

# TRANSLORIAL

JOURNAL OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

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**YOUR TURN!**

*Translorial* welcomes contributions. Send your ideas to [editor@ncta.org](mailto:editor@ncta.org).

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A native Spanish speaker born and raised in Mexico City, **Diana Dudgeon** has worked as a translator since before moving to the U.S. in 2008. She has a background in psychology and a depth of experience translating educational, legal, medical and marketing materials. In 2012, Diana founded English Español, offering translation, localization and web marketing services. She handles the online production for Bilingual Training Consultants, serving as their communication and language specialist.



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**Noemi Gonzalez** is a Spanish translator-interpreter with a diverse educational and career background that has led her to venture into medical and administrative interpreting, as well as business language services. Noemi is passionate about language, people, coaching, and mentoring — interests which she has combined to found the first Spanish Bilingual Toastmasters Club in the San Francisco Bay Area, one of her latest and proudest achievements.



**Tuomas Kostianen**, a native of Finland, is an ATA-certified English to Finnish translator specializing in technical and medical translations. In addition, he is an independent Trados trainer and has trained hundreds of translators and project managers around the world. He served eight years (2003–2011) on the NCTA Board as Vice President and President. He has been riding a bike since the age of three.



**Cynthia Whitehead** grew up in Portland, Oregon, and moved to Europe after earning a history degree from Reed College and a law degree from the University of Oregon. From 1976 to 2012, she worked as an environmental law consultant for the EU, UN, and European and Asian governments. In 2013, Cynthia moved back to Berkeley and transitioned to the field of legal translation and interpreting. She is on the board of directors of West Edge Opera (Bay Area) and The Blosser Center for Dyslexia Resources (Portland, Oregon).

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*From the President*

## TRANSLATION IS A GROWTH INDUSTRY

BY SONIA WICHMANN

As you have probably noticed, most people know very little about what we do for a living. But translators and interpreters have been in the news more lately, with reports that our profession is experiencing vigorous growth, triggered by increasing globalization and changing demographics. According to Bureau of Labor projections, the number of jobs in the translation and interpreting services sector is expected to grow 46% by 2022, making it one of the fastest growing industries in the country.

What does this mean for us? The increase in jobs, opportunities, and visibility is certainly exciting. At the same time, rapid growth can sometimes also lead to less favorable working conditions, such as lower quality standards, more bureaucracy, shorter turnaround times, and downward pressure on rates.

For better or worse, our profession is changing significantly, and it is more important than ever to stay informed about what is happening in our field — from new CAT tools and other technologies to payment practices and fair rates — so that we can navigate successfully through the changes.

So follow the news, talk to your colleagues, and consider attending

ATA's annual conference in November or at least catching up with the e-conference.

At NCTA, we are working to help you connect with each other through our many local events initiated by member volunteers. If you live anywhere around the Bay Area — and even beyond — chances are good that there will be a nearby event where you can meet some colleagues to compare news and notes, or simply enjoy the company of others who actually understand what you do all day.

We are also expanding our continuing education program in new locations, including recent workshops in Monterey and Sacramento. As always, please contact us if you have suggestions for workshops or would like to organize an event in your area.

Finally, we want to make sure that you are getting the most out of your membership in NCTA, and that you are aware of all the benefits available to you, including a fully customizable listing in our online directory, the members-only listserv, a printable membership card, and much more. Check our newflash emails for helpful reminders about these benefits.

Meanwhile, happy translating and interpreting! 🌐

## BOARD REPORTS

Except for its annual retreat and other special scheduling changes, NCTA's Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of each month. No meeting is held in July. Here is a summary of recent board meetings:

### March 2015

New board members assumed their duties: Tim Cassidy and Diana Dudgeon sharing events planning; Scott Ellsworth serving as Secretary; Judit Marin as Membership Director; Isabelle Pouliot as Webmaster. The board now has ten members in total.

**Discussed:** workshop planning, including the possible need for a survey to determine which workshops are desired; the selection of a new graphic designer for Translorial; the successful growth of NCTA events in cities across Northern California; and the need for outreach efforts to increase membership, which has dropped by 10% over the last three years, to 434 at present.

### April 2015

Tim Cassidy assumed the position of Ethics Director.

**Reported on:** NCTA outreach to graduates of translation and interpretation programs, offering them one year's free membership; the creation of a new membership card; website maintenance; and planned happy hours.

**Discussed:** planning for upcoming general meetings, NCTA's summer picnic; the Board of Directors' annual retreat; and using NCTA's Newsflash to solicit more volunteers.

### May 2015 (Retreat)

**Reported on:** recent and upcoming workshops; planning for the next General Meeting; experiences publishing the latest issue of Translorial with a new Editorial Board and graphic designer.

**Discussed:** strategies for increasing membership and improving outreach; planning for ATA's 2016 conference, which NCTA will host.

### June 2015

**Reported on:** outreach to the translation and interpreting departments of local colleges, and to interpreters; recent and upcoming General Meetings, happy hours, and social events, including potential locations for the summer picnic; and planning for the upcoming workshop on interpreting and another workshop.

**Discussed:** a new graphic designer candidate for Translorial; advertising for Translorial; and potential pictures for the NCTA website.

### August 2015

**Reported on:** updates from NCTA's Administrator; planned actions for new-member outreach; planning for the September and December General Meetings, including the selection of prizes at such meetings; recent and upcoming workshops; the functionality of the Newsflash system; and the availability of the new NCTA membership card via the website.

**Discussed:** NCTA's bookkeeping and tax-preparation needs; ways of efficiently tailoring event invitations to members' geographical locations; and meeting locations for the Editorial Board.



