



capital translator

Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association
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All you ever wanted to know...about web pages

Learning the Code(s): Writing a Web Page

by Jonathan Hine

The translation agency project manager was a little disappointed that I was already committed and could not take her job. She thanked me for the referrals to four colleagues, then asked, "Could you send us a résumé with your rates?"

"Sure," I said, "but that is all up to date on my Web site which you could get to faster."

"Cool! Give me the URL."

So I saved a first class stamp. More important, I translated several hundred words in the time it would have taken me to update my résumé file, print it and mail it to her. That's money in the bank.

If Internet jargon leaves you totally blank, stay with me. I created my own site on the World Wide Web this year, without having ever written anything in HTML (Hyper-Text Markup Language). Perhaps my experience can help you start building your own home page or find out what you need. At least you'll pick up some vocabulary to impress your friends at cocktail parties.

Please understand that I am not a computer geek. Some computer types call me a power user, because I rely on computer-based tools like

my word processor, modem, and spreadsheet. But I don't program, I don't write applications, and our son still sets up the VCR at home. True computer whizzes reading this may not like the way I explain it. Too bad! I am not writing this for them. If you are encouraged to try this, we both win.

However, this is not about computer basics. Let me assume that you have a PC or a Mac, that you have a modem and you know how to use it. Ideally you already have connected to places elsewhere, like the local university, your employers' computers, America Online, CompuServe, or the local library. You may even have a Web browser like Netscape or Internet Explorer and know how to use it.

Check out the glossary in the sidebar for any terms which are new to you. Here is what happened to me.

I spent some time **surfing the net** (using my Web browser to look at Web pages). I learned how to download HTML files and how to look at the marked-up ASCII text. I also downloaded a complete guide to the subject. It's at <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html>

When I was ready to start building my page, I downloaded the HTML file for a homepage that had the kind of arrangement I needed and roughly the same type of information. Without disturbing the tags, I replaced their text with my own information (this was all on my hard drive. I did not have a Web site

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President's Corner

by Lillian Clementi



The summer is barely over, but the NCATA program year is already in full swing. As announced in our August mailing, NCATA's legal translation seminar has been slated for September 27 and has extended its focus beyond the Romance languages. Although two of the speakers will use examples from Latin America, all four sessions will present information and skills that are applicable to a wide variety of translation projects, regardless of language, and I'm confident that the seminar will offer something for everyone.

In the opening session, NCATA members **Alison Carroll** and **Carmen Kosik** will discuss strategies for tackling a large-scale or long-term legal project. As Alison notes, "Good organizational skills become essential when a translator signs on to assist attorneys in litigation or other long-term projects. Documents can bury the whole team unless someone is tracking what has been translated and by whom, how key terms and phrases are best rendered, and whether sight translation will economize on time and resources." The session will provide tips on efficient management of a team working with large quantities of documents. After the morning break, a presentation by **Brian Fish**, in-house translator of Japanese and French into English at

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner, will offer insights into some of the special problems that arise in patent work.

After the lunch break, **Sergio Sardenberg**, a Brazilian attorney practicing in the US, will present strategies for translating legal concepts in context, examining legal institutions and remedies that exist in the US but not in other countries, and vice versa. The closing session will feature attorney and English-to-Portuguese translator **Monica Sawyer**, who will present hard-to-locate foreign-language resources and tips on harnessing the Internet to compensate for the handicap faced by US-based translators working into foreign languages. This session should also be a useful source of foreign-language reference materials for translators working into English.

Although Program Chair **Alissa Martin** has contributed a good deal of legwork, this seminar was the brainchild of Alison Carroll and Monica Sawyer, who designed the program to cover information they felt had been neglected up to now. If there's a seminar topic you'd like to see addressed, don't hesitate to contact Alissa at the numbers at left. In the meanwhile, I hope you'll send in the enclosed registration form and join us on September 27. ✍

A warm welcome to the following new and returning members:

Marica P. Angelides, Eva Balogh, Laura Benali, Sofia M. Bogdanovska, Milagros Cobos, Giannella De Rienzo, Ana Echevarria, Maria Belén Garcia Paz, Zoreh Granfar, Ales Holz, Emilia Ivanova Balke, Olivia Korsun, Viviane Linssen, Paul W. Merriam, Walter J. Mircea, Marina L. Rota, and Frank Schramm. ✍

The Electronic Accent

by Eve R. Lindemuth

Knowledge of accent marks, or even a totally new character set, goes hand in hand with in-depth understanding of a second or third language. Presenting such characters correctly can be a particularly sticky problem in e-mail.

