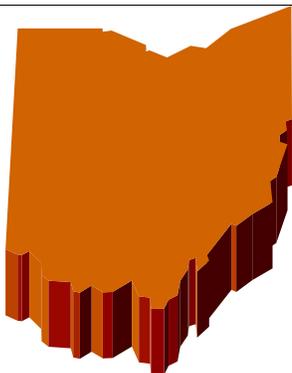


NOTA BENE

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Fellow NOTAnauts:

Greetings from my MacBook Pro, currently connected to a wireless network away from the office. I-Pad at hand, cell phone with apps and immeasurable access and a cup of coffee. Translators and interpreters connect today in all environments. Nifty, eh?

NOTA thanks Vitaliy Plinto for orchestrating a festive Post-Holiday dinner at Legacy Village in Lyndhurst. Your fellow NOTA members shared ideas and experiences in person as compared to a virtual environment. Some might call it "old school". Visit NOTA's blog for an update.

Please submit your entry to Vitaly for the NOTA blog contest. Here's another advantage to NOTA membership. A prospective employer could find your post through a simple Google search to our blog. Connect once again.

Jill Sommer will soon host a blog workshop in Columbus. Why blog? For starters visit Jill's site at <http://translationmusings.com>. She posts regularly on cutting edge issues pertinent to the translation field. One needn't be a technical wizard to begin writing. Jill's (and NOTA's) blog began with a few clicks at Wordpress at www.wordpress.com. Visit Jill's and other blogs and join the fray.

NOTA plans to host a workshop soon in Kent on translation software. Look for a notice either through our blog or Email.

That's all from cyberspace today. Point, click and connect. See you on the 'net.

Best,
John

The Interpreter Guy

*NOTAnauts: NOTA members who communicate electronically



NOTA Celebrates New Year 2012

By Vitaliy Plinto

On Saturday, January 28, 2012 Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA) successfully kicked off the celebration of the New Year 2012 with a Holiday Banquet. The banquet was held at Brio Tuscan Grille, one of the most authentic Italian restaurants featuring Tuscan style cuisine, located in Legacy Village in Lyndhurst, Ohio. Despite the wintry, snowy weather that day nearly 20 people with their families and friends joined NOTA for this celebration. Among the guests were translators, interpreters, editors, proofreaders, teachers and students who came from different parts of Ohio including Cleveland, Kent, Westlake, Akron, Canton and even Columbus!

The banquet was conducted in a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere and created a marvelous opportunity to network, meet new people and make new friends. The guests greatly enjoyed socializing, joking, sharing interesting stories and having friendly conversations with each other. Upon arrival each guest found a gift bag with a holiday card and a box of chocolate candies inside. The gift bags had different colors and were arranged around the banquet table, adding a festive element to our event.

The guests enjoyed not only the friendly social networking atmosphere of the banquet, but also the food that was served. The meal selections were served "family style", meaning that everyone had a chance to taste each entrée as the large plates were passed around the table. Everyone found the food at Brio to be very plentiful and delicious.

"We have never had a party like this before," commented one guest.

"I really wish we had parties like this every week!" exclaimed another guest.

NOTA Executive Committee was really happy with the attendance, guest satisfaction and just how everything went with the banquet. NOTA would be extremely glad to listen to all the feedback and wishes of its members and to consider organizing events such as this one on a more frequent basis if members wish so. In the meantime, NOTA is in the process of organizing another grand event in Columbus, OH, which will consist of a workshop on blogging, luncheon and a choice of a visit to the Columbus Museum of Art or a movie at the Arena Grand Theater. Details on this event will be coming up in the next few days via email, so please stay tuned for more information.

NOTA Executive Committee once again would like to thank all guests who attended the Holiday Banquet and eagerly look forward to seeing everyone again at the next event!

*Don't knock the
weather; nine-tenths
of the people couldn't
start a conversation
if it didn't change
once in a while.
~Kin Hubbard*

Don't forget...

