Terminology Management:
The Final Frontier

By Ursula Schwalbach

Why terminology management?

Whatever field translators work in, the main tool of their trade is language and the specific terminology related to that field. While variety and creativity may work well for literary texts, in technical material they can be deadly in two ways: users of both the source and target texts will most likely be confused by inconsistencies and question their motivation. Translators have the added burden of rendering these inconsistencies in the target language, or making a bold decision to use one term in several cases. Technical language should be concise, unambiguous and easy to understand. The magic formula to achieve all three is terminology management.

I would like to present the practical side of terminology management in a large software company where these issues occur on a daily basis. We have developed sophisticated processes to take into account the many variables present in an environment where change is the only constant.

So what is terminology management?

The basic application is to analyze a source term and find the correct equivalent in a target language. Any translator takes this step many times in the course of a translation, and unfortunately this is where it often ends. "Real" terminology management goes much further. It benefits a company, and in turn the translator, and produces the following long-term results:
• a standardized, company-wide "language;"

• greater client confidence;
• improved quality of source and translated products;
• the ability to recycle terminology and documentation;
• the preservation of previously completed work;
• consistency within products and among related products;
• substantial time and cost reduction;
• reproducibility (not just repeatability);
• painless product updates;
• improved communication among all those involved in a product; and
• terminology sharing with third parties, and thus standardization.

Why isn't it done?

In most cases, the reason is ignorance. Many companies imagine the translation process as a black box. The source text enters the black box at one end, translators do their magic, i.e., they just *know* the translation for each word they encounter, or else use a dictionary, and out comes a perfect translation at the other end. Errors found by users are seldom reported to those who should hear about them. Lately, however, several Internet sites have popped up which make fun of language errors in various software programs. Collectively, such errors may very well tarnish the reputation of a company. Once a company is bitten by this reality, it is often all too willing to implement terminology management processes, but accurate

NOTIS NOTES

Welcome to New Members

Kathryn Guttromson, Christine Joulain, Miki Allen, Hiro Ariga, Jessica Bolding, Carole Bougouin, Daniel Bravo, Tara Chace, Kim Edwards-Fukei, Burton Foreman, Kathryn Luce, Izumi Masaki, Akiko Miura Nunn, Erika Roberts, Randi Sanders, Karin Seyfer, Edward Surridge, Takako Tischer, Carmen Votaw, Irena Zeithamel.

Congratulations

The NOTIS Board would like to extend its fondest congratulations to two recently expanded NOTIS families! **Caitilin Walsh**, Immediate Past-President and NOTIS Webmistress and **Alfred Hellstern**, NOTIS member and former board member, along with big brother Marcus, welcomed Daniel Albert Walsh Hellstern into the world on March 5, 2001. And **Anita Krattinger**, former NOTIS office manager, current board member and *NOTIS NEWS* editor, and her partner, Kirstin Dodge, are happy to report that their daughter, Fiona Dodge Krattinger, was born May 9, 2001.

If You Haven't Already Bookmarked it

By now, you're probably well aware that NOTIS has a Web site—who doesn't these days? But did you know just how much information is on it? Our Webmistress has combed the Web so you don't have to. There are job listings (including volunteer positions), classifieds (want to sell an old dictionary?), and links to T&I organizations around the world. You can also find links to track your UPS letters, calculate how much it will cost to send something via USPS, find business assistance and check out the latest software offerings. There are links to booksellers and training programs as well—why, it's almost as enticing as a walk through the exhibits at an ATA conference! We're constantly updating and adding material (have you checked out the client education offerings?): if you haven't already bookmarked it, now is the time!

Visit: www.notisnet.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

And what is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days...

The American poet James Russell Lowell was singing the praises of June days in New England when he penned these lines. He never came to Seattle. The Board of Directors of the American Translators Association, however, *will* be coming to Seattle in June. Let's hope that the weather indeed is "perfect." The NOTIS Program Committee has decided to take advantage of this special opportunity. There will be two special events on Saturday, June 30.

Terminology Workshop

Join NOTIS and WITS for an advanced terminology management workshop on Saturday, June 30, from 1-4 p.m. (venue to be determined). Ursula Schwalbach, whose fine article leads off this issue, will share her expertise with interested translators and interpreters.

