

LOS ANGELES CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

by Dorothee Racette, GLD Administrator



The 42nd annual ATA conference at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, held from October 31st to November 3rd, 2001, was certainly one of the busiest ever. In accordance with figures received from headquarters, a total of 135 GLD members made the trip to Los Angeles. Overall, slightly more than 1,300 people attended the conference.

The list of pre-conference seminars, which is growing longer from year to year, makes it obvious that many members are interested in taking seminars with small numbers of participants and an intense learning atmosphere. This year, the pre-conference program included two offerings for German translators: Robin Bonthron again offered a highly successful seminar, entitled "Der IAS- und US-GAAP-Anhang," and Professor Dr. Peter Schmitt, our guest speaker from the University of Leipzig, conducted a seminar in two parts about "Advanced Topics in English > German Translation." Both seminars were well attended, and we hope to keep the tradition of offering such seminars alive in the future.

The official conference program, which formally began on Thursday, November 1st, contained a number of very interesting and well-presented sessions for German <> English translators. This year, the conference organizers opted to keep events for specific language pairs in the same room as far as possible. This was a welcome change from hurried room changes between presentations and program. Lois Feuerle and Joe McClinton spoke about translating

written arguments in civil litigation, taking turns to explain the two sides of court proceedings.

Their emphasis on translator pitfalls was especially interesting, and participants took many notes. A PowerPoint file with the text of the presentation is available upon request, either by emailing Joe McClinton at joe@jmctrans.com or by sending 2 Dollars, and a SAS envelope (9 x 12 inch, \$1.49 postage) to Lois M. Feuerle (3036 SE Taylor Street, Portland, OR 97214).

On Friday morning, Nicholas Hartmann gave an expert introduction to German patent translation. The text of his presentation can be found in the proceedings of the conference and in this newsletter, and is so valuable that it should be reprinted in the *Chronicle* for a larger audience. Karl Pfeiffer followed with his excellent presentation about "Industry and Terminology Standards in English-German Technical Translation: An Overview of Developments and Resources." *....continued on page 3*

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interaktiv

The German Language Division newsletter is a quarterly publication of the GLD within the American Translators Association.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of their authors. Articles are subject to editing. Submissions for publication are invited and may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed (the latter preferred) to the editor.

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Perspektiven

Wie jedes Jahr steht auch dieses Mal die letzte Ausgabe unseres *interaktiv* im Jahre 2001 im Zeichen der Jahreskonferenz der ATA, die Anfang November in Los Angeles stattfand. Erfreulich viele Mitglieder der GLD waren auf der Konferenz zu sehen und nutzten die Gelegenheit, sich zum einen einige der vielen angebotenen Vorträge anzuhören, zum anderen aber sicherlich auch, um mal wieder Kollegen und Kunden persönlich zu treffen, mit denen man das Jahr über in der Regel doch meist nur telefonisch oder elektronisch per E-Mail Kontakt hat.

Ein wichtiges, GLD-spezifisches Thema, das auf der Konferenz diskutiert wurde, sind erste Pläne, innerhalb der nächsten 2 Jahre eine eigene Konferenz der *German Language Division* abzuhalten, wahrscheinlich in der ersten Jahreshälfte 2003. Zu diesem Zweck wird in der nächsten Zeit eine webbasierte Umfrage unter den GLD-Mitgliedern hinsichtlich möglichen Inhalten, Veranstaltungsorten etc. stattfinden. Bitte unterstützen Sie die GLD-Leitung in deren Bemühungen, eine solche Konferenz zum ersten Mal auf die Beine zu stellen, und tun Sie Ihre Meinung zu den auf dem Fragebogen angesprochenen Themen kund.

Wer sich mit jugendsprachlichen Umgangswörtern auseinander setzen muss, oder sich einfach auch nur dafür interessiert, was sich in dieser Szene tut, der kann jetzt auf ein neues Nachschlagewerk zurückgreifen, und das Schöne daran ist, dass dieses kostenlos zur Verfügung steht. Der Pons-Verlag brachte nämlich zur diesjährigen Frankfurter Buchmesse ein solches „Wörterbuch der Jugendsprache“ heraus. Es kann bei der Redaktion PONS bestellt werden (info@pons.de, oder Tel. 0711-6672-1333). Oder ganz einfach vom Internet bei <http://www.pons.de> besorgen. Das „PONS Wörterbuch der Jugendsprache“ steht dort vollständig als Online-Version zum Herunterladen zur Verfügung. Vielleicht findet man sich tatsächlich mal in der Situation, wissen zu müssen, was hinter Begriffen wie „quarzen“ oder „Krawallbrause“ steckt.

Nun bleibt mir nur noch übrig, allen unseren Mitgliedern frohe Festtage und ein erfolgreiches Jahr 2002 zu wünschen. Und natürlich auch im neuen Jahr weiterhin viel Spaß beim Übersetzen und Dolmetschen.

Manfred Winter

LA CONFERENCE..

...continued from page 1

The translation of DIN standards can be a difficult challenge, and we are grateful that Karl Pfeiffer decided to post his presentation as an online resource at www.mypresentations.homestead.com.

In the afternoon, a presentation about translating German advertisement and marketing texts (presented by a representative of Siemens Language Services, as the original speaker, Mary Tannert, could not attend) highlighted challenges of translating text that must have cultural and promotional appeal. Dr. Schmitt, our guest speaker from Leipzig, then gave a comprehensive overview of translation studies at different institutions in Germany. In contrast to study options in the U.S., German universities offer a broad spectrum of language options and study specializations.

The German program was rounded off by a seminar for newcomers to the profession, presented by Dorothee Racette and Elke Limberger-Katsumi. The PowerPoint presentation for that session can be found at the GLD website under the URL of <http://www.ata-divisions.org/GLD/beitrag02.html>

Many GLD members also opted to give more general presentations for audiences across language pairs at the conference, and made a valuable contribution to the program in that way.

The tragic events of September 2001 made it impossible for two of our speakers to travel to Los Angeles from Europe. Thus, Ingrid Haussteiner from Vienna was forced to cancel her presentation on terminological issues surrounding the introduction of Euro banknotes and coins and the transition to a common European currency. Even though the presentation had to be cancelled, an abstract of the article was printed in the conference proceedings. A second presentation about financial translation by Elke Faundez of CLS Corporate Language Services in Basel, Switzerland, also had to be cancelled. We sincerely hope that the two speakers will be able to present their topics to us at a future conference. Many thanks for their willingness to contribute to the German program.

GLD Annual Business Meeting

More than 80 people attended the annual business meeting of GLD on Thursday, November 1st. Re-

ports were submitted by Dorothee Racette, Administrator, Michael Magee, Assistant Administrator, Michael Metzger, Webmaster, and Marga Hannon, outgoing Editor of *interaktiv*. Dorothee Racette gave an overview of the current state of the division. The membership keeps growing and reached an all-time high of 753 in September 2001. Due to a decision by the ATA Board of Directors, divisions no longer need to pay an overhead to headquarters,



which is why the GLD budget of approximately 10,500 Dollars is balanced and contains funds for educational activities and future initiatives. Converting the distribution of the newsletter to electronic format has been a financial success, even though the number of downloads seems to indicate that more needs to be done to advertise the download site and content of the newsletter to members. Approximately 70 people have chosen to continue with a printed edition by mail.

