



GeekSpeak

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The GeekSpeak column has two goals: to inform the community about technological advances and at the same time encourage the use and appreciation of technology among translation professionals. Jost also publishes a free technical newsletter for translators (www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit).

The Old Is Gone! The New Has Come!

Almost exactly five years ago I wrote an article for *The ATA Chronicle* (July 2004, accessible with many other back issues on ATA's website) entitled "Taking Inventory with St. Jerome: How Well Equipped Are Our Computers?" This is how the article started:

As I was browsing through websites recently, I noticed that the image used most often on translators' home pages is of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators and the grand translator of the Bible into common Latin. Now, do not misunderstand me—I have nothing against St. Jerome; in fact, most of my academic life was spent researching the translation of the Bible. But I believe these images of Jerome, quill in hand, bent over a roll of parchment, communicate something else: a romanticized idea of translation that has very little in common with our work as modern translators in a highly computerized world. I may be guilty of overextending this interpretation, but I believe that many of us would prefer to identify with figures like St. Jerome than with a computer geek hunched over a keyboard. The truth is, however, that we need both sides of the coin.

I would not be surprised if some of you are saying: *He's been preaching this to us for five years now? Doesn't he get tired of it? I sure do!*

My apologies if that is so. But I don't get tired of it, because I think that

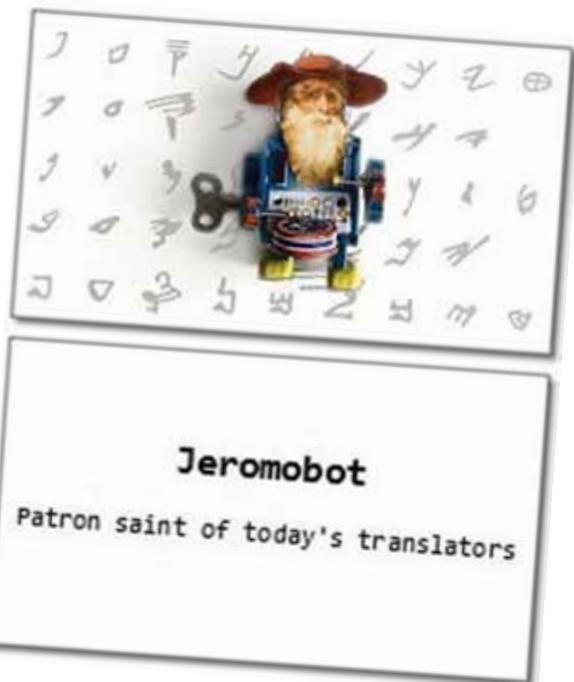
there is merit in persuading colleagues to embrace translation technology.

PLUS, I have something completely new to offer. There is simply no longer any reason to focus only on St. Jerome—because good old Jerome has morphed into *Jeromobot*. Jeromobot has all the linguistic passion and love for language that Jerome has always had, but he has combined it with a heart for technology and a new beat to walk to. His business card appears on the right.

Some of you had the privilege of meeting him in person at last year's ATA Annual Conference. For those who did not, let me tell you: Jeromobot is gentle—but persuasive and persistent. My children can certainly attest to that. They are increasingly embarrassed—actually, mortified—by the many videos Jeromobot and I have been working on, and which can be admired on YouTube. Most of my writings have lately been inundated with him as well.

Yes, he is goofy (his female friends call him "sweet"), but there is something serious that he and I hope to achieve. The original source for this month's column title comes from 2 Corinthians 5:17 (here from the *New International Reader's Version*), and refers to more profound ideas than just new times for translators, but it does not hurt that this is also Jeromobot's battle cry.

So if you think that the only translation technology question you might have to consider is whether or not to



invest in translation memory technology (and there is a wrong and a right answer to that question!), you might have overlooked this thought: the changes accompanying these new times transcend that simple decision. These new times bring browser- and/or server-based translation environments, tight integrations into predefined workflows, arrangements with machine translation, and new quality criteria that are aligned along the lines of usability rather than a more ethereal "highest possible quality." These are all things that would truly befuddle St. Jerome, but not Jeromobot. He is used to a new beat. While he might not always walk in a straight line, he perseveres with seriousness and passion written all over his face.

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