Advanced Terminology Workshop with Ursula Schwalbach on Saturday, June 30, from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Check the NOTIS website for venue, fee, and all relevant details.

All ATA members will also receive a special invitation from our own Ann Macfarlane, ATA President, to a reception at 6:00 p.m. that evening at the Westin Hotel. The Board of Directors is considering the Westin as the site for the 2005 conference. So this will be a great opportunity to perfect your knowledge, and make your acquaintance with colleagues in the American Translators Association. Mark your calendar now and plan on joining us!

ATA Members' Reception to meet the ATA Board of Directors on Saturday, June 30 at 6:00 p.m. at the Westin Hotel. Invitation to follow.

The True Phantom of the Opera Speaks

NOTIS and WITS (Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society) are delighted to announce that we will celebrate International Translators and Interpreters Day on Saturday, September 29. Our program will include a presentation by the true "phantom of the opera"—the man who prepares the surtitles. Seattle Opera Company is distinguished for its surtitles, projected above the stage, that allow patrons to enjoy the opera more fully by providing translations of the sung lyrics and dialogue. Compressing an aria or a recitative into a single line or two is no easy task! Enjoy a fascinating discussion of how this is achieved, and the translation tricks and foibles necessary to do it. Watch this space for details.

Slavic SIG Summer Picnic

All interested translators and interpreters are invited to the Slavic Special Interest Group (SIG) Summer Picnic on July 21, 2001 at Luther Burbank Park on Mercer Island from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. For more information and directions, and to coordinate your potluck dish, please call Larissa Kulinich at (206) 236-0286 or email larajim@earthlink.net.

Software Localization Certificate

The University of Washington Extension offers a Certificate Program in Software Localization. The following classes are also open, on a space available basis, to people who do not wish to acquire the certificate. *Schedule:* (10 sessions) Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m., June 12 - Aug. 21, 2001; $499. Call (206) 543-2320 for details.

<Project Management Track>

The Project Management track is nontechnical in nature and designed for individuals interested in the management and organizational aspects of software localization.

<Localization Project Management>
- Onsite or across sites (i.e., external vendor/partner sites)
- Industry structure, revenues, volume, trends
- Types of projects   • Budgeting
- Scheduling/milestones   • Client/vendor relationship
- Localization kits   • Technical specifications
- Intercultural communication
- Negotiation strategies, conflict management
- Project management tools labs
- Implementation of the quality assurance process

<Technology Track>

This technically oriented engineering track is designed for individuals who have a computer programming background. *Schedule:* (10 sessions) Wednesdays, 6-9 p.m., June 13-Aug. 22, 2001; $499.

<Localization Engineering: Globalization and Testing>
- Globalization concepts/terminologies
- Unicode fundamentals
- Over and under localization
- Introduction to character sets and locale
- Character sets detection and conversions
- Localization build and install
- Custom scripts for pre/post processing
- Localization errors detection and prevention
- Detecting with static layout errors
- Detecting dynamic layout errors
- Creating custom scripts for error detections

"Terminology Management"

defining, scheduling and budgeting for this task prove to be yet another hurdle. The idea of a terminologist responsible for carrying out this task exclusively is fairly new, and many companies are reluctant to hire such a person, because they can't figure out, based on existing statistics, whether such a job will pay for itself.

Quantifying terminology management

Cost tracking associated with terminology management is extremely difficult, because what is managed is information and communication, not a tangible object. We have found in our company that the intellectual set-up time for any given project decreases considerably when terminologists are involved. They archive terminology, and always work with an eye towards the future and recycling, while other people involved in a project may only see their next deadline.

Getting it right from the start

Terminology does not only need to be managed for the target language, but also, and most of all, at the source. And this is a hard pill to swallow for many U.S. companies, especially a software company, where creativity is paramount and consequently any form of standardization is viewed as a threat. But effective terminology management and text recycling are possible only if the creators of the source texts play by a few simple rules.

This is where internationalization comes in. Internationalization in the software industry means that a product is programmed for a world market, and makes no assumptions based on just one language or culture.

When terminologists at my company started to present these problems to developers, writers, and editors, the results were quite surprising. It turned out that, once they understood the

bigger picture and the benefits for themselves, they were more than willing to work closely with terminologists and translators.

