

TCD NEWS

Post ATA conference issue

Volume 3, Issue 4 • November 2001

After the event – the ATA conference in Los Angeles

Issue No.4 of the TCD Newsletter of 2001 appears before you in the wake of the ATA conference in Los Angeles.

As usual, when asked to stand up and identify myself as the editor of the newsletter at the TCD AGM, I invited contributions and material for the newsletter. Usually, this is something of a cry in the wilderness, as there are few editors of any publications anywhere who really do get contributions unsolicited and TCD News is no exception.

But lo! I actually ended up with a veritable landslide – and some great material to boot!

So in this issue you can read about the various committees and their members active under the umbrella of the TCD, plus reports from a couple of their chairpersons on recent activities and progress made. Worthwhile reading.

The Trados debate

Avid readers will know that we gave everyone the chance to put a barrage of questions to Trados in issue No. 2 earlier this year. No one took up the challenge. Sad really, as I get the distinct impression there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the direction Trados is taking, nor does Trados 5 seem to be going down too well either.

On the other hand, maybe the deal we now have with SDLX is actually an expression of our true feelings towards Trados? Are we voting with our feet perhaps?

Time magazine article on translation

Time magazine recently ran an article on the translation industry. Some interesting claims and projections! See if you agree with them. Go to: <http://www.time.com/time/global/november/cover.html>

Robin Brown, editor.
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About TCD

The Translation Company Division (TCD) is a division of the American Translators Association (ATA).

Mission Statement

To promote, develop and guide our rapidly changing industry through the cooperation of our membership.

Newsletter

TCD News is the newsletter of the TCD. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, which are subject to editing. Articles reflect the opinion of the authors only, and do not represent the views or opinions of the editor or the administrator of the TCD.

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Have you moved?

Don't miss out on important announcements. Please contact ATA (see following info) if your contact information has changed.

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TCD listserv subscriptions

<http://www.ata-divisions.org/TCD/listserv/email.cgi>

Your message will be distributed to the whole TCD membership.

Newsletter Advertising

Contact robin@netcomms.dk

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Introducing TCD committees

Interpreter Company Committee

Bill Graeper, of Certified Languages International, is head of the Interpreter's Company Committee. He describes this committee's mission as being "to represent companies whose primary focus is interpreting rather than translating and making sure we have a forum in the TCD." Bill also acts as TCD Liaison to the Interpreter's Division, attending their meetings as representative of the TCD. Read on for Bill's report of the current state of play within his committee.

Interpreter Company Committee Report – November, 2001

Bill Graeper, President, Certified Languages International

This report is a repeat of the verbal report given to the Translation Company Division in Los Angeles during the ATA Fall Meeting.

I attended the meeting of the Interpreter Division of the ATA. I informed the Interpreters that Interpreter companies continue to work with interpreters to increase the opportunities available for both companies and the interpreters with which we contract. We welcome the training opportunities available and increased certification activity by the states. Most recently, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Texas have passed legislation mandating certification of interpreters working in those states. Our position, as Interpreter Companies, is to support these calls for increased professionalism while working with the states to include our accreditation programs as part of the certification. In this way, we can continue to offer work to more interpreters and still assure our customers of quality interpretations.

I reported on a Worker's Compensation carrier in Oregon who classified independent contractors as "covered workers", even though interpreters/translators were exempt from employment taxes under another Oregon law. Obviously, being labelled as employees brings into question contractor status for Federal taxes and has broad national ramifications for language service providers that use independent contractors. This case is currently being heard by an Administrative Law judge. Richard Paegelow of Inline Translations, Glendale, CA reported that they are currently fighting a similar issue in the State of California.

Diane Teichman, TCD member and owner of Linguistic Services, Houston, TX just finished her term as Administrator of the Interpreter Division at the ATA meeting in Los Angeles. During her term, interpreters started communicating through their very active Forum, and through their fine ID Newsletter. Diane has been replaced by Helen Cole of Silver Springs, MD. We will continue to liaison with ID through Helen.

We have seven members of our committee:

Maryse Benhoff, BG Communications
Deborah Morgan, IRCO Intepreters
Ruth Karpeles, Language Service Consultants
Maria Mazzoni, Academy of Languages, Baltimore
Steve Myers, Suzuki & Myers
Sarah Williams, Academy of Languages, Seattle

We will be focusing on programs important to Interpreter companies including certification issues. We will have our first committee report available for the June, 2002 meeting.

Respectfully submitted
William Graeper, Certified Languages International. bill@clilang.com

Best Practices Committee Report – November 2001

Suzanne Robinson, Liaison Multilingual

We saw some significant progress in the Code/Standards Saga at the ATA conference.

