TRANSLATING FOR THE OPERATIC STAGE
Membership Has Its Benefits: Are You Making the Most of Them?

If you’re receiving this issue of The ATA Chronicle, it means that you’ve renewed your ATA membership for 2018. Thank you! ATA would not be “the voice of interpreters and translators” without every one of our 10,500+ members. Since my term as ATA president began, I’ve been trying to spread the word about the many benefits of being an ATA member, including some “hidden” benefits that you may not yet be taking advantage of. Here’s my 2018 checklist for making the most of your ATA membership:

Directory Profile
www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories
If you don’t have a listing in our online directory, create one today. If you do have a listing, review it at least once a year. Add new accomplishments and specializations, and make sure that your contact information is up to date. Remember that our new directory format allows you to upload your résumé and a photo if you wish.

Certification
www.atanet.org/certification/index.php
ATA certification enhances your professional status and—according to our most recent compensation survey—helps you earn more money. With the price of ATA’s certification exam set to go up significantly in 2019—in order to bring the Certification Program’s revenue closer to our expenses—2018 is a great year to set a goal of becoming ATA-certified.

Credentialed Interpreter Designation
What if you’re an interpreter and not interested in translator certification? For you, we have the CI (Credentialed Interpreter) designation, a recent addition to our directory profile options. If you are credentialed as a legal, medical, or conference interpreter by an ATA-approved credentialing entity, apply for CI status today!

The ATA Chronicle
www.atanet.org/chronicle-online
You’re taking advantage of a key member benefit right now by reading The ATA Chronicle, our flagship publication and winner of the International Federation of Translators’ 2017 award for Best Periodical. Remember that you can now choose whether to receive The ATA Chronicle in electronic form, print form, or both.

You make a significant investment in your ATA membership—make sure that you’re taking advantage of all that we have to offer.

Divisions
www.atanet.org/divisions/about_divisions.php
Membership in any of ATA’s 20 divisions is included in your membership. Our divisions—focused on languages, specializations, and areas of practice—serve as a place for members to land within our large association. Membership in a division allows you to connect with like-minded colleagues on email lists, social media groups, and in person. To view a list of ATA’s divisions and learn how to join them, see the link listed above.

Webinars
www.atanet.org/webinars/index.php
ATA is your source for professional development specific to the translation and

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Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns and more can now be found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!
Outside the French Quarter: The “Other” New Orleans

ATA’s 59th Annual Conference is set for October 24–27, 2018, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Planning for ATA59 is well underway. Distinguished speakers have been invited to submit proposals, and session proposals for a variety of languages and specializations are coming in on pace with last year. Speakers come from all over the world to share their experience and expertise with attendees. ATA59 is shaping up to be another great conference for professional translators and interpreters who want to hone their professional skills, stay abreast of changes in the profession, reunite with cherished colleagues and make new acquaintances, and, of course, network with potential clients. If you need some inspiration, visit the ATA58 homepage (www.atanet.org/conf/2017) to see videos and photos from last year, watch a sample session from the Virtual Conference, and much more. I hope to see you in New Orleans where we’ll “let the good times roll!”

Speaking of New Orleans, when most people hear the name, they probably think of the French Quarter and Bourbon Street. They envision nightclubs, restaurants, and partying on the street, but there’s a lot more to New Orleans than just the French Quarter. Here’s some information about the “Other” New Orleans to help you plan your visit during ATA59. (See the box on page 5 for links.)

First, 2018 marks New Orleans’ Tricentennial, so there will be celebratory events throughout the year. Several infrastructure projects have been launched to make the city even more inviting. A number of green spaces in the city have been improved, a new terminal is scheduled to open at the Louis Armstrong Airport in February, and work has begun on a $6 million renovation of the French Quarter surface and underground infrastructure, including converting some sections to pedestrian zones.

Before I can tell you what’s outside the French Quarter, you should know where it is. “The Quarter” as locals call it, comprises a roughly 14 x 6 block area bordering the Mississippi River that’s the oldest section of New Orleans. From the river on the south side, it extends north to Rampart Street (Louis Armstrong Park) and is bounded on the east by Esplanade Avenue and on the west by Canal Street. Our conference hotel, the New Orleans Marriott, is located at the western edge of the French Quarter at 555 Canal Street.

Nearby points of interest include the St. Louis Cemeteries and their above-ground vaults, of which Cemetery No. 1 is the oldest and most famous. It’s located just north of the French Quarter and is the resting place of Homer Plessy, the French-speaking Creole plaintiff in Plessy vs. Ferguson, a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case challenging segregation. You’ll also find the grave of Marie Leveau, the renowned voodoo priestess. You can only enter No. 1 with a registered tour operator, but the other cemeteries don’t charge admission. Cemetery No. 2, located three blocks from Cemetery No. 1, was consecrated in 1823 and is the resting place of many early jazz musicians and notable New Orleanians from the 19th century. Cemetery No. 3 is located about two miles from the French Quarter, and the tombs there are generally more ornate than in No. 1 or 2.

The Audubon Aquarium of the Americas is located about five blocks from the New Orleans Marriott on the river. The 400,000-gallon Gulf of Mexico exhibit is home to 15,000 aquatic animals, and you can also walk through a 30-foot long Caribbean Reef tunnel. Tickets are $29.95 plus tax. Audubon Park, home to the Audubon Zoo and Audubon Nature Institute, is located in the Garden District. In addition to the thousands of animals in natural habitats, the park is a beautiful green space with oak trees and lagoons.

New Orleans is home to more than 45 museums encompassing various aspects of art, history, and culture. You may be surprised to learn that TripAdvisor rates the National World War II Museum as the top tourist destination in New Orleans and the #2 museum, not only in the U.S. but the entire world. Its immersive exhibits and multimedia
experiences, including the stirring 4D “cinematic experience” Beyond All Boundaries, narrated by executive producer Tom Hanks, bring to life the American experience on the home front and the battlefields of WWII.

If art is more your style, try the New Orleans Museum of Art and Sculpture Garden at City Park (an attraction by itself) or one of the countless art galleries on Royal Street in the French Quarter, Julia Street in the Arts District, Magazine Street in the Garden District, or St. Claude in the Bywater.

Got a “desire” for an extremely inexpensive tour of the city? Then take a ride on the St. Charles Streetcar Line, the oldest continuously operated streetcar in the world. For just $1.25 each way (exact change required, or buy a one- or three-day pass online), ride on a mahogany seat with brass fittings and travel 13 miles—from Canal Street in the Central Business District (CBD), around the Riverbend along St. Charles Avenue Pass under majestic live oaks and past numerous antebellum mansions, historic monuments, and through the grounds of the Audubon Zoological Gardens. There’s plenty of shopping and restaurants along the way as well. The Canal Streetcar Line can take you from the New Orleans Marriott through the CBD into Mid-City, a neighborhood featuring many restaurants and bars near the historic cemeteries. A secondary line can take you to City Park mentioned earlier. If you don’t want to walk, the Riverfront Line will take you from the Aquarium to the French Market District.

New Orleans loves festivals! It seems like there’s a different festival almost every week, celebrating everything from jazz music to literature and film and, of course, culinary festivals that pay homage to Po-Boys, seafood, and even fried chicken. There are 16 festivals (yes, 16!), scheduled for the month of October 2018 alone. The details for most are not yet available, but they include Oktoberfest, the Blues and BBQ Fest, Carnival Latino, the LGBT Halloween Fest, a “Mac and Cheese” Fest, and for ATA President Corinne McKay, a Beignet Festival. (See the link for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and Foundation in the sidebar.) These are just a few of the multitude of things to see and do “Outside the Quarter.” For more information about New Orleans in general and things to do outside ATA’s Annual Conference, visit the New Orleans Official Guide online.
Japan Is Cracking Down On Illegal Translation Groups

"Japanese police are coming down hard on a supposed underground ring that’s working to translate and post Japanese content on social media for free, which as you can imagine is costing billions of dollars for Japan and the companies that create this media."

Read more—https://www.geek.com/anime/japan-is-cracking-down-on-illegal-translation-groups-1730664/

Why Can’t I Raise My Rates? | John Milan

I searched the article expecting to find the word “efficient” or “efficiency,” but to my surprise they were absent.

The article states: “Let’s assume that said freelancers are already working as many hours as possible and producing as many words per hour as they can.” Why would we want to assume that? A translator can always sharpen his or her skills, acquire better tools, and organize in other ways, and, as a result, make more money without raising the rates.

I learned this principle many years ago. I hired a Cuban Mariel refugee and his son to remodel my house in Miami. I watched in total amazement how skillfully and efficiently they worked, without wasting any time. They produced the same, if not better, quality than their competitors.

They were cheaper and more efficient than the competition. For that reason they made more money and had more jobs. As far as I know they never had a shortage of remodeling projects.

Raising rates will negatively affect the volume of translation request.

That is my answer to the question posed in the article title.

Risto Siikarla | Boca Raton, Florida

Copyediting for Stand-Out Style in Any Translation | Carolyn Yohn

I just read Carolyn Yohn’s article on copyediting and translation. I wish that translation schools had courses like this! Always refreshing to see translators who understand this part of the craft. Great piece!

Amy Butcher | Montreal, Canada

FROM THE PRESIDENT  Continued from page 2

interpreting professions. One of my favorite ATA resources is our extensive library of pre-recorded webinars, available on-demand on ATA’s website at a discounted price for our members. From translation memory software to endocrinology to the 21st-century interpreting market, we have a webinar—professional development that comes to you—for nearly any topic you would want to learn about.

Member Discounts

www.atanet.org/member_provider

We also offer a variety of discounts on professional services for our members, including:

- Membership in the Organization of American States Staff Federal Credit Union
- Discounted UPS express delivery services
- Collections and accounts receivable services
- Discounted credit card processing services
- Professional liability insurance through Alliant, a Lloyd’s of London underwriter

You make a significant investment in your ATA membership—make sure that you’re taking advantage of all that we have to offer. If you feel that ATA membership is an asset to you as a language professional, tell a colleague who isn’t yet an ATA member. And if you have suggestions about how we can better meet your needs in the future, tell me! I’m always eager for your feedback at president@atanet.org.
Board Meeting Highlights

The American Translators Association’s Board of Directors met January 20–21, 2018, in Miami, Florida. The meeting followed the Board’s Annual Strategy Day.

The Annual Strategy Day provides an opportunity for the Board to discuss in-depth aspects of the Association and the translation and interpreting professions. Strategy Day is coordinated and led by ATA’s president-elect, who, by office, is the chair of the Governance and Communications Committee. This year, President-elect Ted Wozniak guided the Board discussions through various issues pertaining to membership, including targeting new members and retaining current members. In addition, Treasurer John Milan provided an overview of ATA’s finances. Strategy Day discussions do not necessarily result in concrete plans for action, but they do help the Board come to a consensus on issues that serve as the foundation for working through complex options.

