

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

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summer 2009

The peak national professional association for
translators and interpreters in Australia



Localisation & the global economy

National PD policy & committee

Mentoring new T/Is

Admissions policy



Member organisation
Federation Internationale
des Traducteurs
International Federation of
Translators

NZSTI news

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From the editor

The deadline for the summer issue is **10 May 2009**. Thanks to all contributors, especially Sam Berner, and proofreaders Sue Jollow and Barbara McGilvray.

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Front cover: AUSIT Qld Branch members kick off the year with a chat breakfast at Chez Laila (see page 15).

President's Report

Sarina Phan keeping you up to date with current issues and events



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of *AUSIT National Newsletter* for 2009. The 'name the newsletter' competition being run by Editor Bradley Dawson will ensure our publication receives a great new name by the next edition. This report to AUSIT is a mixed one, but what's important is that we are moving forward and your national council is working harder and more efficiently to deliver you the members better services to help you stay up-to-date with industry issues, maintain and upgrade your skills, and be ready for the gloomy economic times ahead.

National Council to meet in May in Adelaide

This year the AUSIT Excellence Awards Gala Dinner will be in Adelaide with the SA/NT Branch hosting the event, so NC has decided to meet this year on 16 & 17 May in Adelaide. Apart from its usual AUSIT business, NC plans to run an AUSIT Orientation Day with some council members giving talks, and meeting and chatting with potential and existing members. Our aim is to create excitement and energy within the SA/NT Branch so as to attract new members and promote the AUSIT Excellence Awards at the same time. NC will continue to work with PAMS and other supporters to implement our business plan.

Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2008

The financial report for the year ended 30 June 2008 was formally audited by John Watty from Proacc P/L. This was done so that all bookkeeping can be handed over to PAMS, alleviating some of the treasurer's workload and streamlining AUSIT's record keeping. The report is now available on the website in the 'members section' under 'official documents'. Members will also find the minutes of the last NAGM in Brisbane there.

Louis Vorstermans takes over as Treasurer

John Crone, who served as Treasurer

during 2007-2008, has resigned for personal reasons. I thank John for his contributions over the year as treasurer and through his other official roles, and wish him all the best.

I have asked Louis Vorstermans to step in as Treasurer and he has kindly agreed to serve in the role until the next NAGM. Louis comes with plenty of experience, as he was Treasurer from 2003-2005.

PAMS and Shweta Desai in full swing

As President I receive many emails from members regarding AUSIT in general and PAMS' services in particular. I am happy to report that members are very happy with Shweta Desai and PAMS in general. In addition, National Executive also met with Richard Gerner and Shweta for a review on 16 January this year. Listed below are some of the issues discussed and agreed upon to further improve services:

- PAMS will take over AUSIT's bookkeeping and the processing of payments as set out in the AUSIT/PAMS Service Agreement.
- Reference checks for new members and SP applicants will be conducted by the local branch and by the Secretary or Membership Officer. Branch committees are required to comply with a seven-day turnaround time for the processing of new applications to ensure the whole process is more efficient.
- PAMS receive an enormous amount of enquiries from people wishing to find a translator or interpreter. PAMS will set up a telephone answering system whereby callers requesting the contact details of T/Is will be referred to the AUSIT online directory and/or the *Yellow Pages* AUSIT entries, as long as the AUSIT group advertisements continue in the future.
- PAMS are happy to work with and for AUSIT. The PAMS people find us polite, pleasant and apolitical. Having six-monthly meetings with PAMS is beneficial.

eBulletin usage and members' general enquiries

It is great to see the eBulletin serving our

members well and that many of them benefit from reading and writing the postings. I read the postings in order to keep up with issues affecting members.

The nature of the eBulletin makes it impossible for Shweta and national council members to monitor postings constantly and address all issues through this particular forum, so if you require information or have specific issues which need addressing, you should contact your local branch or Shweta Desai at <admin@ausit.org>.

AUSIT National PD Committee – our dream team

Our National PD Committee headed by Sam Berner has developed a document called the *AUSIT National Professional Development Roadmap* (see page 5 of this issue). This document has received in-principle NC approval, with just a few details still to be finalised. The PD roadmap will serve as a guide for AUSIT to deliver and run our PD programmes across the country. I congratulate the team on this fantastic achievement and look forward to a great national PD programme in the near future.

With regard to PD requirements for membership renewal, you do not have to send in your PD logsheet, but you do need to state the number of points you have accrued. You also need to keep records of your PD activities (types of activities, receipts, certificates of attendance, etc) for four years and provide them upon request. A more detailed information sheet is available on our website.

AUSIT is committed to developing and delivering relevant and innovative PD workshops and seminars to members. This is becoming more and more important as T/l's around the world diligently maintain and upgrade their skills to remain competitive in the global market. Participation in PD can also increase your versatility and efficiency,

not to mention the opportunity to network and improve your earning capacity. Plan and budget for your PD this year, and contact your local branch for the full programme calendar.

Celebrate excellence — AUSIT Excellence Awards 6 November, Adelaide

This project is headed by Claudia Ait Touati, assisted by Michela Schirru. SA/NT is a small branch, but its committee is determined to put on a great show in November this year. Richard Gerner from PAMS is meeting with Claudia this month to discuss how PAMS can help Claudia and her team with this exciting AUSIT event.

Mark 6 November 2009 in your calendar; consider nominating a colleague, a project, or yourself, and get behind the AUSIT Excellence Awards.

Translating and interpreting project — steering committee meeting update

Due to work and family commitments I was unable to attend the last Steering Committee meeting in Adelaide, and Michela Schirru (SA/NT Principal Delegate) attended in my place. The meeting ran over two days in 40° heat, so Michela did very well to prepare and represent AUSIT at the meeting.

The majority of the first day was dedicated to reports from Project Manager Prue Madsen, Industry Consultant Heather Glass and Technical Writer Jana Scomazzon. Below are some of the issues discussed:

- The project timeframe has always been a challenge for the Committee. Whether the timeframe can be adhered to will depend primarily on the results of the coming round of consultations.
- Many of the units drafted were not viable as stand alone units. To address this, the steering committee broke into

three groups with each reviewing the same five or six units. This task proved to be extremely difficult and laborious, and the steering committee made little progress.

The second day was dedicated to getting back to basics. Michela and others were asked to describe exactly what T/l's do. This discussion was used as a basis for reviewing the units and deciding which could stand alone, which could be incorporated into other units, and which others could be imported. This was a more productive process and the steering committee made good progress.

The Steering Committee worked towards having the first draft of units ready for public viewing by 18 February. They also plan to hold workshops in all major cities around the country to get industry feedback.

The name for the project was also discussed. According to GSA 'Translating and Interpreting' alone may not be an adequate description for a training package, whereas according industry representatives, including AUSIT, believe the project should not be called anything else. A precedent has been set: a training package with only two job descriptions (for now) has been accepted and endorsed.

Go to <www.governmentsskills.com.au> or look out for an AUSIT eflash for the workshop in your local city.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new members and congratulate those who have become Senior Practitioners.

There are lots of things happening at AUSIT, so whether you are looking to network, share your ideas, or contribute to your professional association, AUSIT is only a phone call or email away.

Welcome new members and congratulations to new Senior Practitioners

The following people have become either members or associate members since publication of the last *National Newsletter*:

Elisabeth Auffenberg, Walter Corden, Timothy Cummins, Sarah Dillon, Susan Halliday, Arunee Heron, Sarir

Homayuni-Sadeghi, Corina Roe, Sandra Pavelik, Giuliana Piccari, Caroline Sanders, Harpal Singh, Dinesh Srivastava, Abdul Mallik Tejani, Bun Teo, Mary Tieppo, Patricia Worth.

Welcome to the institute and we hope to meet you face-to-face or electronically soon!

The following members have been granted Senior Practitioner status since the last newsletter:

Gordana Ivetac,
Jan Daniel de Zwaan.

