



capital translator

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Building on the Rubble of the Shattered *Poverty Cult*

The Seven Virtues of the New Translation Era

by Kevin Hendzel

There is a great vibrancy and dynamism in the U.S. translation community today as translators stand up and refuse to surrender to the prevailing undertow of the *Poverty Cult*, a disease diagnosed and declared dead by Neil Inglis in June, 1996 at the ATA Regional Conference in Washington, D.C. Inglis characterized what might be termed the Seven Deadly Sins of the Poverty Cult as “envying the success of others, gloating over the failure of others; a pervasive sense that it is better for everybody to fail than for a few to succeed; a sickly squeamishness where the subject of money is concerned; shabby gentility, more shabby than genteel; a widespread conviction that it is better to have a little and be secure than to take a gamble and risk losing everything; and last, and very much least, *Schadenfreude* mixed with sour grapes.”

I hereby offer the following Seven Virtues as guidelines for the aspiring translator striving to “cast off the counterproductive mentalities that paralyze translator progress in the United States.”

1. Master Your Subjects

The first principle of commercial translation is to deliver a product of unparalleled quality. All long-term success in the translation market is built on this foundation. The increasing complexity of modern technology and international commerce, however, has forced translators, journalists and other writers to develop increasing levels of sophistication and expertise in technology, law, banking, international trade and other fields. Translators with a formal education in the various subject areas have a huge advantage in the commercial market. There is simply nothing in the translator arsenal to substitute for mastery of

subject matter. By hook or by crook, *master your subjects*. This expertise will improve the translation, solidify understanding, protect the client and en-

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President's Corner

by Lillian Clementi



It's official. The Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters has announced that it will hold an ATA East Coast Regional Conference in Charleston on April 15-16 of the year 2000. The Delaware Valley Translators Association has already agreed to support the conference, and I hope that NCATA will give Charleston 2000 the same energy and enthusiasm that was so critical to the success of last year's Regional Conference in Washington. The Charleston conference, along with last month's Southwest Regional Conference in Austin, reflects a gathering momentum for regional conferences that I believe benefits not only regional organizations, but ATA and the translation profession as a whole. By drawing on the experience of the first Regional Conferences in Cape May and Austin and working hard to make the 1996 conference a success, NCATA and the other hosting groups helped make it happen.

And our efforts have contributed more than momentum. Thanks to the hard work of its many volunteers and the generosity of its sponsors, the 1996 Regional Conference made an unexpected but welcome profit, and three of the hosting groups—NCATA, the Delaware Valley Translators Association, and the New York Circle of Translators—have elected to use the bulk of their

share of profits to create seed money funds for future regional conferences on the East Coast and in other areas. Ultimately, we'd like to see ATA's regional groups establish a regular schedule of regional conferences, rotating from East Coast to Southwest to West Coast to Midwest and back again. I think the Charleston conference is a big step in that direction, and I plan to be there. I hope you will too.

On a slightly smaller scale, Program Chair **Alissa Martin** is working closely with NCATA members **Monica Sawyer** and **Alison Carroll** to organize a local workshop sometime between late September and mid-October. The focus of the workshop will be legal translation in the Romance languages, and the program already looks very promising. If you have any ideas for the workshop or are interesting in helping with the organization, contact Alissa at (202) 337-2301 or martina2@georgetown.edu.

Translation Production Assistant Needed

Duties include translation project management, job coordination, maintaining databases, quality control, proofreading and editing, processing jobs, administrative support and client liaison.

Send resume to Ampac Group,
5713 Edsall Road, Alexandria, VA
22304, or fax to (703) 823-1138,
attention of Tim Rowe.

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hance your authority. This authority is—not coincidentally—critical to the success of our profession. Forget nail-biting through interminable *specialization vs. generalization* debates. Choose a few commercially viable specialty areas and learn everything about them. Remember that translators come in two varieties: *specialists* and *hungry*.

2. Appreciate Your Limits

If you ever come across a podiatrist who insists on surgically removing your spleen, you will soon discover why specialty knowledge is important. If you ever advertise yourself as a translator who can *do any subject*, you will look like the hapless podiatrist. The process of choosing specialty fields necessarily means not choosing many others. All good translators recognize the limits of their knowledge and turn down (or refer to colleagues) assignments that may imperil the quality of their product. The act of referring work to colleagues goes beyond charity: It protects the initial translator's reputation by deflecting work that could deflate a hard-won reputation for quality. It also promotes the notion that what translators do is sufficiently complex and demanding to require specialization. This happens to be true.