Here are some highlights from the Board meeting.

Certification Exam Fee Increase: The Board approved to increase the fee for the certification exam to $525, effective January 1, 2019. The last increase was in 2008. The increase will bring the price of the exam closer to covering our costs. There are no changes to the price of practice tests or reviews.

Opening the Certification Exam to Non-Members: The Board revisited the Board motion from 2015 outlining prerequisites that must be met before ATA can open the certification exam to non-members. The Board consensus was that we should continue to work toward “decoupling” (i.e., no longer requiring ATA membership to sit for the certification exam). At its

next meeting, the Board has agreed to review plans and tentative timelines, as well as further analyze how decoupling may effect current certified members.

Nominating and Leadership Development Committee Appointment Approved: The Board approved the appointment of the members of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. They are Past President David Rumsey, Lucy Gunderson (Divisions Committee chair), David Stephenson (Certification Committee chair), Connie Prener (a long-time grader), and Milena Calderari-Waldron (a certified interpreter and advocate for interpreters). The committee reviews and selects the slate of candidates for the elections each fall.

Additional Appointments: The Board also approved:

- The appointments of Roxana Dinu, Kathryn German, Natalie Higgins, and Ana-Cecilia Rosado to the Ethics Committee.
- The appointments of Diana Arbiser and Elizabeth Essary to the Membership Committee.
- The American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation Board of Directors: Marian S. Greenfield (president), Jennifer DeCamp, Geoff Koby, Corinne McKay, and Caitilin Walsh.

The Board meeting summary is posted online. The minutes will be posted once they are approved at the next Board meeting. Past meeting summaries and minutes are also posted online at www.atanet.org/membership/minutes.php. The next Board meeting is set for April 14–15, 2018, in Alexandria, Virginia. As always, the meeting is open to all members, and members are encouraged to attend.
Nine Ways to Stand Out in the Translation and Interpreting Industry

By looking at other industries and what they do differently, I quickly found some trends and items I could implement in my own small agency that would shake things up a bit. I saw results almost immediately.

One of the things I really dedicated time to in 2017 was looking at what I could learn from other industries—those totally unrelated to translation and interpreting (T&I). What I found was eye-opening and intriguing.

I had been feeling like I was in a bit of a rut. I had also been hearing the same tired complaints from colleagues (no offense!) about how it can be difficult to educate potential clients, close deals, and grow in an industry where it seems like the large corporations are eating up the little guys. I knew there had to be a way to change this mindset and look at it from a different perspective in order for smaller guys like us to thrive.

By looking at other industries and what they do differently, I quickly found some trends and items I could implement in my own small agency that would shake things up a bit. I saw results almost immediately.

Whether you’re a freelancer or a small agency owner, looking to other industries for inspiration and tips can provide you with innovative ways of doing things in your own business. Here are nine things I learned and was able to implement simply by looking outside the T&I industry and being open to different ways of doing things.

1. You don’t have to do things the same way as everyone else in your industry. I hear a lot of professionals in our industry making comments about how they feel like they have to do something a certain way because that’s just the way it’s done or has always been done. It turns out that this thing they think they should be doing is actually not working for them at all. If that’s the case, I say “Stop it.” If you spend time and energy on something you’re really not excited about, it’s going to show. Instead, do something different. Do something that will drive you closer to your goals, even if it means that you’ll stand out from the rest of those in your profession. In fact, I would say standing out is a good thing, especially if you feel like the market for your specialization and/or language pair is oversaturated.

2. Make your industry and your work attractive to your clients, especially if it’s a topic that requires client education. You might think, “But I’m a translator. My work isn’t ‘attractive.’” I really beg to differ. What we do in our industry is exciting, and it’s different every day. How many people can say that about their work? Think about it. You go to a networking event, or even a random social gathering, and somebody asks you what you do for a living. When you tell them, “I’m a patent translator,” do their eyes glaze over? If so, it might be how you’re portraying what you do. The next time you’re asked what you do for a living, tell people how you help your clients do business in other countries, or how you connect people across languages who otherwise would never be able to communicate with one another. Paint a picture. And while you’re working on your elevator speech, think about your web presence, too.

Not only is it important to relay what you do verbally in a way that others
Blogging is extremely important in this digital age. Of course, there are other mediums that are going to really make up a lot of how people consume content in the future, like video, but don’t underestimate the power of writing and having a regularly updated blog. Having a blog where you share content regularly is very good for search engine optimization, and it can show clients that you’re an expert at what you do. If you do choose to blog for colleagues or about industry-specific topics, create a separate blog. Don’t mix the message you want to send to your clients with the one that’s meant for colleagues already familiar with what you do.

5. Create other income streams besides your primary one. This is something that a small handful of translators and interpreters I know do very well, but only a handful. Why is that? Because the majority of translators and interpreters I know are too busy translating and interpreting. This isn’t a criticism of what most professionals in our industry do. It’s merely an observation that if more of us put time and effort into creating other income streams, the conversation about rates and certain types of markets might very well be a different one. Looking at how professionals in other industries do this can be a real eye-opener. Again, take a close look at your skills and shoot to do something different than everyone else in the industry. You just might surprise yourself.

Whether you’re a freelancer or a small agency owner, looking to other industries for inspiration and tips can provide you with innovative ways of doing things in your own business.

6. Think in terms of strategy and not just what you think you have to offer. This is perhaps one of the best pieces of business advice I’ve ever received. Think about this carefully. Our clients hire us for translations of texts or to interpret for a specific appointment or meeting, and that’s the extent of what we do for them, right? Wrong. It’s important to listen to your clients and their needs and think beyond the scope of what you think you’re selling.

I hear a lot of translators and interpreters say that they refuse to work with clients who don’t want to adapt to their way of doing business, whether this is paying a certain rate or having a reasonable deadline. But the truth is that in order for this to change, we as a profession and an industry must help ourselves. By this, I’m not just talking about educating clients on how to work with professional translators and interpreters. That’s a given.

When we actually take the time to look at the reason behind why a client needs a text translated or a meeting interpreted, we see the real purpose of our jobs. Rather than being an order taker, think of yourself as a part of your clients’ team. We’re not merely a tool in their toolbox, and our services are not merely another line item on their expense sheet. But if we don’t think of ourselves as more than these things, then we cannot demand more respect in our profession.

We provide services that aid our clients to gain access to untapped markets, to increase revenue, and serve populations that they otherwise wouldn’t be able to serve. When we recognize this, and when we’re able to relay this to clients so that they recognize this for themselves, this is when we hit a sweet spot. And no machine or automation can replace such a vital part of the human team.

7. Figure out how to present your expertise in a way that will be attractive and understandable to anyone. Don’t just think that telling people what you do for a living will be enough. Again, I’m repeating myself a bit here from Number 2, but bear with me. Having a great web presence and a memorable elevator speech are important, but presenting yourself to clients is a process that starts at the point of inquiry and ends at the point of payment. If you think of client interactions as a continuum, it’s easy to
see why every interaction with a client is an opportunity to educate and impress.

One way I learned to shake things up a bit in my business was to learn how professionals in other industries do this. I keep a “swipe file” of businesses and brands that are very successful when it comes to leaving a lasting positive impression. To even make it into the “swipe file,” these brands have to impress me from start to finish. From the time I click on their social media post or website to the time I check out and receive my product or service, if I’m impressed with what they’re doing, they’ve won me as a long-term/repeat customer. It’s that simple.

We’ve implemented this in my business by adopting a customer relationship management tool that’s actually meant for design/creative industries. We tweaked it a bit to make it work for us, and I feel fairly confident that no one else is doing the same in T&I, at least not the way we do it. We’re able to stand apart from our competitors. Whenever a client reaches out to us for a quote or requests a bid, I know without a doubt that we’ll stand apart and appeal to them visually while also educating them.

8. Be open to learning new things with new-to-you programs and software that could take your business to the next level and differentiate you from the competition. To piggyback on Number 7, this is perhaps one of the biggest differentiators we’ve adopted in my small business in the past year. By looking to other industries to see how they handle the challenges we similarly face, we were able to adopt some of the same programs and software they use to fit what we do to manage projects and workflows.

I’m yet to find a proper project management tool in the T&I industry that actually does everything we need it to do. And believe me, I’ve tried many. But when I looked to other industries, I found a solution that’s affordable and effective. Again, no one else seems to be using the same tools, which means that our clients are getting a different experience with us than with competitors. I use the word “competitors” loosely here. I believe in working from a mindset of abundance, not scarcity. There truly is enough work to go around, but how we approach our clients and how we present ourselves to them during every step of the process can be the differentiating factor that convinces them to sign on the dotted line. While you can and should stand apart with your skills and abilities, how you present these things is key in building trust with clients. Consider how you do this with your processes and the programs you use to do business with clients.

9. Increase your visibility and refine your strategy by building a team and surrounding yourself with people in other industries from whom you can learn (and who can learn from you). In addition to doing the research and tweaking the way you present yourself to clients from the point of inquiry to final payment, surround yourself with a small team of colleagues you can consult on a regular basis. Try to tap into the minds of professionals from various industries who can teach you new ways of doing things that you would normally not have considered before. Think of this team as your own personal mastermind group. Meet once a month if you can, and make sure you’re able to provide value to the folks in your group as well.

If you think of client interactions as a continuum, it’s easy to see why every interaction with a client is an opportunity to educate and impress.

Collaboration of this kind can lead to more awareness in other industries about the professional work that we do, and it can certainly help shake things up for the better in our own industry.

BRING YOUR OWN VALUE TO THE TABLE

Finally, remember one thing. You don’t have to do what everyone else is doing in our industry. In fact, I dare say that you shouldn’t. As we’re all unique and bring our own value to the table, it’s time to embrace what can differentiate us and use these factors to benefit our businesses. If you notice something that’s not working, look elsewhere for inspiration. If everyone else is doing something one way, be the “change-maker,” the “outside-the-box thinker.” Other industries can teach us how to grow and pivot, because while everyone else is worrying about the future of this or that, we can be looking at trends or movements happening in other industries and adopt them to freshen things up in our own.

NOTES

Standing Up for the Freelancer

Ironically, our industry often suffers from communication-related problems, primarily between agencies and freelancers. What would happen if both parties worked together to achieve a true partnership?