Hearty congratulations on achieving this distinction!

AUSIT admissions policy and procedures

Information paper for the AGM November 2008

The AUSIT National Council (NC) has recently considered a number of issues relating to admission policy and procedures, and has decided:

- to establish a Qualifications Committee (QC), which will be tasked with reviewing AUSIT admissions policy and submitting recommendations, initially to the NC and through it to the next Annual General Meeting, addressing in particular the definition of 'equivalent qualifications and experience' for admission as an AUSIT Member;
- to create a sub-category of 'Student' within the Associate membership category, with the annual fee for this sub-category being set at approximately 60 per cent of the cost of the Associate membership;
- that, subject to any recommendations the QC may wish to make, the current constitutional provisions relating to overseas membership provide sufficient basis for consistent handling of applications from non-residents and that there is no need to create a separate 'overseas member' category; and
- to continue reviewing admission procedures with a view to clarifying and simplifying current arrangements and to submit a report, including any recommendations for constitutional amendments, to the next Annual General Meeting.

Intended Outcomes

These policy decisions are intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- Make available to the NC, and to AUSIT more broadly, a permanent advisory body to consider matters relating to qualifications for admission to AUSIT
- Clarify what constitutes acceptable equivalent qualifications and experience in cases where applicants for membership do not have NAATI accreditation or recognition
- Encourage greater participation by students in AUSIT and, as a consequence, ensure regular renewal of AUSIT's membership base by encouraging participation from potential and new entrants into the profession

- Remove confusion about requirements for AUSIT membership by practitioners residing overseas
- Clarify, update and simplify procedures for handling membership applications in all membership categories

Summary of considerations

1. Qualifications Committee

Section 5.3.3 of AUSIT's Constitution refers to the Institute's 'Qualifications Committee,' one of the functions of which is to determine equivalent qualifications and experience for admission to Member status in cases where an applicant does not have NAATI accreditation or experience. While the NC has from time to time acted as a *de facto* QC, it has been concerned that the absence of a formal qualifications referral body and formal guidelines hinders Branch Committees in deliberations over membership applications, and has the potential to lead to confusion and possibly to inconsistencies between branches regarding admission criteria.

Appointment of a QC is designed to fill the existing gap in this matter. The Committee will advise the NC on qualifications issues and will make recommendations to the NC - and through it to the AGM — as required. The QC will not have executive powers, supervisory functions, or corporate decision-making authority.

The QC will consist of three AUSIT members, at least one of whom will be a Senior Practitioner. QC members will be appointed by the NC for a period of three years in the first instance, with membership renewable once. Membership will be on a voluntary basis, with the main membership criterion being a demonstrated knowledge of AUSIT and of the profession. The NC reserves the right to terminate membership of the QC at any time, but will not do so unreasonably or without discussing the matter with the member concerned. The chair of the QC will be appointed by the NC from within the group. The QC will normally conduct its business through email exchanges, with minutes to be provided to the NC.

2. Student sub-category

Unlike some similar professional T&I associations, AUSIT has no 'student' membership category, so students wishing to apply for AUSIT need to apply for the Associate category (unless they already have NAATI accreditation or recognition). Anecdotal evidence suggests the cost involved in doing so is deterring a number of students from applying, which in turn is depriving AUSIT of current membership numbers and – perhaps more importantly – of a continuing source of 'new blood'. Bearing in mind the desirability of limiting constitutional amendments to a minimum, the NC has agreed to create a sub-category of Student within the Associate category, attracting a reduced membership fee (approximately 60% of the Associate fee). The criterion for joining this sub-category – being a current student – would not be difficult to check and administer. This new sub-category will be publicised and promoted in AUSIT's literature and on its membership forms.

3. Overseas membership

Over the past year there have been inconsistencies in branch committee considerations of applications from overseas residents, especially where links with Australia are unclear or appear minimal. Consequently, it has been suggested that AUSIT create an 'Overseas member' category, with separate membership criteria.

According to Section 5.3.6 of the AUSIT Constitution, residency in Australia is not a prerequisite for membership, and the NC was not convinced significant problems exist with the current provisions. At this stage NC is not recommending a new category be created. However, NC notes the question is connected to the issue of 'equivalent qualifications and experience', and as such will direct the QC to take this matter into consideration and to report to the NC, which will then consider the matter further, consistent across branches.

4. Admission procedures

In considering the admissions policy, NC noted numerous instances where current admissions policies and procedures are unclear or inadequate; for example, the requirement for sponsorship by three financial members, which is impractical in many instances. NC has decided to focus on these issues during 2009 and will submit a report, including any resultant proposed constitutional amendments, to the next AGM.

National PD policy

Information paper for the AGM November 2008

1. Introduction

In projecting the image of a contemporary professional body, AUSIT advances and promotes professionalism through requiring from its members adherence to a Code of Ethics and commitment to measurable ongoing professional development.

On-going learning is at the heart of any translator's or interpreter's professional life. AUSIT National Council recognises that to meet its objective to position AUSIT as an innovative, efficient, professional and ethical organisation, members should be encouraged to further their professional development in relation to their professional activities.

To ensure that AUSIT makes progress towards this objective, the AUSIT National Council will foster the development of a multi-skilled membership and support members in their professional development.

2. Principles

AUSIT National Council is committed to the provision of timely and innovative professional development to its members, as well as to other industry players seeking to improve their understanding of the profession. NC will do so by providing members with:

- opportunities to plan and develop skills, knowledge and attributes that complement their professional goals;
- opportunities to participate in career development activities which extend and enhance their capabilities and capacity for advancement within the profession;
- opportunities to enhance their current contributions toward the industry and the profession;
- equity of access to professional development opportunities.

3. Definitions

Professional Development refers to the processes, activities and experiences which provide opportunities to extend one's professional learning. Participation in continuing professional development assists in the development of one's professional learning, or the growth of one's expertise leading to improved

work outcomes. Continuing professional learning is needed to keep up with new developments in the industry and is demonstrated through better practice.

Professional development activities shall be deemed to include, but not limited to:

- keeping up to date with significant developments in the profession and professional community by attending conferences, workshops and seminars;
- acquiring further skills and knowledge which can be applied to professional work;
- investigating and developing innovative ways to enhance the quality of the industry;
- undertaking further academic studies in any field(s) of specialisation relevant to the profession;
- writing about the industry in relevant publications; and
- being nominated/submitted an entry for various industry awards.

The **National Professional Development Coordinator** is a paid contractor appointed by and reporting to the National Council, who is responsible for the implementation of PD policy and procedures, and for liaising with the State Professional Development Coordinators. The National Professional Development Coordinator shall be appointed by the NC.

State Professional Development

Coordinators are members of Branch Committees responsible for the organisation and provision of PD activities at branch levels in accordance with professional development policy and procedures and any relevant directives issued by the National Professional Development Coordinator. They are directly accountable to the National Professional Development Coordinator and their Branch Chairs.

The **PD Resources Database** is a national database of resources and providers prepared by the National PD Committee and maintained and updated annually at branch levels by the State PD Coordinators as part of their reporting to the National PD Coordinator.

Revalidation of accreditation is a credential awarded by NAATI to T/Is who satisfy a required amount of professional development and work practice.

The **Professional Development activity log book** is an official document produced by the AUSIT National Council as part of the requirements for PD within AUSIT, and for the revalidation process by NAATI. Members record PD activities they undertake in the log book.

Delivery Modes are the means by which PD activities can be accessed by members and non-members of AUSIT. These include, but are not limited to: formal and informal courses at educational institutions (through face-to-face and e-learning); mentorship; workshops in industry-specific skills delivered by third parties and AUSIT-based trainers; web-based seminars; self-study; and exchange programs.

4. Policy statement

This Policy applies to all Members and Associate Members of AUSIT. The provision by AUSIT of high-quality continuing professional development is integral to supporting the status of the profession. Attaining consistency in this provision will be achieved through the regulatory framework set out in this policy.

