed contracts. I can only use a translation environment tool like across or Déjà Vu X if I take the time to convert the file into MS Word first. I normally do not convert unless I see some immediate benefit (e.g., obvious repetition of text in a long document).

Working with Scanned Original Documents

When working with scanned documents, I rely heavily on LogiTerm (see the review of LogiTerm in the November 2007 and January 2008 issues of *The ATA Chronicle*). It allows me to look up terms in my terminology, bitext, and reference databases through one interface. However, two of the great advantages of using a translation environment tool are:

1. Numbers are copied from source

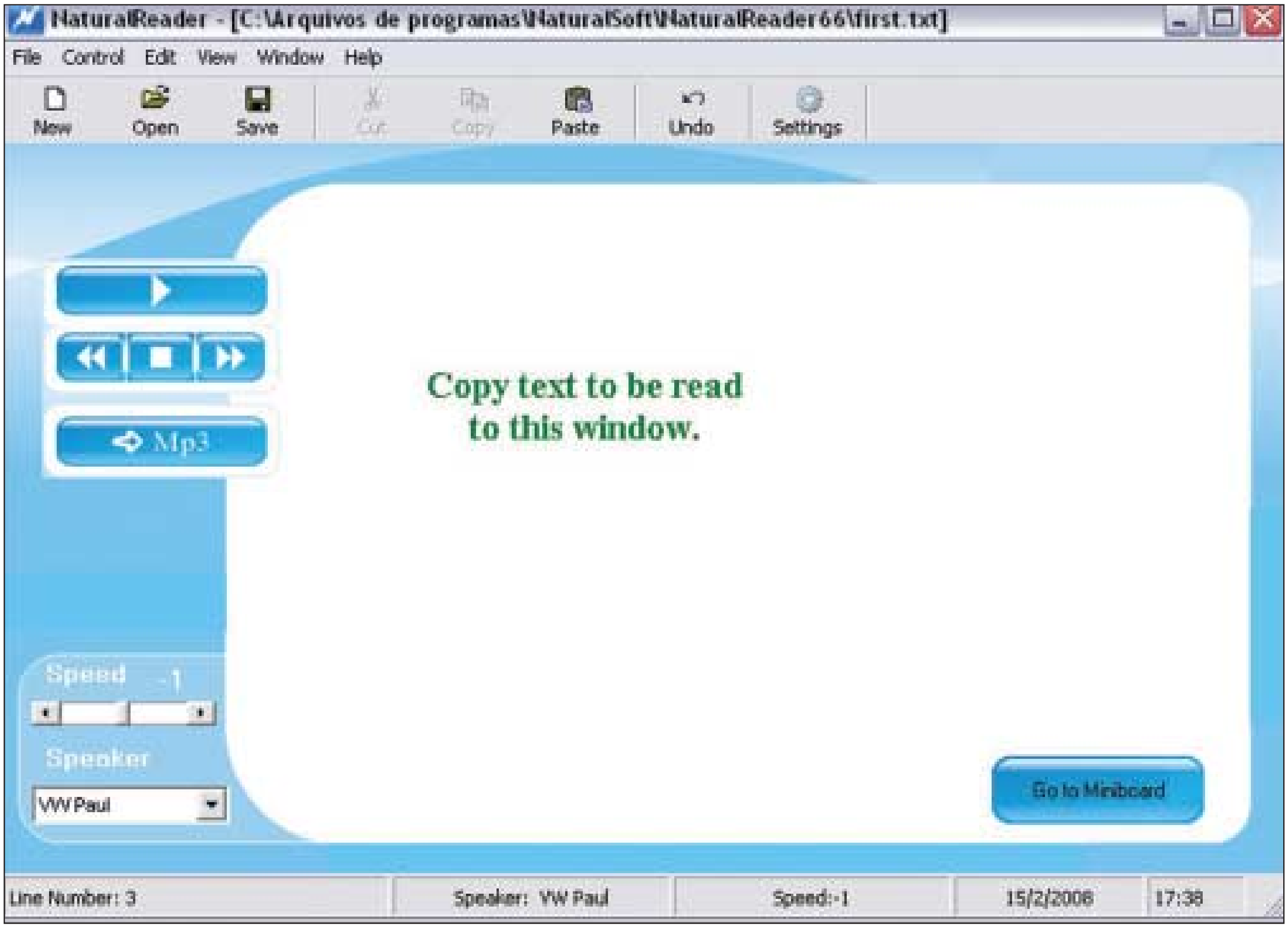


Figure 1: NaturalReader Main Program Window

NaturalReader - [C:\Arquivos de programas\NaturalSoft\NaturalReader66\first.txt]

Copy text to be read to this window.

Speed -1

Speaker: VW Paul

Line Number: 3

Speaker: VW Paul

Speed:-1

15/2/2008

17:38

to target, and are often converted from 1.200 to 1,200 if necessary/appropriate, depending on the tool.

2. It is extremely hard to miss an entire sentence or an entire paragraph because each sentence is translated separately and the tool keeps track.

So, when I translate a scanned file without converting it into a formatted text document first, I use TTS tools to read through the translation while I silently read the original to make sure nothing is missing and that all the numbers are correct. Needless to say, you can also use TTS tools to read your translation just to see how it flows and to catch errors you might not see on the screen.

Four TTS Programs

The four main programs I found on the Internet are NaturalReader, ReadPlease, Text2Go, and TextAloud (see the references on page 30 for links). Most of them have 30-day trial versions or free versions with limited capacities. The paid versions can all convert text to MP3 files. I have summarized the tools' features in Table 1 on page 27.

"Natural" Voices and Free Voices

In my experience, the Microsoft voices, which are always free, are very painful to listen to for any length of time. If your objective is simply to proof a list of numbers or similar, you may be able to use a free product. Note that Dragon Naturally Speaking has a basic TTS function that may be all you need, if you already have Dragon installed on your PC. The AT&T Natural Voices and Nuance RealSpeak voices used by many TTS programs seem to me to be the best overall for English, but some languages like Chinese are only available from other companies. Samples of the different voices are provided on the sites of the companies selling TTS software.