Those attending the TCD meeting approved the latest version of the document outlining criteria for "Compliant" membership in our division (see above). The term was changed from "Credentialed" because Scott Brennan, President-elect of ATA, who will be our liaison with the ATA board regarding TCD developments and is supportive of our writing approvable standards, warned us that there was considerable concern about the possibility that ATA would be opened to legal liability if a "credentialed" member conducted business improperly. Scott is supportive of our efforts and will help us work through the ATA board's concerns.

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Criteria for Compliant Membership in ATA/TCD

TCD compliance represents a commitment to abide by and be governed by an enhanced standard of business conduct.

1. A compliant member of ATA/TCD must operate as a legal entity from a registered business address.
2. The company must have been in the language services business for at least 2 years.
3. The member must agree annually in writing to abide by the TCD Code of Best Practices.
4. The company must operate an effective system of quality assurance for the language services it provides, in accordance with the TCD Quality Standards. All contracts produced by the company must confirm the company's voluntary compliance with the TCD Quality Standards, a copy of which can be made available to the other contracting party upon request.
5. The company must pay all agreed ATA/TCD fees in order to retail membership.

Presented for approval to attendees of ATA/TCD Annual Meeting Nov. 2001

In order to put some strength into the "Compliant" status indicated in the criteria, however, we added the requirement that members in that category acknowledge voluntary adherence to the established TCD Standards in all contracts with clients and suppliers. After further discussion, including with the creators of the ASTM Interpreters Standards, we are feeling somewhat confident that with "voluntary" adherence, our division and ATA would not be vulnerable to legal action, but the individual member companies who declare adherence could be if they conducted business in a manner prohibited by the standards.

If this proves to be the case, we do not have to worry about creating a more binding standard criteria in the future - our purpose of giving "Compliant" members a meaningful status will have been accomplished. We can then proceed, with whatever fees are determined to be appropriate for this status, to develop a PR campaign to promote our compliant members and hopefully to raise the image of the industry.

You have all seen the version of the Standards themselves as they stood at the beginning of the conference (published in full Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 2001). Paul Penzo, a Canadian translation company owner who attended our division meeting, has been working for some time with four other company owners to create a standards definition for translation companies in Canada. They have already been through many stages in which specific descriptions of day-to-day company activities have been rejected because they are not realistic in how a responsible company must conduct business in some cases. Consequently, he has suggestions for parts of our document that should be generalized to a degree. On the other hand, the Canadian document is considerably more restrictive in several aspects, such as the basic requirements for a business to be termed a translation company and in which language pairs they are qualified to work. The committee's specific suggestions will be incorporated and included in the next issue of the TCD Newsletter.

Respectfully submitted
Suzanne Robinson, Liaison Multilingual.
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Toll-free number (800) 990 1970

Elections

At next year's ATA conference in Atlanta, we will confirm the election of a new Administrator and Assistant Administrator. In Los Angeles, the following people volunteered to assist in the selection of candidates:

Bill Graeper, Certified Languages International,
bill@clilang.com
Charles Teubner, Marketing Services Group,
cteub32152@aol.com
Elisabete Miranda, Translation Plus,
info@translationplus.com

Please let us know if you are willing to assist in this area.

Strategic Planning

Steve Iverson announced in Los Angeles that there will be a Strategic Planning meeting to be held in Milwaukee, WI from Friday, February 8 - Sunday, February 10. The goal will be to define a clear direction for the group before the "installation" of new officers. If you are interested in attending, please contact Steve at steve@iversonlang.com

TCD Meeting

As you know, we've now had 2 very successful mid-year meetings for TCD members. We have located a few agencies (including Iverson Language Associates) who are willing to assist in setting up a meeting in Chicago. Watch for dates and schedules. This has proven to be a very worthwhile event, and you will not want to miss it!

Best Practices committee

One of the most active committees to date within TCD is the Best Practices committee, headed by Suzanne Robinson, of Liaison Multilingual. The activities of this committee have been widely reported in earlier issues of TCD News, and have extended into the realms of defining a quality standard. Suzanne has taken her role so seriously that she even flew to Europe at her own expense to talk to translation company trade associations and the British Standards Institute (BSI), which has been tasked with supervising the development of a European translation industry quality standard.

A draft code of Best Practices which will form the basic criteria of 'Compliant' TCD membership was hammered out at the TCD conference in Colorado Springs and published in the Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 2001 issue of TCD News following that conference for debate.

The European quality standard is deemed to be something that can be adapted to the purposes of the TCD and a vote was taken at the TCD AGM to provide a mandate for Suzanne and her team to go forward with that. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor.

Committee members:

Suzanne Robinson, Liaison Multilingual; Steve Iverson, Iverson Language Associates; Robin Brown, Network Communications; Rita McGrath, rmcgrat@emory.edu; Bill Graeper, Certified Languages; Michael Launer, RussTech; Richard Antoine, Magnus International; Gabe Bokor, Accurapid Translation Services; Adrian Spidle, Adaptive Language Resources

List of TCD officers and committee chairpersons

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