Currently, e-mail (and related) technology is in a period of transition in regards to the presentation of international characters. Until recently, typed documents with accent marks added by hand were not so shocking. Now, clients and colleagues expect to see computer-generated documents with computer-generated accents. Problems arise, however, when the format used is e-mail. The future resolution of this issue will mean that all operating systems and e-mail software use the same methods to display and read characters—or at least be smart enough to convert various information automatically.

Since this is not yet the case, translators must take steps themselves to ensure that e-mail containing accented characters is presented in a readable fashion, though this is not always possible. This is especially important for text (as opposed to an attachment) within the body of an e-mail. To emphasize this point, here are some examples of special characters that didn't arrive intact:

This is what was received:	Was it supposed to be this?
=46luent in English	Fluent in English
Li=E8ge	Liège
=3D=3D=3D=3D=3D=3D=3D	????
apr=E8s	après
J3rgen	Jürgen
Please find enclosed my r&sum&	Please find enclosed my résumé
Fran(oise Brune	Françoise Brune
aLÿÖ _SaL;a . ~ ± j	[Chinese characters]
JoÛlle	Joëlle

Why did this happen and how can it be prevented? The simple explanation is that different e-mail programs and gateways encode, decode and read character sets in different ways. (This has to do with bits and bytes; for a more in-depth explanation, see articles like John Delacour's "MIME, Internet Mail and CJK," *Multilingual Communications & Technology*, Volume 8, Issue 2.)

To avoid sending characters that look correct to the sender but wrong in the recipient's mailbox, some precautionary measures can be taken, but none is foolproof. The first is not very desirable: only use ASCII characters—the US alphabet plus a few symbols—readable by all operating systems when sending e-mail. This solution does defeat the purpose,

however, of sending international e-mail and may make it look like the sender doesn't know how to spell (for example, ecole vs. école).

Another way to avoid *incorrect* accents is to use the same type of operating system and e-mail program as the recipient. However, this is not always practical or possible. A third option is to manually choose the encoding method with which e-mails are sent: MIME, BinHex, or Uuencode, matching the method used by the recipient. Of course, the recipient must have the appropriate fonts to read languages other than English. Another solution would be to send information containing *non-American* characters as an attachment to an e-mail. This can cause problems of its own, but will work most of the time.

The purpose of this discussion is to increase awareness about the fact that e-mail is not yet the perfect tool and reiterate that e-mail users must take special care to successfully convey international information over the Internet. New tools are being invented and improved upon every day, and surely, such hindrances to international communication will soon be a problem of the past.

Comments and suggestions on this topic are welcome. I can be reached at linbod@mindspring.com.

Web pages ...continued from page 1

yet.). Then I used my Web browser to look at it. You can look at files on your hard drive by typing the full path of the file in that long box at the top of the browser screen (e.g., C:\netscape\stash\file.htm) and pressing return.

My new **homepage** looked just like the one I downloaded, except that all the words were mine. What a rush to see my own name and information on the screen!

There was an icon where a little graphic had been on the downloaded page. Graphics (icons, photos, pictures, etc.) are stored separately and are **linked** to the spot in your page that you want them to appear. A **link** is a tag that contains the location of the graphic. It can be in the same place as your HTML file (recommended for home pages) or anywhere else. When I downloaded the page I used as a pattern, I did not also download the graphics. When I disconnected from the Internet, my browser could not find the graphic file. Instead it inserted a dummy icon as a placeholder.

Next, I experimented with changing the tags to alter the appearance. I centered my name and added some bullets. Then I created a whole new page by marking up a text version of my information sheet. I saved it with its own filename (trinfo.htm). I inserted a link from the home page to trinfo.htm and another in the other direction. No cool icons yet, just the standard blue, underlined text that the basic browser gives you. I added the tag for e-mail (<mailto>) so readers could send me messages at the click of a button.

When I had the two pages looking respectable, I downloaded a cheerful graphic from CompuServe (I was planning on locating my Web site there anyway) and inserted a link to it at the top of my home page. It took some trial and error to understand how to get it centered

and cut down to size. The length and width in pixels are part of the tag, so I had to change them, look at the results, and change them again until I got it right.

