



GeekSpeak

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Historic Breakthroughs

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).

Something happened

in Denver in late October and early November that was truly historic. In fact, Laurie Gerber, an ATA-certified Japanese→English translator and the most tireless bridge-builder between the translation and machine translation (MT) communities, turned to me at one point and said, “I think I’m done. My job is finished.” She was not talking about a translation or editing job that had kept her busy for a few days or even weeks; instead, she was talking about something that she had set out to do years ago and had probably assumed would never come to fruition during her lifetime. What happened during the co-located ATA Annual Conference and the conference of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA) in Denver was the final formation of a strong bridge between these two communities, and now it is up to you and me and those on the other side to actually use this bridge.

Here are some snapshots of the two conferences in Denver that may illustrate their historical nature (and hopefully convince you that I am not completely mental in expounding on the significance of these conferences).

On the last day of ATA’s conference, conference organizers made sure to line up a successive string of sessions all dedicated to MT and its meaning to the translation profession. Since the program at ATA’s conference has 10-14 simultaneous tracks, there were plenty of other sessions for the non-MT-inclined audience. Interestingly, though, it was the MT sessions that drew the largest audience. Mike Dillinger’s session on how to utilize MT as a translator and Laurie Gerber’s session on post-editing MT had full rooms of 200 participants each, and the closing panel with representatives from both the MT and the translation communities drew an audi-

ence of 500 or so. The numbers alone are remarkable—in previous years maybe a dozen translators would have shown up, and then only to make strong statements against MT—but even more interesting was the underlying spirit of the questions, which were intended to learn more about MT rather than to insult. I cannot overstate what a change this was in comparison to previous years. While I am not part of the “MT lobby,” in the past I have had to soothe the fears of many proponents of this technology before they made presentations to translators by assuring them that we no longer believe in public executions.

Fast forward to AMTA’s conference. The opening speakers of that conference were a very eloquent Nicholas Hartmann, president of ATA, and myself, both of whom tried to represent the translators’ view of MT. The reception was warm and decidedly noncritical and revealed a clear

consensus that MT could only be taken to the next level with the translator rather than without.

One of the things that both Nick and I tried to communicate to the MT community was that, at least in the branch of statistical MT, there is a great indebtedness to human translators. For too long developers of MT looked at data and corpora as if they had developed on their own rather than being the fruits of human translators’ labor. We stressed the vital importance of acknowledging this and making sure that from now on translators play a much more active role in participating in ongoing developments.

Of course, this naturally means that we also need to be willing to engage rather than sit back and complain. It certainly seems that these two conferences have created the infrastructure that will enable this to happen.

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Publications from the Localization Industry Standards Association

Journal of Internationalization and Localization

The Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) has published the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Internationalization and Localization (JIJAL)*, a new academic journal dedicated to providing research into the business and technical aspects of globalization. The journal is available free of charge as a PDF file from www.lessius.eu/jial, and may be ordered in hard copy.

Globalization Insider Online Archives

The archives of *Globalization Insider*, LISA’s newsletter, are now open to the public without restriction. The archives contain 19 years’ worth of articles on all aspects of globalization and localization. The archives can be accessed at www.localization.org.

Member News

Send your news to Jeff Sanfacon at jeff@atanet.org or American Translators Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314.

- **Lisa Carter** published two book translations with HarperCollins in 2010: *The Einstein Enigma (La fórmula de Dios)*, by José Rodrigues dos Santos, and *Voltaire's Calligrapher (El calígrafo de Voltaire)*, by Pablo De Santis.
- **CETRA Federal Services**, a newly created division of **CETRA Language Solutions** in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, opened an office in Washington, DC.
- ATA Past President **Peter W. Krawutschke** (1995-1997) is one of the recipients of Western Michigan University's (WMU) 2010-2011 Distinguished Service Award. Krawutschke, a German language and translation specialist, joined the university's Department of Foreign Languages faculty in 1967. Since 1995, Krawutschke has been serving as head of WMU's German Section. His past administrative posts include chairing the Department of Foreign Languages for five years and twice serving as director of an on-campus translation center that he founded in the mid-1980s. Krawutschke is also a past president of the Federation Internationale des Traducteurs. He received ATA's Gode Medal in 2008.
- **Alexis Levitin**, a professor of English at Plattsburgh State University of New York (SUNY), has been appointed to the rank of SUNY Distinguished Professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Levitin was recently recognized for his work as a translator of Portuguese and Brazilian literary works by Eugenio de Andrade, Egito Concalves, Carlos de Oliveira, Astrid Cabral, and Clarice Lipsector, among others.
- **Valeria Petrocchi** served as the editor of the first volume of *Prospettive e obiettivi funzionali nell'insegnamento delle tecniche di traduzione inglese>italiano* (Edizioni Compo Mat, 2010), a new series created to provide material on science and language mediation.
- **Lawrence Schofer** published two book translations with Locus Publishing in 2010: *Life Before Letters. The Well-Read Odyssey of the Future Mr. Book Fair* and *See You in Frankfurt! Life at the Helm of the Largest Book Fair in the World*. The books comprise two volumes of memoirs by Peter Weidhaas, the long-time director of the Frankfurt Book Fair.
- ATA Terminology Committee Chair **Sue Ellen Wright** is one of the recipients of the 2010 Eugen Wüster Prize (EWP). Wright is a professor of modern and classical language studies at the Kent State University Institute for Applied Linguistics, where she teaches computer applications for translators and German-English technical translation. As a recognized international terminology expert, she is active in the national and international standards community. Her publications include numerous articles in the field of terminology management and translation studies, and edited books in these areas. She is the co-compiler of the *Handbook for Terminology Management*. For more information about the EWP, please see http://infoterm.info/activities/terminology_awards.php.

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In Memoriam

(Published in MPNnow on November 18, 2010.)

Longtime ATA member **Trudy K. Balch** died of breast cancer on November 1, 2010.

Trudy was a 1974 graduate of Brighton High School in Rochester, New York, and attended the University of Missouri-Columbia. After graduation, she lived in New York City.

Trudy was an accomplished writer, editor, and Spanish- and Ladino-English translator. Her publications included *Gaby Brimmer: An Autobiography in Three Voices* (Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England) and *My Ocean: A Novel of Cuba* (Groundwood Books). She was a presenter at several ATA conferences. In addition to ATA, she was a member of the American Literary Translators Association.

Donations in Trudy's memory may be made to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation (<http://tinyurl.com/komen-org>).

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