

inforMATION

issue 4

winter 2005

Letter from the Editor

We're all in this together

The new year is well underway as you read this, and the tidings are not glad. The tsunami has touched all of us, some more directly. This issue of *inforMATION* includes a report on how our profession is supporting the worldwide humanitarian effort to aid its victims. Yet the work-a-day world continues to demand our attention. We hope you find this issue helpful in your work; it includes reports on software for translators and other computer tools, online resources, and a number of educational opportunities coming up in the year ahead.

This issue also features efforts that your chapter has been involved in to educate our future clients and to educate their educators. The American Translators Association has organized a very successful and effective school outreach program, providing all the tools for you too to become part of the effort. You'll find an article and a flyer about the program in this issue. And Moira Pujols, president of MATI, filed a report we are reprinting on the table she and other MATI members organized at the national conference of foreign language teachers held in Chicago in November 2004. Thousands of foreign language teachers learned about translation and interpreting careers and our Midwest and national associations through this effort. This is invaluable outreach and education that raises the understanding of our profession among key segments of the population, and it all works to raise our stature as well. So even if you don't feel the immediate effects, you do benefit.

That's what a professional association does for you, and for us. And what can you do? You can ***join or renew your membership for 2005***. Maybe that's all you can do right now, but that check is your way of being part of the effort, of letting the rest of the profession know you too are concerned about our common future. And some of us can contribute more. ***Nominations are now being sought*** for the

positions of secretary, vice-president and two directors of MATI. (Current directors whose terms are expiring can also run for the positions coming vacant.) If you're just starting in the profession, this is a great way to expand your network and ensure that MATI meets the needs of its new members. If you're already established, maybe it's time to share more of your expertise with your colleagues. Perhaps your oldest has finally left home, or the youngest is now in school all day, so you can make a little more time available-to write an article for this newsletter, to help organize an educational event in your state (what would *you* like to know more about?) or speak about translating and interpreting at a local school. Whatever the interest or the amount of time, there is a need you can meet. Just call me or send an email. I will be leading the nominating committee again this year and appreciate your ideas and interest. Remember-what you do for us, you do for yourself as well.

Janice Becker,
inforMATION Editor

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Membership News

NEW: Online registration starting mid-January

MATI membership expired in December 2005, so log on to www.matiata.org to renew (or join!) after January 15.

Online registration means:

- ◆ No more forms to mail;
- ◆ Information automatically entered at renewal time (enter only changes to your information);
- ◆ Edit your own information in the online membership directory;
- ◆ Option of charging your membership fees to your credit card; and
- ◆ Membership volunteers are free to concentrate on expanding membership services and managing other issues that are important to you

NOTE: If you joined after October 1, 2004, your membership is current for 2005; however, we ask you to please enter your information on the online form for our new database and membership directory. Choose the "Mail Check" option but do not mail a check-you have paid through 2005.

MATI Educational Event in Indianapolis

Details on page 19

Medical Interpreting in Three Cultures

By Irina Markevich

For 11 years I have been working as a Russian<>English medical interpreter for various hospitals and medical offices of the State of Massachusetts. Three years ago I joined the Massachusetts General Hospital (“Mass General”) and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Interpreters teams, which offer services in 168 foreign languages. Working for these hospitals has proven to be the most rewarding experience of my career as a medical interpreter. I found myself surrounded by people of various medical professions completely dedicated to all aspects of high-quality patient care. This experience inspired me to expand my horizons and learn another language so I could help more than one community.

The work of Spanish interpreters fascinated me. Because of the characteristics of the different communities, Spanish medical interpretation tends to provide more variety with respect to medical situations than does Russian. Spanish interpreters are routinely needed in the areas of labor/delivery, pediatrics, and venereal disease treatment; they assist female patients who have been raped or battered, as well as patients suffering from AIDS and drug addiction—situations that the Russian interpreter scarcely ever encounters. Another thing that fascinated me was that the patients were from virtually every Spanish-speaking country of the world and differed in culture, dialect, and way of life.

So I decided to master Spanish, went back to school, and completed a Bachelor’s degree in it. Aside from my course work at the university, I participated in several programs that took place in Valencia, Spain, where I studied at the University, lived with Spanish families, and improved my conversational skills. I also went through an internship

program at Mass General that gave me the opportunity to work closely with Latin American patients, learn about their cultures and traditions, master different dialects, and be mentored by excellent Spanish<>English interpreters until I felt ready and secure working on my own.

There are tremendous demographic differences between the Russian and Latin -American populations. The first important factor is age. While most of the Russian-speaking patients are between, say, 65 and 90 years old, the Spanish ones are all ages, and most of them are young. An interpreter is likely, for example, to work with young mothers bringing children to a Pediatric Unit. OBGYN, Labor/Delivery, and Prenatal Care Units are filled with young women from Latin America who either know only a tiny bit of English or do not understand anything at all.

Another difference is family status. Considering that most of the Russian-speaking patients are elderly, there are numerous widows and widowers among them; at the same time, one can meet couples who have been married for over 50 years. The Spanish-speaking population is much younger. In Spanish interpreting, I have worked with many teenage girls giving birth as single mothers, as well as with young traditional families consisting of a very loving mother, father, and children. In general, since the Russian population is older and more likely to suffer from serious ailments, Russian patients tend to be more gloomy and pessimistic, while Hispanics are more cheerful, smiling, and, if not optimistic, at least not fatalistic. For that reason, an interpreting session in Spanish is apt to be a more cheerful experience for the medical interpreter.

A further major difference between Russian and

Latin-American patients involves education. The average Russian-speaking patient has a university degree and is quite knowledgeable about a number of subjects, including medicine. On the other hand, university degrees are considerably rarer among the Hispanics a medical interpreter encounters, and some patients have been to school for only a few years, if at all. The more educated and cultured patients tend to come from the countries of South America rather than from Central America.