I began my career as a freelance translator, moved into a role as a project manager, and eventually became an agency owner. In 2016, I gave a presentation on looking out for the good of the freelancer at ATA’s Annual Conference in San Francisco. With 31 years of experience in the translation industry, I wanted to emphasize the importance of the freelancer’s role, speaking from my own personal experience.

As we all know, the translation industry has three key players: 1) the client, who purchases translations from the translation company, 2) the translation company, and 3) the freelance translator. There are thousands of freelancers crafting awesomeness for us all.

Freelancers work long, lonely hours. Their role is multi-purpose. Freelancers have to figure out what the source author is trying to say. They also have to deal with calls from frantic project managers begging them to take on another job. They are, in short, the pillars of our industry. Because of this, shouldn’t we, agencies, take special care of them? Shouldn’t we cater to their every need? I don’t think agencies give freelancers the appreciation they deserve.

In 2007, I conducted research and asked translation companies to tell me the two main reasons why they chose one translator over another. The number one reason was quality, and the second reason was tools and technology (e.g., Does the translator use Trados?). I asked the same question nine years later, and the number one reason was subject matter expertise followed by price. It’s interesting to see how this has changed over the years and what’s considered most valuable in the industry.

A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE

I looked at how our agency was handling our freelance selection practices and relationships. Our resource manager would email candidates asking if they wanted to work with us. We would send them our rates and, if they agreed, we would test them. Once they passed our test, these translators would be incorporated into our workflow system for our project managers to use.

The resource manager would test our translators on a regular basis to make sure they were doing a great job. In short, our relationship with our freelancers was transactional, nothing more, nothing less. We knew freelancers were part of our process, but they were out there, somewhere in space, and we almost never spoke with them.

We kept this model for years until one of our employees asked, “Why don’t we re-think how we treat translators? Why don’t we make them key players in our business? Why not create a position where the job is to champion for the freelancer?”

Agencies should understand that freelancers are in business to be as profitable as they can.

It was a simple idea, but one that we had never thought of before. I was immediately sold on the concept. The first thing we did was to rename the resource manager position. We wanted a title that would summarize two concepts. The first, define...
who freelancers really are: they’re the talent in translation. Second, we wanted a word or phrase to describe the go-between freelancers and our in-house team. We created a new name for this very important position: talent liaison.

MAKING THE CHANGE
We then looked for the person in our company who would be best suited for this new position. Although our previous resource manager was awesome in many areas, she was not an out-of-the-box thinker. The person who would fill our talent liaison position needed to have excellent communication skills, since it would require communicating with freelancers, mostly in English. Although our standard practice when looking for a translator is to consult ATA’s online directories, some language requirements require the use of alternative search methods instead of a public database.

Let me share this example. Years ago, we were asked to provide interpreting services for an injured worker who spoke Nahuatl. He was to be seen by a doctor who spoke only English. We searched high and low and couldn’t find such a language combination. Finally, we found a priest in San Diego, California, who spoke both Spanish and Nahuatl. We then secured an interpreter for Spanish and English.

Yes, you’re ahead of me, we used two interpreters and the project was a success.

How did we achieve this? Our talent liaison looked for innovative ways to solve our problem. She was an out-of-the-box thinker. One can have great ideas, but if you don’t have the ability to carry them out with the proper authority, your ideas will stay shelved. Our talent liaison was given total authority on all translator-related issues, which she needed to make things happen.

She also needed experience in conflict resolution. Business relationships are never perfect and, yes, sometimes agencies and freelancers don’t view things the same way. To make things worse, many of us allow our emotions to dictate how we communicate. For this reason, the talent liaison must negotiate challenging problems so everyone is happy. I know what you’re thinking: this talent liaison is more like Superman or Superwoman. You’re right.

UPDATING OLD WORKFLOWS
Project managers prefer the first freelancer they contact to take the assignment, and they know those freelancers who are unfamiliar with the word “no.” We decided to look at our database of freelancers, which hadn’t been cleaned up in years. We had over 3,000 freelancers, and 200 of them were used on 90% of our projects. Only 151 had updated files, and the categories we used for subject matter experience were too broad.

Because of this, we cleaned up our database and forced project managers to use new freelancers. This was not an easy task. We found that project managers are often too busy to want to try new freelancers. Instead, they prefer to go with what they know. But they were given quotas to meet and asked to make sure a seasoned editor was on the project to minimize potential risks. Within the first month of cleaning up our database, we were able to add more than 84 new freelancers to our projects.

The interaction between a freelancer and an agency is a relationship. And just like any relationship, it takes time, understanding, patience, and hard work.

Another eye-opening experience was the realization that we treat freelancers as employees. I’m not referring to the legal definition of employees, but the fact that we count on freelancers to handle tasks that are not related to their job as a translator (i.e., “Can you just perform a light formatting task on this project?” “Can you work out terminology differences with the editor?”).
We, as agencies, need to at least thank and, even better, compensate translators for such efforts. This brings me to the word “loyalty.” Agencies should understand that freelancers are in business to be as profitable as they can. They have many clients asking them to take on a job, so it’s normal for them to accept the project that earns them the most profit.

The interaction between a freelancer and an agency is a relationship. And just like any relationship, it takes time, understanding, patience, and hard work. Maintaining a strong relationship with freelancers will make a world of difference to an agency’s day-to-day operations.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FROM THE BEGINNING
Our agency also changed the way we originally made contact with freelancers. Before, we would ask them if they wanted to work with us. If they did, we would tell them what we were willing to pay and ask that they take a test. This type of introduction was cold. Would you ever want to do business with or date someone whose introduction was so limited?

I always compare business to personal transactions. Think about it—freelancers have a choice. Why not differentiate ourselves from the start? We now include information about who we are and why we look forward to working with the candidate. It’s been a year since we started this initiative and now our freelancers feel part of the team. They’re important, and we listen.

We also improved on business practices while we created this new talent liaison position. When there was an issue with a project, we found that freelancers wouldn’t be open to too much negotiation since both the freelancers and the project manager were personally involved with the problem. Bringing in a third party helped diffuse the issues.

Finally, we were able to improve the lag time between when a query would come in concerning an invoice and the response time from our accounting department, who receives hundreds of emails a day. The talent liaison would step in immediately and resolve all accounting-related issues.

There was also a list of issues we had with freelancers that was not being addressed. For instance, many freelancers working in some countries can receive payment using traditional payment methods (i.e., wire transfers, PayPal, etc.), but others are limited in terms of how they can receive payment. We would either need to stop working with freelancers who wouldn’t accept our payment options, or be flexible and pay through other means. We chose to do the later.

BETTER RELATIONSHIPS, BETTER RESULTS
When our agency started to evolve our company’s operations and stand up for one of the cornerstone roles in our industry, it helped improve communication, collaboration, and productivity. But it also helped us strengthen our relationships with our freelance team and provide better solutions going forward.

Michael Cárdenas is the president and founder of Local Concept, an international corporation that has been doing business in the language industry for over 31 years. He works closely with international advertising agencies and corporations in the production of multilingual advertising and marketing campaigns. He was introduced to the translation industry as a freelance translator, which inspired him to start his own company. He is a frequent speaker at international conferences, government agencies, and universities. He has a juris doctorate from the California Western School of Law. Contact: mcardenas@localconcept.com.
What's it like to play an interpreter on the big screen? Alexandra Reuer got a chance to do just that!

A few months ago I had the pleasure of traveling to Austria, in part to attend the festivities organized for International Translation Day by the UNIVERSITAS Austria Interpreters’ and Translators’ Association. In addition to an architectural walking tour of the city, a one-day conference, fantastic reception, and other events, the association had also planned a screening of Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe, a film featuring one of our interpreter colleagues playing an actual interpreter. As a special surprise, UNIVERSITAS was going to fly in that interpreter (and now actress), the wonderful Alexandra Reuer, from Bristol, England, for the screening as their guest of honor. I

had read about Alex’s role in the ITI Bulletin, the publication of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, before and wanted to meet her to talk about the film.¹

In case you’re unfamiliar with the film, here’s a bit about the story. Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe (German title: Vor der Morgenröte) is a 2016 internationally co-produced drama directed by Maria Schrader about the acclaimed Austrian author Stefan Zweig. Born in Vienna in 1881, Zweig achieved distinction in several genres—poetry, essays, short stories, and dramas—most notably for his interpretations of imaginary and historical characters. In 1934, driven into exile by the Nazis, he emigrated to England and then, in 1940, to Brazil by way of New York. Finding only growing loneliness and disillusionment in their new surroundings, he and his second wife committed suicide in 1942. Stefan Zweig: Farewell to Europe focuses on the author’s years in exile, his inner struggle for the “right attitude” toward the events in war-torn Europe, and

This was exactly the kind of high-pressure situation that interpreters are trained to handle, nerves and all.

his search for a new home. The film was Austria’s official entry for the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 89th Academy Awards in 2017, but was not nominated.²

During the film, Zweig is interviewed by the international press at the height of his career and fame. The questions are posed in Spanish, English, and French, and Zweig answers in his native German. That’s where the interpreters come in, who play a relatively large role in the film. Alex is even featured in the trailer.

Alex, a native of Germany, is a German, Spanish, and English interpreter and translator specializing in law, human rights, environmental and social justice issues, and policies of the European Union. She has lived and worked in England for the better part of a decade. I was fortunate enough to be able to chat with Alex after the screening over a few glasses of sparkling wine. We bonded over our fondness for Vienna, gender-inclusive language, the professionalization of our industry, and, of course, the film.

You looked fantastic in the movie! I’m so pleased to see that the director cast actual interpreters for the interpreter roles instead of going with the more obvious choice: actors. Can you tell us

FEATURE | BY JUDY JENNER

The Interpreter on the Big Screen
more about why that happened? Also, what was the auditioning process like?

Thank you! I’m so in awe of these make-up artists, they did such an amazing job. And yes, all three interpreter roles were filled by real-life interpreters rather than actors. They held a full day of casting to fill the roles and invited both actual interpreters and actors to audition, though we only found this out afterward. When I was there for my half-hour slot, I was in a group with maybe five other translators and interpreters. We were asked to sit down and take turns doing some whispered interpreting of excerpts from the script that were read out to us. We were also filmed doing this. Later, after having been selected for the part of the English interpreter, the director told me and the two colleagues playing the other interpreting parts that it had just been too obvious that the actors who auditioned for the interpreting roles were only pretending.

To me and anyone else in our profession, this intuitively makes sense. Though we were told at the casting session that we were free to whisper pretty much whatever we liked if we had trouble keeping pace with what was being read out, this was exactly the kind of high-pressure situation that interpreters are trained to handle, nerves and all (and it probably showed). Plus, it obviously helps that, as an actual interpreter, you would know how to sit, how loudly or softly to whisper, and where to direct your gaze to make it look natural. To an outsider, these actions probably don’t sound very hard to do, but the fact that they clearly aren’t easily imitated is a tribute to the complex nature of our profession.