Figure 2: NaturalReader Floating Window

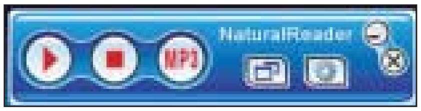


Table 2: Test Table of Numbers for TTS Tools

1	2,000.00	123,456,789
525.00	852,00	63.2

NaturalReader: My Favorite and Why

After trying all the programs in Table 1, I purchased NaturalReader. Surprisingly, it was the cheapest alternative, though all these programs (when including one decent voice) cost under $75.

NaturalReader appears to work with any program, and is compatible with Vista and Office 2007. One way to convert text into speech is to copy the text and paste it into the main program window (see Figure 1 on page 28). You can also open TXT and RTF files directly in this interface.

However, NaturalReader also has a convenient floating window, shown in Figure 2. This is what I end up using most of the time. Select text in any window with your cursor and click on play (or on MP3 to create a sound file). Additionally, NaturalReader can install toolbar add-ins for MS Word and other programs (see Table 1).

In addition to the convenient floating window and low price, I chose NaturalReader because it had a good approach to numbers. I tested all four programs with the number sequences in Table 2.

NaturalReader's and TextAloud's renditions were all I could hope for. They read the following (with pauses between each cell):

One
Two thousand point zero zero
One hundred twenty-three million four hundred fifty-six thousand seven hundred eighty-nine
Five hundred twenty-five point zero zero
Eight hundred fifty-two comma zero zero
Sixty-three point two

ReadPlease was not satisfactory from a number-proofing standpoint. The output speech was:

One
Two thousand [missing point zero zero]
One hundred twenty-three million four hundred fifty-six thousand seven hundred eighty-nine
Five hundred twenty-five [missing point zero zero]
Eight hundred fifty-two comma zero [missing zero]
Sixty-three point two

When proofing medical bills for insurance claims and corporate financial statements, which are both full of complicated numbers, I need a predictable rendition. I found ReadPlease's rendition hard to follow while reading the numbers. I did fiddle with the settings, but the output was always that written above. A customer service representative for TextAloud told me that this is partially due to the voice and the version of the voice, so ReadPlease used with a good voice could work.

Unfortunately, Text2Go was even worse, since Text2Go can only work with HTML files. After converting my table into HTML, Text2Go treated the numbers as if they were all run together. Text2Go is really the worst solution for a translator, and it is clearly meant to be used by people who want to read text on the Internet and save it to their iPods to listen to later.

The only drawback to NaturalReader is that it only works with English, Spanish, French, and German. Perhaps translators need to write the programmers an e-mail to ask them to add more languages!

TextAloud: Runner Up

TextAloud has many more languages than NaturalReader, so it may be the only choice for some translators. Text can be read by pasting it into the program's main window, shown in Figure 3. MS Word, PDF, or HTML files can also be opened from within this main window, but all formatting is lost (the formatted files are converted to simple text files).

The voices used by TextAloud are the same as those used by NaturalReader, or similar, but TextAloud provides a much greater variety of voices and even accents, such as European French and Canadian French. It is a strong alternative to NaturalReader.