Although education and income level are usually closely associated, the incomes of Russian- and Spanish-speaking patients seem to be about the same, because most of the former are retirement-age and receiving SSI. Many of the Latin American patients also receive various subsidies. The majority of Hispanic patients require Free Care Services, which are provided by the hospital, whereas Russian patients are covered by either Mass Health or Mass Health in conjunction with Medicare, which gets them better coverage and more convenient access to prescription drugs. Most Hispanic patients can receive prescription drugs at no charge only at the hospital pharmacy, where they have free care.

The attitudes of medical personnel to the two different populations are more or less the same. The Russian patients, however, tend to develop closer relationships with their physicians, initiate social conversations, tell jokes, and give them gifts for the major holidays. Quite often, physicians have considerable respect for those patients who have had successful careers in science, medicine, and engineering. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for a former Russian doctor (or even a non-doctor) to feel that he/she is more knowledgeable in medicine than his/her own physician, and this may lead to an unpleasant situation, with the interpreter in the middle.

In contrast, Hispanic patients are very appreciative, respectful, and trustful of their doctors. They do not question treatment plans and are easy to deal with. Doctors treat them with care and kindness, but may be paternalistic. Often, Spanish-speaking patients have very little familiarity with the formal Spanish names of illnesses or simple medical terms. For example, the word “diabetes” would not mean

much to them. In such cases, clarifications by interpreters are invaluable. Often, in order to facilitate communication, the interpreter might say “sugar in your blood,” which would be more meaningful to the patient than a translation of the term the doctor used. In general, it is common for Spanish interpreters to use language with adults equivalent to what Russian interpreters would use talking to children. Another classic example is the verb “to urinate.” If a doctor asks a Hispanic patient whether he/she had urinated and the interpreter interprets it literally, the chances that the patient will know what the doctor is talking about are very small. Knowing this, interpreters do not wait for a puzzled look but immediately use the term “peed”. Conversely, if a Russian interpreter working with an adult were to use the Russian equivalent of “peed” rather than “urinate,” it would be perceived as totally inappropriate and embarrassing. If I were interpreting for a 70-year-old Russian man and the doctor asked (as he very well might) if he had peed, I would still use the term “urinate” to avoid awkwardness.

Usually, I have a very good relationship with both the Russian and Hispanic populations. It is just as interesting for me to listen to WWII stories from Russian patients as stories of the rain forests of Central America, the beauty of Machu Picchu, or the dictatorship in Cuba. I love all of them and give a hundred percent of myself in order to provide them with good interpreter service. Overall, I find the Spanish-speaking population to be tolerant and easy-going in their attitudes to both medical staff and interpreters, while Russian patients can be more demanding and may tend to complain.

I would advise new interpreters to be friendly to all patients but to stay neutral. Step in when you notice that the medical staff is having difficulties with the patients as a result of cultural differences and offer your help in clarifying matters.

Irina Markevich recently moved to Indiana from Massachusetts and promptly joined MATI. She is also a member of the American Translators Association and can be reached at imarkevich@hotmail.com.

ACTFL Final Report

December 9, 2004

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is a national organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction throughout the U.S. When our chapter learned that ACTFL's 38th Annual Meeting would be held in Chicago, November 19–21, 2004, we approached ATA with the idea of sharing the cost (\$650) of a tabletop exhibit with MATI. Our chapter members would staff the booth and provide information about the chapter and ATA. This plan was accepted, and ATA mailed association materials to us (thank you to Maggie Rowe) for our exhibit.

The final conference count was 5,309 attendees, in addition to 329 companies exhibiting. What follows is a brief summary of the MATI-ATA participation.

Materials that made people stop at the table were:

- ◆ “Can students see success from your classroom?”
- ◆ “Is your school program missing from *Park's Guide*?”

Materials that people picked up the most:

- ◆ Membership brochures (all gone)
- ◆ “Can students see success from your classroom?”
- ◆ ATA luggage tags (all gone, good idea)

Materials that people had more questions about:

- ◆ *Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government*
- ◆ *Getting Started: A Newcomer's Guide*
- ◆ *Park's Guide*

Observations:

Most teachers were completely unfamiliar with ATA or even the fact that there might be a translators' association. On the other hand, a few were ATA members and they seemed very happy and surprised to see ATA exhibiting.

The exhibit space in general was disjointed and poorly organized. Many exhibitors and attendees who had been

to other ACTFL conferences complained. The MATI-ATA tabletop was initially given a space behind a wall, where nobody dared to venture. After a concerted lobbying effort, we were finally upgraded from the “hall of losers” to a better location. Things improved after this change.

Two teachers who had just started their translation programs came to the table because they heard ATA was there to ask how ATA could assist them in the creation or development of their departments. I referred them to Marian Greenfield because she heads the Professional Development Committee, for lack of a better name to give.

Suggestions:

- ◆ Kent State University was there as an exhibitor. From my conversation with Dr. Gregory Shreve, it would seem like a good idea to get adjacent tables in the future, if possible.
- ◆ Although I was told by ACTFL that I should only bring what could be placed on the tabletop, several exhibitors had free-standing vertical banners that drew a lot of attention to their tables and seemed to somehow comply with the regulations. This served as a way to bullet point what the exhibit table is about, instead of having to go to the written materials to find out.
- ◆ It would be a good idea to review the ACTFL program in advance and announce to ATA members which sessions would count for ATA CE points. One person asked.
- ◆ One of the teachers suggested that ATA provide labels that say “I am an ATA member” or something similar, so others know we are there.

This was an extremely worthwhile experience, both personally and professionally. I would definitely recommend that ATA plan to exhibit again in the future, splitting the cost with a local chapter if possible. The 39th ACTFL Annual Meeting and Exposition will be in Baltimore, Maryland (November 18–20, 2005).