*From the Ethics Director*

## ON TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER ETHICS

BY TIM CASSIDY

Like me, some of you may have only a vague notion of ATA's *Code of Ethics*, a working document that has been in place since 1966, and which was last updated in 2010 with the publication of ATA's *Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*. This code reads as follows:

We the members of the American Translators Association accept as our ethical and professional duty:

1. to convey meaning between people and cultures faithfully, accurately, and impartially;
2. to hold in confidence any privileged and/or confidential information entrusted to us in the course of our work;
3. to represent our qualifications, capabilities, and responsibilities honestly and to always work within them;
4. to enhance those capabilities at every opportunity through continuing education in language, subject field, and professional practice;
5. to act collegially by sharing knowledge and experience;

6. to define in advance by mutual agreement, and to abide by, the terms of all business transactions among ourselves and with others;

7. to ask for and offer due recognition of our work, and compensation commensurate with our abilities; and

8. to endeavor in good faith to resolve among ourselves any dispute that arises from our professional interactions,

mindful that failure to abide by these principles may harm ourselves, our fellow members, the Association, or those we serve.

In reading through this list, most of us can recall situations when such principles came into play. According to NCTA Administrator Juliet Viola Kniffen, our local chapter once had a more active ethics structure, represented by a committee that served mainly to mediate payment disputes. Fortunately, such disputes do not need to be resolved in isolation, and with the advent of our listserv, NCTA members have been able to ask for and receive real-

time feedback on clients' payment practices and other ethical questions. And this forum can be especially useful to members prior to accepting new projects.

Meanwhile, ATA itself emphasizes that it cannot exercise authority over any commercial disputes, and to that effect the association has issued a *Policy of Non-Involvement in Commercial Disputes*. However, ATA does have a grievance process for hearing unresolved violations of its core principles, and though rare, sanctions against violators have occasionally been taken.

But most of all, I just wanted to make you aware that NCTA does offer support and guidance on ethical questions, beginning with the valuable input of veteran members via the listserv, but also including consultation with the Ethics Director. I invite you to contact me directly for any ethical concerns you may have, or simply to learn more about ethics-related topics.

I look forward to continuing discussions about ethics in future issues of *Translorial*. 🌐

## member benefits

NCTA is working hard to promote the association and its members • Make sure you are taking full advantage of your member benefits

Find other members and contact colleagues	Use the search fields to find Individual members under the <i>Find a Linguist</i> tab; click the <i>Find a Corporate Member</i> tab to search for Corporate and Institutional members.
Referral service: all members are listed at ncta.org	NCTA's online referral service makes it easy for new clients to find you. Be sure to keep your listing updated, and take advantage of your listing's file upload section to post your résumé, certificates, and other files that highlight your unique experience and accomplishments. Enliven your referral service listing by uploading a photo of yourself.
Stay in touch	Be sure to join the 250+ members on the NCTA Members-only Listserv (Yahoo!™ Group email list) to quickly receive answers to your questions, exchange information, and read job postings.
NCTA social media	Participate in the LinkedIn group and Facebook page; follow us on Twitter. <a href="#">LinkedIn/NCTA</a>   <a href="#">Twitter @NCTAorg</a>   <a href="#">Facebook/NCTA.org</a>
Network	Meeting colleagues in person can be invaluable. Get to know translators, interpreters and LSPs at workshops, informal social & networking events, and quarterly General Meetings. Go to <a href="#">ncta.org</a> , click the <i>Events</i> tab, and mark your calendar.
Membership card	Your NCTA membership card is now available for download and printing any time you'd like. To access that feature, go to <a href="#">ncta.org</a> and hover your cursor over the <i>Members</i> tab, then select "Update your info" from the drop-down menu. After logging into your record, select "Membership Info" in the blue MY PROFILE box. Simply click the "View/Print My Membership Card" link and voilà!

# WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

The following members joined NCTA between March 4, 2015 through October 30, 2015

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## UNICODES

Find the key to the two-letter codes designating members' working languages at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/26umq4g>.

*From the Events Director*



**FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD COME TO OUR MEETUPS**

BY DIANA DUDGEON

Whether it is a happy hour, lunch social or morning coffee, NCTA events offer a great opportunity to get together with our colleagues and build professional relationships. Don't underestimate the power of being social and consider these five reasons why you should join us at our next gathering:

**1. Networking**

It is not just a buzzword; professional networking may lead to work collaborations, referrals and other business opportunities.

**2. Staying current**

Besides learning what others are doing and how, conversation topics usually include recently read books and articles, industry related events, CAT tools, business practices and marketing strategies.

**3. Increasing your visibility**

A foreign concept in our profession, but a good one for selling. Do you know a guy who knows a guy? They probably met at happy hour.

**4. Getting advice**

Or giving advice. You may find people with tons of experience willing to share their knowledge, and if you are one of them, maybe you'll benefit from a fresh new perspective.

**5. Having fun**

Virtual is overrated. Interface with real people!

Check out our calendar for upcoming events near you and please contact us at [events@ncta.org](mailto:events@ncta.org) if you have any suggestions, new meetup ideas, or would like to host an event in your area. 🌐



*San Francisco Happy Hour, from left to right: Javier Moreno, Tracy Chen, Kathy Partlan and Gilberto Melendez.*



*East Bay Lunch Social, with hosts Matthias and Afaf Steiert.*

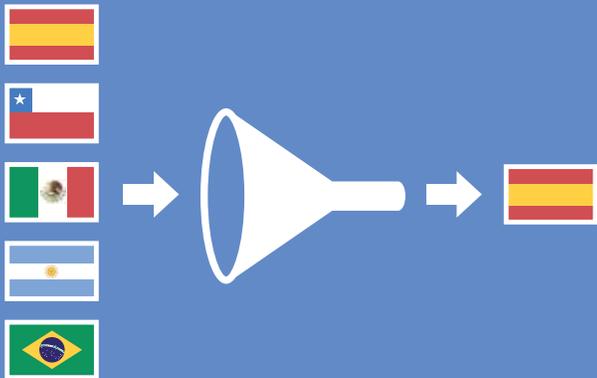


*Rich Wessling bottling wine at the Wessling family farm during the wine tasting in Corralitos organized by Mimi Wessling.*