References

NaturalReader 6.5
www.naturalreaders.com

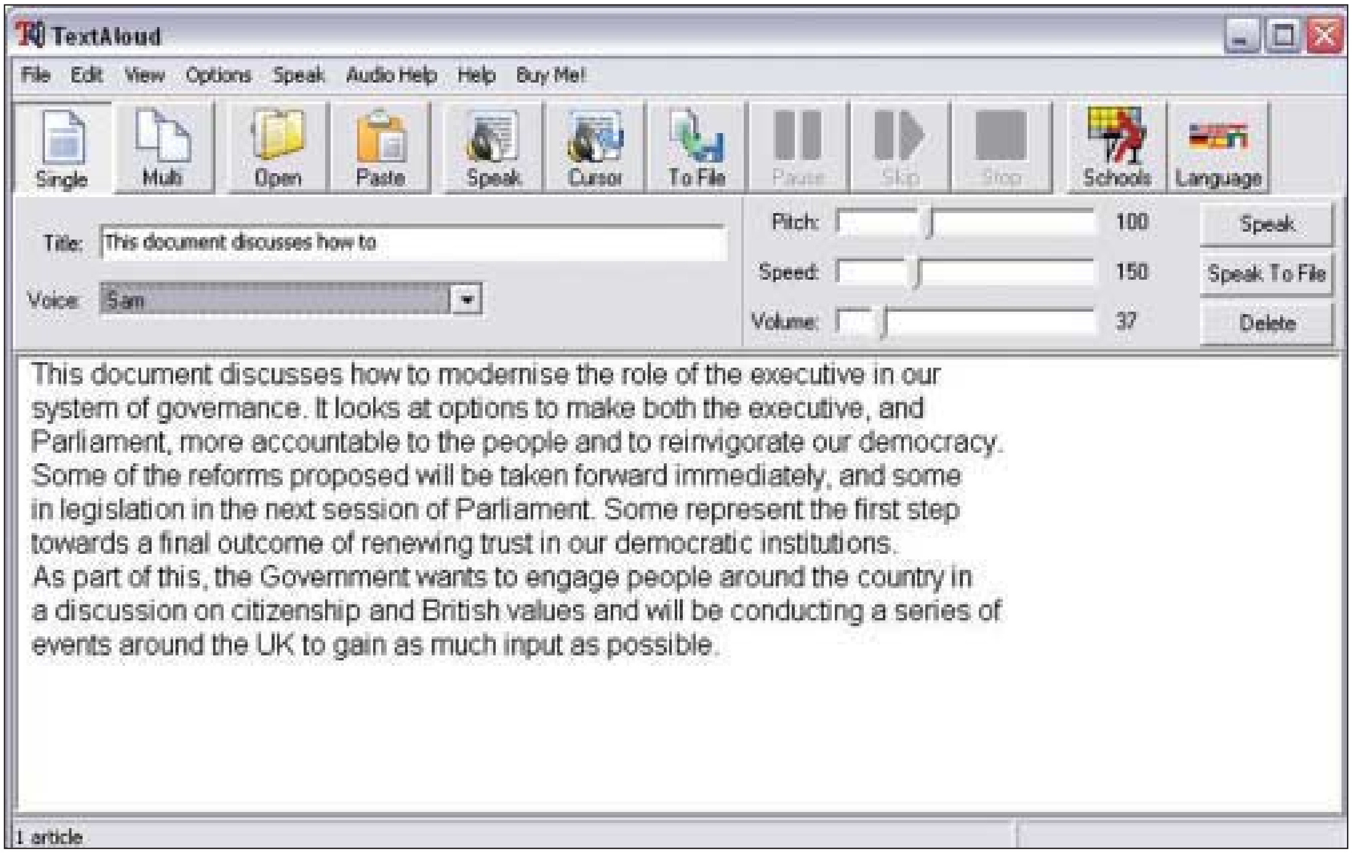
ReadPlease Plus
www.readplease.com

Text2Go
www.text2go.com

TextAloud
http://nextup.com

LogiTerm
www.terminotix.com

Figure 3: TextAloud Main Window



Title: This document discusses how to

Voice: Sam

Pitch: 100

Speed: 150

Volume: 37

This document discusses how to modernise the role of the executive in our system of governance. It looks at options to make both the executive, and Parliament, more accountable to the people and to reinvigorate our democracy. Some of the reforms proposed will be taken forward immediately, and some in legislation in the next session of Parliament. Some represent the first step towards a final outcome of renewing trust in our democratic institutions.
As part of this, the Government wants to engage people around the country in a discussion on citizenship and British values and will be conducting a series of events around the UK to gain as much input as possible.

1 article

Business Smarts | Weathering Economic Doldrums

In difficult economic times, service businesses are often the first to feel the pinch. Freelance contractors, who do not have a fixed income on which to rely, need to set up a strategy for leaner times in order to keep their businesses afloat.

Dear Business Smarts,

The news on television does not have to tell me about a possible slowdown of the U.S. economy. I can see a clear reduction of work in my order volume and the scope of projects I receive. This is the slowest my freelance translation business has been in five years. I have already started to look for work in online forums, but most projects pay so poorly that I might as well not accept them. I am wondering if I will be able to pull through this slow phase.
Worried

Dear Worried,

First and foremost, do not panic. You are certainly not alone in your concern about a recession in the U.S. economy. Since your business was thriving until a few months ago, however, there is every hope that you will eventually return to that same level of income. In the meantime, it is important to think about your strategy for a slow period.

First, take stock of your financial condition. How much consumer debt do you have, and what is your savings situation? What are your monthly fixed costs that absolutely must be covered? Based on this calculation, you can then try to identify any personal or work-related expenses that can be cut back to make up for lost revenue—being absolutely certain that a decrease in expenditure will not negatively affect the quality of your work. These figures will give you a realistic idea of the minimum monthly income you need to earn from your business, and will most likely put you at greater ease.

With that in mind, put a positive spin on your temporary downturn. This could be an excellent opportunity to embark on a new business venture. If you work in any language pairs that are in demand in Europe or Asia, explore the possibilities of finding customers in other countries. As the value of the U.S. dollar continues to slide against the euro, the fees of U.S.-based translators become increasingly attractive to European buyers, particularly because overseas transactions are also exempt from the high value-added tax (VAT) that is tacked on to service prices in many European countries. Restructure your résumé and application materials to suit this potential new market, stressing your experience and knowledge of local conditions in the U.S. Another approach may be to educate yourself for a new field of specialty that will continue to be in high demand, such as legal, medical, or financial translation.

It is most important to take a professional approach to your uncertain economic situation, by putting more effort into networking and making your presence known among your colleagues. Participate in online discussions in your specialization or language combination, but avoid the temptation to surf cheap auction sites to score poorly paid work assignments. A transient change in economic conditions can never destroy your experience and expertise.

Comments?

ATA members can discuss business issues online at the following Yahoo! group: **http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ata_business_practices.** You will need to register with Yahoo! (at no charge) if you have not already done so, and provide your full name and ATA member number in order to join the group.

The information in this column was compiled by members of ATA's Business Practices Education Committee for the benefit of ATA members. 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. Send your questions about the business of translation and interpretation to The ATA Chronicle*—BPEC Q&A; 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA; Fax: +1-703-683-6122; E-mail: businesspractices@atanet.org. Questions must be accompanied by a complete name and address, but will be published anonymously or pseudonymously upon request.*

The Onionskin

Chris Durban
chrisdurban@noos.fr

Old Chestnuts Plague French Menu

The Onionskin is a client education column launched by the *ITI Bulletin* (a publication of the U.K.'s Institute of Translation and Interpreting) in 1996. Comments and leads for future columns are very welcome; please include full contact details. Contact: chrisdurban@noos.fr.

Bustling Le Serri's Café in the eponymous town outside Paris serves brasserie-style fare plus tasty couscous and other ethnic specialties. And when English-speaking tourists began puzzling over the (French-only) menu, manager Mr. Nait was happy to accept an offer of translation services from a French friend who works as an English teacher.

The results are now up on the Serri's website (www.serris-cafe.fr), and offer a lesson for any small business tempted to go the amateur route. The online menu includes standard howlers like "tart of the day," but also "pot of countryside" (*terrine de campagne,* or country-style terrine), "salad of goat heat" (*salade de chèvre chaud,* or salad with toasted goat cheese), and an intriguing dish of tomatos, roquefort cheese, and "plugs, let us" (*lardons,* or diced bacon, is apparently misidentified in a dictionary lookup as a verb and conjugated as an exhortation in the first person plural).

Mr. Nait thanked us for the feedback—he was unaware of the problem—and now knows he needs a reviser.

Whence is a rule of thumb for buyers: never ever use translation software for "outbound" texts—documents targeting clients or external partners. And always arrange to have input from friends, including schoolteacher friends, vetted by a second pair of eyes. The skill set for language teaching is simply not the same as for translation.

Signing Off in Chicago

Required skills for sign-makers would logically be sensitivity to design, technical knowledge, and literacy in their native language—ruling out the team that crafted a sign displayed in the arrivals area of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. This reads "For your protection/Any person who assults a passenger or employe of CTA [Chicago Transit Authority] can, under the law, be imprisoned for up to ten years!" Hundreds of thousands of people see this sign each year, so can we please get our spelling, grammar, and punctuation right, gentlemen? Thank you.