Submitted by Moira Pujols, President

[Maira Pujols, president of MATI, alerted **inforMATION** to a great Web site loaded with news about our profession from all around the world, *intranews.net*. We wanted to share this interview with our readers and encourage everyone to check out what *Intranews.net* has to offer. JB]

Intranews Special Report:

Translators Without Borders

As international aid gains strength and speed for the victims of the tsunami that hit southern Asia at the end of 2004, the strategic importance of translators has often been highlighted by the press, but there have been few coordinated responses by the profession.

One of the translators' organisations that has reacted fastest is Translators Without Borders (TSF from the French), set up in 1993 by Paris-based Eurotexte as a non-profit association to provide free translations to humanitarian organizations.

Today the pro-bono group assists organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, winners of the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize, Aides Organization, and Amnesty International, which are then able to use the funds they saved to extend their humanitarian work.

Intranews decided to find out more about what Translators Without Borders have done, are doing and intend to do:

Intranews: How did the idea for Translators Without Borders come about?

TSF: Translators Without Borders began when we (Eurotexte) were offered paid translation work by the organisation that became our name-sake, Doctors Without Borders—or *Medecins sans frontières* as they're known in France. Our first response to their request was: "If we don't charge you anything, will you put the money to good use?" They immediately reassured us that the money would go into other important

Doctors Without Borders activities, and Translators Without Borders was born. Since that day, Translators Without Borders has provided thousands of pages of pro bono translations to document and assist virtually every major humanitarian intervention by Doctors Without Borders and other organization such as Médecins du Monde, AIDES, UNICEF, Handicap International etc...

Intranews: What are your objectives, and how far have you succeeded in achieving them?

TSF: Our main goal is to help NGOs with their operations in the field and to assist them in communicating their efforts internationally.

Intranews: How many members do you have, and is there any cost involved (other than time)?

TSF: We have approximately 150 translators who have been accepted and entered in our database, of whom around 30 volunteer their time to TSF (Traducteurs sans frontières as we usually call ourselves) quite regularly. Over 95% of the work undertaken is done free of charge. If an NGO does have a budget for a particular project, of course the money is used to pay the translator(s).

Intranews: Do you only accept interpreters and translators with certain skills or levels of qualification?

TSF: All of the translators who work for TSF are experienced professionals. When a translator volunteers to join TSF, we send her or him a

test. This is then corrected and graded by a professional translator and, according to the grade, the application is accepted or refused.

Intranews: How do members actively contribute?

TSF: Members actively contribute by translating a whole range of documents - press releases, web sites, annual reports, mission reports, medical guides, guidelines, etc.

Intranews: How do you organise contributions?

TSF: As soon as we receive a translation request from an NGO, we contact by e-mail all the volunteer translators who meet the criteria of the translation (language pairs, specialization, etc.).

Intranews: Do you have more demand for aid than you can provide?

TSF: We are proud to say that, up until now, we have been able to handle all the NGO requests we receive.

Intranews: What are the most frequent requests for translation help?

TSF: See above

Intranews: Do you have requests for interpreting services as well, and if so, can you answer them?

TSF: Yes we do, but not very often. AIDES recently requested a Russian and Romanian interpreters as visitors from those countries were going to be taken on a tour of the French AIDES offices.

Intranews: Do you restrict free translation services to humanitarian organisations?

TSF: Yes, because we feel very strongly that, given the fact that our volunteers are giving up their personal time for pro bono translations, they need to translate for a cause they support.

Intranews: Do you receive any financial assistance for your work?

TSF: No!

Intranews: What aid have you provided in support for the tidal wave victims in Southern Asia?

TSF: This week TSF has translated Handicap International's guidelines for aid workers in the field on what to do in the event of further earthquakes, press releases on the medical and logistical aid being provided by Médecins du Monde and an interview of MSF's Managing Director regarding the donations they've received.

Intranews: In one of our recent articles, we suggested the international translation community might set up a fund so that certified medical interpreters could be sent on humanitarian missions. Do you think this is feasible?

TSF: This is an excellent idea and highly feasible. As the missions, by definition, may involve interpreting from a widely-spoken language like English or French to a local dialect, then this initiative would necessarily involve local interpreters, which can provide the additional benefit of bringing money into the community.

Intranews: Do you think the international translation community can do more to help people overcome language and cultural barriers, and if so, do you have any suggestions?

TSF: Creating a fund to pay for the deployment of medical interpreters as part of disaster relief in the developing world could truly make a difference. This could also be extended to hospitals in poorer areas of countries which do not already provide interpretation services.



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[A note from the editor of InforMATION: Corinne McKay, freelance writer and ATA-certified French to English translator, gave an exciting presentation about open source software for translators at the 2004 ATA conference in Toronto. That presentation is available in the Proceedings of the 45th Annual Conference of the ATA. Here is a taste of her new bulletin; subscription information can be found at the end of this article.]

Open Source Update –

News and views on free and open source software for translators

HTML version: <http://www.translatewrite.com/osupdate.html> Issue #1

Featured application: OpenOffice.org

The free (in terms of cost and source code) office suite OpenOffice.org is a great “gateway” application for translators who would like to get started in open source. Located online at the Web site of the same name, OO.o is, for all tasks not requiring Word macros, better than 90% compatible with Microsoft Office; this is especially true when a document is created with MSWord, then opened and edited in OO.o. In my first year of freelancing, I used OO.o’s “Save as MSWord” function exclusively, and no client ever noticed that I wasn’t actually using MSWord. The suite, including applications for word processing, presentations and spreadsheets, is available for Linux, Macintosh and Windows, and requires minimal (or no) retraining if the user is already proficient in the corresponding proprietary applications. For the translator, OO.o offers some language-specific advantages, such as localizations not yet on proprietary vendors’ radar screens: Slovenian, Welsh, Lithuanian, Zulu, Basque, Estonian, and the list goes on, at <http://110n.openoffice.org/languages.html>

For translation memory users, be aware that as of yet, the most common translation memory programs are not able to handle OO.o files directly, since they depend on Word macros. However, it is possible to

either save OO.o files in Word format, then open them in MSWord, or to use the OO.o-compatible, and free, translation memory tool OmegaT, located at <http://www.omegat.org> <<http://www.omegat.org/>> and also running on Linux, Macintosh or Windows.