Michael Metzger, Webmaster, announced that the GLD listserv currently has about 150 members. For information about how to join the GLD listserv, contact Michael Metzger at karas@sirius.com. In a new initiative for the website, the division has started a knowledge database, in which a collection of interesting articles on the profession will be kept to answer frequently asked questions. The articles are accessible to all at the GLD website. Michael Metzger agreed to serve the division for another year, but invited other members to become involved with the website work.

Marga Hannon, editor of *interaktiv*, gave an overview of the past year's activities. Four issues of *interaktiv* were published, including the largest copy ever with 28 pages last December. Ms. Hannon welcomed the new editor of *interaktiv*, Dr. Christiane Bohnert, who unfortunately could not attend the conference, and thanked Mr. Manfred Winter, co-editor as well as past and current division administrators for their support.

The discussion of new business included ways to improve the electronic distribution of the newsletter, as reader numbers apparently are quite low. It was agreed that instead of one announcement, there would be several emails reminding members to access the newsletter. The newsletter often contains

...continued on page 4

important announcements and helps members stay connected, so it is important to bring readership numbers up.

The Board of Directors has approved a simplification of the election process in the divisions. Elections for GLD are scheduled for 2002, and Dorothee Racette asked for the formation of a nominating committee. Ms. Frieda Ruppenner-Lind and Ms. Ruth Zimmer-Boggs have graciously agreed to be part of the nominating committee. As soon as division guidelines are published by ATA, we will announce election candidates for 2002.

Michael Magee, Assistant Administrator, announced plans for a German Language Division conference to be held in the future. A show of hands among the attendees of the business meeting indicated that roughly two-thirds would at least be interested in such an event. There was a brief discussion focusing on such issues as cost, location, and organizational challenges. It was decided to form a committee to further explore this issue. The committee has established its own listserv discussion group now, and will start by surveying the whole membership for

interest and opinions about such an event. It will look into the feasibility and possibilities of such a conference, which most likely would be held in 2003. A trial version of a questionnaire developed by Uwe Schroeter for this committee has been posted to the Web for a trial period (http://www.ata-divisions.org/GLD/Survey_2001.htm). Please contact the Administrator if you would like to be involved in the work of the committee.

Social Events

On the social side, we were pleased to welcome over 90 GLD members to our own reception held at the conference hotel. Due to the growing numbers of conference attendees, the concept of meeting in a restaurant is becoming increasingly difficult. The well-attended reception was certainly an indication of interest, and we hope to develop the concept further at future conferences.

Dorothee Racette is a translator accredited for GER > EN and EN > GER. She owns and runs One World Language Services® in upstate New York. She can be reached at dracette@owlang.com

**„Wir leben zwar über unsere Verhältnisse, aber immer noch unter unserem Niveau“
Reflektionen eines SINK („Single Income No Kids“) in der Rezession**

von Christiane Bohnert

Inzwischen haben wir wahrscheinlich alle gemerkt, dass die „Neue Wirtschaft“ eine Börsenente war und die alte im Gebälk ächzt und stöhnt. Dazu kommen Terror und Gegenterror. Magere Monate, die doch sonst immer fett waren, Agenturen an der Ostküste, die nicht zahlen können, weil die Post zur Beglei-

chung ihrer Forderungen wochenlang nicht ausgegeben worden ist – und hier schweifen die Gedanken ab, und man fragt sich, warum ein Land, das Leute zum Mond schicken und Berge zu Ebenen bomben kann, in seinem Bankwesen



noch auf die Post angewiesen ist.

Man weiß natürlich aus vielerlei Ratschlägen, wie man in diesen mageren Zeiten überlebt. Man legt Rücklagen an und verkauft die eigene Person nicht aus lauter Panik als zweite Wahl, sondern bleibt beim vorgegebenen Gebührensatz mit darin enthaltenem Wertzuschlag. Einerseits wird man das flauere Gefühl nicht los, dass man sich bei Spezialtexten unter einem gewissen Satz wirklich zu billig verkauft, andererseits denkt man, wenn man's machte, könnte man Arbeit haben, und schließlich ist es eine Frage von Geld-Haben *...continued on page 5*

Wir leben...

...continued from page 4

oder Nichthaben. Wenn man sich dann aber gerade entschlossen hat, die Prinzipien sausen zu lassen, und es ruft dann eine Agentur an, die den vollen Preis zahlt, und man hat dann keine Zeit ... Immer diese Entscheidungen! Am Ende kann man dann nur hoffen, dass die Bilanz am Jahresende nicht zu viele Spuren des Minuswachstums – ein schönes Wort – um uns herum zeigt.

Und das mit der Rücklage – das ist natürlich eine tolle Idee für diejenigen unter uns, die diesen oder einen anderen Job in den goldenen achtziger und neunziger Jahren auf einem Niveau ausgeübt haben, auf dem sie Ersparnisse machen konnten. Aber was ist mit denen, die den Aufbau ihres Geschäfts über Kreditkarten finanziert haben – im allgemeinen Small-Business-Bereich die Finanzierungsweise für über 40% der Start-ups – und die noch an den Schulden daraus zu knabbern haben. Die Worte „Rücklagen“ und „Break-Even-Point“ erhalten in diesem Zusammenhang eine ganz andere Bedeu-

tung: Das erstere ist die notfalls noch ausschöpfbare Kreditlinie, und das Zweite liegt in dem Monat, in dem die Schulden nicht mehr wachsen. In dem Punkt hofft man dann auf ein Minuswachstum im echten, mathematischen Sinne des Wortes.

Und leben will man ja auch noch, schließlich ist man ein SINK. „Don't you have a life?“ fragt man hier zu Lande den von etwas zu sehr Besessenen. Schuldentilgung ist eine wichtige Sache, aber die Frage ist, ob man auf die Zukunft wettet – sich jetzt nichts gönnt, um dann im Alter aufzudrehen bzw. sich ein erstes Leben versagt, um ein Zweites zu haben. In diesem Sinne kann der als Titel zitierte Spruch, der von einer Holztafel aus dem Schwarzwald stammt, als auflockernde Devise dienen.

Christiane is an independent, full-time translator, accredited for English into German translation and lives in St. Louis, Missouri. As far as possible she specializes in finance, accounting, law, contracts etc., which she does from English into German, and from German into English. Also loves translating advertising (for whatever), and well-written manuals, and handbooks.