# Your Studio. Your Way.

Introducing just three of many new features in SDL Trados Studio 2015

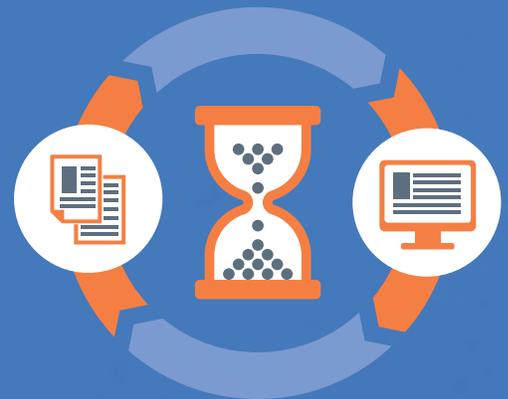
**1** Type less, translate more with SDL AutoSuggest 2.0



Get the most out of your Studio translation memories with AnyTM

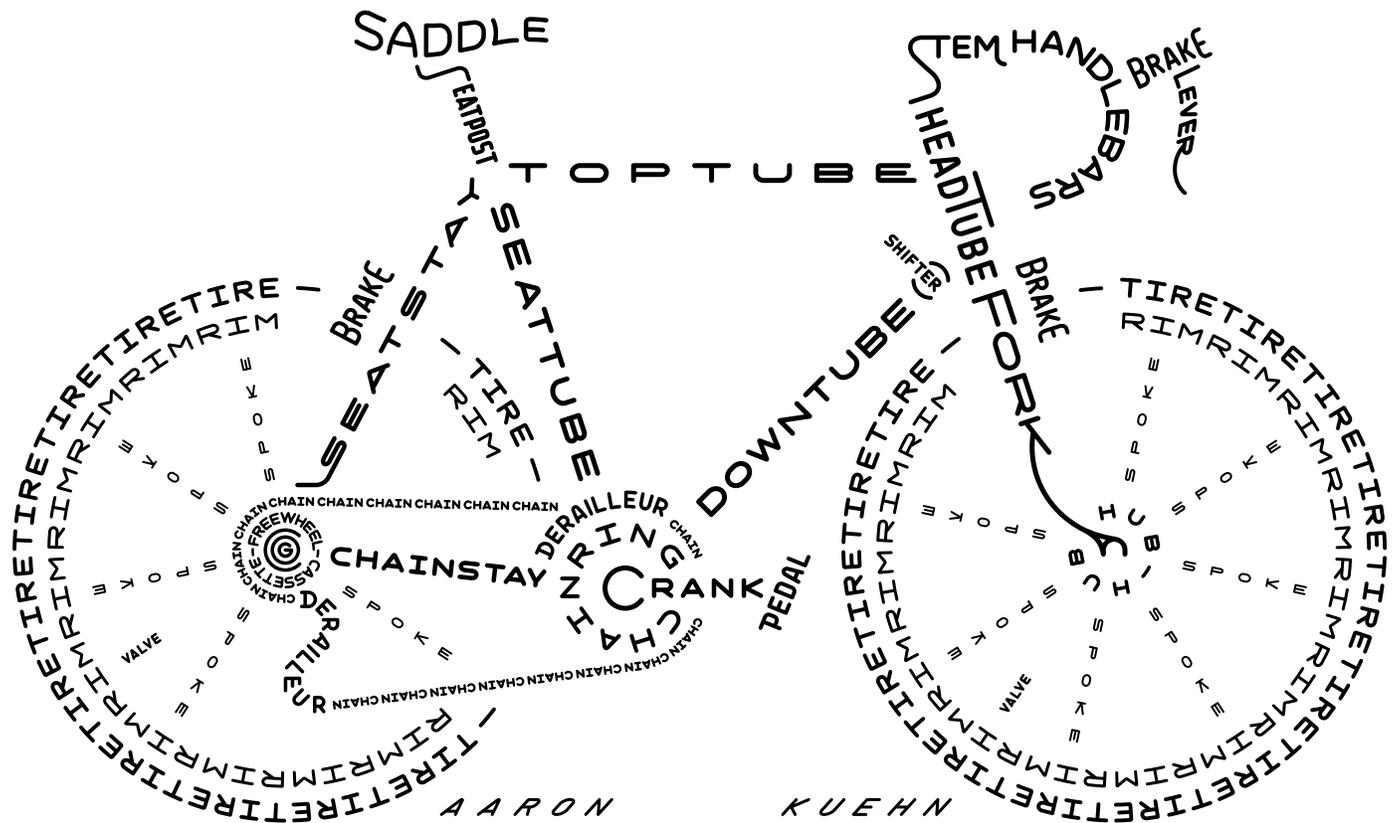
**2**

**3** Update translation memories directly from your target files with Retrofit



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Bicycle Typogram by Aaron Kuehn. [www.aaronkuehn.com](http://www.aaronkuehn.com)

## GIRO DI TRANSLATION

**How translating your passion can lead to a range of benefits, from excitement to tax deductions** BY TUOMAS KOSTIAINEN

I would love to share this experience with you as an example of what can happen as a result of a well-planned, meticulously executed search for direct clients in one's area of expertise and interest. Unfortunately, I can't. What happened to me actually required no effort on my part, but that doesn't mean that one should just sit and wait for dream clients and exciting source texts to miraculously appear, as happened in my case. What I have learned from this experience is that translating material that you are passionate about can make your translation work more enjoyable and rewarding than you (or at least, I!) ever imagined. Add to that a responsive, well-paying direct client that understands translation and you are getting close to a dream translation job. In other words, it's

certainly worth making the effort to search for those dream clients.