Featured website: <http://www.getopenoffice.org>

Continuing the theme, an excellent Web site for OpenOffice.org users of all skill levels is Solveig Haugland’s <http://www.getopenoffice.org> <<http://www.getopenoffice.org/>> . Directly from the homepage, you can “Learn More,” “Get the Software,” or check out “Books and Training.” Solveig is the co-author of the excellent OpenOffice.org 1.0 Resource kit, a user’s guide that comes with a CD of the software, available for \$26.39 (with free shipping!) from Amazon.com and other bookstores. For only \$10.00, there’s a CD of OpenOffice.org 1.1 including an Essentials workbook and templates. The site also includes lots of free tips such as templates, advice on switching to and using OpenOffice.org in various environments such as schools, universities, and government, and information about training services. Please note that there is *no* financial relationship between myself and [getopenoffice.org](http://www.getopenoffice.org); I just think it’s a great website!

[from *Open Source Update*, #2]

Reader Feedback

Thanks to readers Clemens Wilhelm and Gudmund Areskoug for writing to point out that the statement in OSUpdate Issue #1 that “the most common translation memory programs are not able to handle OpenOffice.org files directly,” is in fact not correct. Atril’s Déjà Vu X (available from <http://www.atril.com> <<http://www.atril.com/>> , standard edition 490 euros/US\$603) handles OO.o files natively, and in Clemens’ opinion, is “the most likely (major CAT tool) to ever be written for Linux.” Gudmund also advises readers to keep an eye on the Sun Microsystems Translation Editor possibly going open source this winter, and on the KDE project’s internationalization tool Kbabel (<http://i18n.kde.org/tools/kbabel/>) becoming available for Windows, no timeframe specified on this one!

About Open Source Update

This bulletin is brought to you by Corinne McKay, freelance writer and ATA-certified French to English translator, <http://www.translatewrite.com>. Please feel free to forward it to friends and colleagues. To subscribe, send an e-mail with “Subscribe” as the subject line to opensource@translatewrite.com; to unsubscribe, send an e-mail with “Unsubscribe” as the subject line to opensource@translatewrite.com. Send feedback or story ideas to the same address. Your information will never be shared with a third party.

Good news for translators

Google to Add Major Library Collections to Its Database

In mid-December, the news broke that Google, operator of the world’s most popular Internet search service, has agreed with several leading research libraries and Oxford University to convert their holdings to digital files that would be freely searchable over the Web. Translators around the world cheered.

Dependent as we are on searching obscure terms and unusual usage in myriad languages and infinite numbers of contexts, the translation profession can only applaud the increased accessibility this alliance promises. This may not yet be a true “virtual library,” but the prospect of Google joining forces with the likes of Harvard, the University of Michigan, Stanford, and the New York Public Library is a step in that direction. The goal is said to be the creation of a digital card catalog and searchable library for books, scholarly papers, and even special collections. Full text will be available only for works no longer under copyright protection, while excerpts of new works will be included. In addition to accessibility, digital availability of material of this quality will also address the perennial problem of the reliability of source material we find while surfing the Internet.

Flush with funds from its IPO last summer, Google will underwrite the project and contribute its own technical abilities to the enormous job of scanning and digitizing tens of thousands of pages a day at each library. And because the Google agreements are not exclusive, competition is expected from other major Internet search providers like Amazon, Microsoft and Yahoo, who may offer online access to library materials in return for selling advertising, while libraries receive corporate help in digitizing their collections for their own uses as well.

Some observers see this and similar projects as a trend that could democratize access to information and lower the financial bar. Others caution that online access will never completely replace the need for library collections and their wealth of unique materials, as well as the irreplaceable expertise of librarians.

Also in December, the Library of Congress and an international group of libraries from the United States, Canada, Egypt, China, and the Netherlands announced a plan to create a publicly available digital archive of one million books on the Internet. The group said it planned to have 70,000 volumes online by April.

Janice Becker, editor of InforMATION and Chicago-based German-English translator, can be reached at gabtemail@ameritech.net.

A Visit to Your Local School

Could Take You All the Way to Seattle!

By Amanda Ennis and Lillian Clementi

In schools all over the United States, teachers are actively discouraging their students from studying foreign languages because “there aren’t any jobs besides teaching”—and this at a time when language capabilities are more critical to our national security and economic success than ever before. Some educators are so unfamiliar with our profession that they don’t even know the difference between translation and interpreting.

ATA is already working actively to change that. Along with the flashy press coverage the Public Relations Committee has garnered in its efforts to educate the public about translation and interpreting, there is another equally important side to the campaign—humming along quietly, often under the radar and away from the glare of the cameras. In 2003, ATA added a school outreach resource center to its website and began urging individual translators and interpreters to use the ready-made, age-appropriate materials now available on line at http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/welcome.htm.

In the ten weeks following its debut, the school outreach page had over 8000 hits. And in 2004, some 6000 unique visitors have come to the site. From Surrey, UK to Sacramento, CA, translators and interpreters just like you are educating the next generation of language professionals—and the next generation of **clients**—in classrooms from grade school to graduate school. ATA is now actively recruiting volunteers to speak at schools in your area and to help coordinate the school outreach effort through a national speakers bureau.

And that’s not all. To encourage you to get your feet wet and see how much fun school outreach can be, ATA has launched a school outreach contest, with **free registration for the 2005 ATA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington**, going to the winner. To enter, just have someone take a picture of you making a school outreach presentation at your local school or university and send it to the ATA Public Relations Committee at pr@atanet.org (subject line: School Outreach Contest) or at 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include your name and contact information, the date, the school’s name and location, and a brief description of the class. The best photograph will win free registration to the 2005 Annual Conference in Seattle. **The deadline for submissions is July 15, 2005**, and the winner will be contacted by August 15, 2005. Any member of ATA or of any ATA-affiliated organization is eligible to enter.