In eigener Sache

Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen,

als meine Urgroßmutter von ihrer Tochter gefragt wurde, wie sie denn einen Danke-schön-Brief anfangen sollte, soll die Antwort gelautet haben: „Mit Freuden greife ich zur Feder . . .“. Genau wie damals meine Großmutter vor ihrem Briefbogen sitze ich jetzt hier vor meinem Computer.

Das Wichtigste zuerst: Von der Dezember-Ausgabe 2001 an werde ich als Nachfolgerin von Marga Hanon als Redakteurin die Zeitschrift *interaktiv* betreuen. Ich hoffe, ich werde viel Unterstützung finden, denn nicht nur ist Margas Vorbild „a hard act to follow“, sondern je mehr Ideen hereinkommen, desto vielseitiger kann unser Newsletter sein. Schon Hinweise auf die sehr interessanten Artikel aus der Neuen Züricher oder der Süddeutschen Zeitung helfen.

Obwohl natürlich Deutsch der Schwerpunkt von *interaktiv* ist und bleiben soll, finde ich, dass Artikel wie der über das Ungarische im Märzheft den Horizont erweitern, zumal Ungarn so eng mit der mittel-

europäischen Geschichte verknüpft ist, dass man es gerade wegen seiner (Sprach-)Eigenheit zu Mitteleuropa hinzurechnen muss.¹ Neben dem intellektuellen Interesse soll natürlich auch die Nützlichkeit nicht zu kurz kommen. So sollen weiterhin Arbeitstipps, Einstiegsvorschläge und Artikel zu einzelnen Übersetzungsgebieten erscheinen, wobei diese nicht lang zu sein brauchen. Daneben steht natürlich die Aufarbeitung von Konferenzen. Kurz gesagt: das *interaktiv* soll für die Deutschsprachigen unter uns das sein, was das *Chronicle* für alle ATA-Mitglieder ist,



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¹ Schon vor der Zeit der Habsburger in Ungarn – als man die Ungarn in Europa noch gar nicht richtig wahrnahm – kaufte Jakob Fugger II. (der Reiche) ungarische Kupferbergwerke und nutzte diese, um die tirolischen Bergwerke – Hauptkupferlieferant für die Kanonen aller kriegführenden Mächte der Zeit von Maximilian I. bis Venedig – in seine Hand zu bekommen (er „erfand“ sozusagen das Preis-Dumping).

ein informierendes und – hoffentlich – unterhaltsames Blatt.

Ganz kurz zu meiner Person: Geboren in Hamburg, aufgewachsen in Wiesbaden, Studium der Germanistik, Geschichte und Philosophie in Mainz, Abschluss mit dem Dr. Phil. 1981, Arbeit beim Reclam-Verlag, Stuttgart, als Redakteurin und mit Zeitvertrag an der Universität Bamberg; 1985 Postdoctoral Fellowship in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1-Jahresverträge an der State U

of NY at Stony Brook und der U of Illinois, Urbana, fünf Jahre an der Washington University in St. Louis, MO, 1 Jahr In-house-Translator in St. Louis und seit 1994 selbstständig. Seit 16 Jahren lebe ich in den USA, reise aber mehrfach im Jahr nach Deutschland. Meine E-Mail-Adresse ist: cbstlouis4@cs.com.



AN INTRODUCTION TO GERMAN PATENT TRANSLATION

by Nicholas Hartmann

Abstract: Basic principles and procedures for translating German patents into English are discussed. Topics include the nature and purpose of patents as both legal and technical documents, the structural organization of a patent, and terminological and syntactic peculiarities of the patent “dialect” in both languages. Information is also provided about suggested working methods and the attitudes and qualifications that patent translators must bring to their work. As an introduction to the special characteristics of these documents, a brief extract from a German patent will be worked through during the presentation.

1. Introduction

1.1 What Is a Patent?

U.S. Code, Title 35, Section 154 states that a patent is:

“...a grant to the patentee ... of the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, or selling the invention throughout the United States ... for a term beginning on the date on which the

patent issues and ending 20 years from the date on which the application was filed.”

A patent is therefore a negative right. The authority granting the patent undertakes to enforce the patentee’s right to exclude others from practicing the invention, but the inventor’s right to practice his or her own invention is independent of the patent.

A patent is both a technical and a legal document: it is an agreement between an inventor and an authority that defines the parties’ reciprocal rights and obligations with regard to a particular new item of knowledge called an “invention.”

1.2 What Is an Invention?

In United States patent law, the subject matter of an invention—which may consist of a “process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any ... improvements thereof”—must be:

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novel

A patentable invention must not have been known or used by anyone in the United States, or published or patented anywhere in the world before being invented by the applicant; it also must not have been published or patented anywhere in the world, or in use or on sale in the United States, more than one year prior to the application date. These criteria define the “prior art” (*Stand der Technik*);

non-obvious

The differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art must be such that the subject matter as a whole would not have been obvious, at the time the invention was made, to a person having ordinary skill in the art (*durchschnittlicher Fachmann*) to which the subject matter pertains;

and **useful**.

According to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), an international agreement that streamlines the process of applying for a patent in more than one country, the requirements are “novelty” (*Neuheit*), an “inventive step” (*erfinderische Tätigkeit*), and “industrial applicability” (*gewerbliche Anwendbarkeit*). Many German patents are now written to conform to PCT requirements.



2. Internal organization of a patent

The internal organization of any patent is predictable.

A published patent will begin with a **cover page** that indicates the authority responsible for the patent, along with reference numbers, dates, names of patentees and inventors, and other administrative information. The patent itself

then begins:

2.1 Specification (Beschreibung)

The specification is a narrative description of the invention, beginning with the **Background of the Invention** (*Stand der Technik* or *Technisches Gebiet*); the first sentence of a German-language patent often begins “*Die Erfindung betrifft ...*” This section defines the prior art—that which is known (*bekannt*)—within which the invention must represent some novelty or improvement. The PCT requires that relevant prior-art documents, such as journal publications or other patent documents, be cited and briefly described in this section. It is also usual to cite shortcomings or disadvantages (*Nachteile*) of the prior art, setting the stage for the **Summary of the Invention** (*Darstellung der Erfindung*), typically beginning “*Es ist Aufgabe der Erfindung ...*” or “*Der Erfindung liegt die Aufgabe zugrunde ...*,” indicating the disadvantages that the invention is intended to overcome (*vermeiden*) and the advantages it is intended to offer.

The very next paragraph begins with a phrase such as “*Diese Aufgabe wird erfindungsgemäß dadurch gelöst, dass ...*” (“This object is achieved, according to the present invention, in that ...”) introducing the **Advantages of the Invention**. This section states the specific ways in which the invention achieves the stated object (*die gestellte Aufgabe*), in paragraphs, which often refer to *Vorteile* (advantages) or *vorteilhafte bzw. bevorzugte Ausbildungen* (advantageous or preferred embodiments). In many patents, the wording of this section is very similar to that of the claims.

