THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

MARKET INEFFICIENCIES IN THE LANGUAGE SERVICES SECTOR

by **Leonard Morin**

Based on a presentation given to the membership of the New York Circle of Translators at the group's February 2012 meeting.

Before I go into the substance of this essay, which admittedly is somewhat pessimistic, I think it is important to reflect on the fact that translation and interpreting are beautiful professions. They require a very high skill level. They enable communication that would otherwise not take place, and they are a *sine qua non* of our globalized age.

The translation and interpretation industry is growing at a rapid pace. Since the unanimous verdict seems to be that the need for linguists is growing exponentially, you would think that we could easily command rates that would cover our expenses and more. Yet there seems to be a trend towards rate reduction. My own experience has been that at times I have had to struggle to make a living. Does this mean that our clients are bluffing us and hoping that we will just go along with lower rates even though we are more in demand than ever? That they hope we are paying more attention to the interminable financial crisis than to statistics that reveal that we are in one of the biggest growth industries?

To be fair, another factor that bears on rates is a significant quality issue for both interpretation and translations. I focus mainly on translations in this essay, since they form the core of my business. I have often edited the translations of others, as I am sure most readers have. I imagine your experience has been similar to mine. Sometimes the translations are good, and sometimes they are masterpieces. Yet, I have found that it is rare that a translation does not have significant errors. In addition, when lawyers or friends have approached me for translations, I have often referred them to translation agencies, while maintaining the responsibility for the final product. The translations that I get back from the various translation agencies that I have tried are almost always unacceptable.

Everyone makes mistakes on occasion, including me. My learning curve when I entered the profession was steep and I am always striving to better my skill. But I am talking about grammar and style issues in addition to major errors that cause a divergence in meaning between the source and target languages. In my experience, such errors are more the rule than the exception. They almost always appear to be more a matter of sloppiness than lack of skill, but it is not always easy to discern the genesis of the error.

Meanwhile, nobody seems to be proclaiming that quality work is the slam dunk to success in the field. The articles that abound in the *ATA Chronicle*, *The Gotham Translator*, and other professional communications about marketing,

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The Gotham Translator accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation and translator-related issues. These may include, but are not limited to, **specific translation problems** or **approaches to translation**, **legal issues**, and the **business of translation**. We also welcome **dictionary and hardware/software reviews** as well as **reviews of books, conferences and workshops**. Any ideas or leads on interesting stories and articles for which we may try to obtain reprint permissions are also welcome.

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technology, specialization, networking, and many other intangible elements of success attest to this. So the question arises: how it can be that it is so hard to survive as a competent translator while so many of our colleagues are cutting corners to the extreme detriment of the end client? Some of the translators and interpreters who are not consistently producing quality work are entry-level linguists. Some of them, in turn, will be tomorrow's stars. Yet some will only stay on the market temporarily while still forming a force to be reckoned with. Since the constant influx of new linguists at least keeps pace with those who choose other career options or go under, competent and reliable translators and interpreters experience fierce competition from those who produce unreliable work, however transient their presence on the market.

I would never advise any colleague to cut corners on quality and I would also never do it myself, since the outcome is highly unpredictable and potentially disastrous. Yet quality is not necessarily the decisive criterion for success in this industry. Sometimes quality is imperative and those who can deliver it will prevail. Sometimes, however, what will prevail is whatever will be tolerated.

This of course gives rise to the question of what would happen if quality were to be the norm. Would this mean that more money would be made? Would the end client make more money? Would translators and interpreters make more money? Would agencies make more money? Would the world be a more prosperous place?

Machine translation will have an effect similar to the work of unreliable translators on the market. Just recently, two consecutive editions of the *ATA Chronicle* featured prominent articles on the topic. The consensus seems to be moving towards the idea that this technology will displace some of us out of the industry. The debate seems to be centered on the idea of whether a machine translation can produce a competent product. But I believe that the real issue is whether clients will actually put up with the work that a machine translator does. Even if a machine can never completely make us obsolete, the proliferation of machine translation over time (ostensibly accompanied by post-editing) will depress rates for translations that a machine cannot do. This is because there will always be some question about whether a translator needs to perform the task or a machine will suffice.

There are certain issues that explain why quality is often not the norm. One, of course, is the fact that if a translator goes over a text multiple times to eliminate defects, he or she will make less money, at least in the short term. Another factor is the lack of education that our society provides for the language professions. And as for the education that exists: is it worth it to pay many thousands of dollars and go into debt to enter a profession in which struggle for survival is the norm?

Another factor affecting quality is the ability to control quality. An agency or an end client will have limited resources to do so. It seems apparent to me that an end client or an agency will not always have people who can thoroughly and reliably check the quality of every translation, comparing it to the original. This would require copious linguistic knowledge in many languages and specialized knowledge about whatever the subject matter. And there needs to be quality control of the quality control itself.