We have made enormous strides, but there’s an enormous amount of work still to be done. It’s high time we got serious about this. The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is right now. Join us.

Preparing and delivering an effective school outreach presentation can take as little as three or four hours, and one presentation a year is plenty. Speakers bureau coordinators will essentially serve as relay points for requests from headquarters and need to commit only an hour or two per month. If you’re interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Lillian Clementi (lillian@lingualegal.com) or Amanda Ennis (germanto-english@earthlink.net).

Sick of Clueless Clients?

Get in on the ground floor. Join the ATA school outreach movement and start educating clients one classroom at a time.

It's easy
It's fun
It's free

... and it could win you free registration to next year's conference in Seattle, November 9-12, 2005.

Here's how:

1. Visit the ATA website at www.atanet.org.
2. Click on School Outreach.
3. Pick the age level you like the best and click on it.
4. Download a presentation and deliver it at your local school or university.
5. Get someone to take a picture of you in the classroom.
6. Send it to the ATA Public Relations Committee at pr@atanet.org (subject line: School Outreach Contest) or at 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include your name and contact information, the date, the school's name and location, and a brief description of the class. **The deadline for submissions is July 15, 2005.**

The best photograph wins free registration at next year's ATA conference in Seattle. The winner will be contacted by August 15, 2005. Any member of ATA or of any ATA-affiliated organization is eligible to enter.

Any questions? Contact:
Amanda Ennis
germantoenglish@earthlink.net
Lillian Clementi
lillian@lingualegal.com

[Excerpts from Issue 4-12-26 (twenty-sixth edition)]

The Tool Kit

A biweekly newsletter for people in the translation industry who want to get more out of their computers, by Jost Zetzsche

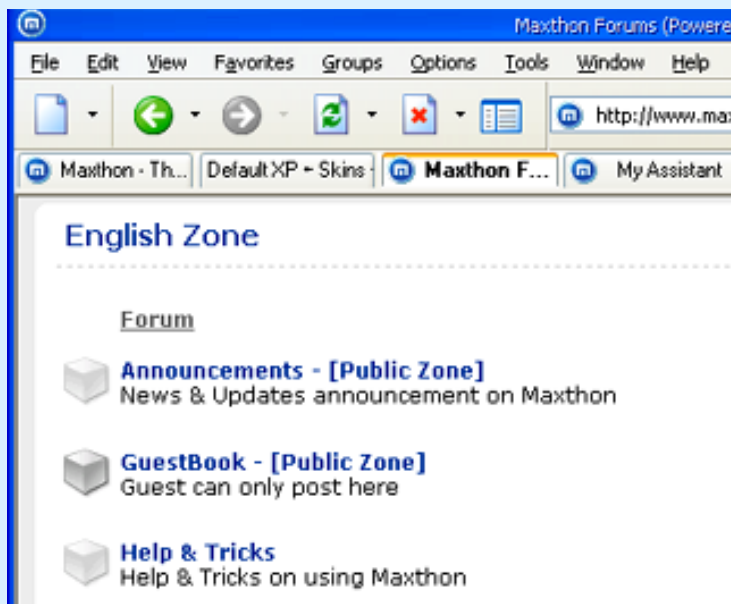
1. Sharpen Your Tools - The Free or Under \$100 Top 10 of 2004
2. It's a New Year: Taking Account of What Your Computer Is Up To
3. Finding More Tool Kitters and Becoming a Tool Boxer

I have struggled with this edition of the Tool Kit in the light of this week's devastation in Asia. It seems trite to write about mundane computer matters when hundreds of thousands are suffering. However, we do still have these "mundane" jobs to do, even as we join together to pray for those many in great grief and distress.

1. Sharpen Your Tools - The Free or Under \$100 Top 10 of 2004

In this end-of-the-year edition, I have tried to draw up a list of the programs that have really helped me throughout the year. I've mentioned so many applications throughout the year in my newsletter, and all of them are useful for one thing or the other, but which ones "stick" and are used on a regular basis throughout the year? Here are my Top 10 in the category of freeware, donationware (this should get the prize for best new word creation of 2004!), and shareware (in no particular order):

- ♦ Maxthon (see www.maxthon.com), formerly MyIE2, must be the most often-used application on my computer. It is



Maxthon Forums

only a “shell” to Internet Explorer, but it offers a whole new world of browsing. My hands-down favorite features are the tabbed browsing, the very effective pop-up protection, and the automatic domain completion for several different domains (you can type internationalwriters in the address field, and by pressing Ctrl+Enter, the browser will automatically open www.internationalwriters.com). Though this particular shortcut works in the plain version of Internet Explorer as well, in Maxthon you can set additional domains, such as Shift+Enter for .co.jp and Ctrl+Shift+Enter for .de). I was very willing to switch to Firefox when that was released but gave up after just a couple of days because I did not find the tabbed browsing as easily customizable as it is in Maxthon.

- ◆ WS_FTP (www.ipswitch.com) or any other of the available FTP clients. I wouldn't want to be parted from my FTP client, partly because Maxthon does not handle FTP traffic well (its only weakness as far as I'm concerned), and partly because I find it very helpful to have all my clients and others who require FTP access sorted and ordered for easy access.