The garbage in/garbage out adage might apply to the sign's Spanish translation, were it not best practice in the translation industry to improve such texts whenever possible. Sadly, the Spanish version is a lumbering *Para su proteccion ¡Cualquier persona que asalte a un pasajero o empleado del CTA puede, bajo, la ley, sor puesta en prision por un termino hasta de diez años!* "Word for word," sighs translator Carmelo Cancio, "and no accents, which is odd, since they appear to have the full character set *(¡, ñ)*."

Like Mr. Cancio, Spanish translator Alicia Martorell judges the text "very poor" and speculates that it might have been produced by "someone studying Spanish." Arbitrary punctuation is also a problem; perhaps the text was produced by a nonnative speaker and set by a monolingual typesetter, ventures a third contact.

Surely the CTA can do better than this—ATA's client education brochure, *Translation, Getting it Right,* is winging its way to them, too.

ATA/MATI Court Interpreting Seminar
June 21-22, 2008 | Embassy Suites O'Hare | Chicago, IL
An ATA Professional Development Seminar
www.atanet.org/pd/court

GeekSpeak

Jost Zetzsche
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The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost also publishes a free technical newsletter for translators (www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit).

The Sky is Falling, the Sky is Falling!

The following originally appeared in Tool Kit*, the author's free technical newsletter for translators, available at www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit.*

It was the only thing that Asterix's Gauls were always afraid of, or, in the American (localized) version, that gave Chicken Little nightmares ("The sky is falling, the sky is falling!"), and it happened to us on Monday, February 11, 2008: SDL bought Idiom.

No big deal, you say? I think it is the biggest deal *ever* in the translation tools industry, even bigger then SDL's purchase of Trados two and a half years ago. Really.

In past editions of my online *Tool Kit* newsletter, I wrote only one large feature article about Idiom WorldServer, but I often mentioned it as a real and sensible alternative for translation buyers or, in the past couple of years, language service providers (LSPs). And I continually praised it as one of the few companies that creatively and ingeniously took up the challenge posed when one of the largest service and tool providers (SDL) gobbled up the largest tool provider (Trados).

No big deal? Check with one of those companies who migrated from Trados to Idiom WorldServer in the past couple of years. They think it is a big deal. And they are not too happy about it.

What is Idiom, Anyway?

Let's first see what Idiom is, what its product, Idiom WorldServer, does, and why SDL felt that it would fit well with its other tools (SDLX, Trados, Tridion, and Passolo in their various incarnations).

When Idiom entered the market in 1998 at the height of the dot-com boom, it seemed to be the perfect solution for large corporations. It not only provided a translation memory/terminology management solution, but also a tool to manage the workflow of the many files that were being processed in 150+ languages. (Remember the huge bundles of cash that were just waiting to be spent for those languages back then?) At the same time, Idiom provided an interface to translators and LSPs.

Of course, you know what happened: the bubble burst, the cash was gone, and like most everyone else, Idiom was hurting mightily. However, they (and their investors) stuck with it. They revamped their translation memory engine and their translation editor (using some of Déjà Vu's technologies), had a management shake-up, and were able to deliver new versions and features for their increasingly complex product at an astonishing rate. They were also known for a customer-centric approach: they had regular and often very productive user meetings on a relatively large scale that often resulted in new features in the next version of the product.

Idiom's Strategy

Idiom's clients were very large corporate translation buyers who wanted to be in control of their translations. Through Idiom, these clients could provide their LSPs (and, in turn, the LSPs would provide their translators) with ready access to the translatable files, connectivity to the underlying translation memory and terminology databases, and quality assurance tools.

But then, after the SDL-Trados deal was announced, Idiom's management came up with a wickedly good idea: the tool was too costly for LSPs to purchase, so why not give it away to language service providers? That way, LSPs could use it for their own translation needs (and replace the LSP editions of Trados and SDLX) and, while they were at it, introduce it to the large corporate translation buyers who could then potentially become paying Idiom customers.

Is it possible for an independent software maker that offers enterprise-level translation/globalization software to be profitable?

Thus, the LSP Advantage Program was born and became the desired program for mid-sized and larger LSPs. But mind you, not all who wanted in were accepted. Idiom WorldServer is a complex tool, so only those that were deemed technologically up-to-par were accepted. Once you were part of the partner program, you had to pay an annual support fee, but nothing that would break the bank. And to make sure that the tool became more suitable to LSPs, Idiom hired Peter Reynolds, a well-known and highly regarded industry veteran, to head up the LSP program. I remember the disbelief in the faces of conference attendees at an LSP conference I attended with some Idiom representatives who introduced the program. It just sounded too good to be true.

Alongside a number of interesting and promising partnerships that were introduced in the past couple of years—including one to machine translation supplier Language Weaver—the last program that Idiom introduced was an SaaS (Software as a Service) offering that allowed users to use the software as a service, circumventing onsite installation and maintenance. This was also a good and timely move.

The New Deal

And then came February 11, 2008. If people tell you that they saw this particular acquisition coming—do not believe them. People at Idiom themselves were completely surprised—and a good number of them were let go. (That is one of the positive aspects of the deal: there are some very capable folks in the labor market right now!)

On the day SDL announced its purchase of Idiom, I talked with Keith Laska, head of the technology division of SDL. I am not sure that he really appreciated my initial response (after he finally got a chance to talk, he asked: "So what do you REALLY think?"). However, he had one rather sobering and, I thought, well-considered observation: if you look at the announcement of the acquisition, you will see that SDL not only paid the purchase price, but also assumed a fair amount of debt.

So here is the question that naturally presents itself: Is it possible for an independent software maker that offers enterprise-level translation/globalization software to be profitable? Or is it inevitable that they will eventually be gobbled up by a company that will continue to sell the tools while also using it for their own service and marketing purposes?