On the other hand, incompetent quality control can have the opposite effect. Two or three times in my career, an editor has been unduly harsh in his or her criticism of my work. For instance, one time an editor made extensive changes to my text that overwhelmingly consisted of synonyms of the terminology that I had used simply because he or she was not familiar with my correct terminology. In a couple of cases, the editor actually added errors. I pointed out the new errors to my client but, since I did not want to be a bad sport, I did not make a big deal of the overzealous editing. That was a bad call on my part, since this severe critique of my work seemed to drastically lower me in the esteem of the agency in question. They subsequently offered me less work and less attractive work.

So I would say that the industry is not structured in such a way that quality will prevail. In fact, I would say that the payment translators and interpreters receive will be determined less by the quality of their work than by the lowest rate of pay that the market will bear while guaranteeing a tolerable level of quality and quantity of translations.

I do not doubt the merits of the claims about the importance of marketing, social media, using new technologies, etc. But I think we should not lose sight of the big picture, the structural factors that make or break success. My hope is that dialogue and debate about every factor of success will foster access to and expansion of the relatively small segment of the market that does pay very well. Also, translators and interpreters should take heart and be less hard on themselves. It probably is not your fault if you are not rich. We are entrepreneurs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 44 percent of all new businesses survive beyond four years.[1] Staying in business for four years is already a major achievement.

Paradoxically, the fact remains that society needs us more and more. The importance of our role grows by the day. I personally find it exciting to be part of this dramatically changing landscape. I hope that we as the New York Circle of Translators can be the agents of change for the better. ■

[1] *Knaup, Amy E. "Characteristics of Survival: Longevity of Business Establishments in the Business Employment Dynamics Data," Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004. Available at http://www.bls.gov/osmr/pdf/st040060.pdf. Consulted on April 6, 2012.*

CAT CORNER
The Across Personal Edition

by **Eric Neigher**

The Across Personal Edition is Across' standalone application for freelance translators, proofreaders, and other members of the localization workflow. It allows individual users to have access to professional-level services including crossTank Translation Memory, crossTerm Terminology, crossProject Management, and crossCheck quality assurance tools. This article will detail each of these systems and demonstrate why the Across Personal Edition is the superior choice for freelancers – tens of thousands of freelancers around the world use the Personal Edition every day.

General Information

The Across Personal Edition can work either as a standalone, offline client for you to work in, or as a Standby Remote Client, allowing you to connect with your clients online, on their servers. This allows you the flexibility to receive jobs as email packages from clients, or to simply be given a username and password and work for your clients as if you were one of their own, in-house translators.

All work using the Personal Edition is done in this one stop shop CAT tool, a comprehensive workbench that integrates all of the following components with a customizable, searchable, and easy-to-use interface.

The Across Personal Edition is completely free for freelancers, despite the fact that we normally charge $1450 for the product. All you have to do is register on our website at www.my-across.net to receive your free downloadable copy.

crossTank Translation Memory

A sentence-pair based TM system, the crossTank is designed to be the most efficient, targeted, and easy-to-use integrated TM platform on the market. Utilizing a comprehensive database with segmentation which can be customized to your or your clients' liking, the crossTank allows for:

- Automated pre-translation of any matching sentences in any project, saving enormous time and allowing re-use of translation segments you've done in the past.
- Recommendations of similar translations done by you (or others to whose work you have access via crossWAN) in the past, so that you can reference previous work and make use of your own prior, approved translation strings.
- Integrated functionality within the translation workbench, allowing you to add, remove, or modify TM entries as you work, compares your TM with pre-existing other TM, and manipulate the way the TM shows to your liking.
- Importation of pre-existing TM from other Across instances or from other tools.
- Exporting of Across TM to be used by clients or other members of the workflow, even if they are not using Across.

To get more information on how the crossTank functions in the Across Personal Edition, and to learn how to make use of it yourself, please have a look at our Interactive Tutorial (http://www.across.net/tutorials/flashlesson/flashplayer.htm?unit=0121_en&courseid=001&playername=knowhow-992x673x25&settings=global&mousekey tracing=true).

crossTerm Terminology Glossary

The crossTerm is Across' proprietary terminology management system. It features a comprehensive set of terminology tools, all of which are integrated directly into the Across Personal Edition workbench. The crossTerm contemplates several "states" for terms included in it, allowing Personal Edition users or their clients to designate terms (from single words to entire phrases) as preferred terms, acceptable synonyms, or deprecated terms that are not to be used in a final translation. These term categories can be applied in a dependant context, as well, allowing some terms to be designated as preferred when working on a document for one client or one subject area, and deprecated when working on another.

The crossTerm is always up and running, and allows users to add and modify terms directly from the translation workbench, to

import term glossaries from clients, and to export term glossaries when necessary for transmission. It has a comprehensive set of accompanying metadata, including definitions, creation dates and persons, and even photos and videos to assist with proper term usage.

crossTerm is also set up to work seamlessly with crossTank, allowing the translator to see concordance searches of TM which contain the terms he or she is currently working with, making consistent usage easy. Additionally, crossTerm comes equipped with the crossSearch module as a standard feature, which allows users to find information about terms and term usage on the internet to compare their own translations.

Finally, crossTerm is equipped with automated term extraction features, that will allow translators and terminologists to scan a document automatically and extract useful terminology, thus populating the term glossary easily and quickly.