A paragraph mentioning “*ein Ausführungsbeispiel der Erfindung anhand von Zeichnungen*” (“an exemplary embodiment of the invention with reference to drawings”), or some similar phrase, introduces the **Summary of the Drawings** (usually just headed *Zeichnung*: drawings are singular in German but plural in English). The individual Figures are described in terms of direction of view, relationship to other figures, etc. *...continued on page 8*

Patent Translation... *...continued from page 7*

The remainder of the specification consists of the **Description of Preferred Embodiments** (*Beschreibung der Ausführungsbeispiele*), in which the nature of the invention is described in detail. This is where the inventor supplies the “disclosure” that is his or her part of the patent transaction. To paraphrase Burton Amernick (see References):

In return for receiving the rights conferred by a patent, the inventor (*Erfinder*) gives to the public by way of the printed patent a full written disclosure (*Offenbarung*) of the invention, which must be complete enough to teach (*lehren*) those skilled in the relevant art how to make and use the invention. The disclosure must also include that which the inventor believes to be the best way to carry out (*durchführen*) the invention.

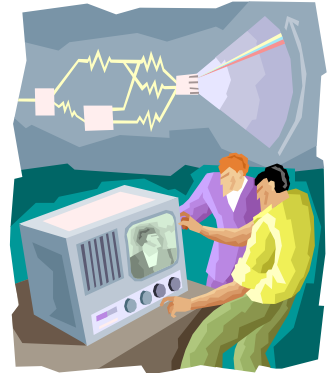
In a mechanical or electrical patent, this section refers in detail to the patent drawings, in which each element or component has a reference character (*Bezugszeichen*). Chemical patents seldom have drawings, but they often include formulas as well as Examples (*Beispiele*) disclosing the relevant method or composition of matter.

2.2 **Claims (Patentansprüche)**

The claims represent the issuing authority's part of the bargain. Each claim defines a “range of protection” (*Schutzbereich*), i.e. the particular area of technology within which the authority will enforce the inventor's right to prevent others from exploiting the invention. Claim writing is a subtle art, and the phrasing of each claim is critical: if a claim is written too broadly, it will infringe upon some prior art and the invention will not be patentable; if it is written too narrowly, the protection can easily be circumvented. The translation of claims therefore demands particular attention and care.

In U.S. patents, the numbered list of claims is sometimes prefaced by a phrase such as “I claim:” or “What is claimed is:”; this seldom ap-

pears in German patents. Even without the explicit preface, however, every claim is notionally a single sentence, which must contain only one period, at the end. This is mandatory: no matter how convoluted, a claim must never be subdivided into multiple sentences.



Claims usually have a two-part structure. The first part is the preamble (*Oberbegriff*), which defines the prior art or the field of the invention. German claims begin with a noun (“*Vorrichtung ...*”), but a common U.S. practice is to begin the main claim (*Hauptanspruch*) and any other independent claims (*unabhängige Ansprüche*) with the indefinite article (“An apparatus ...”) and a dependent claim (*Unteranspruch*) with the definite article (“The apparatus as defined in ...”). The second part is the characterizing clause (*Kennzeichenteil*)—very often beginning *dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß*, which is usually rendered as “characterized in that” or “wherein”—containing that which is actually claimed as novel and inventive (*erfinderisch*) and therefore to be protected.

2.3 **Abstract (Zusammenfassung)**

A brief summary of the invention appears on the cover page of a published patent, or is part of an unpublished application.

2.4 **Drawings (Zeichnung)**

The drawings are an integral component of a patent. No patent should ever be translated unless the drawings are supplied: they often resolve ambiguities and provide other vital information.

...continued on page 9



Patent Translation... *...continued from page 8*

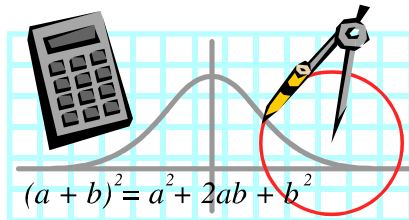
2.5 List of Reference Characters (Bezugszeichenliste)

This does not appear in every published patent or application. Certain attorneys insist on having this translated as **Parts List**.

3. Translating patents

3.1 Thematic Unity

Rule 13 of the Patent Cooperation Treaty states that “the application shall relate to one invention only or to a group of inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept (‘requirement of unity of invention’).” For the translator, this means that each individual patent—like a sonnet or a short story—deals with only one topic; this in turn limits the amount of subject-related research that needs to be done for each patent.



3.2 Terminology

Within that single topic, the translator’s principal task is to understand and manage terminology. Most importantly, the target-language terminology must reflect the source-language terminology consistently and unequivocally. For example: if *Einrichtung*, *Vorrichtung*, *Gerät*, and *Einheit* all appear in the German text, and if you decide to translate those words into English as “mechanism,” “apparatus,” “device,” and “unit,” respectively, then within that patent you must always use “apparatus” for *Vorrichtung*, and you must never use “apparatus” to translate any other German term; the same applies to every other word or term.

Much of the patent translator’s time is therefore spent setting up and maneuvering around these terminological barricades; this demands close attention and good record-keeping. Problems can also arise when the translator has to work on several patents from a single source on a

single subject: having decided in Patent A1 to render *verbinden* as “connect,” *befestigen* as “mount,” and *verriegeln* as “lock,” what do you do when Patent A2 introduces the German verbs *lagern*, *fixieren*, *arretieren*, and *anschließen*? A good thesaurus is the patent translator’s best friend.

The terminology must also be appropriate. Bear in mind that the original author of a patent worked very hard to define the subject matter in a way that was not too broad and not too narrow. The translator must respect those intentions: a “*topfartige Auswölbung*” must be called a “cuplike bulge” even if in the drawings it looks just like a bump.

3.3 A Translation Procedure

In most patents, the same material will appear more than once within the specification, and there are often parallels between certain portions of the specification and the claims. The translator can take advantage of these echoes, to save time and to take another step toward terminological consistency, by proceeding as follows:

- First translate the entire specification, referring to the drawings to help solve terminological mysteries. My method is to check each paragraph as I translate it, then wait an hour or so and read through the entire specification again.
- The very first paragraph of the specification, often beginning “*Die Erfindung betrifft ...*,” is almost always identical to the preamble of the first claim. Cut and paste, and make minor adjustments as necessary.
- The section which begins with the statement of the patent’s object (e.g. “*Der Erfindung liegt die Aufgabe zugrunde ...*”) contains a number of paragraphs each describing a feature that is “advantageous” (*vorteilhaft*). The first such paragraph is often very similar to the characterizing portion (following *...continued on page 10*)

Patent Translation...

...continued from page 9

dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß) of the first claim, and each subsequent paragraph often echoes another individual claim. Cut and paste this entire section, then make adjustments as necessary; the reference characters will need to be added.

- The abstract is often very similar to the first claim (with punctuation added to make it more readable, since the “single-sentence” rule applies only to claims), and can usually be brought over with only minor modifications.

It is very dangerous, however, to assume that a particular patent will obey all these rules, and on that basis to cut and paste blindly. Always read and check and double-check every word.