Check out our NOTA^{OHIO} blog on Wordpress and enter the bi-monthly blog contest!

<http://notaohio.wordpress.com/>



Congratulations to Svetlana Ball for winning the Jan/Feb blog contest! Svetlana won a \$10 gift card to Barnes & Noble online gift certificate

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Vitaliy is working on several upcoming seminars and networking sessions.

STAY TUNED...

Reproduced with permission from Jill Sommer's January 30, 2012 blog Translationmusings.com

I received the following very helpful message from a contact and am forwarding it for your awareness and consideration. By following the simple instructions you can opt out.

"Without attracting too much publicity, LinkedIn has updated their privacy conditions last summer. Without any action from your side, LinkedIn is now allowed to use your name and picture in any of their advertisements!

Some simple actions to be considered:

1. Place the cursor on your name at the top right corner of the LinkedIn screen. In the pull down menu, select "settings"
2. Then click "Account" on the bottom left of the screen
3. In the column next to Account, select the option "Manage Social Advertising"
4. Finally un-tick the box "LinkedIn may use my name and photo in social advertising"
5. and Save

How to inform your connections? Simple: Via Inbox >Compose message, you can send a message to up to 50 connections at once. I am sure all of them will appreciate being informed.

MEANING IS NOT A COMMODITY

Previous articles on this blog have addressed the issue of "selling words" to refer to the way most freelance translators price their work. While this concept has always been flawed, it represented a way of negotiating prices with purchasers of translation services which, with the advent of CAT tools, became even more problematic because translators found themselves faced with demands for discounts on previously translated words or "repetitions" and words that were "close to" words that had been previously translated or what came to be known as "fuzzy matches".

All to no avail, I have tried to determine the targeted user of these "CAT tools", a term which is used for software programs consisting, in their simplest form, of a translation memory and a terminology database. My gut feeling, based on what I have gleaned from those who are pushing their use, is that these programs were designed to help the individual translator, who would develop an ongoing "translation memory" consisting of matched source- and target-language segments. This translation memory would work in conjunction with a terminology database which the translator would constantly update. The translator was led to believe that he/she would "never have to translate the same sentence again".

For many translators, it was a rude awakening to discover that translation agencies were developing translation memories for all their clients and that they, the translators, were expected to give discounts for previously translated words, whether or not they agreed that those previously translated words conveyed the meaning of the source document. Sadly, most translators simply complied. After all, there was no financial incentive to make changes and the only way to survive financially was to produce more words albeit at a reduced rate.

Texts were turned into segments that were matched with previously translated segments, previously

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*"Whether the
weather be fine,
Whether the weather
be not, Whether the
weather be cold,
Whether the weather
be hot, We'll
weather the weather,
Whatever the
weather, Whether we
like it or not"*

~unknown

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for following our efforts to introduce more contractor-friendly legislation for Kentucky. We are currently at an important cross-roads and your response will have a direct impact on how we proceed.

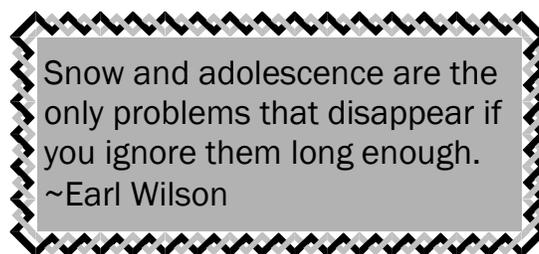
SB77 has been introduced, backed by the Ky Chamber of Commerce and the Home Builders Association (<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/12RS/SB77.htm>). As this bill was introduced before we were able to introduce ours, we will be unable to introduce translator and interpreter specific legislation this session. However—and that’s a big however—this bill may work to our advantage as it seeks a uniform definition statewide on what an independent contractor is versus an employee (currently different state government departments disagree and follow separate guidelines). As I understand it, this bill would also be favorable to an LSP’s E&O policy by releasing an LSP of independent translator or interpreter liability.