Your scene lasts seven minutes and is set in Buenos Aires, Argentina. How long did filming it take and where was it filmed?

Those seven minutes took a full day. The scene was shot in an impressive wood-paneled room in the Palais am Festungsgraben in Berlin. On the day of shooting, everyone got there really early in the morning to get made up, and then it was pretty much all hands on deck until evening. Because the entire day was dedicated to shooting just the one scene, in which we interpreters played a very prominent role, there wasn’t very much downtime. The same scene was shot repeatedly from various angles and with different lighting arrangements, and at some point the production team even made separate audio recordings of all our interpreting parts, just in case any of our whispered interpretations needed amplifying for the film. So, all in all it was a rather exhausting day, but also probably one of the most glamorous assignments I’ll ever do.

So, all in all it was a rather exhausting day, but also probably one of the most glamorous assignments I’ll ever do.

You appear in a key scene, during which the legendary Austrian actor Josef Hader, who plays Stefan Zweig, is interviewed by several journalists from different countries, including one from The New Yorker. You sit next to this American journalist and whisper simultaneously into English. When the journalist asks Zweig a question in English, Zweig doesn’t wait for you to interpret, which suggests that he understood the English question. He then answers in German. Zweig does the same with a question from the French journalist, but he does allow the interpretation of a question posed to him in Spanish. Do you happen to know what the rationale was behind that?

That’s a good question. What the producers and director clearly wanted to convey was Zweig’s grasp of several languages. Though why he would understand French and English, but not Spanish, is not entirely clear to me. But then I’m no expert on Stefan Zweig! If I remember correctly, there

Left: Judy Jenner and Alex Reuer in Vienna, October 2017.

Alex sported a 1930s look for her part.

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are other scenes in the movie where Zweig does understand and speak Spanish, but those might be set later on, when he's lived in South America for a longer period. Going back to our scene, perhaps they wanted to show Zweig becoming progressively more impatient with the interviewers’ questions, which is why he might tolerate the interpretation of the Spanish question (which is the first one), but then grows impatient and is eager to get the interview over with as quickly as possible. But I really don’t know, so we would have to ask the director.

Obviously it’s a movie and not a real interpreting situation, but how would you compare your experience to an actual assignment? Was it easier or harder? You probably had the script beforehand, right? One can usually only dream of such a thing.

Yes, we did get the script way in advance, which, as you say, is a bit of an ideal scenario compared to real life.

Contrary to what I would normally do, I translated my part beforehand, realizing that the entire thing was about to be recorded for the big screen.

It was clear that the production team had already put a lot of thought into it, but weren’t shying away from additional input to make the interpreting scene as authentic as possible.

In the scene, Stefan Zweig is being interviewed by a group of journalists at the PEN Congress in Buenos Aires in 1936. The tension in the room is palpable as the journalists try to elicit a political statement regarding the Nazi regime from Zweig that he politely but firmly refuses to make. Having the interpreters relay Zweig’s answers in whispered tones to the journalists was seen by the director as an important contribution to the overall feel of the scene. My two interpreting colleagues and I were prompted to whisper audibly, where normally you would try and keep noise levels to a minimum. Another interesting aspect was that because we spent all day shooting the same scene repeatedly, I could keep rephrasing my output in a bid to keep polishing and refining it—a chance we seldom, if ever, get in interpreting.

As to whether it was easier or harder than a normal interpreting assignment, that’s difficult to say. It was easier in the sense that there were no surprises in the content I was interpreting. But what made it difficult was the unfamiliar situation of having to “look the part” for the camera. And because there weren’t many breaks in the day, I possibly talked more that day than during any other job I’ve had. To sum it up, despite being very familiar with the dialogue thanks to all the
preparation and repetition, the day still felt just as exhausting as any other “proper” interpreting assignment.

Since the film was set in the 1930s, I noticed there was a lot of smoking going on in the room where your scene takes place. Was that tough on your voice? Ah, yes, I forgot to mention the smoking! In keeping with the smoking-room feel of the scene, all the men were encouraged to smoke. Fortunately, none of the actors smoked in real life and therefore weren’t particularly keen on the idea, which meant that a smoke machine had to be employed. So, while this was certainly more pleasant than actual cigarette or cigar fumes, I still left the set with a bit of a sore throat that day. Fortunately, I was working mainly as a translator at the time and didn’t have to launch straight into another interpreting assignment afterward!

As interpreters, we sometimes struggle to make our voices heard and to get what we need to guarantee a good performance, be it decent audio, a comfortable chair, or trying to prevent people from talking over each other. In your fictional interpreting situation, did you get the impression that the client was open to your needs and suggestions? Very much so. From the start, the director was really keen to involve us on things like notepads (yes or no?), seating arrangements (they changed them according to our suggestions), and even on what the interpreters should be doing at the start of the scene, when we are seen standing in the background. It was clear that the production team had already put a lot of thought into it, but weren’t shying away from additional input to make the interpreting scene as authentic as possible.

Finally, would you play an interpreter in the movies again? It was a really exciting experience and one for which I’m truly grateful. I was also impressed (and admittedly a little surprised!) by how nice, down-to-earth, fun, and approachable everyone was on the set, including the director herself. While I don’t fancy myself as a particularly talented actress (I never really went beyond amateur dramatics), I think that being an interpreter does partly come with some of the same qualities that actors must possess: sounding and looking confident under pressure, being able to improvise, and, most of all, rendering someone else’s words as convincingly as if they were their own. So yeah, if an agent were to beat down my door, I would definitely consider working on a film again.

I think that being an interpreter does partly come with some of the same qualities that actors must possess.

NOTES

Judy Jenner is a Spanish and German business and legal translator and a federally and state-certified (California, Nevada) Spanish court interpreter. She has an MBA in marketing and runs her boutique translation and interpreting business, Twin Translations, with her twin sister Dagmar. She was born in Austria and grew up in Mexico City. A former in-house translation department manager, she is a past president of the Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association. She writes the blog Translation Times and is a frequent conference speaker. She is the co-author of The Entrepreneurial Linguist: The Business-School Approach to Freelance Translation. Contact: judy.jenner@twintranslations.com.
Unearthing Article Statistics in the LinkedIn Mobile App

LinkedIn has made it much easier for authors who use the LinkedIn publishing platform to view readership statistics in the LinkedIn Mobile App.

I’m someone who publishes regularly on LinkedIn and who uses the LinkedIn Mobile App more than the desktop version of LinkedIn. One thing that always bothered me about the LinkedIn Mobile App was not being able to see readership statistics directly in my LinkedIn article. Honestly, the initial lack of readily available analytics functionality annoyed me almost as much as the inability of the app to support publishing long-form articles. Well, at least the analytics issue has been resolved!

Now LinkedIn makes it much easier for authors who use the LinkedIn publishing platform to view readership statistics in the LinkedIn Mobile App. Yes, analytics data on your long-form posts have been available in the app for some time, but now it’s easier than ever for authors to access this information. After all, understanding your readers better is key to creating and publishing content for maximum impact!

In fact, you don’t even have to look for readership statistics for your articles in the mobile app. Every time you open one of your long-form articles, the app automatically displays an analytics bar at the bottom of the screen with the number of likes, comments, and clicks your article received. It can’t get any easier than that. So, the only major difference between the initial statistics view in the mobile app and the desktop version of LinkedIn is that in the desktop version, you can also see the number of times your article was shared in the initial statistics view.

GOING BEYOND THE BASIC STATISTICS

As in the desktop version, the LinkedIn Mobile App provides authors who are interested in more detailed information about their readership with just that: geolocation and demographics information for each article! Getting to the more detailed article analytics in the app is also simple.

1. For more information on who liked and commented on your article, tab the “Likes” and “Comments” icons in the left corner of the analytics bar. (See Figure 1 on page 19.) When you tab the “Comment” icon (top right), you can see who commented on your article and like and respond to the comments your contacts left. You can also tab the photo of these contacts and send them a thank-you message from within the app.

2. For more information on the demographics and geolocation of your readers, tab the “Clicks” icon in the right corner of the analytics bar. Now you have access to four pages that provide the following readership information for the selected article:
   - The top four organizations that viewed your article
   - The top four job titles readers of the article carried
   - The top four cities/regions where your article was viewed
   - The top four sources through which the article was found

To move from one statistics page to another, simply swipe left or right. (See Figure 2 on page 19.)

ANALYTICS DATA IS AVAILABLE FOR ARTICLES AND POSTS

If you’re reading this article, chances are you’re just starting out on the LinkedIn publishing platform. It’s important to understand the major differences between articles and posts:
Articles: No character limit, basic character and paragraph formatting.

Posts: 1,300 character limit, no text formatting other than (automatic) highlighting of links and contacts.

LinkedIn now makes accessing analytics data for posts just as easy as for articles. You can find the number of likes, comments, and views your post received at the bottom of each of your posts. (See Figure 3 on page 20.) If you want to dig deeper into your post analytics, you can use the same procedure for accessing more detailed information as for article statistics: simply tab the respective section in the analytics bar.

The LinkedIn Mobile App automatically displays an analytics bar at the bottom of the screen with the number of likes, comments, and clicks your article received.

Figure 1: Basic analytics information is now displayed at the bottom of the screen when you open one of your articles in the app.

Figure 2: One of the four pages with more detailed demographics data for an article.
2018 Honors and Awards Now Open!

ATA and the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI) present annual and biennial awards to encourage, reward, and publicize outstanding work done by both seasoned professionals and students. Awards and scholarships for 2018 include:

- **The Alexander Gode Medal**, ATA’s most prestigious award, is presented to an individual or institution for outstanding service to the translating and interpreting professions. This award may be given annually. Nominations are solicited from past recipients of the Gode Medal and the membership at large.

- **The Alicia Gordon Award for Word Artistry in Translation** is given for a translation (from French or Spanish into English, or from English into French or Spanish) in any subject that demonstrates the highest level of creativity in solving a particularly knotty translation problem. Open to ATA members in good standing.

- **The S. Edmund Berger Prize** is offered by AFTI to recognize excellence in scientific and technical translation by an ATA member. The award may be given annually.

- **The Harvie Jordan Scholarship** is awarded to an ATA Spanish Language Division member in good standing to promote, encourage, and support leadership and professional development within the division. The scholarship may be given annually.

- **The Student Translation Award** is presented to any graduate or undergraduate student, or group of students, for a literary or sci-tech translation or translation-related project. The award may be given annually.

