

From the President's Desk

Dear MATI Members,

I cannot believe the summer is almost over, which means it's almost time for the MATI conference. In this issue of inforMATION you will find the preliminary agenda for the conference. You will also notice that to make the conference more affordable, we have slashed the registration rates by 30%. Please take advantage of the early bird rate and register. We have also started a ride/hotel sharing program to offset the travel cost to both the MATI conference in Indianapolis and the ATA conference in New York. Please write to matiemail@gmail.com if you are interested in carpooling or sharing a hotel room with a fellow MATI member. After the MATI conference, please don't forget to stop by BARcelona tapas restaurant at the intersection of Delaware and Ohio to mingle with conference attendees and presenters. We look forward to seeing you in Indianapolis and New York!

Best Regards,

Di Wu

President - MATI (Midwest Association of Translators & Interpreters)

www.matiata.org

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From the Editor

Dear MATI Colleagues and Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you as your new newsletter editor. I am excited to take on this responsibility and look forward to receiving your articles and letters for the coming issues. I would like to thank Sue Couture for all of her hard work on past issues of inforMATIon and for her guidance in preparation for this issue.

I joined MATI in the spring of 2007 as a student in the translation program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and rejoined in the summer of 2008 as a professional. I currently work as a Linguistic Validation Project Manager at Corporate Translations in Chicago, IL.

Please note that Saturday, September 12, will be the Sixth Annual MATI Conference held at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in Indianapolis, IN. Please see below for the MATI conference agenda.

Best wishes,

Alexis Pollitz

6th Annual MATI Conference

Saturday, September 12, 2009, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Lecture Hall (LE) Room 104 – 325 University Blvd.

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

Indianapolis, IN 46202

Time	Topic	Presenter
8:15 A.M. – 8:50 A.M.	Registration/Check In	
8:50 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.	Opening Remarks	Di Wu
9:00 A.M. – 10:50 A.M.	Quality Assurance for the Translation Industry: Tips and Tricks	Dierk Seeburg
10:50 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.	Break	
11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.	Speak Up, The NCC is Listening! A Preliminary Report from the Front Line	Karin Ruschke
12:30 P.M. – 1:15 P.M.	Lunch (On-Site)	
1:15 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.	Working with the U.S. Government and European Translation Agencies	Alp Berker
2:30 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.	The Next Step In The Professionalization of Healthcare Interpreting: A Forum on Setting Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs	Karin Ruschke Alejandro Maldonado
3:45 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Computer-Assisted Translation Tools: From Term Extraction to Integrated Translation Environments	Dierk Seeburg
5:45 P.M. – ??	Tapas and socializing in Indianapolis BARcelona Restaurant 201 N Delaware St Indianapolis, IN 46204-2127 (317) 638-8272	

Welcome new MATI members:

Esperanza Ministries
Timothy Brinkley
Raquel Kline
Vivian Kurzendoerfer
Terri Myers

SAVE THE DATE!

October 28 – 31
50th Annual ATA Conference
New York, NY
Register at <https://www.atanet.org/conf/2009/register.htm>

The Money Anaconda: RFPs are really an Ambush Predator

By Diane M. Haines, Translation Manager, The Geo Group

Anacondas are amazing creatures. They wrap themselves around their prey and squeeze until there is no life left in them and then they swallow them whole.

There are days that working for some of the bigger corporations feels just like that. They squeeze language service providers (LSPs) on price and timeline and expect to have a perfect project that everyone will love. Then, when these unrealistic expectations aren't quite met, they gobble up what is left of your dignity by calling you into their office and ambushing you with finger pointing. No hints were given that anyone was unhappy with the work that your company has done, just a blind-sided ambush like a predator waiting to pounce.

These same large corporations also go out for bids using an RFP (request for proposal) or RFI (request for information), which are fairly deceiving. They dangle words like "2-year contract" and "preferred vendors", giving the impression that if you take the time to show the top-notch quality and customer service you can provide that you might have a chance of getting some of their business. Unfortunately the RFP is poorly designed from the start.

First, they are usually very vague on how much work the corporation

generally does every year. For instance, they share with you information such as last year they spent \$1,000,000 in translation. That doesn't tell anyone much. Was that \$1,000,000 spent in 10 languages or 20? Did they translate 100 documents or 10? How many agencies did they use or did they go directly to translators?

Then they ask you detailed questions about your process; the quality of your work, what levels of service you can provide and how you monitor that you are returning a quality product. But when it comes right down to making a final selection, their decision is based almost solely on price. Like an ambush predator, they give you hope by asking you to attend a meeting to discuss with them the answers you gave to the RFP. This meeting usually turns into a nothing more than a price negotiation meeting once they have you in their grip.