And let's face it, for SDL, the acquisition seems to be a very consistent move. True, I think they will be faced with an immediate exodus of some of Idiom's (prospective) users, and will once again have to deal with the same old questions that they still remember—and have yet to answer—from the Trados acquisition ("Why would I buy a product from a competitor?"). However, there is no doubt that SDL has now assembled a formidable array of tools, even for an LSP giant (the others have already responded—for instance, see Translations.com's news release at www.translations.com/about/news/pr/pr_080211.html). In addition, SDL will have tremendous opportunities to sell more of its services to some of the large corporate Idiom users. (And it cannot hurt to have most of your service competitors using your tools and being at your mercy as to what features you make available to them.)

SDL's purchase of Idiom is most likely the biggest deal ever in the translation tools industry.

No Way Out?

Let's come back to the question of whether it really is inevitable for providers of Idiom WorldServer-like products not to be profitable. I am not a financial expert, but I am pretty sure it is not a foregone conclusion. Idiom has gone through a unique evolution from high-end corporate tool through the dot-com bust to embracing a whole new market and offering a whole new distribution model. There is no doubt that this costs money. And there is also no doubt that some of Idiom's ups and downs could be avoided by a new(er) kid on the block.

Also, Idiom was heavily funded by investment capital. This does not have to be a problem, but it also does not exactly make you truly independent to make all your decisions the way you would like to. One tool vendor I spoke with today asked: "What do I say to my clients when they say: 'What makes you any different from Idiom?'" I am not sure that I have a completely valid answer to that, but true independence may be one.

And Now?

Here is what I wrote after the Trados acquisition in 2005:

> At first sight, the purchase of Trados by SDL does not seem to be a particularly positive move for the industry. It has been good to see SDL successfully challenging Trados over the past few years, both in terms of increasing the market share of SDL's products and in pushing Trados to continue its own development. What is now left of that once-competitive environment is a quasi-monopoly scenario that would probably cause economists to shudder.
>
> But (...) I hope that one or even several of the remaining smaller vendors will use this situation to position themselves as the alternative solution—in much the same way that SDLX was able to do a few years ago. For instance, I could imagine that some of the larger multi-language vendors who have been working with Trados ➡

> would feel encouraged to take a second look at the remaining tools and promote some development there.

This rings pretty true as we look back now at the Trados deal, and it rings true with this acquisition as well, doesn't it? Last time it was Idiom that answered the challenge. This time it will be someone else. I would not be surprised if that new challenger were one of the well-suited tools that advertises in my newsletter, or, just as likely, a set of tools.

But challengers there must be. If not, our industry will go through some unfortunate changes. Language technology that caters to large corporate translation buyers would be in the hands of a very few, very large LSPs, and the mid-sized LSP market would essentially be cut out, leaving the smaller clients to the smaller LSPs. I do not want this to happen and I think that (almost) everyone else in the industry would agree. I do not mind large LSPs. They are equipped to do many jobs that only they can do. But the majority of jobs can be done by service providers large and small(er). We need that diversity to keep our market healthy.

That is why this is such a big deal.

And here is the good news at the end for the little guys: Asterix and Chicken Little both eventually learned that the sky was not going to fall. The apocalypse was averted, for a time. I am convinced that this will hold true here as well.

Plan Now

49th Annual Conference

American Translators Association

Orlando, Florida
November 5-8, 2008
www.atanet.org

Member News

Send your news to Jeff Sanfacon at jeff@atanet.org or American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314.

- The membership committee of the Société Française des Traducteurs in Paris, France, has granted **Douglas J. Foran** active member status.

- **Denise Wallace Campo** was featured in the December 2007 issue of *Kansas City Business Magazine.*

- The new Center for Translation Studies at the University of Illinois has chosen **Elizabeth Lowe** to serve as its first director. Lowe, associate director and associate scholar in the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida in Gainesville, will begin in August. A translator, Lowe is also the founder and director of the Translation Studies Certificate program at the University of Florida.

- **André Pellet** has been appointed the chief operating officer of **ProZ.com**. Pellet has been in the translation and localization industry for over 20 years, having served as president of M2 Enterprises/M2 Limited, and then as vice-president at Welocalize.

ATA Translation Company Division

9th Annual Conference

July 17-20, 2008

The Inverness Hotel and Conference Center

Englewood, Colorado

Highlights:

- Thursday evening reception and banquet.
- Two days (Friday and Saturday) of educational sessions tailored to the needs and concerns of translation company owners and managers.
- Topics will focus on industry trends, workflow tools, project management, sales, marketing, behavioral interviewing, and more.
- Plenty of time and opportunity for networking, networking, and more networking!
- Optional Friday or Saturday evening activity in Denver (www.denver.org).
- Sunday morning buffet breakfast.

Advertising, exhibit, and sponsorship opportunities available.

Stay tuned to www.ata-divisions.org/TCD for more information!

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Success by Association

Society for Technical Communication

Quick Facts

- Established: 1953
- Website:
  www.stc.org
- E-mail:
  stc@stc.org
- Contact:
  Society for Technical
  Communication
  901 N Stuart Street, Suite 904
  Arlington, VA 22203-1822
  Tel: (703) 522-4114
  Fax: (703) 522-2075

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is an individual membership organization dedicated to educating its members and the industry about the issues concerning technical communication. Its 14,000 members include translators, technical writers and editors, content developers, documentation specialists, technical illustrators, instructional designers, academics, information architects, usability and human factors professionals, visual designers, and Web designers and developers. STC's mission is to advance the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media.

Goals

- To enhance the professionalism of STC members and the status of the profession.
- To provide information through publications, reports, and conferences.
- To report on new communication technologies, methods, and applications.
- To provide recognition and awards.
- To promote the education of members and support research activities in the field.

Benefits

- Networking opportunities through STC's 130 local chapters.
- Educational conferences and seminars at reduced member rates.
- The opportunity to join STC's 21 special interest groups.
- Forums for sharing expertise and professional opinions.
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ATA chapters, affiliates, and local groups serve translators and interpreters in specific geographic areas. They provide industry information, networking opportunities, and support services to members at the local level and act as liaisons with the national association. This column is designed to serve as a quick resource highlighting the valuable contributions these organizations are making to the Association and the profession as a whole.

Beacons 10 — Now Online!

Members of ATA's Literary Division have collaborated in an online publication of collected literary translations, under the editorial direction of Michele Aynesworth. This issue features a broad collection of works from Europe and Latin America, and a good bit from Asia. *Beacons* was first published in 1992, and what started out as a one-time project quickly became a tradition.