For complete entry information and deadlines, visit www.atanet.org/membership/honorsandawards.php.

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**AUTOMATIC ACCESS TO ANALYTICS FOR WRITERS ON THE GO**

Readership analytics have been available in the LinkedIn Mobile App for some time, but now an analytics bar gives writers easy access to basic analytics data every time they open one of their articles in the app. While understanding your readers better is key to creating and publishing content for maximum impact.

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**2018 Honors and Awards Now Open!**

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**UNEARThING ARTICLE STATISTICS IN THE LINKEDIN MOBILE APP continued**

The only difference between the analytics data LinkedIn makes available for articles and posts is that for articles you get to see how your article was found (e.g., LinkedIn Pulse, Google search, etc).

![Figure 3: For posts, the same basic analytics information is available as for articles.](image)

The only difference between the analytics data LinkedIn makes available for articles and posts is that for articles you get to see how your article was found (e.g., LinkedIn Pulse, Google search, etc).

![Figure 4: An example of demographics data for a LinkedIn post.](image)

More detailed readership information is still somewhat buried, it’s there for writers on the go who want to better understand their audience without having to use an external service. Good job, LinkedIn! Oh, and one more thing. Can you please enable writing articles in the mobile app? Please LinkedIn, please!

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**Uwe Muegge** is the global language manager at Arthrex. He has more than 15 years of experience in translation and localization, having worked in leadership functions on both the vendor and buyer sides of the industry. He has published numerous articles on translation tools and processes and taught computer-assisted translation and terminology management courses at the college level in both the U.S. and Europe. You can find him on LinkedIn (linkedin.com/in/uwemuegge) and Twitter (twitter.com/uwemuegge). Contact: info@muegge.cc.
Couples Counseling: Reimagining the Freelancer–Company Relationship

(The following originally appeared as a two-part post in May 2017 on the Interpreters Division blog, www.ata-divisions.org/ID/blog.)

I’m not sure that I’m technically qualified to offer relationship advice to freelancers and language companies. However, throughout my career I’ve had the opportunity to participate in and/or observe hundreds if not thousands of these relationships and develop a very strong opinion on the topic, if not expertise, so I’ll just run with that.

For me, this is a topic of supreme importance to our industry and one we should not take for granted. While I understand that processes and technology are important, the freelancer–company relationship is at the core of everything we do, so it really deserves our focused attention. Like all human relationships, it requires understanding, communication, and cooperation, yet there is an inherent tension in this relationship that I don’t quite understand. I find it very frustrating that as an industry we can’t seem to get this key relationship right.

There seems to be an assumption that we should all be able to work together and that working with one freelancer or company should be the same as working with any other freelancer or company. So, when we have an experience that proves that assumption false, rather than looking at that as the exception, we treat it as the rule—looking at all potential relationships through this filter, expecting the worst, and feeling justified when we’re proven right and feeling like we dodged a bullet when we have a positive experience.

Well, I think it’s pretty clear that if we as a species approached our personal relationships this way there wouldn’t be many of us around! We’re pretty picky (and rightly so) when it comes to choosing our friends and partners. We seek out people with whom we have chemistry, who share our values, are like-minded, enjoy the same things, share our view of the world, and who, hopefully, help make us better people.

Since not everyone on the planet shares all of this with each of us, or we with them, not all relationships necessarily work out, which explains why we don’t all have 7.5 billion friends! So, why shouldn’t we approach our business relationships in the same way? If we did, I think we would find that, as in love, there is someone for everyone.

At ATA’s 57th Annual Conference, my colleague Robert Sette and I presented on this topic and had such positive feedback that we did a follow-up at ATA58. That said, I think some of the concepts bear repeating here, so here are some ideas (in no particular order).

Know thyself. To have success in any relationship, you first need to know yourself, what you need, and what you can offer. So, before approaching a potential business partner, make sure you give that serious thought and come up with a list of must-haves, nice-to-haves, can-live-withouts, and deal-breakers (we all have them). Most importantly, know your value and be able to articulate it. Then stick to your guns. Be honest with yourself. If you can’t bear a certain behavior, don’t try to convince yourself you’ll be able to put up with it. Likewise, if there is a need you can’t honestly meet without a major overhaul of your processes, work style, or personality, don’t pretend you can. You can’t change the other party and they won’t change for you. You can only control yourself. Sometimes the chemistry isn’t right and that’s okay. It’s not about proving the other party wrong or justifying yourself. It’s about finding the right fit and understanding what kind of relationship will or will not work for you.

Communication is king. Just like in personal relationships, good communication is paramount. Ironically, one of the biggest problems in the freelancer-company relationship is communication. I say ironic because our jobs are to facilitate communication across languages, yet we don’t seem to be able to communicate effectively amongst ourselves. Part of this may be because many of us do so much of our work remotely and don’t always have the chance to speak face-to-face, or speak at all for that matter, because of time zone issues. Maybe it’s because we’re all in the same industry and make assumptions when communicating with each other that we wouldn’t otherwise make when communicating with people outside the industry. It could also be because, due to the nature of what we do, we aren’t always communicating in our native language and things can get lost in translation (again, ironic). Or it might be a combination of all three or something else altogether. But this only means that we must strive that much harder to communicate clearly and make sure that we’re understood and that we understand.

We also need to be sure to identify our counterpart’s preferred method, style, and frequency of communication, as it may be different from our own and we’ll have to adapt. Acknowledging and honoring your counterpart’s communication preferences, whether they match yours or not, will help to ensure communication success.

Check your baggage at the door. Don’t bring old baggage into a new relationship. Just because you had a bad experience in a previous relationship doesn’t mean you’ll have a bad experience in the new one, unless you hamper it with tired assumptions and stereotypes. Make this your mantra: all business is personal.
companies are not users and exploiters, and all freelancers are not prima donnas!

Assume the best. When seeking new relationships, being open and assuming good intentions will serve you much better than being distrustful and assuming the worst (see above). Besides, with that attitude, why would you be out looking in the first place? While there are unprofessional companies and individuals out there, the vast majority aren’t looking to take advantage or exploit. They are focused on doing the same thing as you: ensuring that their clients get the quality product they both need and deserve. We can better serve this purpose by truly cooperating rather than bickering. Plus (and this is surely my California days coming out in me), I truly believe that you attract the energy you put out in the world. So, work on your positivity.

Listen more and talk less. We’ve all heard the equivalent of the parental admonition, “You have two ears and one mouth, so use them in that proportion.” Well, that applies as much to business as it does to personal relationships. For the relationship to work, everyone needs to do his or her part, but it will help you infinitely to really try to learn and understand your counterpart’s needs, likes/dislikes, pet peeves, preferred communication style and method, among other things. And if you discover some common interests, that never hurts.

Acknowledge your counterpart’s contribution to the relationship. For a relationship to thrive, each party needs to acknowledge that their counterpart contributes something valuable to the relationship. While separately they may have strong identities and unique qualities, together they create something that neither can offer on his or her own, thus bringing out the best in each other. Without this acknowledgement and balance, there is no relationship.

Don’t look for love in all the wrong places. If you don’t like country music, don’t go to a honky-tonk. Likewise, if you need someone to translate a complex financial document, don’t look at sites catering to literary translators, as you’ll just be frustrated. There are now seemingly endless online platforms to connect language services providers and buyers

The freelancer-company relationship is at the core of everything we do, so it really deserves our focused attention.

(not unlike online dating sites), and it can be tempting to advertise everywhere to make sure you don’t miss anything. But this can backfire, as you may end up attracting attention you don’t want. Be intentional and discerning about those you approach and how you do it to give yourself the best chance of success.

Be prepared to compromise. To paraphrase the Rolling Stones: you can’t always get what you want, but if you work at it you can often get what you need. And what we think we want isn’t always what we actually need, anyway. Just as in the best personal relationships, each party here often has to give up a little something to help the relationship succeed and thrive, allowing both parties to be happy and function at their best. This is not to say you should cave on your principles—far from it. It just means you must be willing to acknowledge that the needs of your counterpart are just as important as your own and that you’ll need to look for middle ground when the two conflict. It will not always be possible (not all relationships will succeed), but you must be open to it. Success here is a win-win as long as there is balance.

Talk to each other, not just your cohort. Talking to your girlfriends or the guys (or, god forbid, posting online) about your significant other is more about venting than problem solving, and the same is true on the business side. Venting to your cohort is a search for validation and justification, not resolution. The only way to solve a relationship problem is to discuss it with the person who is in the relationship with you. It won’t always work, but if both parties go in with the same intention there is a better chance than if you air your dirty laundry in public.

Treat each other with respect and work to earn trust. Mutual trust and respect are not given; they must be earned. Still, we must go into our relationships with this as a goal and conduct ourselves in a way that is worthy of trust and respect. Professionalism attracts professionalism, respect attracts respect, and trust attracts trust. Our relationships reflect who we are, and how we treat each other helps define us and our professional identity. We owe it to ourselves and the profession to present a united front.

Don’t get too comfortable and fall back on old habits. Pay attention to the relationship. If you’re coasting, you’re probably actually backsliding. Go back to the top and start again. Repeat.

WORKING TOWARD A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

So, have I gotten inside your head? Are you already thinking of things you can do to make sure your current relationships are healthy and on track and how you might change your approach to potential new partners? I hope so. My fondest wish for the industry is to see companies and freelancers working together in true partnership, recognizing and honoring the value of what the other brings to the table, while serving the needs of their common clients. This doesn’t seem like too lofty a goal to me, but we really have to want it. It’s naïve (and not even necessarily desirable) to think that all companies and freelancers will be able to work with each other successfully, but there are matches out there for all of us. We just have to work to find them. We’re all responsible for our own professional happiness and success. This is too big a part of our lives to leave to chance, so don’t settle for the status quo. Don’t let your career just happen to you—take control!
Through the Looking Glass

They are easy to spot. Capricious, overdemanding interpreters for whom nothing is ever right: the pay is meager, the hours are long, the tasks are boring, and the coffee is not fresh enough. Judgmental and vocal, they are constantly scanning their surroundings for colleagues or circumstances to blame for their misery.

While some are excellent at what they do, most grossly overestimate their own abilities. These chronic attention-seekers make poor booth mates because of their propensity to compete rather than collaborate. Despite telling evidence, they hardly ever acknowledge a mistake. It will always be your fault, or mine, and they will be sure to rub it in.

These colleagues respond to life's many blessings with a feeling of entitlement rather than gratitude, and no matter how generous their lot, it's never enough. Life owes them a buck, and so do you.