The role of the terminologist

In some industries, e.g., aviation or medicine, terminology management often consists of systematically defining a corpus. This is not the case in the software industry. We are dealing with ad hoc terminology management, which is usually text-driven and relies on limited context. Terms are often defined in isolation, and there is rarely time to reconstruct a complete concept system.

Classification of terminology

There must be formal processes in place to store and distribute the acquired information. This is done by means of glossaries. Before any thought is given to the kind of database product to be used, the following aspects should be considered:
- purpose and customers
- format
- granularity: to what extent must the information be kept together or split up?
- compatibility: what other tools are already in use and might have to interface with this tool?

The actual database design and number of fields depend very much on the given requirements. The design can range from a simple source term-target term structure to an elaborate set of fields including definition, synonyms, subject, comment, context, client, reviewer, approval, reliability, etc.

It is also possible to expand a glossary from a simple look-up tool for individual terms to a tool for semi-automated translation, a so-called translation memory. In the case of software translation, whole names of user interface elements, error messages, etc., would then be added.

Research of new terminology

Over the years, my team has developed two golden rules when translating new software terms. First, if at all possible, a source term should always be translated the same in the target language. Users will find it easier to adapt to slight nuances of meaning than to learn new words for very similar concepts all the time. Second, we stay as close to the source term and are as generic with the translation as possible.

Challenges

There are many challenges in an industry that is as much in flux as the software industry: neologisms, trade-marked names, legacy material whose terminology may be obsolete, etc. Another challenge is finding a suitable translation for languages which are spoken in several countries, but with distinct regional flavors. If only one language version is released for these languages, terminology management often amounts to creating a hybrid language acceptable to all countries where this particular language is spoken. This requires intense research and communication.

Priorities when time is limited

Again, terminology is a production variable that needs to be managed. Sloppy terminology work can lead to severe product safety problems or, at the very least, confuse the unsuspecting user. Total terminology management means ensuring terminology quality, not at all costs, but within reasonable parameters, with support from the top down.

Ursula Schwalbach manages a team of terminologists at Microsoft Corp. She can be reached at ursulasc@microsoft.com. This article was originally printed in the Capitol Translator *and is reprinted with permission.*

FROM THE BOARD

So Long But Not Good-bye

When I chaired the first meeting of our board as president in January, I felt the absence of some directors with whom I had been working steadily for some time. Many had come and gone over the years, but continuously since 1991, we had counted among us **Courtney Searls-Ridge**, in turn as director, program committee chair, secretary, vice-president, and president. That is already ample evidence of how much she has contributed to our work and to the progress and welfare of NOTIS. In the meantime, Courtney was elected to the board of ATA, on which she currently serves as secretary. When one considers that she owns and operates a translation agency, one must conclude that she is an indefatigable dynamo. Indeed, her energy seems boundless, but so are her enthusiasm, her affability, and her courteousness as her name aptly suggests. Besides her duties on the board, Courtney has volunteered in innumerable ways to enhance our programs, from conducting workshops, inviting expert speakers, to organizing our summer picnic, and much more. Fortunately, Courtney is not leaving our area, and we know that we can continue to count on her help and wise advice. We will doubtless come calling often, Courtney, and we will also welcome you back in our midst any time and for as long as you wish. So we do not say good-bye, but a very sincere thank you, with our best wishes and a hopeful *Auf Wiedersehen*!

Jean Leblon, NOTIS President

How Do I Love Thee?
Let Me Count the Hours...

Volunteer service is a labor of love, given in appreciation for help received and to further the profession to which we owe so much. It also takes a toll in time and energy. The NOTIS Board is eager to recognize more fully all those who donate so much to our Society. We would also like to gain a realistic picture of the extent of the volunteer labor that makes NOTIS run. For that purpose, the Board proposes to keep a tally of volunteer hours from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002. We need a member with e-mail access and a liking for quirky projects to keep the records. If you fit this description, please contact a board member or send e-mail to info@notisnet.org to volunteer your services. We estimate that it will require about one hour a month to log the hours, which will be sent in by NOTIS volunteers through e-mail.

Terminology Workshop

June 30, 2001
1 - 4 p.m.

See details on page 3

Fresh Ideas, Fresh Faces

Close your eyes and remember the best program, class or conference you have ever attended. What drew you to this event and why was it so memorable?

On February 15th the Program Committee held an informal Wine & Cheese Party at Ann Macfarlane's home in Shoreline with the goal of discussing these very topics and in the hopes of recruiting volunteers to help plan and implement the 2001 Program schedule.