Go to www.atanet.org/publications/beacons_10.php to begin reading now!

Dictionary Review

Compiled by

Peter A. Gergay

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Japanese Business Dictionary: American and Japanese Business Terms for the Internet Age

Editor:
Ritsuko Moore

Publisher:
Schreiber Publishing

Publication date:
2005

Number of pages/entries:
183 pages
4,700 entries

ISBNs:
978-0-88400-313-7
0-88400-313-2

Price:
$24.95

Available from:
www.schreiberpublishing.com
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com

Type of work:
Glossary

Reviewed by:
Diane Howard

Diane Howard is a full-time freelance translator working from Chinese and Japanese into English. She teaches Introduction to Translation Theory for the University of Chicago Graham School Certificate in Translation Studies and tutors Chinese into English translation for the same program. She is ATA-certified for Japanese into English translation. Contact: diane.howard@worldnet.att.net.

In the course of assorted academic programs and several moves across the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, I have grown increasingly protective of bookshelf space. Reference works have to either earn their spot on the shelf or out they go. Or, in the case of new books, they never get in the door. Given the "earn your space" criterion, would I buy the *Japanese Business Dictionary*?

Well, actually, no. The synopsis on the cover states that the book covers "American and Japanese business terms for the Internet Age: banking, accounting, insurance, real estate, import/export, taxes, business law, computers, and more; business terms of international organizations, including the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund." That is rather a wide range for a small book. In addition, this dictionary is a straight glossary—an English term is followed by one to three possible Japanese translations—so one has to infer the technical field of a given term. Let's look at a few of the areas the dictionary claims to cover.

Since the book is labeled "for the Internet age," and computers are listed as an area covered, I first looked for a few Internet/computer terms: *server, client,* and *browser* were listed—as they would be in any good general dictionary—but *SPECint* was not included. Entries for the darker zones of the Internet (*bot, keystroke,* and *logging*) did not appear, nor could I find any names of notorious viruses. At the same time, a fair amount of space is wasted on entries like *application, command, disk, menu bar,* and *shift key,* which are obvious terms that can be found in most dictionaries.

Despite the promise of terminology for international organizations, I could not find any entries beyond the obvious, with United Nations not making the cut, let alone any of its agencies and councils.

Moving to another area, I tried to find some financial terms: *fill or kill, against the box,* and *shark watcher* all appeared. This sort of specialist jargon usually cannot be found in general dictionaries, so having a compendium of this type would be valuable. However, there are too few specialty terms and too many filler terms (at my estimate, well over half the entries) that can be found in the *Kenkyusha, Reader's,* and *Genius* English-to-Japanese dictionaries. The specialized terms that do appear can be readily found through Internet searches by typing the English term enclosed in quotation marks followed by *wa*. This method has the advantages of being free, not taking up any shelf space, and providing not just terminology, but a full explanation of the terms in both languages.

Overall Evaluation

Although Schreiber's *Japanese Business Dictionary* is labeled as being for the "Internet age," it has the feel of a glossary that was put together by an experienced translator in the course of her work before everyone used the Web. Such terminology lists are useful (and the fruit of exhaustive labor), but now that we are truly in the Internet age, many people have posted their glossaries, all but obviating the need for paper dictionaries like this one.

In her introduction, Moore quite rightfully states that business language changes rapidly and that no dictionary can be exhaustive. Given these basic facts, a better approach to contemporary glossary publication might be to use a Web-based platform that could be easily updated and focused on terms that are difficult to find through regular searches.

The Translation Inquirer

John Decker
jdecker@uplink.net

Young children, who are just getting used to their own native languages, are poor objects for instruction in linguistics. However, childhood curiosity is almost universal, so perhaps coming into contact with people who do not speak their native languages could be the trigger for a quick, admittedly superficial, introduction to linguistics. One singer who entertains kids, particularly those who are sick, in our area sings a song called “I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas.” Those are the only words, but in each succeeding stanza he alters that vowel-rich sentence by substituting all the English vowels with just one, starting with “a.” In doing so he creates a mini-lesson in linguistics, though he does not use the song for that purpose. Any adult could point out to a child that if just changing the vowels makes the words sound foreign, imagine vowel changes plus consonant changes! In short order you will go from a perfectly understandable English sentence to an incomprehensible jawbreaker. That could easily be Lesson One for a child.

Abbreviations
used with this column

D-Dutch
E-English
[E]-English acceptable as an answer, the original query did not involve English
F-French
G-German
Gr-Greek
H-Hungarian
I-Italian
Po-Polish
Pt-Portuguese
R-Russian
Sp-Spanish
Sw-Swedish

New Queries

(E-D 4-08/1) Quite justifiably, a ProZ user was nonplussed by the verb “down-regulate” in this patent sentence: “The compounds of the present invention were found to **down-regulate** or inhibit the expression or function of the human IGF-1 receptor.” Is it just a synonym for inhibit, or if not, what does it refer to?

(E-F 4-08/2) A Lantra-L user would like a good French equivalent for TLC (tender loving care), although I imagine there is little hope that the French language would have an abbreviation that is exactly right. (Incidentally, think of how cozy and reassuring it is for folks, at least for those who speak English and are familiar with TLC as a common abbreviation, if they are flying into Mexico’s Toluca Airport, now a rapidly expanding spillover facility for the capital. The airport’s international three-letter code? TLC.)

(E-Sw 4-08/3) Icebreaker, as in “something to lessen formality or break down reserve in social settings,” is a problem for a Lantra-L user when going into Swedish. Surely that rich language has its own equivalent. Any ideas?

(F-E 4-08/4) A ProZer is suspicious of using “breakdown cover” in an information technology context. The following context quote appears after a sales option in a list: *Des solutions qui vont de la réparation au coup par coup à des contrats plus élaborés mixant échange avancé / **casse incluse** et intervention sur site.* What could it be?

(F-E 4-08/5) What on earth is *pupitrage* in a software context? A ProZer was left to wonder after seeing ***Pupitrage** d’un logiciel ou d’un progiciel.* Can this 10,500-person-strong organization help her out?