Such attitude—exaggerated here for the sake of argument—is usually rooted in unconscious insecurity. It's the machinations of an ego that feels threatened and unimportant, doing anything it can to create some separation from the ordinary. It stems from a broken sense of self that got the notions of being and doing all twisted.

Deep down, we all like to think we're good and sensible. We root for the good guys in movies and are unanimous in condemning overtly selfish and unappreciative. Oh, we're not that. Yet a quick look around proves that we all can exhibit such behavior on occasion if the wrong buttons are pushed. We just don’t bring ourselves to admit it often.

It's always easier to see and condemn misconduct in others; hence the constant criticism and finger-pointing. It's a projection whereby the unconscious mind provides us with a tilted mirror image against which to vent and direct our anger, all the while fooling ourselves that the silhouette reflected back is not our own. This mechanism is meant to protect us.

At the end of the day, other people's behavior will always change in response to what they get from us. Again, we tend to take the reflection for the reality, never looking at the true source of light.

We all know a few self-important interpreters who cannot be pleased. Yet in their hearts they all think of themselves as nice people, no matter how unbearably obnoxious they may seem to us.

If too many arrogant divas are popping up in your booth, perhaps it's about time you take a long, good look at the image reflected back at you on that glass. Here are a few subtle points to ponder as you talk to yourself:

- Who do you blame when circumstances don't conform to your expectations?
- Do the words “always” and “never” pop up in your head or slip off your tongue often?
- Does your performance determine how you feel about yourself?
- Are you in a silent competition with your booth mate?

The answers to the first two questions will tell you how personal, permanent, and pervasive you perceive the annoying circumstances in your life to be. The final two will show you how much of your identity you have wrapped around what you do, rather than who you are.

The exercise will expose beliefs and circumstances that may be triggering you off your best behavior. It will show areas where there may be room for improvement. Most importantly, it will make you a better and more conscientious interpreter that clients and colleagues will want to have around.

Give it a try and you may find yourself wondering whatever happened to those prima donnas.

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Interpreters are a vital part of ATA. This column is designed to offer insights and perspectives from professional interpreters.

NEW ATA-CERTIFIED TRANSLATORS

Congratulations!

The following members have successfully passed ATA's certification exam:

**English into Chinese**
- Shaoli Needham
  - Honolulu, HI

**English into Spanish**
- Isabel E. Aguirre
  - New York, NY
- Emilio Garcia-Diaz
  - Jontepec, Mexico
- Guadalupe Martin
  - Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Carola Lehmacher-Richez
  - Peachtree City, GA
- Diana Szilard
  - Houston, TX

**French into English**
- Benedetto H. Cataldi
  - Acquapendente, Italy
- Jose O. Fuentes
  - San Salvador, El Salvador
- Meghan McCallum
  - Glendale, WI

**German into English**
- Kira L. Bohm
  - Mercer Island, WA
- Rhoda M. Kriek
  - Riverlea, Australia
- Elani Wales
  - Everett, WA

**Spanish into English**
- Veronica A. Mayer
  - New Haven, CT
Interview with Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman, Translators and Librettists

What if your translation had to be singable to a pre-existing melody that couldn’t be changed? What if it had to be understood on the fly while being performed? These are the sort of “what if” questions that my guests for this column, Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman, have been facing for years.


Mark Herman is a literary translator, technical translator, playwright, musician, and actor. For over two decades he has written the “Humor and Translation” column in The ATA Chronicle. He has a BS from Columbia University and an MS from the University of California, Berkeley, both in chemical engineering.

In 1979, the two were commissioned by the Bronx Opera to translate Mozart’s The Abduction from the Seraglio into English for performances in New York. The production and their translation were reviewed favorably in The New York Times. Since then, Mark and Ronnie have translated 23 additional operas, operettas, choral works, and songs, many of which have been performed in the U.S., U.K., and Canada. They have also collaborated on many translations of poetry and children’s books and co-authored Translating for Singing: the Theory, Art and Craft of Translating Lyrics (Bloomsbury, 2016).

Thank you both for joining us today. To begin, please tell us a little about the circumstances of that first commission in 1979.

We had done a singable translation of the lyrics to Carl Orff’s 1936 choral cantata Carmina Burana (ironically, for copyright reasons, the translation can’t be sung publicly) and sent it to various opera companies that performed at least occasionally in English translation. We didn’t receive responses from most of them, but we did hear from the Bronx Opera, a small company in New York now celebrating its 50th anniversary. They were looking for a new English version of Mozart’s The Abduction from the Seraglio and decided to take a chance on us, knowing that if we didn’t deliver, or they didn’t like our translation, they could still use an existing one. However, they were hoping that we would come up with a translation they preferred to the existing versions.

How did you handle what I assume was a relatively new challenge for both of you? Had you already translated much poetry at that stage? Any songs?

As mentioned, we had translated Orff’s Carmina Burana, a substantial work. We found that matching words to sung phrases came naturally to us. Also, we had both written metered, rhymed poetry, some of it published. Mark had written a couple of librettos, and some music, for musicals and Ronnie had written several plays. Both of us had also sung in high-quality amateur choruses for years. As for translations, in addition to Carmina Burana, Ronnie had translated several poems and Mark was translating technical documents for the library at Exxon Engineering, where he worked as an environmental engineer. And so we dove into the Abduction translation.

You’ve said that opera translation requires both musical and linguistic training. Tell us about your musical training at that point, and since then.

As children, both of us had instrument lessons—Ronnie on piano and Mark on saxophone and clarinet. As adults, we both had professional vocal training and, as mentioned, both of us were singing in choruses. Also, Mark had taken courses in music theory. We test our translations for singability by actually singing them before we submit them anywhere.

You’ve translated works originally written in Latin, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Czech. Are you fluent in all of them?

Unfortunately, we’re not truly fluent in any of them. We proceed with the help of dictionaries and, when necessary, native speakers of the source languages. In school, Ronnie studied Latin and French, and Mark Spanish, German, and Russian. In graduate school, Ronnie studied Old Occitan (also called Old Provençal,
which is closely related to contemporary Catalan), and some ancient Greek. Between French and Latin, Ronnie was able to pick up Italian. When the Bronx Opera asked us to translate a Czech opera, Ronnie said, half jokingly, that we would do it if the company paid for Czech lessons. They said yes, and Ronnie studied with a native Czech speaker for about six months.

What did you learn from that first assignment in 1979 that encouraged you to keep translating operas?
We learned that we loved struggling to make meaningful, singable phrases, the thrill of working toward an actual performance, getting input from the directors, conductors, and singers, and hearing our words come alive in the voices of the performers. We also loved bringing our children to performances. After all, they had heard us test singing the lyrics for months.

Who usually commissions your translations?
Our work is commissioned by publishers, opera companies, and school music programs. We also do some translations on our own. Our publishers include Ricordi in Milan, Italy (the original publisher of operas by composers such as Verdi and Puccini), as well as Musica Russica in San Diego. For Ricordi, our work is subject to scrutiny by editors, who, initially, were conveniently located at the University of Chicago. We send them a translation, they make suggestions, and, usually, after three or four go-rounds the translation is considered publishable. When we work for an opera company or school, we submit each act as we finish it to the stage director (or conductor, if there is no stage director, such as for a choral work), who makes suggestions. Once rehearsals start, we also receive suggestions from the performers and conductor, most often still via the stage director.

When several people have a say in the performance of your translated lyrics, how are differences of opinion resolved? Who makes the final call?
The final say is with the editor of a published work. For an opera company, it’s usually the stage director. However, we require that no changes be made without consulting us first. Often, we just make changes in line with the criticisms. In the remaining cases, we argue; sometimes we win, sometimes we lose, and sometimes we compromise.

Do you attend rehearsals of an opera you’ve translated, or attend opening night?
Was there one performance that was especially memorable?
If possible, we attend both rehearsals and performances. However, distant locations often make it impossible for us to attend either. Most memorable for us, because they were our first, were the Bronx Opera performances of The Abduction from the Seraglio. We attended the opening night on Friday and the second performance on Saturday. The audiences were enthusiastic. After the Saturday night performance, we went with friends to Greenwich Village, ate a late supper, and then bought an early morning edition of the Sunday New York Times. In it was a favorable review of both the Friday performance and our translation: “Highly singable.” We were soaring pretty high ourselves.

What can you tell us about how critics react to foreign opera sung in English?
Reactions vary widely. Some critics hate the very idea of opera performed in translation. Others blame the translators for everything they don’t like about the performance, or, if they like the performance, don’t mention that it was sung in translation, much less mention the translators. The New York Times, however, has mentioned us every time it has published a review of an opera sung in our translation.

Opera lyrics challenge the translator in all the ways that poetry does, but with the added burden that the words must also fit into a pre-existing—and largely unforgiving—musical structure. The poetry translator must prioritize meter, rhyming scheme, syllable count, and rhythm while keeping the meaning and allusions in mind. What must the opera translator do in addition?
In addition to functioning as poetry, words in an opera serve theatrical and musical functions. Therefore, in addition to the elements of poetry you mention, we must consider diction level and characterization and how the words fit the music.

You’ve said that “During the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the unwritten rules for...”
The translation of all poetic forms into English called for an exact imitation of the rhyme scheme (and of the original meter), whether or not required by the music and however convoluted the result.” What about the fashions in vogue today?

A revolution in the writing, and translating, of poetry occurred early in the 20th century, discussed in detail in Ronnie’s book Digging for the Treasure. As a result, contemporary English poetry, both original and translated, is mainly free verse. The idea is that a translation can, and frequently should, emphasize important aspects of the original other than form. However, the preponderance of free verse means that few contemporary poets (unlike lyricists) acquire the metrical and rhyming skills needed for translating opera. But the fashion pendulum is swinging: forms like hip-hop are reviving interest in meter and rhyme, driven by the fact that human beings delight in patterns.

You’ve also said, “While rhymed originals should generally be translated into rhymed English, the spirit rather than the letter of the relationship between words and music should dictate the stanza form.” Can you give us a brief example of a translation “in the spirit”?

Consider a quatrain from Giuseppe Verdi’s Il trovatore: “Era già figlio prima d’amarti, / non può frenarmi il tuo martir! / Madre infelice, corro a salvarti, / o teco almeno corro a morir!” The rhyme scheme is abab, where a rhymes are feminine (not accented on the last syllable) and the b rhymes are masculine (accented on the last syllable). The literal translation of the first two lines, sung by Manrico to his beloved Leonora as he is about to leave her, is “I was her son before I loved you. Your suffering will not hold me back.” The literal translation of the last two lines, sung by Manrico to his (absent) mother Azucena, is “Unhappy mother, I run to save you, or at least run to die with you!” Our translation, which omits the a rhymes, is “Though you may suffer, I cannot stay here; / she is my mother, you are my bride. / Unhappy mother, I swear to save you / or to die with you there at your side.” The missing a rhymes are compensated for by a weak rhyme (“suffer-mother”), repetition (“mother-mother,” “you-you”), and assonance (“may,” “stay,” “save,” and “die,” and “side”).