- ◆ To finish up the “Internet section,” I use both Ad-Aware (see www.lavasoft.com) and Spybot (see www.spybot.info) to catch malicious spyware and adware running on my computer. I have found that it's wise to have a combination of programs -- some will catch what others don't. For virus protection I have used Norton for many years but have just switched to F-Prot (see www.f-prot.com) after mounting frustration with Symantec's customer service.
- ◆ ClipMate (see www.clipmate.com) is my (almost) ever-present clipboard mate that collects and stores everything I copy so I can access it at any time. The only caveat for Trados users (and I wouldn't be surprised if this is true for Wordfast users also) is that there can be conflicts with Trados.
- ◆ I sometimes think back to the days when I used Microsoft Word to work in large text files and, oh, even the memory hurts EmEditor (see www.emeditor.com) and UltraEdit (see www.ultraedit.com) are my choices for text editors, EmEditor for its wonderful capabilities to work with and convert between and from any kind of code page, and UltraEdit because if there's anything you can imagine doing to text, UltraEdit can probably do it (and that doesn't include translation, editing, and proofreading!).
- ◆ Although both of these text editors have HTML capabilities as well, I am still (happily) stuck with HomeSite (see www.macromedia.com/software/homesite), an HTML editor that allows me to work in HTML files without touching the code (unless I ask it to).
- ◆ For searching through a large number of files, my all-time favorite Search & Replace (www.funduc.com) has been a true friend this year. With the recent release of a whole host of new indexing tools from the likes of Google and Microsoft, however, this may change in the coming year(s).

- ◆ Convert (see www.joshmadison.com) is my favorite converter between metric and imperial measurements.
- ◆ Miranda (see www.miranda-im.org) provides my chosen mode of communication with a number of colleagues. What differentiates this instant messenger from others is that it supports all the major protocols at the same time, allowing you to talk to any of your colleagues, no matter what IM they are using.
- ◆ WordToys (see www.wordtoys.com) has restored some of my enthusiasm for working in Word again. Its very large number of new and newly combined options for Word are fun to discover and work with and are serious productivity tools (such as quick access to special characters or language-specific quotes or symbols, the AutoPilot that allows you to combine up to 20 processes with a single command, or the advanced save and copy options).

2. It's a New Year: Taking Account of What Your Computer Is Up To

Peter Golisch pointed me to the little freeware download Belarc Advisor (www.belarc.com) which provides a detailed report of all the hardware and software that you have installed, including operating system, processor speed and memory, system serial number, printers, controllers, displays, etc.

I installed and ran it and was thrilled with the detailed report I received (including all the serial numbers of the software I've installed!).

3. Finding More Tool Kitters and Becoming a Tool Boxer

If you would like to recommend this newsletter to a colleague or friend, send them to www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit. If he or she mentions your name during the subscription, I'll put your name in a drawing for one free Tool Box book per edition.

If you find the tips in this newsletter helpful, you may be interested in purchasing my Tool Box e-book with hundreds more tips. For more information, see www.internationalwriters.com/toolbox.

Intranews

Special Report:

An Interview

with

Fred Burks

In 1981, Fred Burks went to Indonesia as part of a VIA (Volunteers in Asia) student exchange plan, and spent four years learning Indonesian. After two years of living in the People's Republic of China, he became a contract interpreter first in Indonesian in 1986, then in Mandarin in 1988. In 1992, after taking an assignment as the administrative interpreter supporting two simultaneous interpreters at a government-sponsored seminar in Washington, DC, he became officially qualified as a conference interpreter.

Despite a population of 220 million, very few American interpreters speak Indonesian. In 1995, the State Department asked him to go to Copenhagen to interpret for Vice-President Gore at a UN Conference. As he admits, "even though I wasn't officially qualified for high level interpreting, they couldn't find anyone else." He qualified at the highest level shortly thereafter.

Since then, he has interpreted for Presidents Clinton and Bush (the younger), Vice-Presidents Gore and Cheney, Secretaries of State Albright and Powell, and numerous other high-level government officials.

As widely reported, in November 2004, Fred Burks resigned as chief interpreter in Indonesian for the US State Department after it insisted he agree to a new contract that included a pledge

never to disclose “any information” that he learned in the course of his government interpreting work to unauthorized outsiders. Intranews decided to find out why he resigned, what was so different in comparison with standard confidentiality requirements in interpreting, as well as the cost of his decision and the integrity it required.

I speak Indonesian, Mandarin, and Spanish, in addition to my mother tongue, English. I worked as a Mandarin interpreter for the State Department for about five years...

Intranews: What qualifications do you have as an interpreter?

Fred Burks: The vast majority of my interpreting work in the last 18 years has been with the U.S. Department of State. The State Department has three levels of interpreters: consecutive, simultaneous, and “conference” (high level, - simultaneous interpreters of course are qualified to interpret for conferences. This is a poor choice of names). I qualified as a conference interpreter in 1995. No other tests or qualifications are required by the State Department.

Intranews: How many languages do you speak?

Fred Burks: I speak Indonesian, Mandarin, and Spanish, in addition to my mother tongue, English. I worked as a Mandarin interpreter for the State Department for about five years, though in recent years I have only interpreted in Indonesian professionally.

Intranews: You say you became “officially qualified as a conference interpreter” in 1992. What did this process entail?

Fred Burks: In 1992, I became qualified as a simultaneous interpreter, which means I was qualified to interpret at conferences. I became qualified

as a “conference interpreter” in 1995. Until my recent resignation, I was the main State Department interpreter to evaluate tests for applicants at all levels in the Indonesian language. I thus understand the process quite well. For both simultaneous and conference level qualification, the test uses a video recording of a simulated interpreting session. The performance of the applicant is recorded and evaluated based on a number of criteria. There is no written component for interpreters.

Intranews: Was the work for the White House any different from interpreting for other clients?

Fred Burks: In my high-level work, there were two basic formats: conferences and bilateral meetings. The conferences were little different from conferences around the world, though the U.S. generally only uses two interpreters, while many nations use three for simultaneous interpreting. I interpreted at one conference in the White House conference room. The only difference from a regular conference is that there was no booth, and only one interpreter for each side, as the meeting was less than an hour.

The bilateral meetings are quite different. There is quite a bit of protocol to follow. These meetings are almost always done with consecutive interpreting. The government of each principal involved provides one interpreter. Each interpreter interprets only for their country’s speaker. When I interpreted for President Megawati’s visit to Washington, DC one week after 9/11, exceptions to protocol were made in two ways. As Megawati understand English fairly well, it was agreed that I would provide whisper interpretation to her. Thus, she could listen to the English, but always have my whispering in Indonesian for a backup any time she didn’t understand something. This worked very well.