To get more information on how the crossTerm functions in the Across Personal Edition, and to learn how to make use of it yourself, please have a look at our Interactive Tutorial (http://www.across.net/tutorials/flashlesson/flashplayer.htm?unit=0123_en&courseid=001&playername=knowhow-992x673x25&settings=global&mousekeytracing=true).

crossProject

Many translators and other members of the localization workflow want to keep track of and administer the various projects that they are working on from a central location. crossProject for the Across Personal Edition allows for this functionality by providing a suite of tools lifted from the Across Language Server and tailored to end-users.

crossProject allows for jobs to be checked in via upload from a local source, or from direct access to a client's servers, and for those same jobs to be scheduled, monitored, and completed from a single management interface. All tasks are wizard driven, so the software is easy to learn and can be customized to be as comprehensive or as deep as a given user desires. In addition, crossProject can generate reports for you on the progress, efficiency, and leverage of a variety of elements of a given project or task in real time as the task is being completed.

To get more information on how the crossProject functions in the Across Personal Edition, and to learn how to make use of it yourself, please have a look at our Interactive Tutorial (http://www.my-across.net/en/training_center.html).

crossCheck

Apart from timeliness, the most important aspect of any localization job is accuracy. That's why crossCheck, the Across Personal Edition's integrated quality assurance tool, is so useful. Project managers can set up specific quality management criteria before the kickoff of a project and these will be transferred seamlessly to users of the Across Personal Edition, who can then check for and apply corrections to them automatically using the integrated search and correct tool.

Across is compatible with a variety of predefined quality assurance workflows, including the EN 15038 ruleset for the European Union, among others. These QA sets can be applied either as a translator or corrector is working on a project in real time, or after the fact in a reporting context. Examples of the variety of error types that can be checked for include:

- Spelling (specifically tailored by language)
- Punctuation (specifically tailored by language)
- Empty or missing content
- Unused or improperly used translation memory entries
- Improper use of terminology
- Improper spacing within segments
- Many others

While working on a task using crossCheck, translators and proofreaders can easily add commentary regarding QA issues in the crossDesk workbench through integrated commentary and bookmarking buttons. Finally, if working online, project managers can monitor and provide aid for quality management issues in real time as the translator or proofreader works on his or her task.

To get more information on how the crossCheck functions in the Across Personal Edition, and to learn how to make use of it yourself, please have a look at our Interactive Tutorial (http://www.across.net/tutorials/flashlesson/flashplayer.htm?unit=0124_en&courseid=001&playername=knowhow-992x673x25&settings=global&mousekeytracing=true). ■

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
Lana Rachkovskaya

Lana is a longtime member of the New York Circle of Translators. In the past Lana served on the Board of the NYCT as Program Director. Currently she is the Director of Operations at Capital Translations, Inc. which is a full service language services provider. More information can be found on the company website at www.capitaltranslations.net.

Thank you for agreeing to this interview Lana. Knowing how tight your schedule is I really appreciate you taking out time and I am certain the NYCT members feel the same.

How did you get started as a translator? University program? Come in from another field?

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I feel truly honored to have this platform to reach out to the translations community.

I did a university program (Institute of Foreign Languages, St. Petersburg, Russia), majoring in Translation and Interpreting. I started translating and interpreting for several companies in Russia, I worked with them directly, not through agencies. I studied in the evening, taught during the day, and translated at night. I pulled many all-nighters back then.

You were the Program Director for the NYCT a few years back. What do you believe members should do in order to get the most from membership?

Go to every meeting and get involved. There are amazing networking opportunities and everyone should take advantage of them. Always have your business cards and resumes ready when you come to meetings.

Another great way to make connections with people in the industry is getting involved in various committees and volunteer work. Volunteering within your local chapter and/or the ATA not only will open a lot of doors for you but will also reward you with a sense of purpose.

I also recommend taking advantage of our Mentoring Program that can help you improve your resume and provide you with a career advice, which is specific to your needs.

Lana, you run a business, have a family, volunteer for the NYCT and have a personal life, how do you manage it all? What time saving tips can you give new translators?

Sometimes it seems impossible. Good project management skills that I learned over time certainly come very handy. I plan my day very carefully. My agenda normally lists various projects, deadlines and word count next to them. Rush requests get highlighted. I also use a management system, in which all projects, clients, invoices, etc. are handled. When you get to a certain point, you just can't work with Excel sheets, it becomes inefficient. My advice is to look at your day and identify where you waste most of your time. Then improve that workflow. If you work from home, make your family understand that your work is important and you cannot be interrupted. Closing your door usually does the trick. Keep your conversations with clients short, sweet and to the point. And then, of course, the faster you translate, the more money you can make. Make sure that your typing skills are very strong.

Many new members have been asking about CAT tools. Which are your personal favorites and why?

I think it is mostly what you are used to. I was trained to use Trados many years ago, so this is my tool of choice but I can learn and work with virtually any tool. Trados is still pretty much the industry standard. Some companies switch to Wordfast but most still prefer Trados. Then it is also about investment. I believe that if freelancers invest in one tool, it is better to stick with it and all future updates. It is also possible that you may have two large clients: one uses Trados, another – Wordfast or another tool. It maybe worthwhile investing in both. Normally you can cover the cost fairly quickly.