We would like to continue to monitor this bill and to support it as long as it supports our industry’s interests. But the problem is, Bill (cc-ed) and I can not continue to battle this fight alone. If we are going to continue to be engaged, we need your financial support to continue. Our lobbyist fee is \$2000 a month and we began working with our lobbyist May 2011. Bill’s company, Certified Languages International, has paid to this point; however, it’s not Southern hospitality to allow him to foot that bill any longer, particularly as CLI has limited operations in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. While we are not asking our refugee friends for anything beyond support-in-kind at this time, I am going to flat out ask each of my LSP colleagues to help us pay for this. I can’t tell you how to run your businesses and I can’t define for you how important this is or isn’t to your business. But I can ask you to join In Every Language in paying the amount you feel comfortable with. Checks may be sent to Certified Languages International; ATTN: Bill Graeper; 4724 SW Macadam Avenue, Suite 100; Portland, OR 97239. Lobbyists’ fees are tax-deductible, just like attorneys’, etc and we are happy to forward any original receipts from our lobbyist that your bookkeepers may need to justify the charge.

I personally feel as though SB77 is worth following. I feel as though this will have a direct impact on our industry and will either make our situation better or worse. But Bill and I can not bear this burden alone. We are doing this for the industry and must therefore have the support of the industry. Please send your check to Bill or your pledge amount to me or Bill, whomever you feel more comfortable with, when you are able. We are hoping to receive all preliminary donations by January 31st. Any amount is welcome.

Thank you in advance for your support,

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MEANING IS NOT A COMMODITY cont.

translated source-language words were matched with target-language words to arrive at a “translation”, which supposedly conveyed the meaning of the source-language text. The translator became a “language engineer” who manipulated segments and marveled at the way the software could reproduce formatting and put all those segments back together in a way that seemed to produce a target-language document that was identical to the source-language document.

Machine translation, which incorporates some of the same technology, also works with words. This technology may be based on rules of grammar and dictionaries or it may be statistically based on natural language usage, but ultimately it is based on words which have denotative and connotative values determined by context.

All well and good were it not for the fact that writers in the real world use language that is not only idiomatic and/or idiosyncratic, but rather is language that I have come to call Humpty Dumpty language, a language characterized by the concept “a word means exactly what I choose it to mean”. So, what does the human translator do when he/she encounters a word in the source language for which any of the possible alternatives in the target language would be somewhat bizarre? I tend to think that the human translator would opt for the intended meaning. No automated language program is capable of making that determination, and it is not something that can become part of a translation memory or a terminology database.

In reality, what seems to have gotten lost is that the role of the translator is to communicate meaning. While that meaning is of necessity couched in words, there is no direct correlation between the words in one language and the words in another language, nor can we be sure that the words used by a writer in one language convey the meaning that he/she intended to convey. We are all aware that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a document that is well written in any language.

So, in the end, meaning is not a commodity. It cannot be reduced to words to be sold to the highest (or lowest) bidder. Although meaning is expressed in words, those words are constantly changing. Any attempt to automate the expression of meaning is bound to fall short.

The automated language industry is actively trying to involve human translators in the machine translation process. In reality, they need the work of human translators to provide the matched segments that is the basis of statistical machine translation. However, they seem to ignore much of the advice that comes from translators. In discussing the role of translators, Fred Hollowood of Symantec Corporation said: “I relied heavily on the quality assessments of translators. They were not always favorable. It was some time before I learned to temper these evaluations with automatic metrics and user evaluation of MT output.”

Automatic metrics will be the subject of a future article, but user evaluation of MT output is something that can be compared with user evaluation of human translation. Oftentimes it is not the end-user of the translation who evaluates it but the entity contracting the translation. This entity is not always capable of determining how it will be understood by the end user.

There is no doubt that the translation industry is in a profound state of change. We cannot cling to the past, neither can we ignore it. The merchant translator that Bernie Bierman mentioned in previous articles is gone forever. The freelance translator has no “knight in shining armor” to protect his/her interests. But we do know that our profession is not and should not be based on the sale of words. The role of the translator is, has always been, and hopefully will always be the communication of meaning and that is something that defies commodification.