The second exception was that I ended up interpreting for both principals many times during her three days in Washington. This is very much against protocol, and I at first protested. But Megawati’s interpreter practically begged me to take his place, confiding that Megawati did not like him, and had scolded him for poor interpretation a number of times. She had only recently become president and had not yet found an interpreter to her liking.

Interpreting for someone who speaks a good amount of the language being interpreting can be quite challenging.

Intranews: According to your own statement, you worked “only three weeks” as a conference interpreter in 2004. Was the job for the State Department paid that well?

Fred Burks: The State Department pays below market rates. At the highest level, the current compensation is US\$ 500 per day of work. I charge more for my work with private clients. As a contractor, and as the State Department’s top Indonesian interpreter, I had the luxury of deciding how much or little I wanted to work. In the past two years, I have become quite passionate about my work on the Internet exposing major cover-ups and building global community. Though this does not yet provide any income, it is clear to me that this is where I want to focus my energy and time. Because of this, I only took interpreting assignments that were particularly interesting or meaningful. As a result, I earned very little last year and have been drawing down on my savings to support my Internet work.

The new contract stated that interpreters “shall not communicate to any person or organization any information known to them by reason of their performance of services under this agreement that has not been made public, except...

Intranews: Why did you resign?

Fred Burks: This is a long story, but the main reason is that I would have had to sign a new contract required for all interpreters. The new contract stated that interpreters “shall not communicate to any person or organization any information known to them by reason of their performance of services under this agreement that has not been made public, except in the necessary performance of their duties

or upon written authorization of the Contracting officer.” This means that if my itinerary has not been made public, I can’t even tell my family in what city I’m staying while I’m away working. It means that if someone tells me a good joke while I’m working, I can never tell it to anyone unless it somehow becomes public knowledge. It means that I would not be able to share the many heart-warming stories from my times with my clients that are not the least bit sensitive. Nor would I be able to write most of what I am writing here. As the contract specifically stipulated that this clause did not expire after the contract was terminated, it meant that I could not share this information for the rest of my life.

I very much understand the need for confidentiality and secrecy under certain circumstances. By no means do I think interpreters should be free to talk about anything they hear while working. Yet strangely enough, I was never required to sign any confidentiality agreement with the State Department in my 18 years of interpreting work! Though I was interpreting for presidents in secret meetings, I did not have secret clearance. In my opinion, presidential interpreters should be required to have secret clearance. But as long as it was not required, I chose not apply as it is a very long, invasive process. To go from no confidentiality agreement at all to the above, incredibly restrictive agreement to me seems entirely inappropriate.

I negotiated for about a month with my supervisors at the State Department to see if we could work around the new contract. It appeared that we would be able to do so. But then, out of the blue, the chief of language services, who had been involved in these negotiations, for reasons unknown to me sent me an email stating that anyone who did not sign the new contract would no longer be able to work for the State Department. That is when I sent in my official resignation.

Intranews: Was the non-disclosure agreement any different from that normally required of professional interpreters?

Fred Burks: I have not done a lot of private work. The work I have done privately has not required a non-disclosure agreement. I did keep sensitive

information confidential, strictly for ethical considerations. I do not think interpreters should reveal information they learn in the course of their work that might negatively impact their client, unless there is a very good reason.

Intranews: Was there no previous non-disclosure agreement?

Fred Burks: As I stated above, I never signed any kind of confidentiality agreement.

Intranews: Did you resign, or were you asked to resign?

Fred Burks: I chose to resign after my chief's email stating that, in effect, I could no longer work with the State Department if I didn't sign the contract. Technically, I did not resign, but rather terminated my contract.

Intranews: Have you found any work since leaving the job?

Fred Burks: As I am so passionate about my other work, I am not interested in looking for other interpreting work now. I have turned down a couple offers. If something really interesting comes along, I may accept it, but I am keeping very busy with this other most empowering work.

Intranews: What effect do you think your decision will have on your career?

Fred Burks: I had already been working much less as an interpreter. I will miss the fascinating work at high levels, but other than this, my resignation has not had much effect on my career. I could easily find lots of interpreting work if I chose to make the effort.

Intranews: Have you undergone any pressures since resigning?

Fred Burks: I have actually been quite sad that only a couple colleagues contacted me to discuss my resignation and express their sadness at my leaving. Though I was actually quite well liked at the State Department, none of my supervisors called to express regret. Neither have I been subject to any pressures. I have talked with the press about a secret meeting I was involved in back in 2002 at which

I wish I could help out in Indonesia, which has been so hard hit in this most recent disaster. My heart goes out to all of the victims.

the US government requested that president Megawati secretly capture a well-known fundamentalist Muslim and turn him over to the U.S. As this was an illegal, or at the very least highly deceptive action with great ramifications, I have decided to talk about it since my resignation. This revelation has received quite a bit of press in Indonesia, supporting many people's belief there that the U.S. manipulates politics in Indonesia. I will likely soon be going to Indonesia to testify in the high-level court case of the above-mentioned gentleman. He is currently facing an extensive jail term for allegations which come largely from the U.S.

Intranews: Do you think the international translation community could do more in cases of humanitarian disasters such as the tidal wave that hit Indonesia last week, and if so, do you have any suggestions?

Fred Burks: I think the interpreting community could set up a list of interpreters who would be willing to help out in major disasters like the recent tsunami. This list could include contact information and other important questions, such as willingness to pay for travel, needs for reimbursement, etc. If a disaster should strike, this list could be made available to major relief organizations involved in handling the disaster. This would likely be of great assistance in providing a rapid relief team to sites where the need is great. I would certainly be interested in adding my name to this database. I wish I could help out in Indonesia, which has been so hard hit in this most recent disaster. My heart goes out to all of the victims.