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide translators and interpreters with a structure to support their learning and development in a collegial manner throughout their professional lives;
- ensure that AUSIT possesses an innovative, effective, professional and ethical membership who can positively contribute to the achievements of AUSIT, the industry and their own professional lives;
- encourage and support T&I professionals in their professional and career development as part of their membership of the organisation;
- provide administrative guidelines for the provision of professional development to AUSIT members and to other industry players seeking to improve their understanding of the profession.

(continued overleaf)

4.2 Objectives

AUSIT National Council promotes the value of professional development within and outside of AUSIT and shall aim to :

- empower translators and interpreters to take responsibility for their own continuing professional development;
- support the acquisition of knowledge, skills and capabilities of T/Is by providing appropriate recognition for undertaking professional development;
- ensure that continuing PD is focused and designed to support T/Is in achieving and maintaining desired levels of professional competence;
- ensure equity of PD provision across its membership;
- identify, develop and promote timely, innovative and flexible approaches to PD, enabling T/Is to access information about professional learning opportunities and select those best suiting their needs;
- increase access to high-quality continuing PD programs and courses designed to support lifelong continuing learning in the profession;
- encourage AUSIT members to take an active role in their own ongoing professional and career development as part of their membership review and to use their learning effectively;
- assist members who joined after November 2006 to account for their PD activities;
- take into account proposals for PD activities from various stakeholders;
- encourage and actively engage in building alliances within the ranks of the

membership as well as outside AUSIT for the most effective use of resources and delivery of PD;

- continue to ensure, through short and long-term strategic planning, that PD remains mandatory for retaining membership in AUSIT, as with other professional organisations; and
- continue to measure the outcomes of its PD activities against international and local industry standards, with the aim of continual improvement of delivery.

4.3 Outcomes

- AUSIT positioned as a major provider of continual learning and promoter of the profession
- Improved work-related outcomes for a better-trained and more technologically savvy membership
- Increased revenue through provision of PD and training within and outside of AUSIT
- Raised awareness among end-users that translating and interpreting are professions requiring high-level skills
- Enhanced best practice among practitioners and end-users
- A healthy membership with good management and leadership capabilities capable of furthering the aims and goals of AUSIT.

Implementation

- The National Professional Development Coordinator is responsible for the implementation of the PD policy and procedures.
- National Council shall actively invest in the development of PD resources by providing administrative and financial

support to the various stakeholders involved in the delivery and preparation thereof when deemed necessary.

- NC, acting through the National PD Coordinator, shall monitor and audit various PD activities to ensure they meet the overall aim of this Policy, the strategic vision of AUSIT, the needs of the membership, and the standards of materials and quality of their delivery.
- NC, acting through the National PD Coordinator, shall work on building alliances with all relevant stakeholders both in Australia and overseas, with the aim of enriching the PD activities available to its members and other industry players seeking a better understanding of the profession.
- NC, acting through the National PD Coordinator and the State PD Coordinators, shall maintain an updated and viable database and calendar of PD events and activities for its membership.
- NC, acting through the National PD Coordinator, shall work on extending AUSIT PD activities beyond its direct membership with the aim of becoming a significant player in the provision of continual learning and promotion of the profession, as is already undertaken by other academic and training institutions, NAATI and sister organisations, both here and overseas.
- NC shall continue promoting and implementing use of the PD activities log book.
- NC shall supplement this policy paper, spelling out the mechanism of tying PD to the membership status of AUSIT members.

National PD Committee

A new venture into professionalism for AUSIT

Those who attended last year's National AGM will be aware the National Council has appointed a new sub-committee to address the professional development needs of AUSIT members in a systematic way. The sub-committee is accountable to NC, and while initially comprising Andre Bevez (Vic), Sam Berner (Qld), Claudia Ait-Touati (SA), Max de Montaigne (Qld) and Willy Waldburger (NSW), has since acquired three additional members: David Connor (Vic), Andrew Bell (WA) and Brad Paez (Vic).

The AUSIT National Professional Development Committee was created to assist and consult the NC on matters pertaining to professional development. NPDC members are volunteers who do not hold office within the National Committee and who, as a team, report on their findings to the National Committee through one of its members, Andre Bevez, who is also the VIC/TAS delegate to the National Committee.

This allows members to share their experiences about what is happening

on the PD front in each state. Two of the members are themselves PD Coordinators for their states. The Committee is open to additional members who feel they have something valuable to add to its work. The Committee's mandate is for a single year, unless NC finds it feasible to extend this in November 2009 during the Adelaide NAGM.

What we do

The National PD Committee plans to achieve the following:

- (1) prepare a national database of available training providers;
- (2) prepare a national database of available resources;
- (3) define the role and duties of the potential National Professional Development Coordinator;
- (4) prepare a feasibility study comparing modes of PD delivery;
- (5) prepare a draft National Policy for professional development;
- (6) prepare a White Paper on promotion of PD among practitioners, especially outside of AUSIT, as a means of raising revenue;
- (7) involve the AUSIT community in discussion of points (4) and (5), and use the results in (6);
- (8) develop the industry newsletter as a viable means of providing PD content; and
- (9) prepare a National Policy on

mentoring for new and potential members.

Why this is important

- The NPDC aims to consolidate all state efforts and to organise PD into some form of a national framework, at least in terms of resources available. This will have an extremely positive impact on the quality and variety of PD provided.
- A National Policy will act as a roadmap for further PD efforts on behalf of AUSIT. If this is correctly implemented, it could provide AUSIT with much needed funds and allow it to grow.
- The NAATI revalidation scheme has created a client base which is desperately seeking PD points yet which may be enrolling in training sessions not necessarily best meeting their own PD needs. A National Policy will also enable AUSIT to attract members by providing them with appropriate PD at lower costs

once they join.

- Being able to deliver a wide range of varied PD activities also raises the profile of AUSIT as a training provider, which in turn will generate additional income as AUSIT expands to provide training for end-users at government and private levels.

The Committee has to date prepared a Draft National Policy for professional development, which appears on pages 5 and 6 of this issue, awaiting discussion and comments by members.

All correspondence regarding the Draft National Policy for Professional Development should be addressed to Sam Berner at: <sberner@arabic.com.au>, or Andre Bevez at: <andre@languageadvantage.com.au>.

2009 AUSIT Excellence Awards & AUSIT/proz conference in Adelaide

What better place to celebrate excellence than in the festival state? Stay connected and be part of the night of the nights for the T&I profession, the 2009 AUSIT Excellence Awards, proudly hosted by the South Australian and Northern Territory branch of AUSIT on 6 November at the prestigious Adelaide Town Hall.

The awards are now open for nominations. If you know a colleague who has been involved in a project worthy of recognition, or have heard of an organisation which has greatly enhanced the T&I industry, why not nominate them? Maybe you have achieved something that is worth celebrating — why not nominate yourself?

This year we have introduced two additional categories: one for 'Outstanding contribution to AUSIT' and another for 'Outstanding contribution to Indigenous interpreting'. Nomination kits can be downloaded from the Awards website:

<[http://www.ausit.org/excellence_ awards](http://www.ausit.org/excellence_awards)>

or by emailing the awards committee at <awards@ausit.org>.

Celebrate excellence and encourage your profession over a sumptuous dinner in Adelaide on 6 November 2009!

In recent months we've seen a number of positive developments in our industry. One is the unique collaboration between AUSIT and Proz.com, a leading online marketplace for translators. Following the appearance of Proz.com CEO Henry Dotterer at the 2008 AUSIT Biennial Conference in Brisbane, AUSIT and Proz have joined forces to organise the first ever Australian Proz conference. With 8,000+ Proz members, we are looking forward to a large international attendance.