3. Defend Your Product

If you work with direct clients (or the less reputable translation agencies) it is imperative to stand up and defend the integrity of your product against the full arsenal of

assaults: Impossibly shrinking deadlines; the lost 40 pages that must be completed on the original deadline or the condemnation of your translation by the client's sister who took a semester of French in college. The reputable translation agencies will fight this battle for you by establishing policies and practices that protect their product as well as their in-house and freelance translators. The policies I have established at ASET place translators and editors in the role of decision-makers not only on production and quality issues, but also on whether jobs are accepted by the company at all.

Direct clients, on the other hand, have hired you, the translator, ostensibly to deliver expertise and a product that the client is unable to produce on his own. So, forget the mantra that "the client is always right." In truth, there are good and bad clients, and the bad clients are almost always wrong when they insert themselves into the translation process. The good clients in the translation industry grasp this intuitively and recognize that they have hired a translator (or translation agency) to deliver a service they cannot. These clients will rely on the translator to look out for their interests on a level far in excess of their ability to judge it. They will give latitude sufficient to operate in a manner consistent with the translator's quality standards, which in the end can only benefit them.

Translators run into trouble when good clients start down the road toward bad, and the

translator is foolish enough to actually follow the client down this road under the guise of "meeting the client's needs." This is idiotic and self-destructive. What clients need to be told is that they are about to enter a minefield. No set of actions that place client circumstances above the quality level of the product ("I don't care about quality, I need those 40 pages overnight!") are ever acceptable, period. There is no excuse for a translator to act as a co-conspirator by bowing to client demands that compromise that translator's product. In the same way that no sane surgeon would ever agree to do a six-hour triple bypass operation in a mere 45 minutes to *meet the patient's needs*, no translator should agree to butcher a translation toward the same end.

4. Sign Your Work

The simple act of claiming authorship shatters the *black box* invisibility of the translation process and reinserts translators into their rightful place as craftsmen of the translation product. A host of respected translators, including John Bukacek in the U.S. and Chris Durban in Europe, have long promoted translators' signing their work as a means to elevate public recognition and appreciation for the role of translators. The long absence of translators in the public consciousness has had many troubling and costly consequences for the profession, including a near universal lack of appreciation for what transla-

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You and Your Taxe\$

by Kathleen Sweeney

In honor of everyone's favorite anniversary, please find below a potpourri of helpful hints so that preparing your income tax return may not be such a taxing ordeal.

If you are swamped with work and have no time to organize your taxes, the IRS offers taxpayers the option of applying for an extension of time to file. This will grant you a reprieve only as far as your paperwork is concerned. Please keep in mind, however, that there is no grace period for paying the taxes that you owe. To obtain an extension, you must file Form 4868, *Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*, by 15 April 1997. You must also enclose a check with this form for the amount that you think you will owe with your tax return. In this instance, it is far better to overestimate your tax liability, because if you do not send in enough money with your extension form, you will be charged interest and penalties that are assessed as of 15 April. Once you send in your extension form, the deadline for filing your tax return will be postponed to 15 August 1997. This will give you an extra four months to get your paperwork in order. When you finally prepare your tax return, please remember to include the amount that you paid, when you mailed Form 4868, under the section entitled *Payments*

on page 2 of your Form 1040.

The personal exemption has been increased to \$2,550 for tax year 1996 and \$2,650 for tax year 1997. For those who do not itemize, i.e. those who do not file a Schedule A, the standard deduction has been increased for tax year 1996 to \$4,000 for single taxpayers and \$6,700 for taxpayers who are married filing jointly.

The U.S. Congress has also provided for a gradual increase in the allowable amount to be deducted for health insurance premiums. If you are self-employed, showed a net profit for the year, and pay for your own health insurance, you may deduct 30 percent of the amount that you paid in premiums for yourself, your spouse, and your dependents on line 26 of Form 1040 for tax year 1996. Premiums paid for any month during which you were eligible to participate in any subsidized health care plan offered by your employer or your spouse's employer do not qualify for this deduction. The remaining 70 percent may be deducted on Schedule A under *Medical Expenses*. For tax year 1997, the portion that may be deducted directly on the front page of Form 1040 increases to 40 percent.