While our favorite program topics ran the gamut from Meditation to File Organization Strategies, we found many more similarities in why we attended an event and what we liked so much about it. We went to learn and/or to network; we went because we knew the presenter personally or by reputation. We were intrigued by the title, or personally interested in the topic. What draws you to a program?

A program can be successful for many reasons. In particular, we discussed the value of a great presenter whether it is for their organization, passion, humor, experience or knowledge. The best rewards were to have met a valuable contact or to have learned something new and useful.

As a result of the party, several people volunteered to join the NOTIS Program Committee and help us organize and present programs for the coming year. We will meet virtually and occasionally in person according to planning needs. We are looking forward to the fresh ideas, talents and energy that they will bring to our group. Still, do you have other ideas about what makes a program successful? If so, it is never too late! We'd love you to share your ideas and/or some of your time to help make NOTIS programs the best ever. For more information about volunteering, please contact info@notisnet.org.

In Memoriam

It is with sorrow that we note the passing of our colleague Jerry A. Torgerson, Lao and Thai interpreter and translator, on May 3, 2001. Jerry, who had resided in both Laos and Thailand, had also pastored a church, and entered into interpreting and translating in his semi-retirement. He was often seen presenting programs on financial and business topics. Always active in the translation community, he served until recently as webmaster for our sister organization, WITS. He shall be sorely missed.

MEETING REVIEW

Editing Workshop in Bellingham

On Saturday March 10, 2001, twenty-eight NOTIS members and non-members, including six from British Columbia, attended a NOTIS workshop on Western Washington University's beautiful campus in Bellingham.

Titled "How to be Your Own Best Editor and Proofreader," the workshop was presented by Courtney Searls-Ridge, the Academic Director of the Translation and Interpretation Institute in Seattle, Secretary of the American Translators Association, and past president of NOTIS. Courtney had just revised and updated this ATA workshop especially for NOTIS members. From 1:30 until almost 5:00 p.m., we were immersed in pragmatic principles of editing and proofreading any translation, our own as well as those of others. One of the most valuable elements that Courtney covered was the difference between editing, copyediting, and proofreading, notions that will prove to be very useful when accepting an editing or proofreading assignment, or just utilizing them for our own translations. This proficiency will also enable us to better reach an agreement with the companies we deal with. So often employers do not recognize those differences, or else expect us not to be cognizant of them. How many of us have been stuck with doing both of those tasks for the same remuneration?

The break offered more time to network and to enjoy varied refreshments. At the end of the session, we left with a handout containing many instructions, plus several appendices including self-tests, proofreader's marks, examples of poor translations, and other helpful references. All in all, it was a very informative and practical afternoon.

Marie-Paule Meda is a French<>English translator
and can be reached at MED717@msn.com.

The National Endowment for the Arts is offering Translation Project grants. Grants are available to published translators of literature for projects that involve the specific translation of poetry (including verse drama) from other languages into English. All proposed projects must be for creative translations of published literary material into English. Grants are for $10,000 or $20,000, depending upon length and scope of the project. For details, go to http://www.arts.gov/guide/Lit02/Litindex.html. The application postmark deadline is March 11, 2002 for poetry.

Added Bonus

Seattle is not only the geographic center of the United States (Space Needle to Hawaii, western tip of Alaska, New England or the Keys is about the same distance); it is also the default center of NOTIS activities and events. In March, however, it was Bellingham's turn to host some thirty participants from Western Washington and British Columbia gathered there for a lecture on editing and proofreading translations presented by Courtney Searls-Ridge. Through a series of slides, examples and practical exercises, we had a chance to see Courtney's perspective on the work most of us have had much practical experience with but have given only little thought to in terms of structure and theory.

Most welcome was also the chance to meet with colleagues and friends, old and new. Bellingham proved to be a good choice: it is a pleasant city with - perhaps rather surprisingly - a community of translators of its own and a perfect meeting place with our colleagues from the Vancouver, BC area.

Here are the top three things I learned at the workshop:
- always create a style sheet (in addition to a glossary) and submit it to your client together with your work;
- do not be afraid to let the client know that you are not sure of some terms used or simply do not understand a sentence or two—a much better way to get repeat business than mistakes discovered later by someone else!
- do not be the much hated 'malicious editor'—have respect for your colleague's work, be objective and correct only real shortcomings.