For me CAT tools are not about accommodating your clients. They are about improving your workflow and quality. They are about saving time.

In what direction do you see the translation and interpretation industry going? What do you think are the major changes we should all prepare ourselves for?

I think it has been steadily going in the direction of technology. It is no longer enough to be an excellent translator with a lot of experience. You must be able to use certain tools and automate your process. You also have to be flexible and willing to learn. In some areas, like localization, it is impossible to work without applying certain CAT tools or understanding the technology behind the process. In other areas, like Legal, there are different requirements. However, I personally do not see the reason why we should not apply the technology we have available to us that makes our lives easier and more efficient on every project.

In terms of major changes, I think acknowledging to ourselves that we have to keep up with technology is still a major change for a lot of people. I also see application of machine translation and ability to post-edit as one of the future venues as well. There have been so many changes as to how certain file formats are being processed. Another new and exciting area is video interpreting via Skype and telephone interpreting that is rapidly growing. I envision that interpreting will be taken to a larger scale globally in the future where interpreters will be able to provide video interpreting from their mobile devices almost anywhere in the world. I think the future is bright for those who are willing to learn and stay on top of the game.

I also think that requirements for translators will become more strict and standardized in the future, as more and more companies approach ISO certification and make efforts to streamline their processes.

Then there are changes that impacted our community in both positive and negative ways. For example, the invention of Google Translate has helped many people around the globe to communicate better. However, on the corporate level some clients misunderstand how the service should be used, they think that it can be used as a final product or addition to the professional translation services. This is where we have to help our clients understand the difference and educate them.

What outside of translation do you enjoy when you finally have free time?

Any free time I have I spend with my 20-month old daughter and my husband. We love walks in nature and various projects. I am raising my daughter a trilingual, so this is another huge project on its own. When I finally have a few minutes to myself, I enjoy yoga.

Finally, what hidden talent do you have that none of your colleagues knows about? French pastry chef? Rock climber? Magician?

None of the above but I did go to the Art School when I was younger. I enjoy oil painting but haven't done it in a long time. Lately it is mostly crayons and watercolors with my daughter, which is even more rewarding. I also love playing piano, although I am not nearly as good as I once was or would like to be, and I am a pretty good cook. At least this is what my husband says. ■

Translation in the Social Cyberworld

by **Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo**

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Business owners and marketing experts recognize the need to create user-friendly sites in other languages that are localized for consumers whose first language is something other than English. A demand for the translation and localization of web content is constantly growing, as immigrant populations' buying power increases and more companies reach across borders to a global community. Besides marketing campaigns and corporate websites, social media content is quickly becoming a fast and inexpensive form of marketing and communicating in real time.

Although the need for this niche translation market is more realized as social media becomes more advanced, the options that businesses and organizations have for obtaining translations of their social media content are many. How do business owners and social media sites know where to look to achieve accurate renditions of their original messages? Is the trend for quick turnaround translations causing more to trust in crowdsourcing and practically free outsourcing methods? How do businesses, translation agencies and freelancers measure return on investment (ROI) from social media marketing?

Some business owners believe that the translation and localization of their company website mean they will start to pick up customers and clients from other countries and language communities. A few years ago, this would have been a great step in reaching out to these target markets; however, these days, simply having a multilingual site or localized content is not enough. Social media is taking over the marketing world at a rapid pace, and there really is no other choice than to jump on this cyber bandwagon. So, what's in it for me?

This is the million-dollar question that business owners, consumers, language service providers (LSPs) and freelancers are asking. At a recent networking event I started talking to a woman who asked me what I do for a living. When I told her that I am an LSP owner, she started to tell me how she knew so much about the need for reaching out to potential clients in foreign languages. She went on to tell me that she saw how her professional networking site of choice allowed her to post her profile in other languages, so she thought, "Sure! Why not? I'll put my profile into Spanish and French! I don't know what it says, but whatever."

This business owner thought she was savvy in putting her profile into another language, but she didn't question its quality, as a free service provided by the site might not be the best option for obtaining an effective, high-quality rendition of her qualifications. This is where we come in. Freelancers and LSP owners are dipping their toes into various fields in which they feel themselves to be experts, but what makes someone an expert in the niche of social media translation? Today, most people have a degree of participation in social media, whether it is personal, professional or both. Having a Facebook page is not cutting-edge anymore, but what you do with your page very much is, and there seems to be an application (app) for everything now. App creators are constantly thinking of new apps that people will find useful or entertaining in their everyday lives. Besides Facebook and LinkedIn, Twitter has taken off as a real-time social media service that updates you on what's going on with friends, family,

celebrities, and local and international businesses. All of these things allow a business to build its brand and reach potential and current clients quickly and efficiently.

A common trend in social media and web content translation is crowdsourcing. Joe Kutchera defines crowdsourcing in his recent book *Latino Link: Building Brands Online with Hispanic Communities and Content* by using Facebook as an example of crowdsourcing at its best: "Facebook currently utilizes crowdsourcing via a translation app that allows volunteer translators to choose their language and translate content for free by making it 'available to everyone, everywhere, in all languages.'"