Everyone should know by now that personal interest is no longer deductible. Personal interest includes interest paid on credit card purchases, car loans, installment plans, taxes

owed to the IRS or to any state or local tax agency, etc. However, if you have a credit card that you use strictly for business, any interest that you pay on business items purchased with your business credit card may be deducted as a valid business expense on your Schedule C under *Other Interest*. If you pay an annual fee for a credit card used strictly for business, your credit card fees are deductible on page 2 of your Schedule C under *Other Expenses*.

If you use your car for business and you deduct the business use percentage of your actual car expenses, you are entitled to deduct the business portion of any interest that you paid on a car loan on your Schedule C under *Car and Truck Expenses*. ✎

© 1997 by Kathleen Sweeney

Kathleen Sweeney translates Russian, French, and Polish into English. She has been a professional translator/interpreter since 1982. She has had formal training in tax theory and return preparation, and has also worked as a professional tax preparer.

Virtues

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tors do—even among clients who should know better—and absurdly optimistic public expectations for machine translation and other automated solutions for leaping the language barrier. Translators who sign their work are also expressing confidence in their product in public while demonstrating the integrity to stand by their work.

5. Quote Your Rate

One of the fastest ways to get rid of a plumber is to tell him what rate you will pay him to come fix your sink. The fact that plumbers slam down the phone at this kind of treatment and some translators do not is astonishing. Freelance translators are well advised to set rates at their own discretion and quote those rates to translation agencies (also referred to as *translation companies*, a preferred rendition, in this article). I can think of nothing that interests me less than what a translation company tells freelance translators it *will pay*. In fact, a reputable translation company can readily be identified by its request that you quote your rate first. There is plenty of room for good faith negotiations between parties that approach a transaction as equals.

6. Promote Your Profession

Public relations and promotion of translation has been so catastrophically poor for so many years that it is a miracle the public knows we exist at all. There is no unified public policy promotion, advocacy or lobbying for translators on the

Kevin Hendzel is the Director of Language Services of ASET International Services Corporation, a premier translation services company in the Washington, D.C. area, and is a former member of the NCATA Board. A graduate of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Kevin served as the Head Linguist on the US-USSR Presidential Hotline during the Gorbachev era. Kevin's own translation credits from Russian into English include 34 books and 2,200 articles published in science, technology and law. He can be reached at Khendzel@asetquality.com.

national level, and extremely scant promotion through the popular media. Even in such a lackluster environment, translators are blessed by the fact that we all work in a field that the public finds intrinsically interesting (imagine the challenge of promoting, say, industrial fluids to the media.) Some of the most visible media coverage for translation, including magazine articles in the international trade press, major metropolitan newspapers and in-flight magazines, as well as radio interviews and commentary, have been initiated in the last two years by individual working translators, interpreters and translation companies on the national, regional and local levels. Translators in Europe have begun a major client education initiative to reach out to industrial translation users. Translators in FLEFO report on

their college campus appearances to promote translation and several of the more active FLEFO translators and interpreters share source information and feedback from client education and public relations efforts.

7. Perfect Your Craft

Good translators do not become great translators by study, research or practice alone. These will get you to *good*, perhaps *very good*, and certainly are necessary steps to solid competence. Great is much, much more painful. Great translators—the ones who really stand out—have had their translations mauled, picked over, dissected, disemboweled, examined, edited, published, revised, and amended by their translation colleagues, editors and reviewers, sometimes for years. Each successive translation then draws on the collective experience of the translator as well the entire host of creative input and guidance from those translation colleagues and editors. All translators benefit to the extent that their work is *at risk* for examination, revision or review. Translators are best served in their professional development by establishing and maintaining a close community of cooperative and disciplined colleagues whose talent and expertise help to guide and focus the intensely personal creative act that is translation. ✍

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Vaulting the Language Barrier

Computers are helping to search texts and data now shrouded in linguistic differences

by Janet Raloff

Marjorie Hlava can't read Russian, but that doesn't stop her from learning the contents of a document printed in the Cyrillic alphabet. She simply places each page under the cover of the flatbed scanner in her Albuquerque office, presses a button, and waits as her computer displays an English-language version.