I am relatively new to NOTIS and its activities but let me tell you—we are a friendly and interesting group of people, so make sure to join us next time (even if the meeting does not offer the added bonus of taking a trip to Bellingham!).

Tomas Barendregt is a Czech translator and interpreter
and can be reached at barendregt@earthlink.net.

One-time cushy job

Want to help build our organization and our profession with an easy one- time cushy volunteer job? Live in the Seattle area? Wouldn't mind several hours worth of filing? I, Sara, the volunteer membership coordinator will happily wine and dine you if you'll come to my house to help out . Please let me know at spanish@drizzle.com or (206) 200-2520.

Translation & Interpretation Institute

The T&I Institute offers a certificate program in translation and interpreting through Bellevue Community College. To request a brochure, please call (425) 564-3171 or visit the website at www.conted.bcc.ctc.edu/transinterp.htm. For registration information, call (425) 564-3171.

Summer Quarter 2001 Classes

Introduction to Translation and Interpreting (INTRP 101)

This course is an excellent introduction for individuals considering a career in translation or interpreting as well as for technical information managers, medical providers, and others who work closely with translators and interpreters. It offers an overview of both professional fields and defines the skills necessary to work successfully in either profession. Textbook required: Practice of Court Interpreting. This is a three-credit course, fee $300. Mon/Wed, June 25-July 30, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., taught by Martha Cohen and Anne Quinn.

Fundamentals of Translation (TRANS 103)

This course is for individuals with advanced language skills and no formal training in the process of translation. Participants learn basic translation techniques as well as the process of translation. The course also offers a practical review of the English writing and editing skills necessary to produce clear, polished translations. This is a three-credit course, fee $300.
10 Wednesdays, June 27- September 5, 6:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m., taught by Maia Costa.

Technology for T & I (INTRP 104)

This course is appropriate for translators and interpreters with beginning, intermediate, or advanced computer skills. Instruction in areas such as electronic editing, graphics, proofing tools, use of computer, fax/modems, email and internet helps students improve productivity and consistency. Students are also introduced to localization, machine translation and other advanced tools. This is a three-credit course. Days, dates, room TBA.

Ethics & Business Practices (INTRP 106)

This course is appropriate for beginning and experienced translators and interpreters as well as others who work closely with these professionals. The role of the interpreter in business, conference, medical and courtroom settings is discussed, as are standards of business practice in translation and interpreting. This course also covers how to market your services and set up a business as a freelance translator or interpreter. This is a three-credit course, fee $300. Tues/Thurs, June 21–July 24, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., taught by Susana Stettri Sawrey and Courtney Searls-Ridge.

Electronic Distribution of *NOTIS News*

We will start implementing the electronic distribution of *NOTIS News* and send out Email reminders when the new issue of *NOTIS News* is posted on the NOTIS website (www.notisnet.org) in PDF (Portable Document Format). Ideally, we will phase out sending hardcopies altogether and electronic notification will be our standard method of delivery. Please let us know if you wish to continue receiving a hardcopy by filling out the form below and sending it to *NOTIS News*, P.O. Box 25301, Seattle, WA 98125.

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Yes, I would like to continue receiving a hardcopy of *NOTIS News* in the mail.

NAME (Please print): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	TIME & PLACE
June 1 - 3, 2001	ATA Translation Company Division 2nd Annual Meeting	www.ata-divisions.org/TCD	Wyndham Hotel, Colorado Springs
Saturday, June 30, 2001	Terminology Workshop	Ursula Schwalbach, Microsoft Corporation	1 p.m. - 4 p.m. www.notisnet.org for details
Saturday, June 30, 2001	ATA Reception	ATA members will be invited to meet ATA Board	Westin Hotel, Seattle 6 p.m.
Saturday, July 21, 2001	Slavic SIG Potluck Picnic	Bring a dish to share	Luther Burbank Park on Mercer Island, 1 - 4 p.m.
Saturday, Sept 29, 2001	International Translators and Interpreters Day Opera Surtitler	All are welcome to attend	TBA
October 31 - November 3, 2001	42nd Annual conference of the American Translators Association	Fax ATA at (703) 683-6122 or send Email to conference@atanet.org	Regal Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles

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