All one has to do is click on the app, choose a language (and yes, it's possible to choose one that you may not even speak) and begin. There are tabs for "My Translations," "Style Guide," "Glossary" and "Review," among others. You can review others' translations and vote on their accuracy and

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SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Over the past few years there has been a significant increase in the number of organizations using social media tools to disseminate information. Although it is difficult for organizations to truly quantify the commercial benefits of social media, many are accepting that it is now an integral part of the marketing mix. Social media enables companies to create online discussions with targeted communities and also allows them to promote products and services at a relatively low cost. As Oscar Wilde once said, "the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about." According to research conducted by Burson-Marsteller (www.burson-marsteller.com) for its Global Social Media Check-up, in February 2011, 84% of the top 100 companies in the Fortune Global 500 index are using at least one of the main social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or corporate blogs. Twitter is the most popular social media tool among Fortune Global 100 companies (with two-thirds having a Twitter presence), and at least half are reaching audiences through Facebook (54%) and YouTube (50%). One-third of the companies maintain corporate blogs. Many organizations are beginning to realize the benefits of blogging. It's a quick, relatively inexpensive tool that enables you to share your expertise and build web traffic, and more importantly, connect with clients and potential clients. Companies based in Asia Pacific primarily use social media to communicate with their western stakeholders. In the course of 2010, there was significant social media growth in Asia Pacific and Europe, especially in terms of Twitter. In 2010, the number of companies being talked about on Twitter increased by 90%. Besides the four main social media sites mentioned, there are also many more sites available.

Site	Key Geography	Registered users
Badoo.com	Europe and Latin America	116 million
Blackplanet.com	African Americans	20 million
Cyworld.com	South Korean	25 million
Friendster.com	Southeast Asia	90 million
Orkut.com	India and Brazil	100 million

Many companies have multiple accounts, and these different accounts can be managed by different company divisions that may be located all over the world. Both HP and IBM have over 80 blogs apiece. The New York Times website has 59 blogs, all by different writers and journalists, all on different topics and all representing the brand and the company. This online content creates a continuous demand for rapid translations from social media providers and users all over the world. Millions of new entries, blogs and posts go online everyday. According to Techcrunch.com, September 2010, the market for web-based translation is estimated to be worth about $3 billion. Even if an organization does not have a proactive social media presence, it still needs to monitor social media sites for content relating to them, their brands and industry — such as complaints, product feedback and trends. One of the unique qualities of social media is that it is multidirectional. An organization is a participant (a consumer) as well as a producer and publisher. It's not just about the content you are pushing out, but also the content that you and your business are attracting. Once social media gets hold of an interesting tidbit, the effect is nuclear, and your coverage could be worldwide. If that content is being published multilingually, then do you understand the content as well as all the cultural nuances that may exist within it? Some translation vendors provide multilingual social media monitoring services although the approach is fairly basic.

Most organizations do not have the resources to maintain multilingual blogs and monitor social media content. The most obvious low-cost solution that companies turn to for the translation of content is machine translation (MT). We all know MT has its limitations, but there are an increasing number of plug-ins for blogs and content management systems that allow the streamlined generation of machine translated content. Translation plug-ins (for example, GTS Translation and Wordpress Global Translator plug-ins) will automatically translate and update a blog each time a new post is added. The content is pushed through the MT system and then ideally into a post-editing workflow so that it can be cleaned up by human translators.

— Louise Law, Welocalize.

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consistency. Although Facebook does pay for the platform development for the translation of its site, it does not carry out the translation in the traditional sense by utilizing paid translators and proofreaders. Most linguists and LSPs that I know are not willing to provide the services and processes they've worked so hard to perfect for years without payment (except at times, for a nonprofit as a volunteer service), and rightly so. This brings up the question of why someone would choose to volunteer to translate for a site that is a multibillion-dollar enterprise. The answers I have encountered range from putting valuable content into one's own language, so that the community may benefit from the material on a site with such popularity among users worldwide, to simply having a love for the language. Even though crowdsourcing may make content available to a broader group of consumers at a rapid pace, those of us in the industry are well aware of the problems that arise in professional quality, accuracy and consistency when utilizing volunteers, many of whom do not have proper qualifications or training. Most of us are in this to make a living. LSPs would love to make this social media mogul their client; however, a more manageable goal is to work with current or more likely customers who would like to promote their businesses in real time because, let's face it — everyone's going social, and luckily, with the growth and popularity that social media has seen, there is enough of this pie for everyone. So how do we go about tackling this task? There doesn't seem to be any one specific solution or answer, but here are some commonly implemented methods.

