

# American Translators Association: More Than Certification

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Many translators first learn about the American Translators Association (ATA) through its translator certification program. However, they are often unfamiliar with the many other benefits ATA has for translators and interpreters. Many of the benefits are available online, so they can be accessed by linguists from all over the world. This presentation will provide an overview of the many benefits available.

Now in its 50th year of existence, ATA is the largest organization of translators and interpreters in the United States. It has over 11,000 members,<sup>1</sup> including a large international membership, with many members from South America.

As you may know, ATA offers a certification exam to translators in 24 language combinations. Becoming ATA certified allows translators to document their abilities objectively in a specific language combination. To prepare for this exam you may benefit from “An Informational Presentation” about the exam and how errors are marked at [www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams\\_presentation.php](http://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_presentation.php).

ATA’s Annual Conference is a great opportunity for professional development and networking. Last year’s conference in New York City attracted 2400 participants. Among the international participants, most came from Canada, Argentina, and Brazil. They enjoyed 116 presentations on topics ranging from literary to financial translation, and from medical to legal interpreting topics. There were sessions in English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Portuguese. If you missed this opportunity, you may still benefit from recordings of these sessions, (including handouts) on DVD-ROM.

The conference, however, is not the only way to get professional development. ATA organizes an annual series of seminars and mini conferences throughout the United States to provide advanced education and training in diverse specialties and languages at an affordable cost. For example, this past year, ATA offered seminars on Translation Tools, Court Interpreting, Business, and Medical Translation from San Francisco and San Diego, to Jersey City and Washington, D.C. These are usually one- to two-day events that provide more in-depth information on a specific topic and a great opportunity to network with colleagues who share that specialty.

To help members market their services nationally and internationally, ATA has an online Translation Services Directory. Listings are available for certified and non-certified members at no extra cost; however, certified translators get extra visibility as they are identified with the ATA logo. Another benefit available online is *The ATA Chronicle*. Its eleven issues per year include informative, educational, and entertaining articles that target a readership primarily of the members; newsworthy items on the association’s activities, member achievements, opportunities for professional devel-

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1- American Translators Association, “From the Executive Director”, *The ATA Chronicle*, January 2010.

opment, and the wider translation and interpretation community. The ATA Chronicle also provides a venue for members to publish articles pertaining to their work and interests. Full issues are available to members online and in print. Non-members have access to select articles online.

In addition to its journal, ATA has other publications about the profession, such as “Translation: Getting it Right”; proceedings and materials from ATA conferences and seminars (in print and DVD-ROM format); a Patent Translator’s Handbook; a Medical Translator’s and Interpreter’s Resource Guide; Division Newsletters; and a literary translation journal.

Since bigger is not always better, ATA has established Divisions to meet the needs of specific languages or fields. There are French, German, Korean, Japanese, Nordic, Portuguese, Slavic, and Spanish Divisions in addition to the Interpreters, Language Technology, Translation Company, and Medical Divisions.

As an example of what Divisions offer the members, consider the Medical Division. With more than 3200 members, it is the third largest ATA Division. Its members are from all over the world and work in 65 different languages. It has a listserv (e-mail distribution group) that provides the opportunity to network with other medical translators and interpreters online and ask terminology questions, share resources, or even ask for guidance on an ethical dilemma. Usually, within minutes of your posting, someone will offer help.

*Caduceus*, the Medical Division’s newsletter, brings you articles on medical topics, illustrations, and specialized glossaries on a quarterly basis. The Medical Division’s website makes this newsletter available to the public online at [www.ata-divisions.org/MD](http://www.ata-divisions.org/MD). In addition to providing current and past issues of *Caduceus*, other features of this website include multilingual medical glossaries, links to online resources for medical terminology, and instructions to join the listserv.

Many Divisions organize mid-year conferences. The Medical Division collaborated with the Interpreters Division last year for such a conference and offered presentations by local physicians and other hospital personnel, as well as a tour of a local hospital and the national Center for State Courts.

As you will see, ATA resources are available wherever you are. Go online and make the most of them at [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org) or meet us at this year’s conference in Denver, Colorado. We welcome you with open arms.