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IJET Sets Sail to the Windy City

The Japan Association of Translators (JAT) is pleased to announce the 16th Annual International Japanese/English Translation Conference (IJET-16). Translators and interpreters from across the globe will journey to the Westin Chicago River North in Chicago, IL, US for the world's premiere E<>J translation conference. Chicago, also known as the Windy City, features spectacular architecture, excellent restaurants, plentiful shopping, and convenient public transportation. Plan to stay a few days longer to take in the city.

Informative Sessions

As at past IJETs, Saturday and Sunday will be packed with sessions. Saturday will begin with an opening ceremony and a speech by Scott Brennan, President of the American Translators Association. Shortly thereafter, Cornelius Iida, interpreter to Presidents Carter and Reagan, will give the keynote address.

After lunch, nine presentations on topics relating to translation and interpretation will be given in three breakout rooms. Sunday will feature 15 presentations, again in three breakout rooms.

IJET-16 received a very generous \$3000 grant from the Japanese Language Division of the American Translators Association. Some of the grant has been allocated toward the keynote speaker. The remainder will be used as honoraria for expert speakers who are not necessarily translators. These recognized experts will share their knowledge with IJET-16 attendees.

The organizing committee received so many excellent proposals for presentations that we decided to have two extra days for field-specific presentations. Tentatively, three presentations will be given on Friday afternoon before the Zenyasai, or pre-conference dinner. A post-conference seminar is slated for Monday morning.

There's More

IJET conferences are an excellent place to catch up on industry trends and network with colleagues, but it's hard to do everything in the two days normally allotted for an IJET. That's why IJET-16 will be a four-day conference. In addition to the Friday and Monday field-specific seminars, there will be meetings of special interest groups (SIGs) on Monday morning. In a roundtable format, each SIG will cover one theme directly or

Indirectly related to translation (e.g., pharmaceuticals, parenting and translation, finance, tax issues). SIGs will meet in a restaurant, park, coffee shop, bar, or other location instead of a stuffy conference room. Feel free to propose a SIG of your own. In addition, an exhibit hall featuring translation companies and vendors of translation tools and software will be open on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday.

Visit <http://www.jat.org/ijet/ijet-16/> and follow the links for more information. To receive periodic emails about the conference, contact Ben Tompkins, organizing committee chair, at ijet@sbcglobal.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 26, 2005

MATI Educational Event in Indianapolis

IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis) Indianapolis

9:00 – 3:15, Saturday, February 26.

(See article in this issue of InforMATIon for details)

March 5-6, 2005

Legal Translation and Interpreting Seminar

Houston, Texas

Join colleagues for 2 days of in-depth, advanced-level session on legal translation and interpreting presented by experts in the legal field. On Saturday, the ATA will provide a full day of sessions, a job marketplace and a networking session. On Sunday, the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association will provide a half-day of sessions. Space is limited.

For more details, visit www.atanet.org/pd/legal

April 29-May 1, 2005

Financial Translation & Interpreting Conference

Hyatt Regency / Jersey City, New Jersey

Plan now to attend 3 days of in-depth, advanced-level sessions on financial translation and interpreting presented by experts in the field of finance. This career development and skill-building conference is targeted at experienced translators and interpreters. Take advantage of networking opportunities such as the Job Marketplace, the Welcome Reception, and the Exhibit Hall. Earn ATA Continuing Education Points.

To learn more, visit <http://www.atanet.org/pd/finance>

June 3-6, 2005

16th Annual International Japanese/English Translation Conference (IJET-16)

Chicago, IL

(See article in this issue of InforMATIon for details)

July 9, 2005

ATA Translation Tools Seminar

Chicago, IL

September 15-17, 2005

Second Annual MATI Conference in Chicago

A program announcement will be sent to members in June, registration to begin in late July. Two days of general sessions, an all-day workshop on Friday, 9/15, plus an ATA exam sitting.

Be sure to save the dates!

MATI Educational Event in Indianapolis

on Saturday, February 26

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Peter Krawutschke, former President of ATA, will address “Translation at the Beginning of 2005: A Look at the Present, Past, and Future of Translation in the US”

Presenters: Dr. Nicholas Hartmann, member of the ATA Board of Directors and MATI member, will speak on “Some practical aspects of technical translation.” His talk is “aimed at those entering the profession and at more experienced translators.”

Ms. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, co-chair of the Standards, Training and Certification Committee of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, will speak about “Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care.” This two-hour presentation will include case studies and the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired in the session.

Other activities:

- ♦ MATI General Meeting
- ♦ Panel on educational opportunities for translators and interpreters in the MATI region and online.
- ♦ Update: Indiana Commission on Health Care
- ♦ Networking!

Place: IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis), Indianapolis

Time: 9:00 – 3:15, Saturday, February 26.

For additional information and to register, visit www.matiata.org and select the “Calendar” link.

There will also be an **ATA exam sitting** in conjunction with this event on Friday, February 25. For additional information on the exam, please visit www.atanet.org and select the “Certification” link.

inforMATIon Submission Guidelines

We encourage readers to submit articles of interest to our readers related broadly to the fields of translation and interpretation. For example, reviews of books or software products, reports on MATI-sponsored events, developments in your field, marketing ideas, are all welcome. We also appreciate announcements of upcoming events involving our profession. We suggest articles approximately 1,200 word in length, and please submit your contribution in electronic format, preferably as a MSWord document. Pictures and graphics in electronic format are also welcome, although we cannot guarantee that we will be able to publish them. And be sure to include your name and contact information, as well as a short biographical entry (3-4 sentences) in the electronic file with your article. We suggest the Chicago Manual of Style (University of Chicago Press) for your editing guidelines.

contratiempo

Taller de redacción y estilo para traductores y escritores

Contratiempo nfp — Taller avanzado de redacción y estilo para traductores y escritores, dirigido a aquellos interesados en resolver dudas y perfeccionar la expresión escrita en español.

Dónde: Columbia College, Room TBA

Cuándo: Febrero 12, 19 y 26

Horario: 10 am - 3:30 pm

Costo: \$150 los tres sábados, \$120 por dos sábados, \$65 por un sábado.

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