When I started working as a translator about 20 years ago, it quickly became obvious that I wouldn't be translating entomology texts, a field in which I had my degrees and was really interested. The closest I got to entomology were some pesticide registration documents and instructions for a mosquito trap. Two decades into my translation career I admit that I rarely got excited about the texts I was asked to translate. Don't get me wrong, I was certainly enjoying my work, but the most exciting part for me (in addition to the pay checks) was the process of translating and the use of Trados (yes, I'm serious about the last one).

Until recently almost all of my translation work had been for translation agencies rather than direct clients. I had always thought that companies needing something translated from English into Finnish needed the same text translated into at least a dozen other languages and would therefore prefer to work with an agency. There were, of course, companies with internal translation departments, but their number seemed to be dwindling. In fact, I worked as a freelancer for a few years for Caterpillar (no real entomology connection here either, in spite of the name) before they decided to outsource their translation work to translation agencies. It was very sad to see what happened to the quality of the translations and how complex the project management became as a

result. (Sad, too, about the effect on my earnings.)

### The coolness factor

Anyhow, because my good translation agency clients kept me so busy, I thought that searching for direct clients was wasted time in my case—no matter what Judy Jenner says. It didn't really occur to me to look for direct clients who could offer me more exciting source texts to translate. Then one day last year, a translation coordinator from Trek Bicycle Company contacted me out of the blue, asking if I would be interested in translating some of their bicycle-related texts from Eng-

*A quality-conscious company understands that the quality of their translated material is a reflection of the company itself.*

lish into Finnish. Bicycling! Why didn't I think of that? In the last 10 years, that had become my main hobby and interest. What could be cooler than translating bike and biking-related texts for a direct client that made quality bikes and accessories and seemingly cared about the quality of their translations as well? (Okay, biking around Italy would be cooler, but I've yet to figure out how this could become an income-generating activity for me.)

After passing the translation test I became part of a two-person Finnish Trek translation team. I was concerned initially because some of the texts turned out to be much more marketing-oriented than I had anticipated. Marketing texts are generally not my field and I have never felt comfortable with the typical American marketing speak. However, these marketing texts sounded different, more relaxed, and I felt like this was marketing I could identify with and feel excited about. Eventu-

ally even the mountain-biking lingo made its way into my comfort zone. I suddenly found myself with an opportunity to express my creative side and to my surprise, discovered that it wasn't so bad after all.

### Access to a whole team

Then there were the more technical texts, such as assembly manuals and bike specs, for which correct terminology and an understanding of bicycle structure and function are crucial. This is exactly the type of situation where a termbase management system like MultiTerm works beautifully. In no time I had collected hundreds of terms and expressions and put them into my newly created Trek termbase. The next step was to combine my termbase with that of the other Finnish translator and get the combined termbase proofed by Trek's Finnish representative, who also proofreads our translations. This really brought home to me the benefit of working with direct clients. You have access to the writers, engineers, in-country reps and other translators either directly or through a very responsive project manager. You are part of the team and feel much more involved in the process and much more responsible for your own end product.

A team of two good translators who understand bikes and biking can certainly produce much better and more consistent translations than a variable group of random translators whose bike-related experience might not have evolved since their first tricycle. A quality-conscious company understands that the quality of their translated material is a reflection of the company itself. After all, why would they spend millions of dollars in localizing their websites into over 20 languages if their translations were so lousy that people might start to wonder if their products were of similar quality?

### Claiming tax deductions

As a side benefit of all this interesting and—at least to me—exciting work, I am now so familiar with bike parts and the latest technological inventions that I can go to a bike shop and have at least a semi-intelligent discussion with the staff. (I just



*Former professional cyclist and Trek pro team member Jens Voigt and the author at a recent biking event in California.*

wish my brain could recall all those terms with the same speed as MultiTerm.) And as if that wasn't benefit enough, I can now deduct my bike maintenance manuals and other related reference materials on my tax return. I did wonder if I could take a deduction for the beautiful \$10,000 Trek Madone road bike I've been dreaming about. After all, I translated its assembly manual and video. But I probably need to talk to my tax advisor about that first.

So, what's the point of this burst of happiness here? No, I'm not trying to convince anyone to start biking or translating bike-related material, but I do want to encourage you to think about subject matters and fields that you are passionate about or really interested in and then start searching for potential clients in those fields. Most likely it's not going to be easy or fast, but when you finally succeed in finding one or two good clients and get to translate texts that really excite you, you will be asking yourself "Why didn't I do this earlier?" 🌐

## GENERAL MEETINGS



## NCTA GENERAL MEETING, MAY 9, 2015

### Featuring a presentation on the future applications of language processing

BY SEAN DODD

NCTA's General Meeting of May 9, 2015, featured a presentation by computational linguistics pioneer Merle Tenney. The meeting was held at Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

President Sonia Wichmann began with announcements, including ATA's School Outreach Contest. New NCTA members introduced themselves and acknowledgments were also given to NCTA's new Editorial Board, whose first issue of *Translorial* had just been published. Refreshments were graciously provided by Venga Global, a translation agency.

In his presentation, Merle Tenney provided a comprehensive history of computer-assisted translation (CAT) from the 1980s to present. The two "hard problems" that computational linguists faced in those early days — machine translation and speech recognition — have largely been solved, and now we find ourselves in a new era of machine learning. "Half of the functionality was in the computer-science problem, not in the linguistics," he said.