The conference will be held on 7 November 2009 at TAFE SA in Adelaide, and will focus on the changes globalisation brings to our profession. Discussion topics include:

- how we can benefit from a growing global market;
- whether the economic crisis will effect our industry;
- what e-marketing is about and what do we need to know to benefit from it;
- how interpreters can profit from the Internet; and

- how new technologies can aid in professional development and mentoring.

Naturally, networking at this conference is also important, especially since it will provide AUSIT members with overseas contacts.

Register now to benefit from the early bird prices! Registration forms can also be downloaded from the AUSIT website <[http://www.ausit.org/excellence_ awards](http://www.ausit.org/excellence_awards)>.

We're looking forward to seeing you all during this fabulous weekend in Adelaide.

The Excellence Awards Committee
Claudia Ait-Touati, Chairperson,
Michela Schirru, Sponsorship
Coordinator,
Sam Berner, PR Coordinator

Localisation

Serving the global economy

Vivian Stevenson and Ignacio Garcia discuss a (not so new) career path for translators

So, you said you wanted to work in localisation?

You may just have completed your translation degree, or are already somewhat established as a freelancer. And in the 'traditional' markets (personal documents, publishing), prospects are looking a little thin — elusive clients, strong competition, and southbound prices. You've been told that the real demand for translators is in localisation, but wonder what your chances of success are.

There are a few things worth knowing before you take the plunge. You've been prepared to work in translation, by completing a degree or by experience, and although localisation shares some common features, it's nonetheless a completely different beast.

L10n, i18n and g11n

If you are seriously contemplating a tilt at localisation, it is worth stepping back and looking at some context. As long as there have been export markets, there has been a need for translating manuals, instructions, advertising and product information. However, the evolution of global markets underwent an enormous shift in the 1990s with the advent of the Internet and online delivery of services and many products — this brought about big changes in the translation process and goals too.

The companies which saw the emerging opportunities of a globally networked economy started thinking about ways of delivering their products into worldwide markets in the fastest and most competitive way. That meant not just lumping someone in say, Yugoslavia, with a program or product designed with the US consumer in mind, but actually tailoring that product to suit. This involves lots of market research, and a rethink about the design and launch of products so they can be easily tweaked or revamped to fit any desired target market.

This new way of thinking about product design and marketing was dubbed *globalisation* — or *g11n* for short (there being 11 letters between the *g* and the *n*). The globalisation strategy for an enterprise involves two complementary approaches: an overall engineering and product design versatile enough to be adapted to the needs of individual markets (called *internationalisation* or *i18n*, following a similar derivation to *g11n* above) and the actual process of performing this adaptation (called *localisation* or *L10n* — the *L* capitalised to avoid confusion with the *i* in *i18n*). Due to the level of competition involved, globalisation especially prizes speed, or in military terms, getting there 'firstest with the mostest'.

As an example, consider a software company that wants to release an accounting program worldwide. As part of its globalisation strategy, it looks at each individual market and the competing products already there, identifying features and needs, and evaluating its competitive strengths. The company then sets a design team to work to internationalise its software as much as possible by writing the core code that will address all the common features that accounting packages around the world use, plus its own special innovations and modules to address identified in-country needs. This might entail technical issues, such as special accounting categories or tax calculations, but there will also be language-related aspects such as non-Roman characters, right-to-left scripts, different keyboards, and so on. After the code has been tested and debugged, it is ready to be localised by the linguistic team, which translates the user interface, instructions and help sections into the target language. Each localised version is then re-tested by engineers and target language users for functionality, and once cleared is ready to ship.

Of course, globalisation, internationalisation and localisation need not be concerned only with software, but software lends itself more easily to the ideal of simultaneous and instantaneous release. Thus, a television or car manufacturer can usefully implement some features of the globalisation workflow, but is still governed by the reality of making and delivering cumbersome physical products. Globalisation is therefore particularly cutting edge, with Web-enabled products which require on-line updates, patches and so forth. These can still be physical products, such as your computer router, and as such are still subject to hardware upgrades which involve unavoidable delays. Things like computer games and operating systems, however, are essentially disembodied slabs of digital code that can be 'shipped' via Internet at the click of a mouse, and it is here that the dictates of speed and competition are at their most intense.

To summarise then, the ideal of **globalisation** is to have a presence in worldwide markets implemented by **internationalisation**, which involves creating a product template to be (ideally) instantaneously adapted to any market, while **localisation**, which is the actual adaptation process, allows (ideally) simultaneous release of all language versions. And although hardware is not excluded, the real domain is digital.

With this in mind, let's look specifically now at localisation to see what awaits you as a translator.

What distinguishes a localisation text?

What really sets localisation apart is that it entails *random access* to texts in a digitally rich environment, and this is entirely new in our history of reading and writing.

Think for a moment about any computer application you have. In the course of normal use you click on menu buttons, open drop down windows, respond to command prompts and so on. When occasionally you have a problem, you open the 'help' window and search through the relevant subject; inside the help window there are usually links you can click to jump to related topics within the program help, or maybe even hyperlinks enabling you to access more details on the Web.

This pattern of use — jumping to what interests you and skipping everything in between — is typical of the computer

age: it is *random* rather than *sequential* access. Traditionally, texts are written in a linear fashion and are meant to be read from the beginning to the end. Computer-age texts like help manuals, however, should be intelligible wherever you start, with references to point you backwards, forwards or even outwards(!) to find exactly what you need to get the job done.

Reading in a digital environment, as opposed to a printed one, is therefore like suddenly living with an added dimension. Whereas we might conceive of the printed word as existing on a flat linear plane, a true digital text is more like a three-dimensional space where you can walk along flat sections (linear reading), but also climb up or down ladders (menus and cascaded windows), or even disappear through a wormhole (hyperlink) into another text altogether. 'Googling' and reading newspapers on-line are good illustrative examples.

The people who write digital texts are therefore thinking about the screen and interactive use, not the printer and passive reading. They have to produce consistent, self-contained descriptions that suit random access, and consequently the style tends to be redundant, mechanical, and repetitive. The grammar will also normally be simplified to facilitate reader understanding and of course translation (including machine translation, MT) if possible.

What does translating for localisation involve?

From the above it is obvious that localisation certainly involves translation *per se*, since it requires conveying written content from one language into another — although in this case the flow is mostly one way — with English being the primary source as the dominant global language of commerce and development. The process can also require adaptation, encompassing the familiar approach plus techniques of free (non-literal) translation.

Speed is vital, so new versions will ideally be created by quick and simple increments or amendments to the old. Repetition of course invites re-use, and avoidance of re-translating anything that has been done before. With consistency, reusability and functionality being keys, attention must be paid not only to the source text, but also to accompanying memories and glossaries (which also expand over time). All this of course means that translation memory (TM) software or even more purpose-specific localisation tools are a must.

As for conditions, translators work on disconnected parts of an enormous whole, normally under a tight deadline, and often within a team scattered over different countries and time zones, whose only intercommunication is what each member sends to the project memory for another to possibly reuse.

The material itself can be opaque and dull: written to facilitate user searches, it can appear disjointed and repetitive — anathema to many who have learned to prize the exact opposite in language.

As remarked above, there is some overlap between translating in general (for print, you could say), and for localisation. Here we will ignore the common features and focus on the differences that set hard-core localisation apart - that is, what it takes to localise software, user interfaces (UI) and user assistance (UA – those voluminous help and documentation files).

Take, for example UIs — drop-down menus, toolbars, context-sensitive help, error messages. It is here, with text strings and computer code intertwined, and minimal or zero context until you run the program, where localisation becomes a different profession. Strictly speaking, you cannot claim true localiser status until you have met and dealt with this kind of situation. And if you can handle it, then congratulations, because there is a shortage of these skills and demand exceeds supply.

Part 2 — 'Starting up in localisation', continues in the autumn 2009 issue.

