

Does that make any sense? - Comments on Jost Zetsche's seminar, "A Translator's Toolbox for the 21st Century"

- By Daniel Estrada

What did the audience invariably reply when they heard this tall (over 6'6) German-Oregonian in a bright orange polo shirt and a cleanly shaven head go over a detailed explanation and then ask, with a puzzled frown (as if he wasn't quite sure, which of course he was) "Does this make any sense?" We all replied, "Yes!"

I am a software engineer, so when I received FLATA's e-mail announcing this workshop I thought I would benefit mostly from the second part of the presentation, which focused on tools specifically for translators. I was pleasantly surprised by a couple of things. The first was that, the subject of computers not being the most exciting, even for me, time actually flew by because of Jost's lecturing abilities and the constant interaction from the audience. The second was that the initial part of

Jost's lecture, on general tools in the operating system and other goodies, was full of juicy tips and eye-openers which I hurriedly scribbled down. My reactions varied from "Oh, so that's the way to do it" to "I didn't know XP could do that." When I got home I implemented at least 5 immediate action items, and I keep my notes



Jost Zetsche

under the keyboard for quick referencing.

Let me give you an example of something I applied immediately. I had been having problems creating PDFs with Acrobat Writer 5.0, but I didn't know why. Like Jost, I detest having anything launch automatically, so I keep my Start Up folder as

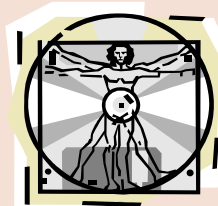
empty as possible (especially the "hidden Start Up folder" which one can only see through programs that read and modify the computer's registry). It turns out that if Acrobat Assistant is not present in the Start Up folder, you won't be able to create PDFs from Word. So I reinstalled Acrobat Writer 5.0 and did NOT delete Acrobat Assistant from the Start Up folder, and *voilà!* Problem solved. That, by itself, paid for the seminar.

Indeed, the general tools section was so full of Q&A that toward the end we had to skip several sections and go straight into the CAT section, where Jost compared some of the major tools like Trados and Déjà Vu.

I was asked if FLATA members could benefit from this presentation. In general I give an enthusiastic two thumbs up. Having said that, I noticed some people in the audience looked

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A Translator's Toolbox for the 21st Century



<http://www.internationalwriters.com/aboutus/jost.html>

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pale because they had limited computer knowledge and skills. But, having noticed how little they knew — the computer world advances rapidly and your know-how can become obsolete in a couple of years — I tried putting myself in their shoes. It must be scary using a dominant tool like a computer for your trade, while knowing so little about it. It would be like being the captain of a Jumbo Jet, knowing only how to program the automatic pilot and how to turn it on and off. Then the automatic pilot gets shut down during a storm and you have a plane with 300 passengers on board. What do you do, other than dry off those drops of cold sweat?

I would suggest upgrading your system, meaning hardware, operating system and tools, as well as hiring someone to teach you to handle basic operations such as back-ups, burning CDs, e-mail management, antivirus and hacker protection, and more.

Jost's e-book is well written, quite detailed, updated, and complete. I highly recommend it. People with intermediate and advanced computer skills will especially benefit from it, and beginners will have a comprehensive reference to explore their systems. **Ff**

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