4. Why translate patents?

Patent translation is not for the faint-hearted or the disorganized. It demands a meticulous and rigorous approach to subject matter that may be complex and abstruse. Among its many rewards, however, is the knowledge that with each patent, the translator is helping to advance the frontiers of innovation.

There are other, more tangible benefits: few translators deliberately choose to specialize in patents, so those who do may find themselves with less competition than their colleagues in more popular specialties. Because an issued U.S. patent is viewed in the business world as an extremely valuable piece of property that is worth paying for, patent attorneys and corporate patent departments are unlikely to quibble about a translator's fee—provided the translator has demonstrated that he or she can consistently and reliably produce American English patent texts that are both accurate and idiomatic.

One final reward is a measure of job security: the subtleties and peculiarities of patent language in both German and English are such

that patent translation is likely to remain immune to automation for at least a few more years.



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Patent Translation...

...continued from page 10

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J.-D. von Uexküll and H.J. Reich, *Wörterbuch der Patentpraxis* (5th ed., Carl Heymanns Verlag, 1998; ISBN 3-452-23775-3).

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U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
<http://www.uspto.gov/>

U.S. Patent database (by number)

<http://164.195.100.11/netahtml/srchnum.htm>

IBM-sponsored U.S. Patent database
<http://www.patents.ibm.com/patquery.html>

European Patent Office
<http://www.epo.co.at/epo/>

European Patent database
<http://ep.espacenet.com/espacenet/ep/en/>

German Patent and Trademark Office
<http://www.patent-und-markenamtd.de/>

World Intellectual Property Organization
<http://www.wipo.org/eng/main.htm>

6. Acknowledgments

Dave Wentz, Mary Lou Blatteau, and Paul Goodrige in Philadelphia; Jan Clayberg and Olaf Bexhoeft in Washington, D.C.; Bill Grimes and Isabel Leonard in Boston; Milton Oliver in Connecticut; Suzanne Gagliardi, Barbara Gallo, and Helga Piel in New York; and Waltraud Schlochtermeyer, Hans Raible, and Margerit Rolli in Stuttgart, among many others, have offered advice, guidance, wisdom, and the opportunity for many years of on-the-job training in German patent translation. Thank you all.

Nicholas Hartman is independent technical and scientific translator, living and working in Milwaukee, WI. He can be reached by e-mail at polyglot@execpc.com.



The ATA Pilot Mentoring Program: A Mentee's Perspective

By Marissa Wright

As a new member of the ATA, just about to complete the certificate program at the Translation and Interpretation Institute in Bellevue, Washington, I applied to the mentoring program anticipating a traditional mentoring experience.

Before the conference, those of us who were matched as mentees in the program were sent a

workbook published by the consultants² working with the ATA to set up the pilot program. I found this booklet, "Creating your Personal Vision and Writing a Plan: Three Tools for Achieving Your Goals," useful, but I still had no idea how the relationship would actually play out. ...continued on page 12

² The Mentoring Group www.mentoringgroup.com

Mentoring...

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I hoped that contact with an experienced translator in a structured mentoring program would help me grow and establish myself in my chosen career, as well as learn to balance my career with my family life. The application form had listed areas of interest and general goals to be selected by the applicant, offering a means of matching mentor and mentee. I assumed that the relationship would require frequent interaction, and that the mentor would be in charge, managing the relationship and setting the goals.

One of the prerequisites for participating in the pilot program was attendance at the pre-conference mentoring seminar at the 2001 ATA conference in Los Angeles. Well, one of the first things I learned in this session was that I, the mentee, would be managing the relationship. In this modern mentoring concept, the mentee initiates the contact, sets the goals and the schedule. The frequency of contact would also be considerably less than I had expected—only 1 to 2 hours a month. Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones, the trainer, emphasized that these meetings should be actively managed by the mentee for the relationship to be successful.

We discussed the qualities that make a good mentee—the ability to elicit and accept feedback, open-mindedness, good organizational skills, self-motivation, commitment to self-improvement and ability to follow through, just to name a few. We also brainstormed and came up with some of the challenges that could arise in a mentoring relationship, from the personal aspect of communication difficulties and differing expectations, down to the practical issues of time and distance. These can be a problem because location was not a consideration in the matching process.

In the mentee training session, we explored the value of a mentoring experience for both the mentee and the mentor. While it is obvious that a mentee has much to gain from the mentoring relationship—skills, knowledge, risk management, ability to learn about the industry faster, increased confidence, awareness of opportunities, and so on—the mentor benefits from the experience also. The mentor gains recognition from the association, the satisfaction of giving back, a sense of investing and improving the future of the profession, as well as the possibility of learning something from the mentee.

We then covered the four stages of a formal mentoring relationship, beginning with building the relationship. The mentor and mentee need to get acquainted, in person, by phone or by e-mail. Since the mentoring seminars were held on the day before the ATA conference, we were fortunately able to meet with our mentors at least once, and in my case several times, to get to know each other a little. These meetings were not at all awkward, and were really quite interesting and motivating.



We then scheduled future e-mail and phone meetings to discuss the goals that I, the mentee, had set for myself. At the next few conferences, which will take place soon, we will also negotiate aspects of the mentoring relationship such as the level of formality our relationship will have, boundaries, how we will give and receive feedback, and guidelines about confidentiality issues. The mentee, of course, must keep in mind that the mentor probably has a busy schedule, and it is up to the mentee to set the agenda for the telephone conferences.

Next will come the task of actually working to achieve the goals I have set for myself. I had stated in my application that, as the parent and primary caregiver of a young child, one of my goals would be to balance my freelance translation workload with my family obligations. The Mentoring Task Force, headed by Courtney Searls-Ridge, matched me with Christian Schmitz, an experienced translator with a similar family situation. We were paired because he indicated on his mentor application that he was managing a successful freelance translation business and was also the primary caregiver of a toddler at home. I look forward to his guidance in this area as I build my business and establish a client base, while caring for my child. We also share the German/English language pair with opposite native languages. This was not a requirement for matching mentees and mentors, but it may make it possible for us to assist each other with language issues as well.

...continued on page 13

Mentoring...

...continued from page 12

The ATA Pilot Mentoring Program is structured in such a way that the formal mentoring relationships are to last for one year. The Mentoring Task Force will be monitoring our progress throughout the year. By November 2002, Christian and I will have evaluated our progress and discussed our future options—switching to an informal relationship, or saying “thanks and goodbye.” The Mentoring Group does not recommend continuing formal mentoring relationships for longer than one year.

I am looking forward to working with an experienced ATA mentor, and I already anticipate a productive and positive year. I fully expect to be able to celebrate our success with that of many other pairs in the program at the 2002 ATA Conference in Atlanta.

Marissa Wright is a new freelance translator in Bellevue, WA, where she will soon receive a certificate in German-into-English translation from the Seattle-based Translation and Interpretation Institute. Marissa is a member of the GLD and NOTIS, the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society. She can be reached by e-mail at marissa.wright@gmx.net.