Three book reviews

The first, *On the Smell of an Oily Rag — Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian*, is by a Victorian colleague, the Chinese translator-poet-writer Ouyang Yu. I've been savouring this book for several months, reading each chapter slowly and as a separate course, because it has had a positively reflection-inducing effect on me. Not only have I learned some fascinating characteristics of the Chinese language and culture, but the book has compelled me to make comparisons with my own language.

Interestingly, I have found quite a few similarities between Chinese and Hungarian! This is an inspiration for exploring conventions in language usage, and a great way to consciously explore idioms and collocations in your

own language.

The second book is a biographical novel which I devoured instantly. *Ivan: from the Adriatic to the Pacific* was written by Coral Petkovic of Perth. Coral is an Australian-born Croatian translator and interpreter, who sets out to tell the story of her late husband's life. The account of minor and major events is spaced very evenly; the insights feel true and the characters all credible. Ivan was born in pre-WWII Rijeka in Croatia, migrated to Western Australia as a young adult, established a family here, then took them back to his homeland. He was a strong individual with clear goals and a well-defined set of values; I now feel as if I knew him in person! Coral describes characters, events and backgrounds elegantly with an honest directness that

makes reading her award-winning novel very satisfying.

Congratulations to both authors. The books can be ordered directly from them, with their contact details easily obtained through the 'Find a translator' search at <www.ausit.org>.

The third book published relatively recently is Associate Professor and AUSIT member Sandra Hale's *Community Interpreting*. On its way to becoming the seminal work in T&I studies and in wider academic circles, this volume is already on the bookshelves of all serious interpreters. You can order it through your favourite bookshop, in person or online.

*Annamaria Arnall
WA Branch*

Mentoring new T/Is

Queensland's Sam Berner finds it worthwhile and enriching

I will never forget the incident when, at one of my exhausting and exhaustive workshops, a well-established colleague asked me if I wasn't afraid to share so much of what I knew with other translators. Seeing puzzlement on my face, she explained, 'Aren't you afraid they will take work away from you?'

Well, the answer is a resounding 'No' — for a number of reasons. One, there is plenty of work around for those who know how to find it. Two, I have enough confidence in my capabilities to know I won't be losing clients to newbies. Three, and this is most important, I don't see people I mentor as 'competition', but rather as long-term alliances for the future.

I have mentored most of my adult life: working with new teachers when I was a school principal, with new writers as a publisher, and with new translators as an experienced one. There is nothing highly structured in what I do: I follow my intuition and good sense in deciding who will benefit from my knowledge. This has been extremely rewarding, not just emotionally, but professionally and financially as well. Many of those I mentor have particular skills and gifts that complement mine, thus facilitating the creation of healthy working teams.

At another professional gathering, a colleague told me rather haughtily, 'No one mentored me. I had to learn everything alone from scratch. Why should I offer it on a plate to someone else?' I thought to myself, God, if we only had more people willing to mentor more often, we would have fewer of such psychologically scarred humans around. Mentoring is not 'giving it on a plate' to those you mentor, it is a relationship-building exercise that enriches both parties in the relationship.

I am increasingly finding out that the newer generation of translators, especially those arriving from Europe with T&I qualifications, have a lot to offer in this relationship. They have a much more cosmopolitan view of the profession and their grasp of the theory, which most of us start to forget in the hustle of everyday work, is still fresh. It often happens that the mentoring goes both ways. As Galileo Galilei said, 'I have never met a man so ignorant that

I couldn't learn something from him.'

Many professional organisations as well as commercial corporations have official mentoring programs. The American Translators' Association (ATA) has one in place, 'established to develop and implement a program to train ATA members as mentors and people they mentor in an enhanced, informal mentoring relationship.' Mentors get awarded PD points for participating; there are workshops on how to do it.

I am aware there are those among us who love to mentor, but aren't very sure how to go about it. Some fear they might not have the resources — especially, the time. I would like to state here what mentorship is categorically not:

- It is not an act of professional 'baby-sitting'. It is more an act of teaching how to ride a bike. You don't do it all day, seven days a week. And if you do it right, then the person you mentor should be cycling up the hill in 6-12 months. Electronic communication has made life so much easier.
- It does not include setting up businesses for people you mentor, but it can include looking over their feasibility studies, business plans and marketing exercises (you might make them better, but who knows, you might also learn a new approach from them).
- It does not involve giving those you mentor jobs, or sharing your clients with them, unless you are so inclined. I do recommend to clients the people I mentor, if they are not working in my language pair.

I was very pleased to see that a number of experienced AUSIT members are mentoring already — albeit outside of their official AUSIT capacity. At the AUSIT Biennial Conference in Brisbane, long-time Vic/Tas member Eva Hussain gave a very interesting presentation called 'Injecting new blood into T&I' in which she explained how her own mentoring program at Polaron is being run. She stressed the fact that the majority of us are over 45 years old — aptly termed *Translatosauruses* — and that AUSIT faces extinction, if we don't start mentoring the newer generation. Eva strongly believes that surrounding

yourself with young, enthusiastic and innovative people is the only way to progress in this industry — or any other industry for that matter. Otherwise we risk getting left behind. Her suggestions were summarised as follows:

- Talk to people wanting to get in
- Mentor new starters
- Support student placements
- Support internships programs
- Support students in AUSIT
- Get information
- Move with the times

I am aware that others are doing this as well. Worried about the lack of Greek-language interpreters in Qld because of attrition due to old age and illness, the ever-active Effie Antoniou has been mentoring young Australian Greeks in Brisbane for the past three years, preparing them for their NAATI exams. In WA, Trish Will is doing her bit, and trying to get others interested. Silvana Pavlovska is taking on young T/Is through traineeships at the International Interpreting Agency. I met some of her trainees at my workshops. Brad Paez (Vic) has prepared a research proposal to look into issues vital to students — such as English competency and localisation issues, and is working with the Professional Development Committee on specific activities to help students learn about and become committed to the industry. Moira Nolan has been working tirelessly in Tasmania, running crash courses since 2004; she has a new 'interpreting study group' this year.

I am sure there are tens of others motivated by their commitment to professionalism and improving this industry. All we need is to streamline it somehow, make sure that information will be shared between the mentors, and ensure there is a targeting policy aiming at beefing up our membership and preventing us from joining the exhibits of some natural history museum. And this is what the National PD Committee is looking into doing (see page 6 of this issue).

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, contact the Committee through myself:

<sberner@arabic.com.au> or Andre:
<andre@languageadvantage.com.au>.

Language of politics vs. politics of language

Alison Rodriguez of AUSIT Qld dares to dream of a possible new era for linguists

It seems, in the United States at least, the unthinkable has happened.

Not only does the USA now have its first Afro-American president, it seems it may also have a president who knows and cares about language. Barack Obama has shown himself to be a skilled orator and rhetorician; called more sharply into focus because he takes over from President George W. Bush, perhaps the least skilled orator the White House has seen. Where Obama seemed to sail through his speeches with a triumphant flourish, Bush stumbled and stalled. Unable to even begin to answer some questions, his now famous malapropisms (or *Bushisms*) made even his better speeches sound unconvincing. (As the comedian Rory Bremner noted, he would oscillate between moments of Homer and Homer Simpson.)

Of the candidates in the recent presidential race, Obama made the most forthright comments on language education and diversity seen for some time, perhaps brought on by his own experience of being educated in a foreign language. He went to primary school in Jakarta, while living there with his mother and Indonesian step-father. In a speech last July in the State of Georgia, he said, 'Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English — they'll learn English — you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish. You should be thinking about how your child can become bilingual. We should have every child speaking more than one language.' He found it laughable some still insisted that Americans 'need English only' and that Americans 'go over to Europe and all we can say is *merci beaucoup*.'

Needless to say, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was 'thrilled' Obama had highlighted the issue of foreign language learning. The Council's Executive Director Bret Lovejoy said Obama's statements were important because 'many Americans feel they don't need to learn another language, and that is a dangerous mindset in today's world.'