One company that comes to mind is SpeakLike, currently supporting translation of 38 languages in real time. Although the company is not specifically marketing to customers who need translation of social media content, its design does lend itself for this use, as one can type in a block of text (much like an online translation feature) and receive the translated text back almost immediately, depending on the language, length and content. A customer can sign up and pay for translation services, most starting at $.06 per word, with added services of proofreading by a second professional and so on. Another feature is the ultimate (but perhaps not so popular) discount for repeated words via its translation memory (TM). SpeakLike also offers a mobile, Twitter and WordPress app, an e-mail notification service, and even a self-service tool (currently under beta testing). The strategy this company has taken to give customers options for rapid translation services for lower-than-average prices is innovative and can still cover a wide variety of content topics. And the part that perhaps interests me most is the fact that SpeakLike utilizes a combination of human translators and machine translation (MT). Freelancers can sign on when they wish to work and take on projects by being the first to accept a job in the queue. A downside of this business model is that the company expressly states that applicants do not have to have translation experience, although it's preferred. Customers enjoy using the SpeakLike Strings service for IT translations. Market Wire published a blurb on the service in 2010 with customer feedback from Dennis Kashkin, CTO at Bedandbreakfast.com: "SpeakLike Strings has made it easy and fast for us to submit thousands of translation requests all at the same time. The fact that we can directly submit HTML with data fields has saved us a lot of time. I can even track the progress of each project as the translators work on them and download the results whenever it's convenient for my team to immediately incorporate the content into our website." Convenience, price and instant feedback appear to be top-selling points for SpeakLike and similar competitors, as the move for faster and less

expensive translation for online content expands.

Lingotek is another innovative proponent of crowdsourcing. The company employs its Collaborative Translation Platform with endless services, including the option to choose professional, community or automatic translation. It rates these services on its site based on a content value index scale of 1-10 and indicates an estimated cost and time. Lingotek's blog states, "By utilizing the crowd in translation projects, companies and organizations can not only expand globally at a fraction of the time and cost of traditional methods, but organizations and individuals can also contribute in fighting information poverty which severely limits societies across the globe." It goes on to give reasons for crowdsourcing translations, and the main site's description of the Collaborative Translation Platform openly mentions a real-time turnaround method with which traditional LSPs cannot compete. It seems that by allowing clients to choose the process in which they have content translated, companies are truthfully giving clients what they are willing to pay for in a fast-food world via the cyber drive-thru. Lingotek announced its new Jive App at the end of July of this year, and if the new app follows the trend of the company's other crowdsourcing and MT processes, it is likely to also be well-received among users. Marisa Peacock provided more information on Lingotek's community-based approach on CMS Wire, and mentioned that the company uses "qualified" translators.

Other options out there are MT software for purchase by direct clients. SYSTRAN presently supports 52 languages and offers customers hybrid MT software that will remember terminology from previous texts and can be customizable to one's particular field of business. The company offers home office, small business and enterprise solutions that can be integrated into various commonly-used computer programs. This feature can be useful for companies that wish to maintain files in certain programs to be later used as social media content for promotional material, as well as freelance translators who are looking for alternative terms when working on projects. One translator posted an online comment about using the software for Chinese to English translation and said, "It has some good features, like multiple custom dictionaries. The raw output is generally unusable, and every sentence has to be edited. But it is definitely a labor saving device." The translator added that he had only used the 5.0 version, however, and had no experience with any of the later versions.

Smartling offers customers a one-stop shop for recreating a website in another language in a short amount of time by employing a "suite of tools" in the process. Customers can choose from options such as crowdsourcing, using professional translators, MT or even providing (get this!) their own translators. Although I may not be on the bandwagon with some of these points as an LSP owner, I think that a lot of customers are open to seeing several options when choosing the right fit for their company, and trends such as crowdsourcing are definitely becoming more popular in the industry in meeting the needs of these customers. Translators, on the other hand, may not appreciate the practices utilized by the company and others like it. Miguel Llorens Musso, an English > Spanish financial translator, mentioned Smartling in a blog post on July 28 of this year (http://traductor-financiero.blogspot.com) after a press release from the company that announced it had raised $10 million to further develop localization tools. He blogged that the company's own website was not translated well into Spanish and added a screenshot of the site's Spanish version showing both English and Spanish text. Musso voiced a similar

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opinion to that of many translators on why some LSPs use crowdsourcing, saying, "I have a low opinion of these types of services. They are heavy on technology and low on quality, probably because they are usually founded and run by people who are not translators and often don't even know a second language. The quality is atrocious. As a sometimes-visitor of websites using this sort of technique, I am generally turned off toward the company advertising the product." He told me that he thinks crowdsourcing has been more successful for social media sites such as Facebook and TED because of their popularity and appreciation among users.

For other types of media, Jibbigo offers speech-to-speech translation through mobile applications for Apple and Android. Users can speak a phrase, see it in text format on the screen, and hear the phrase spoken in the language the user chooses. This type of technology is appealing to travelers and business professionals who can use the technology on the go. Product reviews for the Android market on AppBrain vary from comments such as "Good voice recognition. The biggest app on my phone!" to "Useless. Not even close." Jibbigo's service has been likened to Google Translate's voice-to-text translation feature within Google Chrome, announced this year. Google allows you to speak the text you wish to translate, although there are many languages still to be added and hiccups to be worked out. The same translator who mentioned the contextual issues he found with using SYSTRAN for translating Chinese > English admitted that Google Translate's features are sometimes more useful due to the fact that Google has the ability to deal with entire web pages and access a broader amount of information at a phenomenally quick speed, allowing a translator to get a better sense of using terms in the proper context. Google Translate's app for Android is also getting a lot of buzz. One review posted by Tecksphere on Android App Review Source stated what those of us in the language industry already know: "While Translate is not 100% accurate it is accurate enough where you should be able to decipher what was being said. The translations are very literal so verb conjugations and slang may not be translated 100% properly." Clearly, one's expectations of a free translator determine how well an app or a free online version works, but Google Translate's app is praised for its clean interface, easy usage with text messaging and extra features.