Using only English, she can also search Russian databases, such as files of published scientific reports. She types in the key words or phrases that describe her interests, then lets a series of computer programs take over. After converting her request into Russian, they sift through data files for references to documents that seem to match, convert those matches back into English, and display them on her computer.

More than once she has even conversed via her laptop computer—on a plane, for instance—with Russians who know no English. She types her side of the dialogue in English, which the computer converts into a Russian display. The other party types his or her responses in Russian, which the computer translates for Hlava. They can chat for hours that way, provided they restrict their words and phrases to those in the thesauruses, or set lists of words, on her machine.

That isn't too hard, Hlava notes, since the Russian-to-English portion currently contains some 750,000 words and phrases and the English-to-Russian one nearly 600,000.

Most of the software programs that allow fairly inexpensive, off-the-shelf computer hardware to translate Russian are preliminary versions being developed by Gerold G. Belonogov and Boris A. Kuznetsov at VINITI, the All-Russian Institute for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow. Hlava's company, Access Innovations, helped channel some U.S. government financing into the creation of those systems.

As the Internet has been demonstrating over the past few years, "we now have access to an enormous amount of information that didn't used to be available," notes Douglas W. Oard of the University of Maryland in College Park. "But it's only accessible to those who speak the language. And as the World Wide Web's name indicates, not everything on the Internet is in English."

Because users seldom pay for data they find on the Web, there is little incentive for those who post the information to invest in expensive, time-consuming multilanguage translations or indexing. What a user needs to make full and efficient

use of a foreign database or the Internet, Oard explains, is a system that translates among languages, searches effectively for answers to a user's query or stated interests, and then ranks any matches by the likelihood of their satisfying a particular user's needs.

For many persons interested in focused areas of science or engineering—such as the microwave heating of plasmas or drugs to treat cancer patients—"the things that Marjorie Hlava [and her VINITI colleagues] do are just as good as you would like," observes Oard. "The limitation is that humans can find them difficult to use"; that is, they need to be trained in effective search strategies.

He and a host of others are working to make foreign data and files easily accessible to an even broader audience, one with little training in data searches. Unfortunately, he says, "we're only about half as good as you'd like at doing this. And getting halfway turns out to have been rather easy." It's the second half that will prove costly in both time and money, he maintains.

The payoff could prove substantial, he and Hlava agree. Such efforts could uncloak a world of research and data for people who don't speak a foreign language.

Today, computer technologies are being developed to translate a wide range of mother tongues. At the behest of the European Parliament, for instance, several ambitious programs are working to make documents prepared in English or French intelligible to those who read any of the other nine official languages of the European Union. Even more challenging projects around the

...computer technologies are being developed to translate a wide range of mother tongues.

world seek to pair English with languages written in non-Roman characters—such as Japanese, Chinese, Greek, Arabic, Russian, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Few of these efforts are designed to provide full machine translation of the documents; rather, their aim is a more limited rendering of some important aspects—such as titles, key words, or abstracts.

Indeed, this may be sufficient if the goal is merely to identify a few particularly valuable documents that a user might then choose to have translated in full, Oard ob-

serves. The projects could also help electronic browsers identify more circumscribed information, such as images posted on the Internet with captions in a foreign language, names and affiliations of foreign scientists who have conducted research on a topic of interest, or newly coined foreign terms or short quotations in a text.

Even limited cross-language identification and retrieval of electronically stored text represents a tall order, Oard notes.

For instance, even within a single language, commercial database searching remains a fairly unscientific, “seat-of-the-pants thing,” observes Richard S. Marcus, an information scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. What’s not well recognized, he says, is that unless someone is an expert in searching or has the services of a good librarian, “you typically are able to retrieve only about 5 percent of the relevant documents available.”

By employing certain computer techniques that he says are available only on experimental systems, “you can bring the comprehensiveness of a search as close to 100 percent as you like.” With several interactions, sophisticated programs can prompt a user to find the most effective words for a query. Marcus maintains that this extra effort “can make all the difference between getting almost nothing and getting everything you want.”

Before computers were in wide use, librarians indexed documents with a few key words—the ones that appeared

in a card catalog. Such limited indexing “is not very good for detailed analysis of articles and documents,” Marcus says, “because a few terms won’t cover all of their information.” Moreover, unless the wording of an indexed portion of some text—often the title or abstract—is restricted to terms in a thesaurus, an indexer might employ words that a later searcher wouldn’t think to use.