In your book Translating for Singing you claim that English is a “rhyme-poor” language. Please explain.

English has more individual words than most other languages, but lacks large classes of words with identical endings. A plethora of identical endings make rhyming in some languages easy. In the example above, the Italian endings “arti” (lines 1 and 3) and “it” (lines 2 and 4) rhyme. Another problem in English is that “love,” an extremely important word in opera, has very few English rhymes, in contrast to “amor,” a word with many rhymes in Italian and Spanish, or “amour,” a word with many rhymes in French.

What are the abilities required to be a competent translator of singable lyrics?

What prepares or trains the mind to develop these qualities?

As with all literary writing, improvements come with practice and work, but there must be some inherent talent. Translators should have at least some knowledge of the source language: relying entirely on dictionaries or previous translations is usually insufficient. Then, as for all literary translation, the translators must be excellent literary critics in order to discern tone and diction level, as well as understand how the lyrics mean in addition to what they mean. For example, should the words be considered straightforward or sarcastic? Were the words contemporary, archaic, or up-to-the-minute at the time of the work’s creation? If a character in an opera uses clichés, is it because it was customary for some librettos to be generally clichéd, as in early 19th-century Italy, or is it because that particular character, and only that character, actually speaks (sings) that way, as in late 19th-century Italy?

Next, the translators must have some knowledge of music and the requirements of vocal production. Translators should also be skilled lyricists in the target language. Translators also need to be prepared to work long and hard (translations put together in a weekend by changing a few words in someone else’s translation are usually terrible). Last, opera translators, often ill paid and frequently ignored or blamed for everything wrong with a performance, must consider their work a labor of love.

As quoted in your book Translating for Singing, Oscar Hammerstein said, “The sad fact is that when you hear opera in English it is in pretty bad English. The [translators] … are not poets, nor dramatists, nor showmen. A good adaptation of an opera requires a librettist who is all of these.” How do you two work together to perform these different roles?

To begin, the person who knows the source language best does an extremely literal translation, including all multiple meanings and odd turns of phrase, and explains any literary or historical
Allusions. Then, one of us does drafts of singable versions, after which we work together on the final version, every word of which is checked for singability. Ronnie usually sings the high parts (soprano and tenor) and Mark sings the lower parts (alto and bass). Mark usually starts at the beginning of a section and works toward the end, while Ronnie sometimes decides on what she wants the final phrase to be and works toward that. Mark is more interested in literality and Ronnie in overall feeling—a good set of checks and balances. We fight a lot. The entire process usually takes at least four months for a full-length opera. After our version is complete, a piano-vocal score (almost always dual-language) is made so that the translation is fully usable. Once a translation is done and performed, we advertise it, together with any favorable reviews, to other companies who might use our work on a royalty basis. We also self-publish dual-language piano-vocal scores for all of our translations not already published by Ricordi or Musica Russica, and sell them to music libraries and other interested parties.

Most operas currently performed were composed in the 19th century or even earlier. Haven't most of them already been translated by now?

Yes, and some of them have been translated many times. But, as pointed out by Oscar Hammerstein, many of the existing translations are terrible. Also, translations can become dated even if the originals do not. Finally, a new translation may be needed for a particular stage production. For all these reasons, there is plenty of work remaining for contemporary translators.

Sung words are harder to understand than spoken words. Can enough of the words in a singable translation be understood to make all the effort that goes into making and performing a singable translation worthwhile?

Yes. In a translation that pays close attention to singability, as many words will be understood as are understood by native speakers listening to the original opera. Unlike operas, musicals are rarely performed in languages other than those of their actual audiences, and few complain about comprehension. Great composers such as Mozart, before they set the repetitions of a line on high-flying and incomprehensible coloratura, almost always set the line on notes in the performer's middle range, which allows the words to be easily understood. Although the audience cannot re-read a missed sung word as in a book, usually one or more of the repetitions are themselves comprehensible, allowing the audience more than one chance to hear and understand the words. Finally, although we disagree with the practice in most cases, there is the possibility of projecting English captions (surtitles) even for works sung in English. Audiences can pay attention to the stage and glance at the captions only when necessary, as opposed to projected English captions for works sung in another language, which require the constant attention of the audience.

**Opera translators probably pay a lot more attention to the prosody of the original than non-literary translators pay to the nuances of, for example, the technical language of a software manual. But in either case the patterns in the source and target languages have to be considered. What have you learned about the rhythmic arrangement of words in your field that might be useful to other translators?**

It's true that operatic music is strongly influenced by the prosody of the source language. However, it's also true that music, with its regular accent patterns and fixed number of beats per measure, at least partially distorts the prosodies of both the source and target languages, moving both closer to the meter of the music. One reason for the awfulness of many Victorian and Edwardian opera translations is that the translators, believing they had to reproduce the prosody (and rhyme scheme) of the libretto exactly, set themselves a much more difficult task than if they had allowed the music, in addition to the words, to influence the prosody of their translations.

One area that is as important in the translation of literary prose as it is in the translation of opera lyrics is the “foreignization/domestication” dichotomy. Please give us your views and a couple of examples.

Much over-simplified, “foreignization” means bringing the audience to the original, and “domestication” means bringing the original to the audience. The merits of each, whether designated by these exact terms or not, have been debated for centuries. We’re in favor of both, used thoughtfully, and keeping in mind that an audience must understand the words as they are sung. A weird example of “domestication” is our translation of The Sorcerer’s Daughter from nonsense Italian into nonsense English. Sometimes we foreignize an entire translation by writing our version in non-modern English when we believe it’s the only way to convey the true flavor of the original. For example, Charles Gounod’s 19th-century French operetta The Doctor in Spite of Himself, based on Molière’s 17th-century play, involves 17th-century customs that could strike the audience as very odd if spoken of matter-of-factly in modern English. Because of this, we translated it into 17th-century English. Here’s a sample regarding an elaborate social ritual involving hats:

**Lucas:** (to Sganarelle)

Straightways ha’ we come from the village, sir, for to summon your skill.

**Sganarelle:** I am your very humble servant.

**Valère:** But, sir, shade your head from the sun’s febrile ray.

**Lucas:** I’ truth the sun be fiercely beating—on with your bonnet, pray.

**Sganarelle:** (Sganarelle puts on his hat.) Hi-heyy! Pox pester this pother of greeting!

The archaic language informs the audience that the ritual they are observing is similarly archaic and therefore acceptable on its own terms. They will usually not be mentally caught up asking “What was that about?” as they might be had the words been in contemporary English.
In addition to translating an opera’s dialogue and lyrics, you sometimes also contribute lines and dialogue that were not in the original. Tell us about that process and give us a few examples.

Sometimes added words are necessary to explain something that the original librettist omitted—to add a footnote directly into the performed libretto because there is no chance for the audience to read one. For example, in François Boieldieu’s French operetta My Aunt Aurore, a satire on the early 19th-century craze for gothic novels, the heroine Julie tells her aunt that she has followed her instructions and keeps a dovecote in honor of the one kept by the title character in Samuel Richardson’s novel Clarissa. The original early 19th-century audience would have known that Clarissa kept a dairy, so we added a footnote:

**Julie:** Good heavens, aunt, you yourself desired me to keep a dovecote in honor of the one Clarissa had.
**Marton:** Clarissa kept a dairy.
**Aurore:** Yes, but cows are so very large. I explained all that...

Jokes are often not translatable locally; that is, at the same places in the translation that they are in the original. For example, the French comic operetta Madame Angot’s Daughter contains the following lines about Madame Angot: “Captured in Malabar, she is believed to be a widow, alas! They want to burn her alive!” We added a joke to compensate for those lost in our translation by rendering the lines as, “The natives tried to burn her / in Hindu Malabar. / They knew when he has said enough.” Our version also adds a joke: the singers repeat the second line four times, suggesting that they should listen to what they are singing and shut up.

**Despite the concern, some might say obsession, of many operas with sex and violence, albeit occurring almost exclusively offstage, most audiences would still give most operas a “G” rating. Is this because audiences don’t understand the foreign words? Have you yourselves ever run into censorship?**

Some “G” ratings do arise in part because audiences do not understand the foreign words. Also, some translations are censored. Mostly, however, the sanitized ratings come from the fact that opera is considered “high art,” much as Shakespeare’s plays today usually get the same free pass despite bawdiness and violence (though there was a period when Shakespeare’s works were heavily “Bowdlerized”).

We have encountered a few taboos over the years. For example, in Mozart’s The Magic Flute, the character Sarastro sings lines meaning, “A man must govern your heart, / for without him / every woman is likely to step outside her [rightful] sphere of activity.” We originally wrote, “Your heart needs guidance from a husband. / Without a man, / a woman will exceed the sphere of woman’s work.” We were required to change this to “Your heart needs guidance from a husband, / or, like your mother, / you will never learn to wed desire and duty.”

**What are the most significant lessons you’ve learned by doing this work? Do you have any tips for translators who might be interested in working in this area?**

We’ve learned that opera translation, as a branch of show business, is essentially a collaborative endeavor, that the translation is not finished until the performance is over, and that new productions may require additional tweaks. Translators interested in working in this area, regardless of inherent talent, should probably start by participating in sung performances of English lyrics. These can be amateur affairs, such as community choruses or community theater productions of musicals. Then the skills mentioned above should be acquired. After that, the hard work begins.

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**


3. Excerpts from performances in Apter and Herman’s English translations are available on YouTube, including:

   - This features Mafenka and Jeník’s Act III duet from Bedřich Smetana’s Czech opera *The Bartered Bride*, sung by soprano Adelaide Boedecker and tenor Matthew Grills. *The Bartered Bride* was produced by the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.
   - This features the aria with chorus for Don Carlos from Act II of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Ernani*, with baritone Russell Malcolm as Don Carlos, the King of Spain. The excerpt from *Ernani* is audio only, although stills from the production are shown during the aria. "Ernani was produced by the Tayside Opera in Scotland.”

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**OUR WORLD OF WORDS continued**
Language Technology Wiki: A Project “Devoted to Helping Evolve the Next Generation of Language Technology with Your Help”

At the end of last year I made a list of personal and professional achievements from 2017, which made me feel very positive about the upcoming year. Interestingly, some of the things I was patting myself on the back for I hadn’t actually done anything to achieve—but I just encouraged others to do something and they implemented the idea far better than I could.