Other tools are more commonly used in our industry. LSPs and freelancers often use computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools to make the translation process more efficient and to maintain a TM for their projects for use later. In doing so, they work together to build the TMs, but they also can find ways of pricing translations to give discounts for clients. This is a topic often debated among translators, agencies and direct clients, as everyone wants to see ROI as a result of using these tools. I'm not so sure that not charging a client at all for repetitions is the way to go, as it takes time to make the TMs, and since many LSPs utilize contractors for different languages, one should not ask a translator to "give away" repeated words. Besides, those words, repeated or not, have to be checked anyway. Freelance translators are contractors and set their own prices, so LSP owners have to account for this when quoting on projects for clients. The ROI here is not simply making the money back on what you paid for your CAT tool(s) of choice or focusing on the profit from a project, but also for the time and effort spent on the project. Remember, a translator's time could go into other projects for which clients are willing to pay, even at a discount.

In taking a look at ROI from a different perspective, however, there is a lot of talk lately

among social media expert bloggers. One blog in particular that I enjoy reading is Smart Blogs on Social Media (http://smartblogs.com/socialmedia). Jesse Stanchak blogged on July 18 of this year about what Dell is doing and how it views its ROI from social media networking. I find the discussion intriguing, as Stanchak explains that ROI is not always about the dollar signs. He mentions Dell's head of social media and corporate-reputation management, Richard Binhammer, who views social media as more than just telling readers about what your business is accomplishing and earning money. This goes back to the reason behind social media. It's social — not a monologue. So, if you blog about your company, tweet about your company or your company has a Facebook page, you need to be thinking about forming a dialogue between your business and your current and potential customers. Binhammer adds that social media is about building one's brand and maintaining a positive relationship with clients. This, too, is a long-term investment of your time, and in most business, time is money. So, thinking of ROI in this way may change the way you view social media and its effect on your business and your brand. Stanchak notes that "Social media are just another tool" that businesses can utilize, and it's important for the company as a whole to use them instead of any single department.

This brings us back to the translation and localization of social media content. It's one thing to put your materials into a second language, but quite another to maintain a dialogue with customers who will build your brand and make you money. Building a brand is the basis of how we make our money. So, why not expect our clients to pay for top quality translation and localization for social media content as well? Think about it this way. We don't expect the products and clothes we buy for our physical appearances to be free, and we're willing to spend a little more on the creams, hair products and clothing we know will make us look nicer. These products are even more appealing when they work quickly and effectively. What we do in translation and localization helps our clients to build their brands — their business face, if you will. We have the power to make our clients look good, and offering the product that works best for them is our business.

Social media is a constantly-changing part of doing business that can be made dangerous when inaccurate or false information is made public. There is no doubt that apps, software and websites for the products mentioned and others like them will evolve in the coming years, and the rest of us will have to keep up. I think few people doubt that MT will ever surpass true professional translation, but the key seems to be implementing the best combination of tools and professionals to get the job done and serving it within a time frame and at a price that clients find appealing. Diving into the social media niche in our industry may mean having to do a little more client education, but convincing a client that paying for quick turnarounds and accurate renditions of their messages, instead of entering text into a free translation tool, may bring you and them more business in the end. It will certainly build your own brand and credibility, both with those you hire and those who hire you. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo is the owner and CEO of Accessible Translation Solutions in Columbus, Ohio. She worked for several years as a freelance medical and legal translator, interpreter and project manager before starting her own language services company. Madalena holds a BA from the University of Southern Mississippi and an MA from the University of Louisville. She is a voting member of the American Translators Association (ATA) and has presented at several annual conferences on topics ranging from interpretation for domestic violence victims to marketing your translation company in the cyber world. In October 2011, Madalena was elected to be the Administrator of the Medical Division of the ATA. Her email is madalena@accessibletranslations.com.

NYCT MONTHLY MEETING, MARCH 7, 2012

We're Getting There! A Review of Milena Savova's Presentation on NYU's M.S. Degree in Translation

Review by **Allison M. Charette**

Dr. Milena Savova, Director for NYU's Center of Foreign Languages, Translation, and Interpreting, was the featured speaker at the NYCT's monthly meeting on March 7, 2012. A great and longtime friend of the Circle, Dr. Savova gave an in-depth presentation of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies' new Master of Science degree in Translation. She also compared the M.S. to the SCPS's existing professional certificates in translation and interpreting, and explained the benefits of each option for existing professionals like the Circle members.