In the early 1980s, Mr. Tenney worked on the Automated Language Processing Systems (ALPS), a corporate offshoot of an earlier project at Brigham Young University. ALPS developed a rules-based CAT tool; but over time, it became evident that a rules-based approach was not cost-efficient. In studies comparing machine translation with human-only and computer-assisted translations, the latter has been found to yield the best results in terms of speed, accuracy, and cost.

Mr. Tenney has come to see translation as a specialized kind of writing. And like most professional writing, it requires specialized tools and approaches. The three content genres fueling the translation industry today are: user-generated, such as texts, emails, and social media; community-generated, such as Wikipedia and open-source user manuals; and expert-generated, or specialized texts that professional writers are paid to produce (published articles, product and service listings, TED Talks, etc.).





Early ALPS tools like Select Term, Auto Term, and TransActive, were narrowly focused on discreet linguistic phenomena, such as morphology and meaning. But soon it was clear that a full suite of editing applications was also needed. That led to English word processing software like Spell Check, Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Grammar and Style checkers. These tools were then adapted to source languages as well, a process which yielded new insights into the “characteristic mistakes” that occur when translating in specific language pairs (for example, using present-perfect in many European languages, versus simple past in English).

As early as the 1960s, *Brown’s Corpus* of one million words had been developed, allowing for the computer tagging of all parts of speech and inflections in English. But for a corpus to be useful, the tagging must be consistent. And back then, in the days before Unicode, even computer text itself was not consistent.

IBM contracted ALPS to test and prove quality-assurance tools, and all of this research and experimentation eventually led to the modern field of Natural Language Processing (NLP), the core components of which are: Automated Speech Recognition (ASR), Handwriting Recognition (HWR),



Happy door prize winners, from left to right: Wendy Woo with her new NCTA logo mug, Hany Farag with *Sicilian Proverbs* by Arthur V. Dieli, and Mao Xue with *The Little Book of Social Media Marketing for Translators* by Nicole Y. Adams.



Parts-of-Speech Tagging (POS), Word-Sense Disambiguation (WSD), Text Classification (TC), Full-Text Search (FTS), and Automatic Text Summaries (ATS).

Full-Text Search (FTS) is now used by Internet search engines like Google, and Handwriting Recognition (HWR) was essential for the development of early Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) such as the PALM Pilot — devices that were the precursors of today's smartphones. Even now, HWR is still an important tool for Asian languages whose writing systems are more pictographic than alphabetical.

Today, machine learning has advanced to Natural Language Generation (NLG), whereby computers generate new texts on their own, pulling in data from various sources and assembling it into syntactically correct passages. NLG is currently restricted to highly specialized idioms, such as weather reports, financial reports, and other narrowly structured writing genres. NLG is also limited to short and simple sentences, using a process of “text leveling” to maintain a simplified reading level. And within languages, “dialect adaptation” is used; for example, adapting a text to Brazilian Portuguese versus European Portuguese.

Because translators often work at the sentence level, and only 10% to 15% of the words in a sentence may need to be checked in a dictionary, Mr. Tenney sees an excellent growth opportunity in sentence-level CAT tools. Indeed, Google-Translate already offers such functionality, with users going in and correcting any mistranslated words, thereby improving the accuracy of future machine translations.

For translators and readers alike, there are also more advantageous ways of displaying the source text and the translated text. Microsoft now allows users to click on translated text to see the original L1 source text to which it corresponds. And side-by-side viewing of L1 and L2 texts can help translators detect errors more easily. And speeding up the translation process is now possible at the input level; for example, by using speech recognition in place of keyboarding.

Mr. Tenney concluded by saying that machine translation tools will increasingly help amateurs tackle translations on their own. “Ultimately, all community content, when you break it down, is individual content,” he said. But he acknowledged that professional translators use tools that are quite different from those of amateurs,

and that amateurs translate only what they want. “Don't get panicked about people who are doing your job at some other level,” he said. “They're probably not doing your job. Nobody wants to translate the licensing agreement.”

**THANK YOU, NCTA VOLUNTEERS** for hosting networking events and assisting with refreshments at General Meetings and workshops:

Hielyna Araujo, Marie Brotnov, Peg Flynn, Srinapa Hummel, Clarissa Laguardia, Kazuyo Levitan, Rita McGaughy, Javier Moreno-Pollarolo, Jacki Noh, Thomas Shou, Marta Sprague, Afaf Steiert, Mimi Wessling, Carolyn Yohn

### MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

**Anne Milano Appel's** translation of *Blindly* by Claudio Magris won the *Italian Prose in Translation Award* at the Oct. 2015 ALTA (American Literary Translators Association) conference in Tucson, Arizona.



## INTERPRETING SUCCESS

### Getting Started as an Interpreter, a workshop held in San Francisco on June 13, 2015

BY CYNTHIA WHITEHEAD, J.D.

In Brussels, I saw interpreters as the high-wire athletes of European Union meetings – nonchalantly juggling abstruse technical terms like rare fruits in their rows of darkened glass cubicles at the side of the room, albeit occasionally interrupting the flow of oratory to ask the speaker to slow down.

As a lawyer and a fairly new translator and interpreter in the Bay Area, I came to Nick Zacherl's half-day workshop certain that interpreting in California would be at least as intimidating and challenging as in Berlin, Brussels, or Nairobi.

However, by the end of the session, we were all feeling confident enough to share our experiences, to critically discuss the different roles of interpreters as linguistic mediators, and to begin exploring the extensive resources provided in the presentation.

Nick began by describing the interpreter's general role: "A successful interpreter is the living bridge between the parties." Rene Magritte's painting *The Pilgrim* served as a symbolic image of the interpreter; a faceless presence in the room.

Later, we got a clear, detailed, and entertaining overview of three major interpreting fields; medical, legal, and conference. Medical interpreting is often the place where new interpreters get started. They move on to legal interpreting and may ultimately do conference interpreting for businesses and government bodies.