With computers, “you can now index all of the words in a document” for full-text querying, Marcus notes. Yet even this does not always prove satisfactory. If an author used the word *Cessna* in his text and a searcher attempted to retrieve it by asking for references to small planes, even a full-text search would miss what conceptually should have been a valid match.

“So our research over the past 20 years has been to make key-word use smarter” by getting the computer to suggest synonyms, Marcus says. Not only might it point out that a *Cessna* is a type of small plane, it might also ask whether it should expand the ongoing search to include other small planes, perhaps helicopters—even dirigibles.

Alternatively, the computer may attempt to narrow an overly broad search by soliciting feedback on its first few matches. The computer can then look for a pattern in what was rejected or ask the user why certain choices were rejected, then refine subsequent searches based on the response.

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British computer scientist Steven Pollitt of the University of Huddersfield's Centre for Database Access Research is taking a similar tack. His computer-aided searches ask the user what terms he or she would like to begin with and use them as a departure for identifying related search terms—some broader, some narrower in focus.

If a searcher typed in Alzheimer's disease, for example, the computer would flash a list of related terms, such as Alzheimer's syndrome and Alzheimer fibrillary lesion. A number next to each term shows how many documents match it.

The computer can also search simultaneously for texts fitting additional categories—such as a country (where clinical trials may have occurred), drugs, or other treatments (such as acupuncture)—and count or display all texts that match the combination.

The key to making this approach work is a comprehensive list of index terms that have been organized into hierarchies, Pollitt explains. Degenerative disease, for instance, would contain a file of terms for Alzheimer's and other chronic illnesses. Choosing Alzheimer's would allow the computer to suggest broader terms, such as degenerative disease, or narrower ones.

For searching to work effectively, the developers of a database must have indexed all texts using an agreed-upon vocabulary—and the more spe-

cific the vocabulary, the better.

The European Parliament has a list of 6,000 terms, known as EUROVOC, to index all subjects in its documents, from politics and law to science. Only a few dozen of these EUROVOC terms deal with medicine. In contrast, the National Library of Medicine has compiled a working list of more than 17,000 words for indexing articles cited in its MEDLINE database.

Searching success also improves, Pollitt notes, when each starting thesaurus is tai-

Few...are designed to provide full machine translation of the documents...

lored to the vocabulary of a particular field, such as medicine or physics. This will limit confusion among terms common to both but having quite different meanings—such as plasma. To physicists, it's an ionized gas, whereas to biochemists it's blood minus its cellular components.

Belonogov, who is a linguist, has embedded 21 such thematically organized dictionaries (covering such subjects as ecology, geophysics, and foreign trade) within his thesauruses. To limit confusion further, the

thesauruses treat as a single term many commonly used phrases up to 13 words long. In fact, about 75 percent of the English entries involve word combos, such as "bottom line," "ballistic missile," or "might be interested in."

When they surveyed the field last year, Oard and Maryland colleague Bonnie J. Dorr found few commercial systems that ranked potential matches. So if 20,000 potential matches are identified, a user must sift through them all to find the few that might be valuable.

Though the VINITI browser does rank its responses, "the drawback is that those responses are in Cyrillic," Hlava says. Nonetheless, it can prove useful when coupled to VINITI's translator programs. Together, the pair can search and retrieve documents from Russia's scientific holdings, which include not only Russian documents but also those published by Russia's trading partners, such as the former Soviet republics, North Korea, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

MIT's experimental system attempts to rank matched terms on the basis of how they were used or where they appeared. For instance, Marcus says, "we have demonstrated that the title words are most important." So if a queried term appears there, the document will be ranked higher than another in which the same term is buried in the text.

Pollitt has tested his searching system on a database of 600,000 medical citations written in a host of European languages. He has also tested it by

querying and retrieving citations—in English or Japanese—from INSPEC, a British bibliographic database covering texts on physics, electronics, and computing. He says the system can now be developed commercially.

Similarly, Marcus believes the system his team has developed is ready for commercialization.

Though VINITI's systems are still under development, working versions are available from the institute in Moscow and from Hlava. However, Hlava notes, money to refine them has all but dried up. The software programs that she marries into working systems still have a way to go before they offer *transparent* translation capabilities to both English and Russian readers, she says.