The M.S. in Translation was launched online last fall with Spanish>English and French>English tracks. Courses fall into one of three groups: theory, context, or practical translation. Every student is expected to complete 36 hours of coursework and finish with a capstone thesis project. The well-rounded course offerings aim to give the translator a holistic training in everything from terminology to contextual knowledge of the markets in which they will be operating. This M.S. program is also unique in this country for its focus on specific subjects (legal and financial translation, for now). Dr. Savova admitted that this approach is a bit experimental, as prospective students are not yet accustomed to this approach, but she is confident that the training will pay off.

The Spanish and French to English tracks of the program are currently operating completely online, but some courses will be offered onsite in Greenwich Village starting in Fall 2012. The online focus has served the program well, as instructors and students can connect from anywhere – including one student from a military post on an aircraft carrier!

This fall will also see the launch of the Chinese>English track of the M.S. in Translation. This track is expected to take a slightly broader approach, as it is only the second program in this language pair in the country. Because of the demand, Dr. Savova is expecting Chinese natives to apply alongside their English-speaking counterparts; the former will be accepted depending on their capabilities in English, and will be provided with English tutors in a partnership with the NYU American Language Institute to better prepare them for a professional translation career into their second language.

The genesis of the M.S. program grew out of NYU's existing professional certificate program, which includes certificates for seven language pairs in translation and three in interpreting, and will be starting Hebrew>English translation training this fall. The certificate program is shorter and less comprehensive than the M.S. program and focuses on practical translation training, offering no theory or terminology courses. But the M.S. degree program has its advantages, as well. The highest-level translation and interpreting jobs are offered within the UN, EU, and other international or governmental bodies. These organizations used to require only a passing grade on an admission test. But now, the supply of translators and interpreters is outstripping demand, and an M.S. degree replaces some of the training that those organizations used to do. An applicant with an M.S. degree in translation is now positioned much more competitively than a certificate holder for these high-level positions.

Both programs certainly sound valuable, but what are the opportunities for Circle members, some of whom have ten or twen-

ty years of experience as translators or interpreters? Dr. Savova allows that neither program may be beneficial to some of us. Applicants to the M.S. program are not expected to be current translators or have any experience in the field. For those of us with less experience, though, or who have just transitioned to translation or interpreting as a second career, the M.S. could be helpful. She encourages any of us who are interested to contact her (information below) to speak about a tailored M.S. program: certain courses could be waived for translators with some experience, on a case-by-case basis. The courses could also be taken one at a time by proven working translators, and can even provide continuing education credits towards the ATA requirements. Also, for the highly experienced among us, Dr. Savova mentioned numerous times how difficult it is to find qualified instructors for both programs, especially the new Hebrew certificate and Chinese M.S. degree. Just a thought...

Dr. Savova also reminded us of the semester-long workshops that her department offers for Circle members and other working interpreters and translators. The program is currently running a financial terminology workshop. A finance and HR terminology workshop is slated to run this fall. These workshops are not language-specific; rather, they serve as training for the markets and context in which we work. She noted that emails are sent about these courses to the NYCT list, so be on the lookout for a reminder of the fall workshop near the beginning of the summer.

Dr. Savova's presentation was very educational for the attendees from the Circle. It is heartening to many of us that our industries are being recognized by higher education as providing career opportunities, which require training in order to pursue. She also gave some of us a gentle reminder of ways to boost our business and performance as interpreters and translators: we can always benefit from further training, whether to prove our capabilities to our clients or to personally increase the quality and effectiveness of our work. Many of us are lucky to live in a city which provides so many wonderful opportunities...and the rest of us have the Internet, which serves just about the same purpose. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allison M. Charette was, until her recent marriage, Allison Ahlgrim. She is still a French>English translator. She lives online at http://www.charettetranslations.com/. For more information on NYU's M.S. in Translation, please visit www.scps.nyu.edu/mstrans. For further questions, or for more information on the professional certificates and workshops for existing translators and interpreters, please contact the presenter, Milena Savova, at 212.998.7030 or milena.savova@nyu.edu.

FCICE Exam Dates Announced!

The National Center for State Courts has officially released the dates and deadlines for the 2012 Written Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam (FCICE)! The exam will be administered August 6th — 17th across the country.

Don't miss the registration deadline! The National Center for State Courts will begin accepting registrations on April 16th, 2012. The deadline to register is June 1st by 5:00 PM eastern time. Remember, this exam is only offered every other year, so if you do not register for this administration, your next chance will not be until 2014.

For more information on registering for the FCICE, please contact the National Center for State Courts by either calling them at (800) 616-6164 or visiting their website (http://www.ncsconline.org/d_research/fcice_exam/index.htm).

- Some quick facts about the Written Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam:
- It is the prerequisite to take the Oral Portion (next offered in 2013);
- It consists of 200 multiple-choice questions — 100 in English and 100 in Spanish;
- You have 3 hours and 15 minutes to take the Written Portion;
- FCCI certification is required to work in Federal Courts in any US State;
- The exam has only around a 20% pass rate nationally — most people have to take it more than once to pass

The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation grouping independent translators and interpreters as well as companies and organizations. It is a chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA) which is, in turn, an affiliate of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

Visit us at www.nyctranslators.org and join online!

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