#### Medical Interpreting

If you like working with people, you will like medical interpreting, a field that tends to be low stress and cooperative in nature, with relaxed dress codes and an emphasis

on helping others. On the downside though, it tends to pay less than other kinds of interpreting, and the subject matter can become a little repetitive, as the same patients are seen for the same kinds of appointments.

Non-certified medical interpreters typically start at \$25 per hour, finding jobs through agencies and by word of mouth. According to Nick, the top two certification exams for medical interpreting — offered by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI) and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) — are easy, and obtaining such certification can raise one's income to the \$45 to \$90 range, which is decent, but still less than legal or conference interpreting.

Medical interpreting is subject to the federal Health Insurance Portability and Ac-

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

countability Act (HIPAA), meaning that interpreters need to understand regulations concerning patient confidentiality and informed consent.

### Legal Interpreting

The market for legal interpreting is broad and includes depositions, qualified medical examinations, and various kinds of court interpreting, ranging from the humble informalities of a local small-claims court to the grandeur and spectacle of federal appeals courts. Sometimes certification is required, but often it is not.

Legal interpreting is challenging, requiring specialized training about the law, but usually without the benefit of law school. Earnings can reach \$1,000 a day for seasoned interpreters, but most new entrants begin at \$50 to \$100 per hour. Travel is common, and mileage and per diem allowances can add significantly to a legal interpreter's income. It is common for legal interpreters to charge minimum 4-hour fees for each assignment.

The work can offer a sense of fulfillment as cases reach their final verdict, but frustrations creep in when trials are delayed or sidetracked by legal motions. With liberty and justice at stake, interpreters often become heavily invested in their work, and learning to separate one's ego from the job is challenging. But at other times, legal interpreters can feel insignificant and overpowered by the sheer weight of the justice system itself; just another cog in the wheel.

Nick also considers the court interpreter certification exam to be easy, though many candidates fail due to improper study and preparation. Information about certification at the state and federal levels can be obtained from the National Consortium for Language Access in the Courts, the National Center for State Courts, and the California Court Interpreter Exam Information website.

*With liberty and justice at stake, interpreters often become heavily invested in their work, and learning to separate one's ego from the job is challenging.*

### Conference Interpreting

Do you want to work for the United Nations or its agencies, the U.S. State Department, the World Bank, international NGOs, multinational corporations, or professional conferences? Then you should train as a conference interpreter.

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One of the world's top training institutes is right here in California. The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey offers translation and interpreting degrees and short courses, including conference interpreting and community interpreting. According to its website, the Geneva-based International Association of Conference Interpreters with over 3,000 members, is the only global association of conference interpreters.

The benefits of this type of interpreting include variety, verbal stimulation, high income, specialist knowledge, flexibility, travel, and international exposure. But it is also stressful and isolating work, and

it can be especially humbling for those working at the "bottom of the totem pole."

### Staying Happy and Healthy

Interpreting is often strenuous and exhausting, so it is important to know your limits and to work within them. Some ways of maintaining fluency and quality are using notebooks to jot down names, numbers, and special terms, preparing a subject-matter glossary in advance of the assignment, or keeping bilingual dictionaries and glossaries on a tablet computer. Internet access that does not depend on local wi-fi can also be helpful.

Interpreters often have to make trade-offs, weighing high income against monoto-

nous routines, or socially connected work against low pay. Some kinds of interpreting are more intellectually stimulating than others, and some is more socially beneficial. Many interpreters find value in helping people who are comparatively powerless, but they also struggle with the ethical constraints of the profession, and the human factor is a constant challenge as interpreters continually adapt their interpersonal skills to the full range of human behaviors and experiences. 🌐

## WORDFAST PRO FOR BEGINNERS WORKSHOP, MONTEREY, MAY 2, 2015

On May 2, 2015, NCTA held two Wordfast Pro workshops at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Taught by Wordfast trainer John Di Rico, the first workshop, held in the morning, was aimed at beginners and focused on setting up and using the basic features of Wordfast Pro. The second workshop, held in the afternoon, was geared towards intermediate users who wanted to learn some of the tool's more advanced features. This was the first time NCTA had held a workshop at MIIS and to celebrate the occasion, the event was followed by a cheese and wine "social," sponsored by Wordfast and attended by the participants and a dozen or so MIIS students.



*Judit Marin, Membership Director*



*Working and networking at the hands-on NCTA Wordfast Pro Workshop in Monterey with presenter John Di Rico.*



## ATA EXAM PREP WORKSHOP

Sean Dodd, ATA-certified translator (Spanish>English) presented the ATA Exam Prep Workshop in sunny Sacramento on August 29 BY ROBERT FINNEGAN

### The language-neutral portion of the workshop

The venue for the well-attended event was the Capsity Coworking Office Space. Most participants were seasoned translators who had signed up for both the general preparation workshop and the language-specific one that followed.

Sean gave us a little of his background and how he studied for and passed the ATA certification exam on his first attempt. He stressed that taking the exam is not a gateway into the profession but rather a milestone recognizing the culmination of professional experience necessary to pass.

He went over the format of the exam, how those taking it receive an envelope with three passages: A, general subject matter; B, technical, scientific or medical; and C, legal, business or financial. Everyone has to take the A passage and then choose one of the other two passages, either B or C.

He also talked about the kinds of things graders look for – the translations must be: complete, accurate, appropriate and natural. We discussed each of these. He also cautioned participants about “over-translating.” If there are terminology or grammatical alternatives, you should usually stick to the safer, more conservative choice. A good tip!

We also discussed a number of common challenges, such as acronyms, concordance, sequential adjectives, English nouns that require phrases to translate (“heavy nouns,” like DUI or felony), noun clusters, double negatives, passive and subjunctive tenses, rhetoric and much more. Participation was lively and there were examples and discussion on each of them.