"It breaks my heart," she told *Science News*, "that we can't get these technologies off the ground." Hlava says \$20,000 would enable the VINITI team to develop a version of the translation and searching programs that would be compatible with Microsoft Windows, the primary organizing software on desktop computers today. The Moscow researchers have no money to invest in it, however: Not only are they working without pay, they don't have money to heat their offices this winter.

Indeed, most of these programs suffer from a paucity of both financing and visibility. Oard hopes to counter the latter through a symposium he's organizing under the auspices of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence. He

plans this month not only to showcase what seems to work reasonably well today but also to highlight where future challenges lie.

Among the challenges, he says, are programs to revise thesauruses automatically as languages grow and change, to identify words in languages like Chinese and Vietnamese,

which do not put spaces between words, and to insert verbs in languages, such as Arabic, that frequently use nouns in place of verbs. ✍

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Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Translation, But Were Afraid To Ask

NCATA/SFL Luncheon To Be Held May 10

In a change of program, NCATA gadflies Neil Inglis and Kevin Hendzel will join SFL representative Glenn Nordin for a panel discussion on the challenging issues that everybody wonders about and nobody is talking about. Neil Inglis, already well known to NCATA members, delivered the keynote speeches at last year's regional conference and ATA conference. Kevin Hendzel is Director of Language Services of ASET International Services Corporation, a premier translation services company in the Washington, D.C. area, and a former member of the NCATA Board. His articles on translation industry issues have appeared in the *ATA Chronicle*, the *ITI Bulletin* and a variety of other publications, and Kevin has been a featured speaker at five ATA National Conferences as well as the East Coast Regional Conference, where he served on the Organizing Committee. SFL Board Member Glenn Nordin is a professional translator who currently serves as Executive Secretary of the DCI Foreign Language Committee and Coordinator of the Federal Interagency Language Roundtable. Don't miss this provocative discussion of some of the best-kept secrets in translation and be sure you're ready to talk about the bee in *your* bonnet.

The menu features your choice of Crabcake Sandwich, Chicken Teriyaki, or Lobster Fettucini with salad and beverage, followed by tea or coffee and dessert. The price is \$16.00 per person. The Lighthouse Tavern is located at 1901 N. Ft. Meyer Rd, in Rosslyn. From the Rosslyn Metro, turn left as you exit the station and walk one block down the hill. The roof parking lot behind the restaurant is free on Saturdays; street parking is available but is metered on Saturdays.

Make your reservations and menu selection with Sandy Kay at (202) 338-1572. Reservations will be accepted through close of business on May 9th. Last-minute walk-ins will be accepted on a space-available basis. ✍

Pellet's Puntos y Puntas

The REAL Power of Translation and Machines

by Mercedes M. Pellet

In 1979, machine-assisted translation meant using an IBM Selectric with a new carbon ribbon. Within the past 18 years, the combination of language and technology has been either hailed as the permanent solution to Babel's confusion of languages or maligned as the downgrading of human endeavor. In truth, technology has greatly advanced the field of translation and localization, not because it can replace human translators, but because it can greatly enhance their accuracy and consistency. Today, the term machine translation applies to the automated conversion of text from one language to another. The reality is that machine translation still produces text which requires major *post-editing*, but computerized tools are upgrading the quality of translations through translation memories, terminology databases, quality control checks and consistency reviews. These tools fall under the category of machine-assisted translation.

Today, machine-assisted translation means a computer, a large hard drive, a modem, good applications and enough technical knowledge to design specialized programs. Nowhere is this more necessary than in the field of software localization. Considering the growth in international demand for

software, as well as the increased worldwide competition, it is not surprising that the ancient craft of translation has become big business, based on technology.

Why Is Software Localization Different?

Software localization is a complicated process which begins, ideally, when the software is being created. In the case of legacy software, which may have been written long before the international market became a target, it may be necessary to analyze the software and prepare it for localization. This preliminary step has been given the name of globalization or internationalization. Whether it occurs at the time of development or years after a product has been on the market, globalization must solve issues such as imbedded text strings, ways of handling dates and measurements, user interface and expansion room for longer languages.