When I was ready to let the rest of the planet see my page, I **published** it. The HTML file has to be checked to make sure it meets the rigid formatting of the Internet protocol. If not, the file will bomb and give the reader an error signal.

CompuServe and America Online both have publishing routines that simplify this process and mount the new files on the member's reserved space in the server. It even tells you what your URL is, so you can get those calling cards made!

Your Internet Service Provider

What a rush to see my own name...on the screen!

(ISP) should have instructions for mounting your Web site. Providing this service has become routine in the last year or so. The publishing part of this process won't be difficult.

My first page was pretty simple. One graphic, a plain gray background, and black type. I thought it was in Times Roman, until I learned that the reader's browser, and not the HTML file, determines the font. I reset my browser to look at my page in some different fonts to make sure it still performed as I wanted.

Since mounting the Web site, I have added links and changed the background color. I also submitted the URL to the AltaVista search engine, so anyone looking for my name, language pair, or subjects would find my homepage.

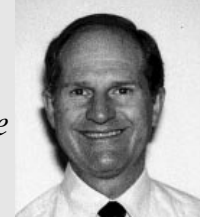
I keep the entire Web site (HTML pages, graphics files, etc.) on my hard drive, and I make my changes there. When I am satisfied that the whole thing hangs together correctly and that the links work, I republish the complete package to my Web site on CompuServe. I recommend viewing your page before you publish it because the simplest omission, like a missing slash or a backwards arrow deep in the text, can make most of your page disappear from the screen.

Since I wrote my page, Netscape has come out with browsers that do Web-editing. Windows 95® and other programs include HTML help. I use a Web-editing tool now (Hot Dog Pro from sausage.com), but I am glad that I did the first pages manually.

This whole process took several months because I could only work on it between jobs. Now I understand what the ISP people do when they produce home pages. Most of the HTML is very simple. Designing original graphics is more time-consuming and expensive than downloading ready-made clip art. Producing my own simple page helped me understand the difference.

Most important, my page makes me available to my clients around the clock. They are the reason I went through the trouble in the first place. ✍

Jonathan Hine is a translator in Charlottesville, Virginia. When he is not modifying his Webpage, he can be reached at scriptor@virginia.edu. You can check out the results of his experience at: <http://ourworld.com/compuserve.com/homepages/scriptor>



Here's the jargon, with my own very liberal translation:

The Internet is an informal collection of computers exchanging data all over the world. The people who own and operate the computers have agreed on a common set of rules for exchanging the data, a major achievement in human understanding! The Internet started from a US Government initiative to hook university scholars and government labs together so they could share their research. Now commercial companies, like MCI and Sprint, are more involved than ever. The big participants operate the **backbone**, a network of major channels and switching areas that move gazillions of data bits per second all around the globe.

World Wide Web (WWW, or the Web). This is the most visible way to communicate on the Internet today. This is a graphic system, producing intuitive screens for humans, not text-based like older systems.

Server. This is the computer that connects your computer software to the backbone of the Internet. It probably has more memory and processing speed than yours, but it's just a computer with software to let it handle Internet data transfers between the backbone and many smaller computers. The smaller computers, including yours, are called **clients**.

The Internet Service Provider (ISP) operates the server. This could be your online service (like CompuServe, Prodigy or AOL) or a pure ISP (like AT&T WorldNet, Erols, Mind's Eye, etc.).

URL and domain names make it all work for us humans. Every computer on the Internet has a numeric identifier on the local net of the ISP. The ISP's server has a

number. The group of similar nets (government, schools, companies) has a number, and the country has a number. When I connect, my computer gets a number from the ISP. This creates a unique string of numbers like a postal address.

Each level of numbers has been given a set of letters so we can follow it. These are the domain names. You have seen them: *www.virginia.edu* or *ourworld.com-puserve.com*. String all the domain names for one computer together and you get the unique **Uniform Resource Locator** for that machine.