These RFPs would be much simpler and easier to complete if they sent you a 4 page document. The first 2 pages describe the scope of the work. They should describe it like: We translate approximately 140 manuals, 100 labels, 20 Release Notes and 25 Quick Start Guides in 32 languages. The manuals average 200 pages, labels average 20 words, Release Notes are 10-15 pages and Quick Start Guides are about 50-60 pages each.

Then they should tell you approximately how many languages have been translated in the past and if there are any new ones that will be added in the future. The last piece of information they need to provide is to tell you if they have an existing translation memory and/or glossary and if so, for which languages.

The next 2 pages should be where you fill in the pricing for translation, editing, glossary creation, IT post-processing, DTP and proofing. The translation, editing and proofing should be per word and the glossary creation, IT post-processing and DTP should be per hour. The prices should include all project management fees. Then you fill in the percentage of Trados breakdown discounts.

This simplifies the process and doesn't set unnecessary expectations that your ability to provide quality work or meet deadlines has any bearing on whether you will be selected as an approved vendor. This allows you to focus solely on pricing your product correctly.

This analogy goes both for the language service providers that go after the RFPs and the freelance contractors themselves. Everyone has the same expectation of quality and timelines.

However, the freelance contractor is often the person that gets squeezed the most on price. As an independent business person, pricing your services is the area that should be looked at very carefully. Pricing yourself too high limits the amount of work you will receive and pricing too low can sometimes set up the impression that there will be questionable quality.

Once you have set your price and get into an LSP's database, they will hopefully send you steady work. Just don't be surprised if they ask you at some point to cut your rates and/or give special discounted rates for specific projects or clients. This is normal business practice for most LSPs. They get squeezed on price, so they, in turn, pass the anaconda-like hug along. •

Announcement

There may be some of you, who would be interested in taking the **60 hour accredited Spanish Bilingual Assistant (SBA)** course that is being offered for the third time at Children's Memorial Hospital (CMH) in Chicago this fall. If so, please contact otorres@childrensmemorial.org.

This is an amazingly informative class for those wishing to interpret in hospitals; the course was intensive, but thorough. Twenty-three of us met on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. for the months of April and May, and the information was covered in both Spanish and English. Just about every one of the body's systems was covered, including cardio, nervous, respiratory, genital, urinary, immune, oncology, etc., with lectures in English from Doctors practicing in each of these different departments at CMH.

Anyone who wishes to know more about my very positive experience, please feel free to contact me, **Gayle Mountain**, at gmout7@sbcglobal.net or **773-973-0326**.

MATI Membership Committee Report

2nd Quarter 2009

MATI Membership Breakdown – June 2009

	Corporate	Corresponding	Individual	Institutional	Student	TOTAL
IL	6		35	2		43
IN			31	1	2	34
WI	1		23		1	25
CA		1				1
CO		1				1
FL		1				1
IA		1				1
KY	1					1
MO		1				1
NY		1				1
OH		1				1
Germany		1				1
TOTAL	8	8	89	3	3	111

2009		2008		2007	
Renewed	82	Renewed	88	Renewed	101
Non-renewed	50	Non-renewed	91	Non-renewed	41
New	29	New	18	New	100

Membership retention was higher in 2009 with 82 renewed and 50 non-renewed members, as opposed to 2008 with 88 renewed and 91 non-renewed members. The number of new memberships is also higher in 2009, with 29 new members, compared to 18 in 2008. Several new and renewing members took advantage of the new multi-year membership option.

Submitted by Rahdne Zola, Membership Committee chair, June 2009

Submission guidelines

We encourage our members to actively contribute to inforMATION. We ask that you submit items of interest in the fields of translation, interpretation, and languages. Below is a list of submission types we accept:

- comments on issues within the profession
- letters to the editor
- biographies
- book reviews
- Q&A
- summaries of monthly meetings
- announcements such as awards, job opportunities, weddings
- announcements of events relating to the profession

Maximum length for features is 2500 words. Photographs and graphics in the form of .gif or .jpeg are also accepted.

Submission deadlines:

- February 1 for the Winter issue
- May 1 for the Spring issue
- August 1 for the Summer issue
- November 1 for the Fall issue

Microsoft Word files may be sent as e-mail attachments, with clearly labeled e-mail subjects. File extensions (*.rtf or *.doc) should be added to short file names. Do not send files with *.exe extensions. Please add a title and author's name inside the word file—please do not put it only in the e-mail. Add 3-4 lines of biographical information at the end of the article. Submit articles to the Editor, Alexis Pollitz, at apollitz@gmail.com. The editor reserves the right to edit each article.

2008-09 Officers and Board of Directors

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