



# TCD 7th Annual Conference Report

By Kim Vitray



I am so pleased to report that the TCD conference held April 20-23, 2006, in Jersey City, NJ, was a resounding success! Vigdis Eriksen and Alexandra Farkas of Eriksen Translations did a tremendous job as our local organizers. We had nearly 100 attendees, which was almost double our conference attendance in 2005, including international visitors from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Israel, and Poland. The online registration provided through the ATA was a huge improvement this year, and the Hyatt provided superb service. We received many positive comments about the program, and attendees seemed to very much enjoy the banquet, the

Friday evening optional dinner-and-jazz activity, and the Saturday evening ATA reception. And last but certainly not least, our final budget was in the black, for the third year in a row.

We are extremely grateful to the following **sponsors, exhibitors, and advertisers** for their support of our event:

- Argos Company
- Beetext Productivity Solutions
- Hebrew Languages Services
- Idiom Technologies
- The Language Technology Center
- Language Weaver
- Lexis-Nexis/Martindale-Hubbell
- MultiCorpora
- MultiLingual Computing
- SDL International
- spanishbackoffice SA

We owe thanks to many others as well:

- Topping the list, **Vigdis Eriksen** and **Alexandra Farkas** of **Eriksen Translations**, our local

conference organizers. They were primarily responsible for site selection and organizing the Friday evening optional activity, but also provided willing and productive helping hands and words of advice and wisdom in many other areas as well.

- Our **speakers** and **panelists**, for their generous contributions of time, effort, and expertise.
- ATA (former) Chapter and Division Liaison **Mary David** and ATA Webmaster **Roshan Pokharel**, particularly for their assistance with site contracting, online registration, name badges, and the TCD website.
- The **ATA** and **its board**, for welcoming TCD conference attendees to their hosted reception.
- Assistant Administrator **Ellen Boyar** of Thomson Scientific, former Administrator **Linda Gauthier** of BG Communications, and conference attendee and special friend **Rina Ne'eman**

Name	Company	Session Title
Jost Zetzsche	International Writers' Group	How Much Is Too Much of a Good Thing? Translation Environment Tools and the Language Industry
Renato Beninatto	Common Sense Advisory	Project Managers Are Your Best Salespeople—How to Leverage Their Customer Interaction to Grow Your Business
Laurie Gerber	Language Weaver	Are We There Yet? The State of the Art and Practice in MT
Charles Campbell/Ed Zad	spanishbackoffice SA/ Lionbridge	Value throughout the Vendor Supply Chain
Natasha Bonilla/ Jeff Wood	Eriksen Translations/ Monterey Institute	Making Internships Work for You
Kim Vitray	McElroy Translation	Fear Factor in the Workplace: Would You Rather Eat Bugs Than Do Employee Performance Evaluations?
Everette Jordan	National Virtual Translation Ctr.	Translation Companies and National Security Needs
Jonathan Bernstein	Levy Davis & Maher, LLP	The How-To's of Enforcing (or Avoiding) Employee Non-Competition, Non-Solicitation, and Confidentiality Agreements
Shaun Daggett	ClientSide News	Where Are All the Clients?
Evan Geisinger	Native Experts	The Global Language Services Infrastructure of 2014—Strategic Technological Futurism for the Language Services Industry
Benoit Desjardins	Beetext Productivity Solutions	Project Management Software for Translation Agencies: Discover the Real Benefits of Workflow Automation
Bill Rabkin	Idiom Technologies	Changing Market Dynamics: Idiom WorldServer™ LSP Advantage Program Provides New Choices for LSPs
Kristen Weigel	SDL International	Dramatically Improve Productivity for Creating, Cleansing & Maintaining Translation Assets



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of Hebrew Language Services, all of whom gave up a beautiful afternoon they could have spent sightseeing in New York City to instead help with last-minute preparation and set up for the conference.



- **Evan Norman and Susan Andrus** of McElroy Translation, for their work on the TCD website and the conference program.

Our Thursday evening banquet was a perfect start to the conference, with good food and drink shared with friends old and new, and a spectacular view of the New York City skyline. Because our conference was co-located with the ATA spring board meeting, we were honored to have ATA President **Marian Greenfield** with us for the evening.