After globalizing the software, the actual process of localization can begin. Localization refers to the translation and adaptation of the software for specific markets. Various applications to facilitate the separation of source code and user interfaces (GUI), since only the latter must be translated, are currently on the mar-

ket. Before programs such as XL8 and Translation Manager were available, there were two basic approaches to translating software. One approach consisted of giving the translators the entire program to translate, which resulted in unexpected changes to the source code since deciding what should and should not be translated was left to the ingenuity of the translators. In the other approach, translators were given the text strings by themselves to render them into the target languages, after which they were instructed to return them to the programmers for insertion in the appropriate places. Since the translators were not told the significance of imbedded variables, the final versions of the translated software may have contained phrases such as *there is <ten> page* or *Click on button <OK>*.

Benefits of Machine-Assisted Translation

Translation programs became a valuable tool for the translator and for the software developer because, in addition to separating interface text and source code, they automated the following steps:

- Creating and expanding predefined glossaries.
 - Leveraging translated strings by comparing previously translated to new material.
- Based on this comparison,

exact and *fuzzy* (approximate) matches are copied into the new material to provide a base translation.

- Performing quality control of the translation by checking spaces, formats and variables.

Additional Translation Tools

Depending on the type of software that is being localized, the translation may require other tools, such as:

- On-line glossaries which provide the latest terminology for the platform being used for the software (Windows, DOS, Mac, UNIX, etc.)
- Consistency checks to make sure that the same terms are being used for items such as menus and buttons—both within the software and in all the associated files (i.e., Help and Tutorial files).
- Automated updating of glossaries to make sure that they contain the terms actually used in the final software.

- Custom programs to assist during the language testing process.

Some of these tools are available through the Internet—for instance, Microsoft's web page provides access to all Windows 95 glossaries—and others require good programming skills. However, the main objective of all these tools is to assist the human translator to increase accuracy and quality. There is nothing available to actually substitute translators.

Machine-Assisted vs. Machine Translation?

Many people approach the software localization process from a programming perspective. Seen from this angle, language is a set of symbols, subject to substitution. With enough memory, a computer can perform all the substitution functions necessary to convert a source text into a comprehensible target text. This *bypassing* of the human translator has as its ultimate

goal a substantial cost-savings and greater control of the process.

Unfortunately, language is a *context-based* set of symbols and it cannot be detached from its accompanying culture, which changes daily. For something that needs to be as immediately identifiable as software, cryptic renditions of machine-translated text will never be acceptable. The base culture of the human translator will always be needed to bridge the gap between what the software creator intended and what the end-user will understand. Regardless of the advances in technology, human translators will never be replaced because language is not like mathematics where $2 + 2$ always equals 4.

Machine-assisted translation now means a dynamic partnership of two disciplines that span the translator's knowledge of what has gone before and the programmer's vision of what is yet to be created. ✍

New and Returning Chapter Members

A warm welcome to Robert A. Croese, Magdalena V. Giannotti, Andrea P. Grosse, Shu-Tyng Hoffer, Cynthia Jaffe, Silvia Ines Kosovsky, Julia Chu Leggett, Karina V. Mayner, J. Marshall McCormick, Marjorie Robertson, Sunny Roest, Betty E. Welker. ✍

NAJIT Annual Meeting Announced

The 18th Annual Meeting & Educational Conference of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) will be held in Seattle, Washington. Pre-conference workshops will be held May 15-16 and the Conference on May 16-18 at the Embassy Suites Sea-Tac Hotel. For complete information, contact NAJIT at 212-692-9581, send email to conference-info@najit.org, or see <http://www.najit.org/conference.html>

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
May 3	9:30 a.m.	Accreditation exams	GMU Center, Alexandria, VA Call ATA HQ 703-683-6100
May 10	12 noon	NCATA/SFL luncheon	Lighthouse Tavern, Rosslyn, VA
May 17 - 18		CATI Conference	U of NC at Greensboro, NC
May 6 - 9		Multimedia '97	Toronto, Canada For info call 703-660-2491
May 11 - 14		Technical Communication 44th Annual Conference	Toronto, Canada For info call 703-511-4114
July 14 - 16		IT Services Conference	Grand Hyatt, Washington,DC For info, call Jim Forberg 208-256-4700, ext. 126
Nov. 5 - 7		ATA Conference	Hyatt Regency Hotel, San Francisco, CA

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