I personally believe that CAT tools (Trados, etc.) as we know them, like the 8-track, will soon be part of the past. This is not true of machine translation, and it is a force that all human translators must reckon with. Dealing with the automated language sector (their term) is not easy in that they have their own “language”. Navigating their Web sites and discussion groups involves constant googling to determine the meaning of acronyms and arcane language.

(Continued on page 6)

MEANING IS NOT A COMMODITY cont.

Nevertheless, I feel that only by attempting to come to grips with their goals, whether or not they are achievable given the idiosyncratic nature of human language, can we achieve a balance in human communication.

Right now, though, what we need is a real dialogue about post-editing, what it is, how it fits in with traditional translation, and how it should be remunerated. Ultimately, that is the bottom line because if translators are expected to contribute to the machine translation process, they should be compensated for their efforts.

SOURCE: <http://www.translationcommentator.blogspot.com/>

Dover woman's voice is the tool of her trade

Source: reprinted from <http://www.timesreporter.com/business/x756964762/Dover-womans-voice-is-the-tool-of-her-trade>

By Joe Wright, TimesReporter.com staff writer

When Victoria Buss came to Ohio 22 years ago from Guatemala City in Central America, she discovered a gift she could utilize — her voice and a way to use her native Spanish.

The Dover resident is a trained freelance Spanish interpreter, voice-over artist, and owner of Victoria's Voice Language Service.

She is a member of Northeast Ohio Translators Association and has done work at Union Hospital as an interpreter. She said she decided to become an interpreter after visiting a friend at a hospital and realizing the need for patients and doctors to be able to communicate.

She lends her voice to a new online game called Wordplay that helps people learn Spanish and have fun at the same time.

Buss got the call when Thomas Butt, CEO at Wordplay Learning of Philadelphia, was searching for the voice for the Spanish part of the game. He contacted Dan Popp, owner of Colors Audio, a recording studio in Akron where Victoria has done work.



Popp told Buss her services might be needed and she put a demo together and got the job.

The game is free for people who would like to learn Spanish. The website is www.wordplay.com. People can sign up and then go to the different lessons.

There are several little boxes on the screen that have pictures describing the word to be learned. When you click on the picture the word is spoken in Spanish (with Buss's voice) and English.

An example is a picture of a couple of children kissing their mother for the phrase "thank you very much."

When you click on it you hear Buss say "muchas gracias" and then another voice follows in English with "thank you very much."

Buss said the most difficult part of the project was having to record the words and phrases for the game without the benefit of seeing the pictures.

"The recording is tedious," she said. "I have to be able to get excited when I record and it can be difficult when you can't see the pictures."

The voice for the English part of Wordplay was done by a woman from Los Angeles at a different recording studio and then put together with Buss' for the game.

The game makes it easy to learn and remember Spanish, so it gives a person motivation to continue. It also is a great tool for Spanish teachers to monitor students' progress.

Buss said her voice also can be heard at the website www.vobravo.com, which features male and female voice demos. On the site you hit female voices and then look for L. Victoria Buss. She has demos for a hospital and furniture store. Victoria said the website helps people find talent.

"Usually they go on the website and listen and they know within a few seconds if they want that voice," she said

Buss also has worked for Tony Gialluca Productions and Audio Concepts Inc. She also has recorded on camera for websites through the studios of Live Actor and lent her voice to Tenneco Monroe, Huggies and Great Life International.

For Huggies, Buss said a jingle was done both in English and Spanish. There was a children's choir that was involved and they knew the words for English but Victoria had to teach them the words for the Spanish jingle.

"That took a little more time," she said, laughing.

Victoria is married to Brad Buss and has three children.



Editor's note: we welcome submissions for the newsletter. Please send all submission requests to Natalie Chubb at nchubb@insight.rr.com