On Friday evening, a group of attendees participated in an optional activity: “**New York at Night: An Evening of Dinner and Jazz in New York’s Flat Iron District**” (and thanks again to Alexandra for organizing this, and

leading us in a fascinating walk/ subway/train journey!). We enjoyed a three-course dinner of fine Spanish-influenced cuisine, followed by music from The Silvia Zehn Duo (Silvia Zehn, piano, and Dmitri Kolesnik, bass).



Our Saturday morning keynote event was once again a panel discussion centered around the TCD mission of improving the relationships between translation companies and freelance translators. The panel consisted of six participants: two freelance translators (**Sarah Yarkoni** and **Laura Brandkamp**), two company owners/managers (**Beatriz Bonnet** of Syntes Language Group and **Werner Hindrichs** of ALS Inc.), and two company owners/managers who are also freelance translators (**Rina Ne’eman** of Hebrew Language Services and **Bin Liu** of Acumen TransMedia Services).



Questions had been prepared and given to the panelists in advance, and then questions and comments were also taken from the audience. There was lively and participative discussion. Following are the questions, and the answers as best as I can reconstruct and summarize them from my notes.

1. Name three specific things that companies can do to help freelancers do their jobs better, and that freelancers can do to help companies do their jobs better?

*Companies can help freelancers by: (1) providing clear instructions; (2) paying on time; and (3) being realistic about their expectations.*

*Freelancers can help companies by: (1) reading the instructions that are provided; (2) invoicing on time; (3) being honest about their capabilities; (4) delivering early to set themselves apart; and (5) providing cultural advice.*

*Both parties should: (1) ask questions; (2) do their homework; (3) be responsive; (4) improve their skills; and (5) do quality work.*

2. Should translation companies outsource project management, and what are the factors to be considered in making this decision and managing this particular relationship?

*On the one hand, project management is what translation companies do; on the other, it is also their prerogative to outsource the project management function when*



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they need to, because of lack of inhouse resources or time, or because they need specialized assistance. However, the group consensus was that translation companies in general should not outsource project management.

- 3. What are the first three steps in professionally handling a difficult issue, misunderstanding, or dispute between a company and a freelancer?

The first step is direct communication between the two parties, not others, to talk about the problem and practice active listening with each other. The second step is to negotiate in good faith. And the third step is to recognize that sometimes things just happen, so take responsibility for them and try to create a win-win and learning experience.

Other tips were: (1) identify and discuss the issue objectively, not emotionally, and to not take it personally; (2) work to ascertain whether or not there is truly a problem, and then exactly where and what it is; and (3) view each other as partners, not enemies.

- 4. What steps can be taken by companies and freelancers toward a system of accountability for professional ethics (e.g., penalties and rewards)?

There was vigorous discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of industry "blacklists." Everette Jordan of the NVTC was to the point regarding unethical behavior: "The government will hunt you

down and charge you with espionage."



- 5. Faced with keen competition and great price pressures, what can both companies and freelancers do to stay viable and in business?

Ideas included: (1) drop prices; (2) offer multiple services; (3) broaden their databases of contacts and resources; (4) go more high-tech; (5) add value; (6) establish themselves as professionals in global communication in order to command better rates; (7) remember it's business, not personal; (8) be reliable and deliver on time; and (9) invest in ongoing relationships with good partners and in honest dialogue.

On Saturday evening, conference attendees were welcomed at a reception hosted by the ATA board. This was a great opportunity for TCD members to talk one-on-one with ATA board members, to bring to their attention any questions, comments, or concerns.



Here's what some of our attendees had to say about this year's TCD conference. You won't want

to miss next year, when we will be bigger and better than ever (stay tuned for future details)!

"Thank you...for organizing a great conference. It's nice to be in a room full of people who spend their days thinking about the same sorts of things that you do. I enjoyed the presentations."

"The TCD conference was well organized and well run—and what a great hotel! Your team deserves credit and gratitude. I appreciate sessions that give me information—and interpretations of it—about the industry that I cannot easily get elsewhere. Also the ATA board reception was outstanding. I also like the keynote panel—a moderated opportunity for open discussion is invaluable."

"Great conference—lots of new attendees! Getting better each year."

"[The conference] was very successful. The organization was highly disciplined and neatly executed. The program of sessions was well arranged, informative, and edutaining."

"There was a good variety of topics, a great venue, and it seemed to be very well organized by all involved."

"Excellent, very well organized, lots of fun. The talks were very useful and interesting and well planned. The New Jersey venue was excellent."