In the United States bilingual education is a heated political issue, because it ties in tightly with the issue of immigration, in particular illegal immigration from south of the border. There has been a huge and powerful swing towards dismantling any previous transitional bilingual education (set up mainly for Spanish-speaking immigrants) and pursuing English-only education for all students. Since the 1980s, presidential candidates have courted Spanish-speaking voters, as did George W Bush, who conversely then went on to pass the *No child left behind Act* which was to restrict bilingual education.

While recent worldwide events have changed the view of foreign language learning at a political if not popular level, the move to legislate for English-only has continued. In 2006, 63 Senators (including John McCain) voted for the *National English Amendment to the Senate Immigration Reform Act* which was to preserve English as the national language. The Democrats had an alternative amendment that affirmed English as the nation's 'common unifying' language while also supporting the rights of 'linguistically diverse Americans'.

President Obama has openly supported 'English plus' which advocates that children should learn English plus another language. He supports transitional bilingual education to aid children of Spanish-speaking families, who can fall behind in English immersion programs, and has stated 'Foreign languages is one of those areas that has been neglected. I want to put more resources into it'. This can only be good. Children who grow up in a culture where their family or heritage language is valued have higher self-esteem and are more likely to maintain rather than reject that language. Research by Professor Colin Baker at the University of Wales has found that children exposed to learning a second language not only show improved conceptual and lateral thinking, but also greater empathy and understanding of cultural differences.

If Barack Obama is as good as his

word, Change could be about to hit the US. With some luck, being the first Afro-American President will not be his only legacy. If Obama does succeed in following through on his rhetoric, we could see an elevation of the status of languages other than English, as well as an increase in the number of students who choose to study languages. A new era for linguists, in a political panorama which is more tolerant and more engaged with the global reality?

We have a dream...

"In a speech last July in the State of Georgia, he [Obama] said, 'Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English — they'll learn English — you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish. You should be thinking about how your child can become bilingual. We should have every child speaking more than one language.'"

News and views from 'across the ditch'

Patrick Geddes, Editor of NZSTI's *Word for Word*

This will hopefully be the first of many news briefs from the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) designed to keep you abreast of events and developments in the NZ T&I scene.

NZSTI Conference 2009, Wellington

The flagship event on the NZSTI calendar, its annual conference, will be held in Wellington on the weekend of 11-12 July 2009. The theme is: *Te Māramatanga mā te Reo — Understanding through Language*. The conference will be run jointly with Te Kāhui Kaiwhakamāori o Aotearoa (the Māori language translators group) with the support of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori/the Māori Language Commission. Sessions are expected to run from 9am to 5pm on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 July, with there being the potential for both plenary and concurrent presentations. Optional workshops and tours will be offered on Monday 13 July.

Call for papers

The conference committee is aiming to achieve a balanced programme of topics relevant to both interpreters and translators. Proposals are invited for presentations that fit with the conference theme and are well suited to the interests of the target audience of professional translators and interpreters, academics, educators, provider agencies and service users.

Interested speakers are invited to send an abstract (approximately 300 words) of their proposed presentation and some biographical details of themselves by **Monday 16 March 2009** to <nzsticonference2009@gmail.com>. Notifications will be made by 9 April 2009, and selected speakers are asked to confirm by 30 April 2009. All presenters must register for the conference at their own expense. If you wish to discuss your requirements with someone please call Christine Goodman on +64 4 916 2463.

Registration information for attendees will be distributed soon. AUSIT members are very welcome and will be offered the same registration fee as NZSTI members.

NZSTI soon to have a new face

NZSTI will soon launch a reconfigured and redesigned version of its website <www.nzsti.org>. The main impetus behind the reconfiguration is NZSTI's desire to provide greater benefit to its membership. This will be done through the creation of a new members-only section and discussion forum, as well as increased email functionality. External users of the website will experience a more user-friendly directory and a forum by which translation jobs can be posted online. New members will also be able to make applications online.

Our FIT representative reports

Those who attended the FIT Conference in Shanghai in 2008 would have witnessed the election of Dr Henry Liu, our immediate past-President, to the FIT Executive Council. Since then Henry has attended his first meeting of the Executive Committee of FIT in Paris, France, at which FIT's policy direction for the next three years was established. At this meeting he was given the following specific roles: Commissioner to establish an international database of complaints and disciplinary decisions; Member of the Community Interpreting Subcommittee; Member of the Legal Interpreting and Translation Subcommittee; Liaison Officer for all FIT members south of the equator (except South American members); Member of the Website Subcommittee; and Member of the PR subcommittee.

Some of the goals identified at the meeting included re-establishing the accountability and credibility of FIT through transparent meetings, better consultation and involvement of membership organisations, as well as transparent budgeting. There was also recognition of the need to improve the image of FIT inside and outside the profession, which resulted in the creation of a new PR subcommittee.

This is a fantastic opportunity to have a direct influence on the future direction of FIT as well as increase FIT's awareness of the issues facing NZ- and Australian-based practitioners. Henry is your representative at FIT and can be contacted at <liu@ihug.co.nz>.



NZSTI's Sybille Ferner at the AUSIT Conference

As mentioned in the last edition of *Word for Word*, closer cooperation with our colleagues in Australia is a high priority for the new NZSTI Council. This was very evident at the Biennial AUSIT Conference held in Brisbane in November, which was attended by about a dozen NZSTI members, including myself, our Vice-President Patrick King, Treasurer Isabelle Poff-Pencolé, and Council members Christine Goodman and Ian Cormack. We were made to feel extremely welcome by the conference organisers and AUSIT Council members, and we held an informal meeting to discuss what form this closer cooperation might take. The options range from mutual recognition, promotion of activities to sharing of information and resources. Watch this space!

While academic and literary translation topics were also represented, most of the papers presented addressed practical topics such as exporting services, NAATI revalidation, international standards, revising and reviewing, ethics, tools and technology.

It was certainly a very worthwhile experience, both professionally and for trans-Tasman bridge-building. We hope to welcome many Australian colleagues at NZSTI's 2009 conference.

Sybille Ferner is a founder member of the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters and has been a member of the NZSTI Council for many years. For the last four years Sybille has been President of NZSTI's Auckland branch. She also helped organise the last two NZSTI annual conferences in Auckland.

Third Conference of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS)

8-10 July 2009 Monash University (Caulfield Campus)

This major international conference offers more than 300 presenters from over 34 countries. The conference theme, **Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context**, embraces a wide range of topics including: globalisation and localisation; cultural translation; the role of literary translation in challenging or reinforcing cultural difference; intercultural relations; gender, sexuality and norms in intercultural studies; transnational media; issues in signed languages interpreting and translation; intercultural mediation, including community interpreting and translation; political and ideological dimensions of translation. There will also be more than twenty special panels on a range of topics, as well as four pre-conference workshops offered on 7 July (see below).

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS AND TOPICS

Martha Cheung — *Rethinking activism: The power and dynamics of translation in China during the late Qing period (1840-1911)*

Josie Guy and Rose Laynbalaynba — *A tsunami after a disaster: long-term implications of the Northern Territory emergency response*

Francis Jones — *The personal is interpersonal is political: Modelling translation and conflict*

Jeff McWhinney — *The impact of video communication technologies on sign language users and interpreters*

Sehnaž Tahir-Gürçađlar — *A 'secularising' translation: the call to prayer in Turkish*

In addition to a full three-day conference program, there will be four pre-conference workshops offered on Tuesday 7 July.

Workshop A – Tuesday 7 July, 10.30am-12.30pm

Translation and/or creation in multilingual broadcasting

Mark Cummins, Content Manager and Pavla Hulova, Editorial Standards Manager, Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia.

SBS Radio, with its 68 language programs, is the most linguistically

diverse broadcaster in the world. Based in Australia, SBS relies on English, but its unique diversity inevitably generates specific editorial, production and evaluation challenges.