Back in 2016 at ATA’s Annual Conference in San Francisco, I had a talk with Henry Liu, then president of the International Federation of Translators, about what could be done to help translators and interpreters have a clearer voice when it comes to shaping how their technology will develop. We didn’t really come to any particular conclusion, but I carried the question around with me for several months until an idea took shape. I started to imagine a loosely structured open web space that was specifically untethered from any commercial offering or sponsoring, but otherwise presented open room for debate.

I eventually issued a call for participation—and for leadership, as I wasn’t going to take part in this—and lo and behold, six very high-profile volunteers showed up: Tom Alwood, Alexander Drechsel, Martin Kappus, Marie-Sophie Petit, Barry Slaughter Olsen, and Iulianna van der Lek-Ciudin. These experts built Language Technology Wiki (www.langtech.wiki), a site that offers space for discussions, ideas, and ways to propel forward the technology that we use day in and day out—or that we will use day in and day out.

Under “Rules” and “About” on its website, you’ll find reminders that Language Technology Wiki is “is not focused on specific issues in existing tools.” The goal is “to point toward a new generation of tools,” so no griping about the latest bug in Trados or the poor fit of some remote interpreting headsets—there are plenty of existing outlets for that. Instead, you’re encouraged to share with others (we’ll discuss who those “others” are in a second) what you think technology should be able to do for you.

Who would be interested in that? First, other translators and interpreters. There’s no doubt that we’ve all developed our own sets of idiosyncrasies for how we go about using (or how we wish we could use) technology to make our lives easier. Sharing these can go a long way in terms of helping our colleagues, and their responses will help us improve our processes.

A second user group includes project managers, owners of language services providers, and translation buyers. As you can see in the list of topics that will follow, the technologies under discussion are not limited to individual translators, but really include every professional in the world of translation. If the topic burning under your fingernails isn’t listed, there’s no reason not to add one. (If it’s a new general topic, it will have to be approved by the site moderators, but that shouldn’t be a problem.)

Another reason for this second group to come to Language Technology Wiki is to learn about translators. Yes, there are project managers and translation buyers who don’t have much personal interest in seeing how translators actually work—but there are many who have a very keen interest. (Many project managers harbor the dream of making the tried-and-true career move from project manager to freelance translator or interpreter in the back of their minds.) Translators and interpreters are also encouraged to see what “the other side” is discussing or hoping for.

Then, of course, there are the developers—either those currently developing translation and interpreting technology or those thinking about it. While they’re certainly welcome to chime in on the exchange of ideas (though I imagine it won’t be easy for some of them to toe the line in terms of not promoting their own products), the more likely role I see for them is to use Language Technology Wiki as a fabulous resource where users openly share their needs, aspirations, and dreams about what technology could do for them. Did you hear that, developers? This is going to be a gold mine for you!

Here are the main topics that have already been set up (as I mentioned above, more topics can always be added):

- Audiovisual translation
- Authoring and translation
- Computer-assisted translation project management
- Collaboration
- Impact of language technologies on the translation process and skills
- Interpreting delivery platforms

Figure 1: Adding tags to a subtopic (tag associated with a particular topic is shown here circled in red)
Interpreting management systems
Machine interpreting/speech-to-speech translation
Machine translation
Quality
Terminology management
Translation management systems
Translation memory
Usability/accessibility/learnability
Voice recognition
Web resources

As you can see, the Language Technology Wiki committee tried very hard to do right by all the different groups and sectors represented in the world of translation.

Here's what I would suggest for you—and for us all—to give this project the needed kick start. Whatever position or role you have within the world of translation, at some point during any given workday you’ll get frustrated that whatever set of tools you’re using doesn’t work the way you think it should, or doesn’t work at all in a certain way. (I’m not talking about bugs, but about badly implemented or nonexistent features.) Or maybe there’s just no tool for what you want to achieve.

The next time this happens, open www.langtech.wiki and register as a user (which takes about a minute). Then look through the existing topics and subtopics to see whether your particular issue has already been addressed. (If it has, be sure to add your insights to whatever has been said). If your issue hasn’t been addressed, add a new subtopic (or topic if it doesn’t fit anywhere else).

Here's a quick tutorial on how to add a subtopic (not because I think you couldn’t figure this out on your own, but because—ahem—I couldn’t figure it out when I first did it):

1. Select “Topics” in the header bar.
2. Locate and open the topic that matches your concern most closely.
3. Note the tags that are associated with that topic (you can find those listed underneath the subtopics. (In Figure 1 on page 29, this tag is circled in red.)
4. Type in a title for a new subtopic in the text field in the lower right corner and click “New Subtopic.”
5. Describe your subtopic in the window that will open and click “Save.”
6. At the bottom of the page, you’ll see a list of commands. (The bar in Figure 1 has the mouse cursor pointing to “Tags.”)
7. Select “Tags” and enter the tag(s) with which you want your subtopic associated. Note that you have to type the tag exactly like you saw it when you looked up the tags above.

This is important, otherwise your contribution won’t show up anywhere.
8. If you did all that, your subtopic will be displayed under the topic and other people can comment.
9. If this doesn’t work for some reason, use the “Contact” command in the header bar to alert the administrator, who will be delighted to lend a helping hand.

Of course, it’s totally okay to come to Language Technology Wiki just to learn. Feel free to scroll through some of the existing content during a work break. (Once you’re there you should also register so you don’t have to do it when you enter something for the first time.) While there isn’t as much data in there as there could be, there’s already some interesting stuff to be found. For instance, do you know what TAPICC stands for and why this might be important to you? If not, check out the entry under “Collaboration” and you’ll be the wiser for it.

I think this might be the start of something really special—a place where we as a large and very diverse community can come together, suggest ideas for how to improve translation and interpreting technology, and see those ideas realized in the tools of tomorrow.

Thank you for becoming part of this. The next time you talk to Tom, Alexander, Martin, Marie-Sophie, Barry, and Iulianna, be sure to thank them for making this a reality.

If you have any ideas and/or suggestions regarding helpful resources or tools you would like to see featured, please e-mail Jost Zetzsche at jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.

Jost Zetzsche is chair of ATA’s Translation and Interpreting Resources Committee. He writes the “Geekspeak” column for The ATA Chronicle. He is also the author of Translation Matters, a book with 81 stories about translators and technology, collected over the past 15 years. Contact: jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
Why Isn’t ATA Certification Offered in My Language?

ATA currently offers certification in 30 language pairs, but there’s always room for more as long as certain criteria are met. As a member-driven organization, ATA provides support for establishing certification in new language pairs, but the work required to reach this milestone must be done by members who work in those very languages. What follows is an overview of the process for establishing a new pair. (See the link in the Notes section at the end of this column for the formal procedure.)

**Demand:** Obviously, ATA cannot offer certification in all the thousands of languages used around the world today. Which languages make the cut depends largely on the extent of grassroots interest in certification. This is reflected first and foremost in the willingness of one or more persons to seize the initiative and complete the steps necessary for approval as a new certifiable pair. But in addition to this core group of committed volunteers, it’s also necessary to document broader interest. This is done in the form of a petition signed by 50 individuals interested in sitting for the exam once it’s offered, of which at least 25 must be ATA members. A few other rules apply as well. The reason for these hurdles is to ensure that interest in the exam among translators working in that pair is sufficient to justify administrative efforts, and that certification doesn’t become available only to disappear soon thereafter due to a lack of interest.

**Team-Building:** Once sufficient interest has been documented, a workgroup of three or more qualified individuals must come together to take the next steps, under the guidance of a liaison from ATA’s Certification Committee. The workgroup should include a few who are willing to serve as initial graders once testing begins—and who will thus forfeit the opportunity to earn the credential themselves until replacements can be recruited from among the pool of successful candidates. At this stage it’s vital that the team members get a feel for each other’s relative strengths and weaknesses. (This includes getting to know each other’s personality, since graders will end up working very closely together in a variety of situations.) During this period team members can also attend grader training, which is held twice a year, and use online grader resources.

**Training and Passage Selection:** Once a team has coalesced, they must spend time studying ATA’s grading standards and procedures in depth, so as to ensure that their work will be consistent with the rest of the program. Meanwhile, they can begin looking for suitable texts in their source language and submitting them for preliminary review. The team liaison will be of great assistance here, especially in filtering out completely unsuitable prospective texts and explaining why they don’t hit the mark. Passage selection is a key process on the path to approval. Given the major role passage selection plays even for established language pairs, it’s essential that a strong foundation be laid for this during the startup phase. Following any preliminary vetting by the liaison, workgroups must complete paperwork for each passage to be approved by the Passage Selection Task Force, which includes articulating a variety of challenges presented by the passage.

**Grading Standards:** Last but by no means least, members of startup workgroups must develop both language- and passage-specific guidelines before testing can begin. For language-specific guidelines, graders specify approaches to common translation issues in the respective pair. For passage-specific guidelines, they record decisions about specific errors encountered in individual passages. In a sense, this vital activity pulls together everything done so far. Developing guidelines represents the last leg in passage selection, promotes teamwork through the exchange of opinions about error severity in particular, and presents a further opportunity for training and the inculcation of program standards.

If this sounds like a lot of work, it is. Assuming this is a part-time endeavor for all concerned, the entire process can easily take two years or longer, though that depends largely on the level of commitment. In the recent past, several initiatives have failed due to the inability to document sufficient demand, and others have foundered owing to a lack of leadership or teamwork. Still, it can be done! Since 2004, eight new language pairs have come on board: Croatian, Ukrainian, and Swedish in both directions, as well as Chinese>English and English>Arabic. These last two examples are the latest successes, having been approved for testing to begin in 2018. Both were long-standing efforts that experienced many ups and downs as well as personnel changes over the years. Ultimately, it was the dedication and hard work of a handful of people in each case that turned the tide. Kudos to all who were involved!

Do you have what it takes to help establish certification testing in a new pair? Check out the full procedure for establishing a new language combination on ATA’s website, or contact me (david@stephensontranslations.com) or Caron Mason, ATA’s Certification Program manager (caron@atanet.org) for further details.

**Attention Farsi Translators!**
A workgroup has been organized to establish ATA certification for translators of Farsi. Anyone interested in pursuing ATA certification in Farsi—as a workgroup participant or future candidate—should contact info@farsilanguagecenter.com.

**Notes**

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David Stephenson is the chair of ATA’s Certification Committee. An ATA-certified German>English, Dutch>English, and Croatian>English translator, he has been an independent translator for over 30 years, specializing in civil litigation and creative nonfiction. Contact: david@stephensontranslations.com.
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