(G-E 4-08/6) A member of Lantra-L wondered about Sinnfiguren in this highly erudite text about the history of rhetoric from ancient times. The entire context paragraph he gave is too long to quote, but maybe we can get away with this: *“…so besteht in ihnen [Rhetorik-Systematiken] doch offenbar Einigkeit darüber, dass es zu den Grundaufgaben des Redners gehört, sich möglichst überzeugend in die Rollen der Prozessbeteiligten hineinzuversetzen, um deren Position so authentisch wie möglich auszugestalten und damit gezielte Emotionen beim Richterkollegium und beim Publikum zu schüren. Zur Erzeugung dieser Affekte kommen u.a.* ***Sinnfiguren****… also die situativ fingierte Rede eines Handlungsträgers, zum Einsatz.”* Anyone want to try?

(Gr-E 4-08/7) This far-from-ordinary query (for this column) refers to a description of a building complex, and the two words in bold print are a problem for a ProZer. Here goes: Λόγω του έντονου πρανούς και της περιπλοκότητας τονκτιρίου επιλέχθηκαν ορισμένες βασικές αρχές ουσιαστικά εκφρασμένες στην είσοδο του κτιρίου. Οι δύο υψίκορμοι όγκοι στην είσοδο του συνόλου, με μεγάλους διώροφους χώρους εμπορικής χρήσης στη βαση τους προκύπτουν με το στενό μέτωπο στον μεγάλο υπερτοπικό άξονα της Λεωφ. Κηφισίας, ώστε να αναδεικνύεται η κατά βάθος έκταση της ανλής. Help if you can!

(I-E 4-08/8) This musical query comes from a ProZ member, who found the bold-print words in the following context clause troublesome: *solo nel 1940 la Banda riesce a* ***riprendersi la scena musicale***. What is being referred to?

(Po-E 4-08/9) In the context of transportation, shipping, and customs, what does *pozataryfowe* mean? Here is a bit more context: ***pozataryfowe*** *ograniczenia w obrocie miedzy wspólnota a państwami trzecimi.*

(R-E 4-08/10) This query from a Lantra-L user concerns a legal document that shades off into tax matters. At the end of a court decision document in a divorce case, the loser was ordered to pay a duty (пошлина) amounting to 3 базовых величин. Exactly what is being talked about here?

(R-E 4-08/11) Everything was clear in the following list of introductory things to be taught in a mini-course on seismological data processing, save for one item: светка. Here is the list: обработка сигнала (фаза, дискретность, уравнение Фурье, **светка**, корреляция). What is it?

(Sp-E 4-08/12) In the world of fashion, what is *el concepto patentado de la caracola?* It is about *unos diseñadores y sus vestidos de novia que pone: […] el encaje como tejido por excelencia, el ornamento marcado por el simbólico fleco, como innovación el* ***concepto patentado de la caracola*** *que se aplica en mangas, cuellos y bajos; las novias con identidad propia.* Is that enough context to figure it out?

Responses to Old Queries

(E-H 2-08/4) *(valve bases):* Gabe Bokor says that this awkward English sentence can be translated into a somewhat less awkward one in Hungarian: *A pumpaalapzat központjából lecsapoló csövezet indul ki.* This, more or less, literally means "drain piping extends from the pump base center." Without some more context, however, Gabe admits his solution might not be right.

(F-D [E] 2-08/7) *(butées de braquage):* Jean Lachaud calls these "steering stops," a basic automotive technical term.

(G-Sp 2-08/8) *(Zulaufförderung):* Gabe Bokor normally translates the last half of this compound as "pumping," so he would use "feed pumping." It is *bombeo de alimentación* in Spanish.

(Pt-Sp 2-08/10) *(coletiva de impresa):* Thais Simoes says this means having a group interview to present a new project or product, or when there is a need to communicate to a large number of people what has happened. Gabe Bokor calls the entire three-word phrase a short version of *entrevista coletiva de imprensa,* or "press conference." Lianka Azulay believes the last word to be a misprint for *imprensa*, thus making the whole thing "press conference" in English and *conferencia de prensa* in Spanish. It also carried the meaning that Thais Simoes mentions above. M. Tereza Guimaraes agrees with Lianka's supposition about the final word being misspelled. Alan Clarke agrees that it is "press conference," and the particular context is an introduction of a new product.

All right, yours truly is certain that the first 15 years of being the editor of something like what you see before you are the hardest, so he sees smooth sailing from now on. Yes, this column, which, I am told, dates back to the first decade of ATA's existence, has been mine since April 1993. And the time has just flown by like it is nothing at all, and I am sure a geologist would agree.

This column is solely intended as a means of facilitating a general discussion regarding terminology choices. For feedback regarding pressing terminology questions, please try one of these online forums: Lantra-L (www.geocities.com/athens/7110/lantra.htm), ProZ.com (www.proz.com), or Translators Café (http://translatorscafe.com).

Address your queries and responses to The Translation Inquirer, 112 Ardmoor Avenue, Danville, Pennsylvania 17821, or fax them to (570) 275-1477. E-mail address: jdecker@uplink.net. Please make your submissions by the first of each month to be included in the next issue. Generous assistance from Per Dohler, proofreader, is gratefully acknowledged.

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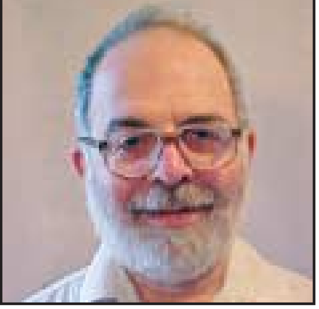

Humor and Translation

Mark Herman
hermanapter@cmsinter.net

Sacred Texts and Unintended Consequences

This column is based on material from two chapters of *Translators through History,* edited by Jean Delisle and Judith Woodsworth, and published by John Benjamins in 1995. The chapters are "The Spread of Religions" and "The Transmission of Cultural Values."