- Do we 'translate' the news from English to languages or do we 'create' the news in other languages?
- What is the role of translation in multilingual media production?
- What are the benefits of common language as a tool for achieving editorial integrity?
- Is translation always helpful when evaluating a program in a language unknown to the assessor?
- To what extent does common language mean common content?

Workshop B – Tuesday 7 July, 11am-12.30pm

Mind the gap: A practical workshop on translation projects

Eva Hussain, Director of Polaron Language Services and Vice President of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT).

This hands-on, practical workshop will explore misconceptions, beliefs and gaps that develop between clients and translation businesses. Using a real-life case study, the workshop will also cover some strategies to bridge the gap and manage client expectations by putting translators into customers' shoes. Translation business owners wear many hats, including those of salesman, marketing executive, educator, bookkeeper, secretary, IT specialist, cleaner and CEO. At times, the translation itself comes last on the To Do list. So how do you juggle all these jobs, maintain your sanity, make a decent living and produce fit-for-purpose translations? If you often make promises you can't keep, under-quote on a regular basis and wish that you could spend more time on what you do best – translating – this workshop is for you!

Maximum 30 participants.

Workshop C – Tuesday 7 July, 1.30-4.30pm

Analysing translation corpora

Michael Barlow, University of Auckland.

The aim of this hands-on workshop is to explore the potential of viewing translated texts as parallel corpora. We will introduce and practise the application of corpus analysis tools and techniques to translation and contrastive studies. The bulk of the workshop will focus on the use of a bilingual concordancer, *ParaConc*, which is used to search for patterns in aligned parallel corpora.

Participants will learn practical techniques in corpus analysis during the workshop and will also gain an understanding of the wider issues relating to the use of parallel corpora in research and translation studies.

Maximum 20 participants.

Workshop D – Tuesday 7 July, 1.30-4.30pm

AALITRA literary translation workshop

This interactive workshop will be coordinated by Jeremy Munday, University of Leeds, and Harry Aveling, Monash University and Immediate Past President of the Australian Association for Literary Translation (AALITRA).

The workshop will begin with a brief talk by Jeremy on literary translation, after which the participants will break into smaller, language-specific groups (max. 10 participants), in order to discuss participants' translations of a work selected in advance. Participants will need to submit their translations in advance so that copies can be made available to other members of their group.

Languages available (subject to numbers, maximum 10 participants per language): Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. Participants need to register in advance.

More information is available at <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/lcl/conferences/iatis09/>.

Online registration is open and a draft program will be available in March. AUSIT is a silver sponsor of the event — members will receive generous discounts on registration and be able to claim 40 PD points per day attended.

To register please visit <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/lcl/conferences/iatis09/registration.php>.

If you would like to be included in the conference mailing list, please write to: IATIS.Abstracts@arts.monash.edu.au.

Working as a subtitler

NSW Branch PD event — Sarah Walls interviews Clémence Duprat

How did you first get interested in subtitling?

I have always been interested in foreign languages. After my Bachelor's degree, I did all my studies in English and Spanish, travelled a lot in Spain and England, completed a one-year university exchange in London, and I watched a lot of subtitled foreign films and series. With the market in multilingual DVDs growing, and the development in France of satellite channels broadcasting subtitled or dubbed programmes, I realised there was a real demand for translators in this area.

What sort of training did you do and where?

I first applied for an internship in London, at Visiontext (a subtitling company) during my last year of studies in foreign languages. I went there for three months, where I mostly translated DVD extras (directors' commentaries, interviews, etc.) and short films from English into French. This was a very interesting first experience and it confirmed that I wanted to qualify in this field. So I looked for training in France and applied for a Master's degree in technical translation, specialising in audiovisual translation (subtitling, dubbing and voice-over). I did that for one year in Toulouse in both English and Spanish.

There we were trained thoroughly in technical translation in different fields: economics, marketing, legal - even aeronautics.

As for audiovisual translation, the training was complete, with theoretical training in cinema, audiovisual techniques, and practical training. We practised our subtitling techniques in the studios of France Televisions, working on a film that was broadcast for the opening of a film festival. We also worked for several festivals during the year, subtitling English or Spanish films into French. We worked as interpreters there too, interpreting what was being said during debates and conferences into English for foreign viewers. They relied entirely on us to understand what was being said and to interpret if they wanted to intervene in the debates.

Once you qualified, how difficult was it to get your first job?

In France, at the end of your Master's degree you have to do an internship of three months to complete your degree. My subtitling teacher advised me of a company in Paris that was looking for someone. I did an internship there, translating (voice-over, subtitling and dubbing) American programmes into French for the French satellite channels. I also subtitled French programmes into English for international film festivals.

After the internship the company hired me, and I stayed there for almost four years — there was no difficulty in finding a job. My colleagues from my Master's degree found jobs quite easily as well, as they became freelance translators, working mainly for American firms in the international DVD market.

You've also done 'live' subtitling at film festivals. What was that like and what were the pitfalls?

'Live' subtitling was very stressful. We watched the films in advance and prepared the translation according to the script provided, then laid out our translation in the form of subtitles, with one subtitle per PowerPoint slide. Then, with a computer and PowerPoint file, we sat above the cinema room near the projectionist's cabin, and launched our subtitles live during the showing of the film.

You had to be really careful to follow the film cautiously and not miss a thing. You also had to be aware of the 'rhythm' of the film and obviously start the subtitles at the right time. We only used that process for short films lasting no more than 20 minutes because it was very tiring. So the main pitfall was the stress, but at the same time it was very good experience. It showed us an aspect of subtitling we hadn't heard of, and how you can subtitle programmes and make them accessible to a foreign public even if you can't afford the latest software.

We received good feedback about this 'live' subtitling, and the viewers were quite happy with the result. They understood the films and didn't miss a thing, which reflected well on us!

What are the differences between subtitling for speakers of another language and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing?

At a technical level, when subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing you have a whole set of rules to apply concerning the colour used to identify the speaker (the main character is generally white, and after that, it depends on the channel - they all have different rules), the way to write sound effects (in the company I am working for we use capital letters in blue font on a white background), and the vocabulary used to describe those sound effects.

On the other hand, when subtitling in another language, the subtitles are generally white, and distinguished with dashes for dialogue when a new person is speaking. You don't use different colours, so it's much easier in that sense.

As to the writing itself, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing obviously doesn't involve a translation process. It's a totally different approach - you just have to pick up correctly what is being said in the programme and then transcribe it into subtitles. But you have to be very precise and accurate, write all the sounds and obviously, your grammar and spelling have to be perfect (as with subtitling in another language).

Subtitling in another language is much more difficult in the sense that you have to understand perfectly what is being said, then translate it into another language. What's more, when subtitling into another language, the main constraints of time and space — transcribing your message in a minimum number of characters per line — become much more of a problem.

When subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, you have to put as much information as possible, so you almost write down everything you hear. But when translating, what's expressed in one sentence in the film can sometimes be translated in three lines in another language. You have to cut and edit almost every sentence. In my case, the French language is much longer than the English language, so when subtitling from English into French, you have to

be careful and concise. On the other hand, when I translated the other way, I found it easier.

Even though these two activities require the same technical knowledge, they require totally different skills and are two very different jobs.

What are the attractions of subtitling and where do you think the best opportunities lie?

Subtitling is a challenging and fulfilling job. You have to do everything you can to transcribe a message from one language to another, and you make it possible for viewers of another country to watch foreign films. It's also very interesting to find ways of being concise, and to shorten dialogue to fit into two lines without losing track of the original message. You can spend hours on a sentence, trying to find which expression is relevant in what context, etc. When you manage to do it, it's so satisfying.

What's more, subtitling is a job where every day is different. The programmes you work on are really varied, and it's exciting to always watch new programmes and discover things.

So far, I have worked on a whole range of different programmes: reality TV programmes for the French channels (*America's Next Top Model*, *The Bachelor* and similar programmes), documentaries for festivals, short films, animations and children's programmes, educational programmes and more. You never know what's next.