Then Sean moved on to discussing test-taking techniques and specific challenges posed by the ATA exam, which he summa-

rized as: limited time (3 hours, 2 passages); format (handwritten, pen/pencil and paper) and limited reference material (“bring your own,” paper dictionaries, glossaries, etc.). He broke each down and gave tips on how to address them, always inviting questions and discussion.

Sean emphasized time management and quality assurance as key factors for success. He gave a sample text to translate that helped participants measure their speed – how long they should take to translate each passage – and how much time ideally should be reserved for quality assurance.

He stressed that, during the exam, you should resist getting up and leaving if you finish ahead of time. Go back over your texts as many times as necessary and use all of the time given you. There is no reward for finishing early.

Sean reminded everyone that only translators who have been ATA members for at least one month can apply to take the exam and one must apply one month in advance in order to take it. This means that anyone wishing to sit the October exam would have to register in early September.

Even though all points were covered and there was a lot of discussion, Sean managed the workshop time so that it ended in time for talking to colleagues and a snack before the following language-specific workshop.

### The language-specific portion of the workshop (Spanish<>English)

While the language-neutral portion was full of good advice in general, and participants were able to discuss questions, the Spanish<>English Exam Preparation Workshop was much denser and was mainly composed of practical exercises and discussion. Sean had sent out practice tests beforehand

with short idiomatic phrases and longer texts to translate from and into English before the workshop. He later corrected the documents and sent them back with detailed feedback and individualized advice and his opinion as to whether or not one was ready to take the ATA exam. In my opinion, this in itself was worth the course fee.

At the workshop itself, the instructor handed out further texts for translation, both into and from Spanish, and gave us time to translate them. Each passage was about one page long, similar to or slightly longer than an ATA exam passage. The workshop format was to receive a passage, everyone translate as much as possible in the allotted time – taking time to review – then discuss the passage and its challenges, and repeat this process.

When the time was up, he asked how much of it the participants had finished. Then he explained that whoever had gotten to paragraph 2 or 3 was producing X number of words per minute and would have plenty of time to complete the ATA exam and review their work. He stressed that participants should practice to where they could translate the practice texts with time to review. Whoever had completed less would have to pick up the pace in a real test setting.

Sean would present his rendition of the text and the participants discussed terminology choices and strategies. The process of repeating this a number of times was enlightening. You could actually feel the pace one would need during a real exam, working diligently but not hurriedly. I personally was struck by the high quality of the discussions and of the competence of the other participants. A very full and informative day and well worth the investment in time and money. 🌐

## CLIENT DEVELOPMENT BY NOEMI GONZALEZ

I became an independent translator and interpreter after working years as a bilingual investigator and manager. The moment I decided to make a career change, this was a natural choice.

However, despite completing an interpretation certificate program and attending myriad workshops and other preparatory work, I was inadequately prepared for becoming an *independent* language professional.

This transition represented an entirely new set of challenges. Ensuring I had the right skill set was relatively easier than developing a good set of practices for establishing a solid client base.

I have gathered experiences from colleagues who entered this profession with different backgrounds and credentials. Some have degrees in linguistics or a related area. Others completed an interpretation certificate program. Still others entered the field organically; for instance, language teachers and bilingual healthcare providers.

A common theme among us all was the void that we faced in the area of client development early in our careers as independent language professionals. Here is what I have learned from my colleagues and from my own journey:

### Study and Understand the Client's Needs

For clients to choose you as their regular service provider, they need to understand how you will fulfill their needs better than anyone else, not just because you are skilled in your niche but also because you understand their specific concerns.

Be an active listener and ask questions: Who is the client trying to reach? Why? What is the client selling? Try to look beyond the obvious.

### Educate to Gain and Retain Clients

After analyzing the clients' needs, educate them on the basic premises of good translation and interpretation, showing how your approach will optimize the results. Keep it basic. The point is to profile yourself as a capable and reliable professional.

Use proven resources available online. Look no further than the American Translators Association's *Getting It Right*, which features two written resources for translation and interpreting clients. If you want to personalize this approach, create and share your own guidelines or standards, matching them to your analysis of the client's needs. This separates you from the pack.

### Find the Balance between Assertiveness and Humility

Developing these skills is quite useful for interpreters, because they are constantly struggling to balance efficiency, optimal working conditions, best practices, and codes of ethics. Assertiveness in establishing the parameters for optimal conditions and a fair implementation of the required standards must be tempered by phrasing these needs in a way that is mindful and respectful of limitations of the client's resources.

Above all, be a problem-solver. For every problem you point out, try to identify one or more possible solutions.

### Foster a Community of Loyal Professionals around You

As independent professionals, we rely heavily on trust. Occasionally, when working through an agency, clients may say, "We liked your work. Can you work directly for us?"

The answer is always no, because that would be a conflict of interest (even if there is no non-compete agreement with that agency).

Thank the client for their show of appreciation and ask them to contact the agency to express their preference.

The same applies to requests made while covering for a colleague. In the long run, this is better for business.

### Be a Mentor to Newcomers

There is no greater personal and professional growth than when you provide focused guidance and support to someone who is beginning their own journey. You can impact that person, and our field, in marvelous and unimaginable ways.