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Das *German Program* der *Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation (GSTI)* des *Monterey Institute of International Studies* freut sich, dieses Jahr erstmals einen Übersetzungswettbewerb auszuschreiben. Machen Sie mit und gewinnen Sie ein Teilstipendium für den Studiengang Übersetzen und Dolmetschen in Deutsch und Englisch an der wunderschönen kalifornischen Küste!

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net unter <http://faculty.miis.edu/~gstigerman> zu finden sind.

Das *German Program* von GSTI führt diesen Wettbewerb dieses Jahr erstmals durch. Wir haben für diesen ersten Wettbewerb dieses Format gewählt, weil wir hoffen, dadurch Erfahrungen zu gewinnen, die es uns ermöglichen werden, einen derartigen Wettbewerb künftig eventuell auch in anderen Sprachrichtungen und Abteilungen durchzuführen.

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Studies...

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als Informationsmaterial über die *Graduate School* und ihre Programme beim deutschsprachigen Publikum (A, CH, D), eignet.

Noch Fragen?

Lesen Sie bitte zunächst die **Teilnahmebedingungen** genau durch. Lesen Sie den zu übersetzenden Text und informieren Sie sich im Web über das *Monterrey Institute of International Studies* und seine *Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation*. Wenn Sie nicht aus der Übersetzungsbranche kommen, können Sie sich z.B. auf den Webseiten des Bundesverbandes für Übersetzer und Dolmetscher in Deutschland (<http://www.bdue.de>), dem schweizerischen Übersetzer-, Terminologen- und Dolmetscherverband (<http://www.astti.ch>), dem österreichischen Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherverband (<http://www.universitas.org>), des US-amerikanischen Verbandes *American Translators Association* (ATA) sowie der *International Association of Conference Interpreters* (AIIC)

über den Beruf informieren. Links zu diesen und vielen anderen interessanten Seiten gibt es auf der Website des *GSTI German Program*



(<http://faculty.miis.edu/~gstigerman>).

Wenn Sie dann noch Fragen haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an die Koordinatorin des Wettbewerbs, Prof. Elke Limberger-Katsumi, per E-Mail unter competition.german@miis.edu.

Alles klar?

Dann kann es ja losgehen. Wir halten Ihnen die Daumen und freuen uns sehr auf Ihre Beiträge.

Viel Glück!

GSTI German



Draft Minutes of the 2001 Annual Meeting of the German Language Division

The annual meeting of the German Language Division was called to order at 1:35 p.m., November 1, 2001, by the division administrator, Dorothee Racette. She announced that participants were free to address the meeting in English or German, as they wished. Last year's minutes were available at the head of each row of chairs. Ms. Racette asked everyone to review the minutes and bring any additions or corrections to the attention of the meeting. There were no additions or corrections, and the minutes of the 2001 annual meeting were approved by voice acclamation.

Ms. Racette then gave her report of the past year's activities of the GLD. At present there are 753 members of the division, making it the third largest in the ATA (behind the Interpreters and the Spanish Language Division). This is a substantial increase over the 700 members the division had as of January 2001. The *interaktiv* is now available on the Internet; only about 75 members of the division prefer to receive a hard copy by mail. There are also about 75 members who have not supplied ATA headquarters with an email address. All other division members must download the *interaktiv*. The new method of publication, introduced this past year, has been a major financial success. ...continued on page 15

Draft Minutes... *...continued from page 14*

Contacts with other professional organizations have also been deepened over the past year, Ms. Racette reported. The participation of Peter Schmitt, a member of the *Bund deutscher Dolmetscher und Übersetzer* (BDÜ), at this year's ATA conference is one indication of closer ties between our division and that organization. Tom West, President of the ATA, is also interested in encouraging international relations among professional translators associations.

Ms. Racette thanked the "Ratsrunde," consisting of past and present administrators and other division helpers, for the support and consultation they had provided to her throughout the year. She also invited other members who would like to participate to let her know.

Another project that has progressed in the past year is the "Frequently Asked Questions" posting at the GLD website. FAQs have been developed to answer some of the most common questions beginners to the profession may pose, but more needs to be done. Ms. Racette called on everyone in the division to take a hand in contributing small articles to round out this valuable resource. Another related effort is the seminar for beginners to the field of German < > English translation that Ms. Racette and Elke Limberger-Katsumi are offering at this conference.

Michael Magee, assistant administrator of the division, then gave a brief presentation, focusing on the issue of a separate German-language conference. This would be the first such conference sponsored by our division and dedicated to German-language translation. We should ask ourselves why we come to the ATA conference and, in the answer to that question, discover the elements that would make a successful German conference. Some of those elements are learning, skill enhancement, networking, and of course some sightsee-

ing. Lower attendance at this year's ATA conference in Los Angeles might indicate that there would indeed be interest in a GLD conference. It was reported that other language divisions have held successful conferences, which can break even or even make money. A show of hands at the annual meeting indicated that roughly two-thirds of those attending would be interested in such an event. The discussion today should be viewed as laying the groundwork for future decisions, Mr. Magee said.

Michael Metzger, division webmaster, then rose and gave his report. He said the GLD website and listserv are functioning well. He does not monitor the division discussions, but rather leaves them free to users to shape. He recommended a good article on email lists that can be accessed at the GLD web page. There are approximately 134 or 135 members of the GLD listserv, and contributions range from 80 to 260 per month. The listserv has grown steadily over the last 2 ½ years. Mr. Metzger explained again briefly how to join it and pointed out that old contributions are available at the GLD archive online. Our website, approximately 20 pages in all, includes back issues of *interaktiv* from March 1999 to the present, available in pdf and zip files. Mr. Metzger said he is always interested in new content for the website and called on all division members to make suggestions. Finally, Mr. Metzger expressed his agreement to continue in the position of division webmaster for another year.

Ms. Marga Hannon, editor of *interaktiv*, reported that 4 issues had been published in the past year, ranging in size from 16 to 28 pages, the largest being the issue that reported on the ATA conference in December 2000. She reviewed the highlights of various issues.

After 4 years on the job, Ms. Hannon will be giving up her post as editor, and the members in attendance *...continued on page 16*

Draft Minutes... ...continued from page 15

gave her a warm round of applause in thanks for all her efforts to develop an informative and well-written newsletter. She reported that the newsletter has been realigned for on-line publication and now offers hyperlinks to websites related to published articles. She thanked Karen Lawliss for her hard work in developing a lively layout that takes advantage of the opportunities offered by on-line publication. Ms. Hannon thanked the *interaktiv* team, consisting of her co-editor, Mr. Manfred Winter, Karen Lawliss, and Janice Becker, as well as past and current division administrators, for their support. Finally, Ms. Hannon announced that Ms. Christiane Bohnert will be the new editor of *interaktiv*. Unfortunately, Ms. Bohnert was unable to attend the ATA conference.