The domain names give hints about the user: *.edu* indicates a college or university; *.org* a non-profit organization; *.com* is a business; *.us* is the United States of America; *.us.ca* is California, but *.ca* alone is Canada; *.gov* is government, as in *www.whitehouse.gov*; *.mil* is for the Armed Forces. Our non-profit chapter NCATA has its own domain name: *www.ncata.org*.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is a series of codes inserted into a plain text file. The codes tell a **browser** (a program that reads plain text with HTML) how to display the text on your screen. The HTML codes are called **tags**. The text to be affected is bracketed by pairs of arrow symbols, like this `<i> the text in here will appear in italics on the screen </i>`. The slash `</i>` marks the end of the affected string. You may nest sets of tags to combine features, like centering, bold and italics. You can type your whole Web page on the simplest computer with the most basic software. All you need are the characters on a normal keyboard.

What Web-editing software applications do is to convert all the formatting codes of your document

(written in Microsoft Word®, Pagemaker®, WordPerfect®, etc.) into the ASCII text files required by the browsers.

The browsers will also save the HTML file being displayed on your hard drive (called **downloading**). You can open the file with a text editor to see (or change) the HTML tags. You can also "view document source" with the browser to see the text file. That can help you associate the tags with the appearance of the screen.

Home page. This is an HTML file on the server that handles your Internet account. If a computer sends out your URL without a filename (like the one on your calling card), this is the default file that your server sends back.

Web site. This is your place on the Internet. Your home page is the front door. The files stored with the home page on the server make up the site.

Search engine and Web search. Search engines are software packages that will find HTML files for you. Some well-known ones are *AltaVista*, *Yahoo*, *Lycos* or *Webcrawler*. Most browsers have links to several search engines. You can also type the URL for the search engine in the long white bar at the top of your browser and press the return key. The URL's are *http://www.yahoo.com* or *http://www.altavista.digital.com*. Get the idea?

http:// means Hypertext transfer protocol. It identifies HTML URL's—the Web. ☞

Pellet's "Puntos y Puntas"

Service: A New Approach With an Old Twist

by Mercedes M. Pellet

The more things change, the more they stay the same." How many times have we heard that old saw? Just recently, I had the opportunity to appreciate the wisdom of those words when solving a problem for a client.

In the age of overpowering technology and expensive gadgets, the deciding factor in achieving success in business is still good old customer service. In other words, that "willingness to help" that no computer application, no telecommunications system and no device can produce: it takes a good ol' human to do that.

Last month, I had to deal with a problem that is particularly vexing in the translation industry: translation reviews performed by non-translators who are completely trusted by the client, but who lack the linguistic skills necessary to transcend their own limitations. Although this occurs in all target languages, including English, it is most prevalent in translations that are from English into other languages. The problem usually occurs when the reviewer is either a native speaker who has resided in the United States for a long time or someone who has studied the target language.

The situation generally evolves along these lines:

1. The reviewer is asked by the client to read and review the translated material.
2. The translation may contain words which are unfamiliar to the reviewer. Since the reviewer may not have access to reference materials, he or she may conclude that the translation "does not sound right."
3. In order to not let the client down, the reviewer prefers to err on the side of making the revision and will change the translation to

fit within the boundaries of his or her knowledge.

4. The translator then receives the marked-up translation and concludes that the client wants all corrections entered as marked.
5. The client receives a completed translation, accurately corrected as indicated by the reviewers, and professionally produced.

Except...the end-user may be left wondering what some of the words actually mean because the reviewers were unable to *transcend their limitations*. That is, they selected words they themselves knew, but they may have known them because of their proximity to English or because that is what they remembered. Unfortunately, the end-user may have no such contact with English or may find the selected word quaint and obsolete.

But, to return to the initial problem which prompted me to write this column, I had to diplomatically tell the client that the reviewer's comments were not appropriate and that I could not make them and still produce a professionally translated final product. The translation was from English into Spanish and the original translator had correctly used the word *saldo* to refer to the balance in a bank account and the word *prestamista* to refer to a lender. The reviewer wanted those words changed to *balance* and *prestador*, respectively.

I had the following choices:

- I could sarcastically suggest to the client that the work of professionals should not be given to amateurs to evaluate.
- I could bad-mouth the reviewer and make a few snide remarks about "mosquito brains" and the need for additional schooling.
- I could take the approach that

"Hey, it's your nickel! If you want gibberish, I'll give you gibberish."

- I could pompously give a brief dissertation on the etymology of the words.

- Or I could take the high road.