The attitude of Judaism and Islam toward translation is very different from that of Christianity. To Jews and Muslims, it is not only the messages of the Old Testament and the Koran that are sacred; so are the individual Hebrew and Arabic words of which they are composed. The holy books, therefore, are never to be translated, except perhaps as an aid to those reading them in the original. Indeed, statements made about the holiness of the original texts are very emphatic:

> To mutilate a single word in the Torah [the first five books of the Old Testament], to set it in the wrong order, might be to imperil the tenuous links between fallen man and the Divine presence.
>
> (quoted from the Talmud, 161)

> This is a message brought down by the Merciful, the Compassionate: A Book of Revelations eloquently expressed.
>
> (quoted from the Koran itself, implying its own inimitability and untranslatability from the original Arabic, 178)

Obviously, the Talmud writer did not know, or ignored, the centuries over which the Old Testament was assembled, edited, and otherwise changed by mortal humans.

Despite the injunctions, both the Old Testament and the Koran have been translated many times over, frequently to serve the needs of Christians. For Christianity, unlike Judaism and Islam, is a religion that is at least partly founded on and largely propagated by means of translations, though there have sometimes been prohibitions against "unauthorized" translations. The great translator William Tyndale was even murdered in 1536 by the Catholic church. But the translation survived even if the translator did not, and Tyndale's English translation was largely incorporated into what became known as the King James Bible, the standard Bible of the English-speaking world for nearly four hundred years (175). (From my own experience, I can attest that it is still the version that is almost always meant when the Bible is cited in crossword-puzzle definitions.)

The "original" Christian Old Testament was not the actual Hebrew Old Testament, but the Septuagint, a translation into Greek (166). The New Testament was also originally written in Greek. Not only was it soon translated into Latin and other languages, but, as has been pointed out previously in this column, the original itself incorporated translation since it quoted Jesus, who almost certainly spoke Aramaic, not Greek. The Christian missionary enterprise, which continues to this day, aims to ensure that the Bible exists in every language, no matter how few the number of speakers (177).

While the Jewish Old Testament was a book embraced by Christianity, at least in translation, the Muslim Koran was rejected, and was frequently banned as pernicious. But how could such a book be refuted if it was not first translated from a language few Christians understood? A certain A. Ross, who, in 1649, re-translated the Koran into English from a 1647 French translation, praised his translation as an "Antidote," a confirmation of the "health of Christianity" against "a poyson, that hath infected a very great, but most unsound part of the Universe" (179).

But there is a law of unintended consequences.

Unlike the Bible, the Koran hints at religious pluralism by including passages referring to other religions positively. Since Christianity, or at least the form preferred by whoever was in power, was purportedly the one true religion, to its believers the very idea of religious pluralism could only be one of "infinite absurdities, heresies and impieties" (199). Even the Koran "reserved eternal salvation for those who believed in Islam" (199). Nonetheless, repeated exposure to the translated Koran was one of the factors that created the climate for the embrace of religious tolerance in Europe during the Enlightenment (200). Other factors were the disgust with the bloody religious wars that occurred, and the multiplicity of sects into which Protestantism had split.

Today, of course, religious pluralism, at least in the U.S., has gone beyond anything conceivable to the authors of the Koran or its translators. According to a recent survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, over 40% of all American adults have left the sect of their parents for another or for no sect at all, and nearly 40% of all marriages are of mixed religious traditions. Perhaps more telling is the advertisement, inviting the browser to take a quiz, that sometimes comes up when the Pew survey is searched for via Google: "Christian? Jewish? Muslim? Atheist? See which religion is right for you."

Herman is a librettist and translator. Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@cmsinter.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 1409 E Gaylord Street, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858-3626. Discussions of the translation of humor and examples thereof are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant.

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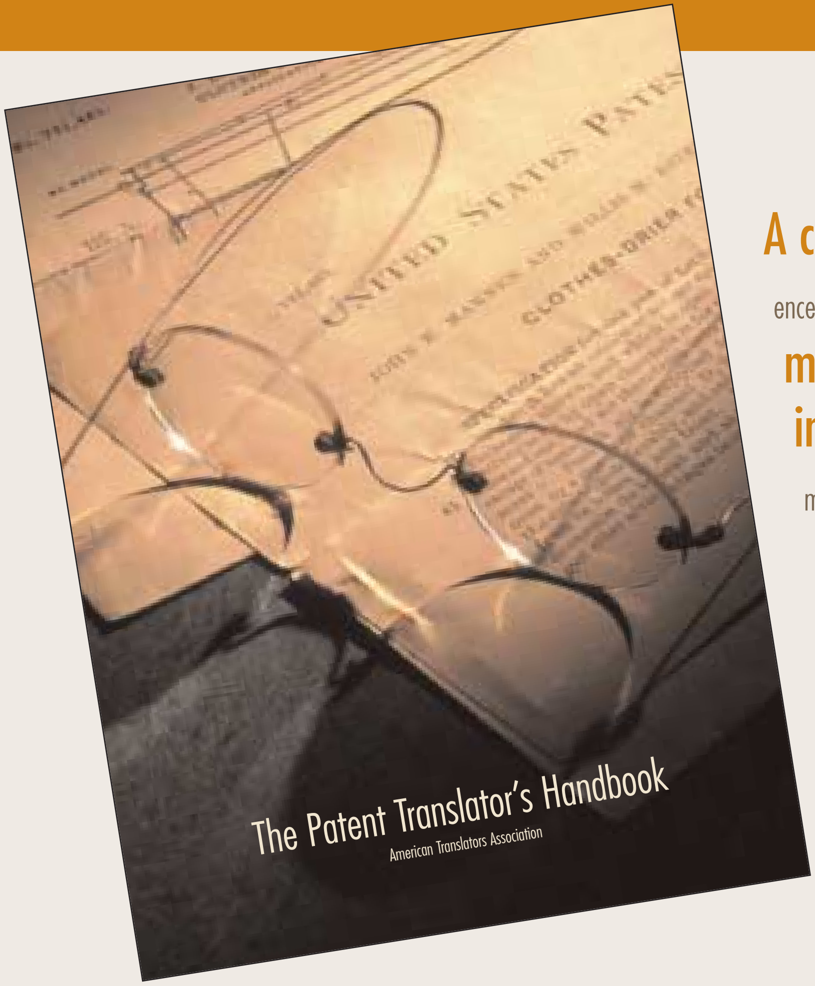

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