After Ms. Hannon's report, Ms. Racette announced that, after much thought, she had decided to thank Ms. Hannon for her contribution to the *interaktiv* and the GLD by giving her a tree for her new home in Australia, a reminder of the gratitude of her colleagues in the US.

The next order of business was the financial report, provided by Ms. Racette, who thanked her predecessor, Helge Gunther, for leaving the division in such great shape. Attached is a copy of the financial report that was distributed at the annual meeting. The budget of \$10,500 is based on a conservative estimate of division membership of 700. Division rules require a vote on dues. Ms. Racette proposed that the \$15 annual dues remain at that level for the next year, and a voice vote approved that motion. The discussion of the budget was then opened. A member asked if the division conference under consideration would be financed by dues. Ms. Racette replied that it would not. Registrations for the conference would be its primary source of financing, along with some funds already earmarked for it. Claudia Kellersch suggested that the budget should

include a specific item to bring speakers each year from Germany, such as was done at this ATA conference. Leslie Nelson proposed that the money formerly allocated from division funds to support headquarters (\$2800) could be put to this use. Ms. Racette agreed that funds could be applied to events and continuing education. The budget was then approved, with one vote opposed and no abstentions.

The meeting was then opened for new business. The first item was the distribution of *interaktiv*. ATA headquarters reported that less than half of the GLD membership downloaded it. This is regrettable since the newsletter includes important news and helpful information for the members. In response to a question, it was reported that the count of downloads covers several weeks after the new issue is announced, so it is reliable. It was suggested that several announcements be sent by email when a new issue is posted to encourage members to download it. Our webmaster, Michael Metzger, also reported that this problem is typical among organizations that distribute their newsletter in this manner. The newsletter is available in both pdf and zip files, so file format should not present a problem. Members were directed not to double click on the hyperlink when downloading, however, and Ms. Racette suggested we could add a "Having difficulty?" paragraph on the GLD website. Mr. Metzger also proposed that *interaktiv* should always include a paragraph with such tips and a note to ask him for help if readers have any technical difficulties with *interaktiv* or the website.

A member asked if the division will be printing a directory of members. Ms. Racette said it was available at the ATA website and reminded the meeting that the division had agreed that we didn't want to spend the money for a printed edition that would soon be out-of-date.

In response to the question about the
...continued on page 17

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possibility of selling subscriptions to *interaktiv* to non-members of the GLD, it was decided that this action, while it would raise more money for the division, would not promote membership in ATA. Ms. Racette said she would bring the issue to the ATA board. It was pointed out that the BDÜ uses subscriptions to their newsletter as a marketing tool.

Next year elections will be held for administrator and assistant administrator so a nominating committee is needed. The Board of Directors has approved simplified election procedure for all divisions. Ms. Racette asked for volunteers for the nominating committee to approach her after the annual meeting and announced that details about the procedure will be published in the next issue of *interaktiv*.

Ideas for a GLD conference were then discussed. The concept is for a smaller conference, 40 to 50 people attending, probably in late April of 2003. Mr. Magee reported that hotels have already been approached. Sue Ellen Wright asked why we don't look into holding it at a university, which would reduce costs but may make travel more difficult if the university is not in a major city. Kent is already hosting a

conference in March 2002, but perhaps SUNY Binghamton would be amenable. Antja Katcher asked if that meant the university would have to co-sponsor the conference, to which Ms. Wright replied that the university would probably want to so their students could attend for less. It might also be possible to offer continuing education credits for attendance. There was some sentiment that the spring of 2002 is probably too soon to organize a conference. Mr. Magee reported that there was intense interest from sponsors and exhibitors for regional conferences that have been held in Austin and that "early bird" registrations go a long way to covering initial expenses. With so many ideas and questions, Ms. Racette once again asked for volunteers for organizing the conference to approach her after the meeting.

At that, Ms. Racette asked if there were any other questions and concerns. When none were raised, she adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Becker
Minute Taker

Rückblick auf LA - Seminar „Advanced Topics in English-German Translation“ Prof. Dr. Peter Schmitt, Universität Leipzig

von Frieda Ruppaner-Lind

Für die ATA-Konferenz in Los Angeles gelang es der *German Language Division* in diesem Jahr, mit Peter Schmitt einen bekannten Fachmann auf dem Gebiet der Übersetzer Ausbildung für ein ganztägiges Seminar am Mittwoch vor dem offiziellen Konferenzbeginn zu gewinnen. Neben seiner langjährigen

Lehrtätigkeit in der Übersetzungswissenschaft an der Universität Mainz/Germersheim und jetzt als Professor für Sprach- und Übersetzungswissenschaft (Englisch) am Institut für Angewandte Linguistik und Translatologie der Universität Leipzig ist Prof. Dr. Schmitt vielen Übersetzern auch *...continued on page 18*

als Autor des PONS *Fachwörterbuch der Kfz-Technik* (1992) sowie aus anderen Veröffentlichungen bekannt. Prof. Dr. Schmitt ist Mitherausgeber der Zeitschrift *Lebende Sprachen* und Bundesreferent für Übersetzungswissenschaft im Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e.V. (BDÜ).

Der Schwerpunkt bei dieser Veranstaltung lag in erster Linie auf praktischen Beispielen anhand zweier Übersetzungen von Ausschnitten des Benutzerhandbuchs eines Ford Mustang. Bevor die Seminarteilnehmer mit dem Vergleich der beiden Übersetzungen begannen, wurden zunächst einmal Punkte wie die Festlegung des Stils und kulturspezifische Aspekte besprochen. Die in amerikanischen Handbüchern im Allgemeinen verwendete direkte Anrede des Adressaten kann in vielen Fällen im Deutschen nicht ohne weiteres übernommen werden, wobei aber anzumerken ist, dass der Adressateneinbezug sich doch allmählich verbreitet. Dabei kann es auch zu Mischformen kommen, wenn z.B. in einer Betriebsanleitung die Einleitung leserbezogen ist und die nachfolgenden Anleitungen wieder unpersönlich sind. Die direkte Ansprache des Adressaten setzt sich vor allem bei Anleitungen durch, die sich direkt an den Verbraucher wenden. Bei der rein fachinternen Dokumentation gilt jedoch nach wie vor der unpersönliche Stil.



Im Zusammenhang mit den kulturspezifischen Aspekten wurde auch darauf verwiesen, dass in amerikanischen Handbüchern dieser Art oft mehr Wert auf Details gelegt wird, da anzunehmen ist, dass der amerikanische Autobesitzer einige der Wartungsarbeiten doch eher im Do-it-yourself-Verfahren erledigt. Im Gegensatz dazu erfolgt der Service in Deutschland eher durch den Händler, weil die Autos so konzipiert sind, dass die Autobesitzer diese Arbeiten selbst nicht durchführen können.