As for opportunities, I am not really aware of the subtitling market in Australia yet, apart from the work at SBS. But I have many friends who are working as freelancers for companies in the United States, and creating subtitles for the DVD market. If you want to work as a freelancer, I think there are many possibilities in the field, and a great demand for qualified translators.

Branch news

Qld

Happy New Year from the Qld Branch. After a well-deserved rest over the Christmas period, the ever active Sunshine State branch kicked off the Year of the Ox with the popular 'chat breakfast' held at Chez Laila and organised by our PD Coordinator Sam Berner. A total of 25 people, members and new faces alike, came together for coffee and breakfast on the banks of the Brisbane River. Discussions continued well past the specified time, and we were all thankful to the cafe owners for not moving us on!

Some of the issues discussed were pay rates and the wording of the certification of translated documents, as well as the need for a permanent training venue for the Qld branch. Translators just entering the profession, especially those who have arrived in Australia recently, aren't sure when they are required to certify a translation and how to do that. Currently there is no standard wording they can refer to, particularly when certifying a translation of an official or legal document. Obviously different translators are doing this in different ways. The discussion was taken on board by our Secretary, Rona Zhang, and we plan to deliver a short workshop on the issue.

Planned PD events for the year include a Wordfast training workshop, a presentation on intellectual property and copyright legislation affecting translators, interpreting in the legal field, a small-business workshop and more.

Another PD event is the fabulous foreign movie deal the Qld branch started in 2008. AUSIT has negotiated a deal with Think Tank Communications on behalf of various Qld Film Distributors, whereby AUSIT Qld receives 20 free tickets to award-winning foreign language movies in return for sending the movie information to its members. As these are foreign language movies, AUSIT members receive 20 PD points for attending the free movie. What a deal! The upcoming film festivals are not part of the free ticket deal, but attendance will also grant AUSIT members 20 PD points. Just keep your movie tickets for your records.

AUSIT's corporate networking efforts with AUSTRADE have also been fruitful, meaning the AUSIT website and contact

details were included in AUSTRADE's latest corporate newsletter distributed to over ten thousand corporate contacts (mostly exporting businesses who require translations) Australia-wide.

Behind the scenes

Our tireless Treasurer Julie Segal is being supported by charming Assistant Treasurer Max De Montaigne. Our ever-active and restless uber-mentor, PD Coordinator and unofficial head honcho Sam Berner is flying around the country giving PD sessions in Canberra and Vic/Tas, with other sessions planned for NSW and SA. Our Secretary Rona Zhang is teaching two subjects for the Master of Arts programme in translation and interpreting (Chinese and English) at Queensland University as well as doing her PhD in translation and interpreting studies (cross-cultural conflicts in legal interpreting) while our Assistant Secretary (and National Secretary) Ilke Brueckner-Klein juggles several AUSIT positions at the same time, yet still did a three-day bike tour in the Victorian Alps covering around 120 km per day. Last but not least, our writer-in-residence Alison Rodriguez is busy editing the conference proceedings, for publication in June 2009.

*Tea Dietterich, Qld Branch Chair
Sam Berner, PD Coordinator*

Vic/Tas

As we struggle to comprehend the scale of the bushfire disaster in Victoria, we spare a thought for our members in affected areas, hoping they have been spared personal and material loss.

The year has started strongly for Vic/Tas, with an assortment of valuable and interesting PD events scheduled. The Committee has also decided in favour of the re-inception of *Bennelong*, our branch newsletter, in electronic format, as an environmentally friendly and cost-effective way of maintaining contact with our members. Contributions from colleagues are always welcome.

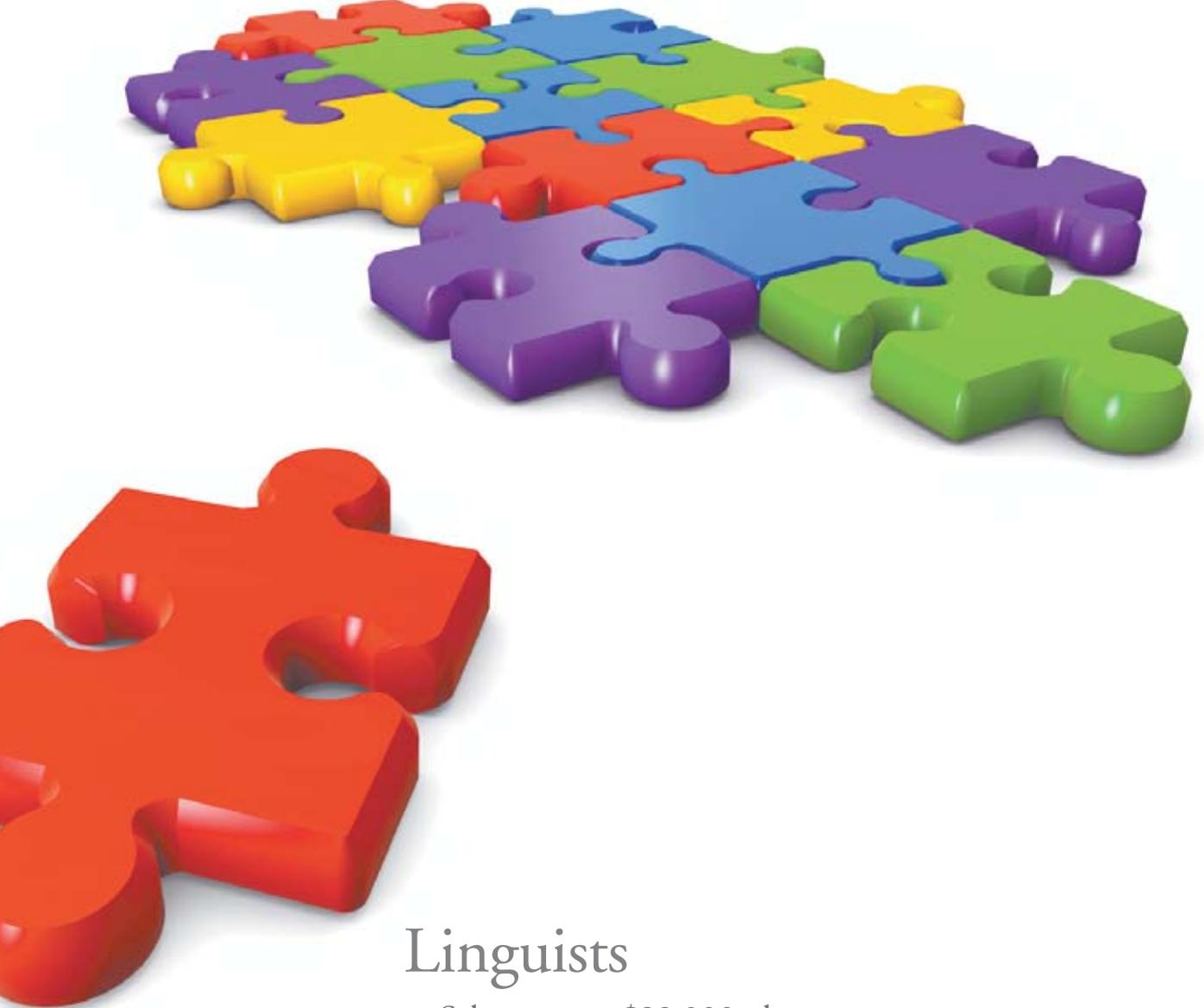
Upcoming PD events in Victoria

Fri 27 March — Networking evening with guest speaker

Fri 24 April — Cultural identity of interpreters

Sat 23 May — Business skills for T/Is

Andre Bevez, Vic/Tas Branch Chair



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do – constantly looking to develop your linguistic skills. We'll also consider those with native speaker proficiency or non-native speakers with a tertiary qualification in a foreign language but with limited professional experience. Multiple language skills will be viewed favourably.

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Closing date: Monday, 2 March 2009.