This would mean that I would have to evaluate the merits of the reviewer's changes to determine if they could be valid in any way. For instance, the text may have been meant for people with a low educational level and a high linguistic contamination—which could mean that the only word they know for balance is *balance*. It would also mean that I would have to address the client's concern and linguistic limitations. And, most important, it would mean that I would have to take responsibility for making sure that the document accomplished what the client wanted.

I took the high road.

I spoke to the client and asked her if it would be possible for me to speak to her reviewer so that I could confirm a couple of the changes. When she agreed, I called the reviewer and calmed his initial defensiveness by saying that the original translator and I appreciated his comments but there were two terms that we wanted to leave as they were. After I explained why, he said that he still preferred the use of the word *balance* because *saldo* seemed a little too fancy for him since the end-user was a U.S. Hispanic. We finally compromised by leaving *saldo* and adding the word *balance* in parentheses.

In this way, the episode became a positive experience for everyone involved and the client felt that her interests were being protected. It required a greater involvement on my part but, I am sure, will result in additional business from the same

client and perhaps others whom she will recommend. The reviewer feels that he was treated with respect and that he contributed meaningfully to the document. The translator was satisfied because she felt that her professionalism was considered. What it really required from me was dealing with each person as if his or her point had merit.

And that is good, old-fashioned customer service! ✍

Accreditation Seminar Reminder

Don't forget to come to the accreditation orientation seminar on Saturday, September 6 at 2 p.m. It will be held in the Cleveland Park branch of the DC Public Library at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Macomb Street, the Cleveland Park Metro stop. Find out what accreditation is really all about and ask those questions that have been bothering you. ✍

On the lighter side...

A boring editing job—NOT!

by Ruth Zimmer Boggs

If you think that editing is unexciting or machine-translation is flawless, you've obviously never edited a machine-translation. Lots of fun!

Here are some particularly funny finds. For non-German speakers, the meaning of the machine-translation is included in parenthesis.

boardroom	Brettzimmer (a room made of or containing wood planks)
bald eagle	kahler Adler (a follicle-challenged eagle)
cad system	Schuft-System (villain-system)
cross training	böse Schulung (bad teaching)
forest understory	Wald-unter-Geschichte (forest-beneath-story)
high rise	hoher Anstieg (as in...dramatic rise)
hispanic	Sein-Panik (the panic of being)
interstate	Bestattenstaat (burying country/nation)
light-hearted	Licht-Herz-ed (light-heart-education?)
lumber jack	Bauholz-Hebevorrichtung (lifting device for lumber)
new zealand	neue Eifer-und (new zeal-and...and what?)
oil spill	Ölsturz (oil fall)
real estate	echtes Gut (genuine good)
stock broker	Vorrat-Makler (supply agent)
stock market	Vorrat-Markt (supply market)
superconductor	Super-Schaffner (terrific/superb/outstanding/wonderful train/streetcar conductor)

and two real gems,

Washington	Wäsche-Tonne (laundry drum)
grandparent	Großvater-Miete (grandfather-rent)

Those treasures put a smile on Karin Wuertz-Schaefer's face when she was editing a machine translation. Have you had similar experiences? Please share them with us and make everyone feel good (and needed). ✍

Somebody Knows the Difference!

News Flash—Someone in the mass media knows the difference between translators and interpreters! This unexpected fact came to light last July when Japanese pitcher Hideki Irabu started with the New York Yankees. In a discussion on NPR of some problems facing Irabu, New York Times sportswriter Jack Curry noted that Irabu's limited English is leading to some extra work for the pitcher and catcher. Because "they can't take an interpreter out on the mound," Irabu and the catcher are having to work out a larger than usual set of hand signals before the games.

Thank you, Jack Curry, for sparing us the image of a translator handling text-based communication out on a baseball field! ✍

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
September 6	2 pm	Accreditation Seminar	Cleveland Park branch of DC Public Library, Connecticut Ave. and Macomb St., Cleveland Park Metro Stop
September 26		M ² Seminar on Globalization and Localization	Baltimore, MD For information contact Isabelle Joulot at 1-800-927-4281
September 27	9 am to 3:15 pm	Legal Translation Workshop	Ellipse Conference Center, Arlington, VA
November 5 - November 9		ATA 38th Annual Conference	Hyatt Regency Hotel, San Francisco, CA

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