Ein weiterer kulturspezifischer Unterschied in diesem Handbuch bestand in der Beschreibung der einzelnen Schritte für Schalt- und Automatikgetriebe. Im Originaltext werden die Schritte nicht getrennt nach Getriebearten beschrieben. In beiden Übersetzungen wurde diese Schritte jedoch sehr übersichtlich nach Schalt- und Automatikgetriebe getrennt, wobei die Hinweise für Schaltgetriebe an erster Stelle standen, was der Ausstattung von Fahrzeugen in Deutschland im Allgemeinen entspricht.

In der Beschreibung dieses Seminars im Konferenzprogramm wurde u.a. auch auf die Kunst der deutlichen und prägnanten technischen Schreibweise verwiesen. Anhand des Ausgangstextes ließ sich demonstrieren, was damit gemeint war: An einer Stelle waren Anweisungen mit Beschreibungen von „Features“ vermischt und Prof. Dr. Schmitt empfahl in diesem Fall, eine Neuordnung des Originaltexts durchzuführen, bevor mit der Übersetzung fortgefahren wurde. Rein sinngemäß war dies durchaus als Vorteil anzusehen, jedoch ging es bei der daraufhin erfolgenden Diskussion auch darum, ob man als Übersetzer dies auch ohne Weiteres verantworten könnte. In vielen Fällen muss man sich dabei an die Vorgaben des Auftraggebers halten, wozu gehört, dass am Original nichts geändert werden darf. Eine weitere Schwierigkeit bei Änderungen am Original besteht auch darin, dass die meisten Übersetzer bei Projekten dieser Art heute Translation Management-Programme einsetzen. In solchen Fällen lassen sich auf Grund der segmentweisen Bearbeitung Umstellungen dieser Art kaum durchführen.

Seminarleiter und Teilnehmer einigten sich daraufhin, dass solche Korrekturen am Original im Idealfall möglich sein sollten, im übersetzerischen Alltag jedoch oft nicht ohne Weiteres durchführbar sind.

Der ausführliche Vergleich beider Übersetzungen unter Berücksichtigung der spezifischen Eigenheiten des Originals und die gründliche Erarbeitung der „Idealversion“ nahmen natürlich auch viel Zeit in Anspruch. Man könnte eigentlich behaupten, dass hier die beste aber auch in Bezug auf Arbeitsstunden absolut teuerste Übersetzung angefertigt wurde. Auf jeden Fall war dies eine gute Gelegenheit, sich wieder einmal darauf zu besinnen, worauf bei einer guten Übersetzung zu achten ist.

If You Build It, Will They Come? The Freelancer's Website

www.www

by Frank Dietz

<http://www1.jump.net/~fdietz/>

A few years ago, I suddenly realized that websites had “arrived”, when I saw a billboard by the side of a deserted stretch of highway in South Texas. It advertised a small-town barbecue place, and it included its web address starting with the now all-too-familiar “www...”

I have been asked by some colleagues whether they should get websites themselves, and how difficult that would be. Here are a few of their most common questions and my answers

Do I need a website?

The answer is “No”. The majority of professional translators don't seem to have websites yet. You need a computer, or good reference works, but you can (still) do your work without having a website. However, there are some advantages to having your own website. It indicates that you are at least somewhat familiar with creating websites (if you did it on your own), which could be useful if a potential client is looking for someone to translate a website. Furthermore, it represents a low-cost marketing tool with a potentially global reach.



Will I need to hire a professional web designer?

Probably not. If you decide to hire a designer, try to find someone who has worked with freelancers/small businesses and who realizes you have an international audience.

Will it be expensive?

You have to spend time *or* money. I would recommend creating the website yourself, as it will teach you new skills. Even if you hire a web designer, you

have to create the content! Don't try to make money, by the way, by placement of banner ads – they are annoying, and your website should be about *your* business.

Will it require expensive software?

Not necessarily. You can use free tools that you already possess, such as FrontPage Express or Netscape Composer. Or download software from one of these sites:

<http://hometown.aol.com/> (for AOL users)

<http://www.stepzilla.com/>

<http://www.arachnoid.com/arachnophilia/>

<http://www.evrsoft.com/download/>

A list of HTML editors for the **Macintosh**:

<http://html.about.com/cs/machtmleditors/>

Will it have a major impact on my business?

In other words, will new clients come beat a path to my door? Probably not. Consider it your electronic business card – it is handy to have, and over time, some clients *will* find you this way.

What should I avoid?

- Background music. It might be fun at first, but becomes annoying soon
- Animations are cute ... the first time around.
- Huge graphics with long load time (remember, not everyone worldwide pays a flat rate for internet access)
- *Fancy* fonts
- Distracting backgrounds, eye-straining color schemes
- News-tickers, hit-counters and other bells and whistles

Here are a few examples of what I consider well-designed and informative freelancers' sites:

<http://www.asherwin.com>

<http://www.on-line-legal.com/>

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Build It...

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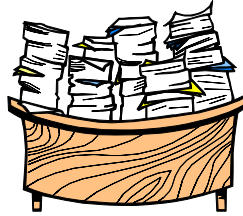
<http://www.simply-said.com/index.htm>
<http://www.linguabase.com/default.html>

How will they know I am here?

Register with search engines (see, for instance, <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/>), though I would not pay for services offering registration with umpteen search engines. Use your URL in your marketing materials (business cards, faxes, invoices). Update your ATA online profile accordingly. Exchange links with similar sites

What should I put on my website?

Besides the “business card on the web”, I would suggest that you find your own niche. Try to create original content that leads people to your website. Use your expertise. Maybe you are an expert about German consumer protection laws – then write some articles and post them on your site. Or create a glossary, focus on a particular region, post recipes, review dictionaries... Many of your visitors might be other translators, but that also gets your name out there.



Is it a lot of work?

I wouldn't say so, but it requires continuing effort. How often would you return to a website that was last updated in 1998? A website is not a “final” product like a book, but a medium in continual flux. Add new content periodically (and let users know that by marking it), check for “link rot” (links that no longer work because their target site has moved or disappeared), and reevaluate your entire site structure at least once a year.

So, what is keeping you? Let a thousand websites bloom:-)

Frank Dietz is a freelance translator living in Austin, Texas. He specializes in technical translation and software localization, and he has actually been paid to play computer games (well, not just play...). His website can be found at <http://www1.jump.net/~fdietz/>.

Have a Safe and
Happy New Year!

Calendar



What	When	Where	Contact & Information
ADÜ-Nord-Tage	March 22 - March 24, 2002	Hotel Simonis, Lüneburg, Germany	ADÜ-Nord website: http://www.adue-nord.de/konferenz
DTT-Symposium "Professionelle Terminologiarbeit im Zeitalter des Internet"	April 12 - April 13, 2002	Tagungszentrum Maternushaus, Köln, Germany	DTT website: http://www.dttev.org/infosymp2002.html
Monterey Institute of International Studies Translation Competition	Deadline: January 15, 2002		Send entries to competition.german@miis.edu See announcement <i>in this issue</i> for more details.

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