These practices have made my career in translation and interpretation more fulfilling. And they've also helped solidify my client base. A client recently wrote to the Language Service Provider (LSP) agency through which I was working:

*She is an incredible translator and is very easygoing. Our clients really appreciate her relaxed ability to understand them and translate [sic] quickly and efficiently. And I trust her to tell me when she misses something and we have to slow down so she doesn't miss anything.*

As trained professionals, we know that this is not extraordinary – that it is just what we do on a daily basis. Real client awareness and development happens when they learn to expect that too. That is when the magic happens. 🌟



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## IN THE FIELD WITH DAVID HENDRICKS

**This Madrid-based translator takes a break from diaper duty to talk to Translorial** BY DIANA DUDGEON

*David Hendricks joined the U.S. Navy in 1989 and studied Russian at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). Later, while stationed in Spain, he taught himself Spanish. After the Navy, David worked in film translation and subtitling. He moved back to Spain in 1998, taking a translation job at a Madrid-based software company. Eventually, in 2005, David went into business for himself, founding DCHR Translations. He and his wife live in Madrid, and this interview coincided with the birth of their baby boy.*

### What's with all the languages?

I discovered my knack for languages with German in high school. I signed up for the class not out of interest, but as a graduation requirement. But before long I realized that I was pretty good at it, and I was especially fascinated with the cultural learning that comes along with language learning. I think that is the driving force behind learning new languages to this day. If I find a culture that interests me, I want to know at least something about the language that drives that culture. The case

with Russian was a bit different. When I took the military aptitude tests, they saw my potential for learning languages and offered to send me to DLI. Russian seemed to be the most interesting of the languages offered, so that's what I chose.

### Tell me about the Defense Language Institute.

I really enjoyed my experience at DLI. It was intense and difficult at times, but rewarding in the end. We had six hours of class, five days a week. The first day



*“I like memoQ because the tool reflects the people behind it: straightforward yet ingeniously creative, and truly committed to making their users' lives easier.”*

Susan Starling, German-English translator  
Sarasota, FL

of class, we learned half of the Cyrillic alphabet and a long list of fairly simple vocabulary words that could be formed with those letters. The instructors were all native speakers, and one of my favorite teachers used to speak proudly of his participation in the *Great Patriotic War*, World War II. He showed us his Hero of the Soviet Union medal, but then spoke of his discontent with the U.S.S.R. after the war, and how he had come to the United States. Some of his first impressions included standing in the aisle at an American supermarket and weeping over the vast selection of mustards available to him. A language without its speakers and without its culture is nothing, so it was great to experience people like that.

**At work, you were chosen over native Spanish speakers, which is impressive for a self-taught language. What does that take? Navy discipline or just plain aptitude?**

I don't think there is a magic formula. For me, it helped that I read in Spanish constantly, especially at the beginning. Reading is very important for locking in spelling and grammar, even in your native language. And maybe that's partly why: I was competing with native Spanish speakers who were living in the U.S., likely spending a great deal of time perfecting their English, and maybe spending less time reading and writing in Spanish. In situations like that, even your native language can get a bit rusty or outdated, making it possible for an "outsider" who has the rules and usage more fresh in his mind to come along and out-perform the native. That's something I have to be very careful about, living here in Spain: I have to force myself to keep my English current and polished.

**How is it being an *autónomo* in Spain, compared with freelancing in the U.S.?**

Being self-employed in Spain has its pros and cons. Financially, it is infinitely better than working for a company, as salaries

here are terrible. At my last in-house job, I was in charge of coordinating the translation department. Because of that responsibility, my salary was better than average by Spanish standards, though still not great. As a freelancer though, my average monthly earnings are about three times more than that salary.

Freelancing may be easier here than in the U.S., in terms of health coverage and retirement. My monthly *autónomo* tax includes full public health coverage for myself and my entire family, as well as a contribution to my public pension. But translation services here are subject to a 21% Value Added Tax. That sometimes makes it difficult to charge decent rates.

**Entrepreneurship is huge in the U.S., both economically and culturally. Is it as important in Spain?**

It's important to differentiate between *autónomo* and *empresedor*. Self-employment, along with the civil service sector, is extremely important to the Spanish economy. If it weren't for people starting their own businesses, Spain's already high unemployment rate would be catastrophic. But for me, an entrepreneur

is someone who will try something new or different; who will create something from the ground up. That's something that scares most Spaniards. Self-employment here is primarily seen in the hospitality industry or in the established trades and professions.

**Any project you would like to highlight at this time?**

One of my favorite projects to date was translating one of the most recent releases of the *Castlevania* video game saga. What I liked most about that project was collaborating with my then-12-year-old son. He was my QA guy for a lot of the gaming terminology. I remember one particular place where I had written an onscreen instruction for the vampire character, phrasing it as, "You must choose the shape of a bat to cross the bridge." Carlos was beside himself: "Seriously, dad? You don't think 'Select bat form to cross the bridge' sounds more natural?" He was right, of course. Not everyone gets to work side by side with their kid like that! 🌐

## Call for Writers

*Translorial* is looking for writers to contribute original content or to cover NCTA events. This is an excellent volunteer opportunity that can help give you professional exposure while also earning CEU points for maintaining your ATA certification.

For more information, please email:

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## NCTA NOVEMBER 2015 TO JANUARY 2016 CALENDAR

<b>NOVEMBER 4</b>	NCTA Happy Hour (San Francisco)
<b>NOVEMBER 4-7</b>	American Translators Association Annual Conference (Miami)*
<b>NOVEMBER 6</b>	South Bay NCTA Happy Hour (San Jose)
<b>NOVEMBER 12</b>	East Bay Lunch Social (Berkeley)
<b>NOVEMBER 14</b>	Workshop: Trados Studio 2015 for beginners (San Francisco)*
<b>DECEMBER 5</b>	General Meeting (San Francisco)
<b>JANUARY 10</b>	New Year's Brunch
<b>JANUARY 23</b>	Workshop: Voice Training for Interpreters and Voice-over Talent (San Francisco)*
<b>FEBRUARY 20</b>	General Meeting (San Francisco)

*\*Pre-registration and fee required to attend.*

*For details and updates, click on the Events tab at [www.ncta.org](http://www.ncta.org)*

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