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# ITIA BULLETIN

April 2007

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ITIA Bulletin

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**Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association**  
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## ■ Editorial

Dear Readers,

Certification is big news in the world of T/I. The ITIA has been making moves in this area and has recently awarded certification status to members for the first time. See below for the roll of honour. This development furthers the image of the association as a serious and professional body.

This month's issue also contains the first part of an article on the history of certification in the U.S. and recommendations for how it should progress in the future. While this article is primarily about the American experience, it is an excellent overview on factors for consideration in the certification process.

Read on!

**Elizabeth Hayes**  
Editor ITIA Bulletin  
elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie

## ■ ITIA Event: Celebration of Translation

Saturday, 12 May 2007, at 7pm  
Irish Writers' Centre  
19, Parnell Square, Dublin 1

This annual event to celebrate the work of ITIA members will focus on literary translation this year with talks by the following speakers:

- ◆ Cormac Ó Cuilleainín:  
*"Translators: Now you see them ...."*
- ◆ Jenny Williams:  
*"Not to hide but to reveal": The aim of literary translation?*
- ◆ Aodh Ó Cannain:  
*"Feeling at home in Europe / The gift of the literary translator"*

As part of this year's Celebration of Translation, Honorary Membership will be conferred on Cormac Ó Cuilleainín, co-founder of the ITIA.

The evening will include a wine reception.

All welcome

## ■ Racist sofa may end in compensation settlement

A poor translation in the Chinese-English dictionary of the MT system of a furniture company has unexpectedly triggered a complaint from an African-American woman, who bought a sofa bearing an offensive label.

Doris Moore was at a loss for words when the sofa arrived at her home in Toronto, Ontario, and her seven-year-old daughter pointed at "nigger brown" on the tag.

The label reads as follows:

**Item:** Abby  
**Description:** Sofa  
**Color:** Nigger-brown  
**Net weight:** 67kg

Moore complained to the furniture store but they blamed the supplier, and they in turn blamed the manufacturing company which is based in the Guangdong Province in south China.

Eventually, the problem was blamed on a poor Chinese-English computer translation program, which is made by Beijing-based software company Kingsoft Corp.

Kingsoft acknowledged its translation program was at fault and said it was a regrettable error. A representative from Kingsoft said the firm had been using the dictionary for 10 years and that it had likely been updated, but Kingsoft didn't buy a newer version.

In the updated version of the 2007 program, the offensive translation no longer appears. However, when the N-word is typed into the program in English, the Chinese characters still appear as "dark brown."

Doris Moore consulted with a lawyer at the Ontario Human Rights Commission about seeking compensation. The commission said the case is in the initial stages now and could take six months to two years to resolve.

## ■ ITIA Certified Translator status

The title of 'ITIA Certified Translator' is awarded to a professional member of the ITIA who has been successful in the examination set by the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association / Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann. It entitles the translator to certify 'Translations to be used in a legal context' in the language combination in which the translator has been successfully examined.

The following ITIA professional members are now on the panel of 'ITIA Certified Translators':

Number	Name	Language Combination
CT01	Bassia Bannister	Polish>English English>Polish
CT02	Anne Fox	French>English
CT03	Bernadette Moynihan	French>English
CT04	Iris Schoenauer-Alvaro	Spanish>German English>German
CT06	Aurora Palacin	English>Spanish
CT07	Olga Farrell	English>Russian
CT08	Sarah-Jane Aberasturi	Spanish>English
CT09	Marcin Szulc	Polish>English English>Polish
CT11	Lucia Alonso	English>Spanish
CT12	Miriam Watchorn	French>English

Congratulations to all!

## ■ New Members of the ITIA

The ITIA welcomes the following new members...

### New Ordinary Member

UNA McMAHON  
Mont Robin  
Ballyshannon  
Carbury  
Co Kildare  
Tel: 046 9552689  
email: jrafter(a)iol.ie  
French to English

### New Undergraduate Member

ELIZABETH HASSETT  
56 Orlynn Park  
Lusk  
Co Dublin  
Tel: 01 8437149  
mobile: 086 1618901  
email: elizabeth.hassett2(a)mail.dcu.ie

### New Corporate Member

MERRILL BRINK INTERNATIONAL  
Unit 2  
Ballybrit Business Park  
Galway  
Tel: 091 771185  
email: Valerie-Anne.Keribin(a)merrillbrink.com  
Website: www.merrillbrink.com  
Contact: Valérie-Anne Keribin, language team leader.  
Translation of technical, medical, IT, marketing, legal and financial documents.

### Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is always delighted to welcome new members to the Association. There are five categories of membership:

- ◆ Ordinary
- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Corporate
- ◆ Concession (undergraduate & senior citizen)
- ◆ Honorary

*Ordinary membership* is open to anyone with an interest in translating or interpreting. *Professional membership* is for those who meet strict criteria set by the professional membership committee of the ITIA and which is part of the drive to raise the status of the profession in the European market.

*Corporate membership* is for firms and agencies associated with the profession while *concession membership* is for undergraduate students engaged in third level language and/or translation studies and senior citizens. Finally, *honorary membership* is intended for national and international persons who have distinguished themselves in our professional field.

For more information on how to join as well as for the relevant application forms, visit the ITIA website at:  
[www.translatorsassociation.ie](http://www.translatorsassociation.ie)

## ■ SDL to takeover Tridion

SDL International announced recently that it has signed an agreement to acquire Tridion, one of the leading providers of enterprise class Web Content Management (WCM) solutions. Under the terms of the agreement, SDL will pay \$94 million (£47 million), which includes \$22m (£11 million) of cash in the Tridion business. The transaction is expected to close in May 2007.

SDL's acquisition of Tridion is intended to strengthen SDL's position in Global Information Management by adding a WCM solution to the SDL solutions portfolio.

"In today's competitive landscape, global trade is an imperative that companies cannot ignore," said Mark Lancaster, Chairman and Chief Executive of SDL. "The combination of SDL's translation management system, providing supply chain management and a virtual centralized multilingual repository, combined with Tridion's advanced WCM technology will enable corporations to conquer the significant language barriers that often stifle the globalization of their businesses. The combined solution creates a Global Web Content Management solution which will allow companies to not only create, but specifically maintain multi-lingual web experience for their customers.

"At a time when access to information is the currency of business, information assets are critical to the current and future competitiveness of any organization. Tridion enables organizations to use information efficiently and effectively in order to achieve their business goals. Tridion's unique *BluePrinting* technology enables organizations to address and respond to new markets using local knowledge while maintaining strong control of their brand."

The next issue of the ITIA Bulletin will be out in May 2007. If you have any contributions, suggestions or scandals that you would like to share with over 990 subscribers worldwide, send them to Elizabeth Hayes at [elizabeth.hayes7\(a\)mail.dcu.ie](mailto:elizabeth.hayes7(a)mail.dcu.ie).

### Subscribing to the ITIA Bulletin

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## ■ Situation worsens in Afghanistan

In last month's issue, we reported on how Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo was released from captivity in exchange for prisoners in Afghanistan. The release was widely condemned as many felt that giving in to the demands of hostage-takers put the lives of other westerners in jeopardy. Furthermore, the exchange bargain brokered by the Italian government did nothing to help the situation of Ajmal Naqshbandi, an Afghan who was captured at the same time. Naqshbandi was travelling with Mastrogiacomo and an Afghan driver when all three were kidnapped. The driver was beheaded in the early days of the kidnapping. It was widely reported that Naqshbandi was working as an interpreter for Mastrogiacomo but the Afghan's father released a statement requesting that his son be referred to as a reporter, not an interpreter. His insistence on this may have been an effort to distance his son from the Italian. Alas to no avail for on April 8th, Naqshbandi was beheaded by the Taliban. Shahabuddin Atal, who claimed to be a spokesman for the regional Taliban commander released the following statement, "We asked for two Taliban commanders to be released in exchange for Ajmal Naqshbandi, but the government did not care for our demands, and today, at 3.05pm, we beheaded Ajmal in Garmsir district of Helmand province. When we demanded the exchange for the Italian journalist, the government released the prisoners, but for the Afghan journalist, the government did not care."

One of two French aid workers was recently released by the Taliban who are demanding that French troops leave Afghanistan in exchange for the remaining hostage. Nicolas Sarkozy, frontrunner in the presidential campaign, stated that he does not see a long-term presence for French troops in Afghanistan.

In this troubled region, the situation for civilian westerners and those who associate with them, regardless of profession, is becoming more and more precarious.

## ■ What next for interpreter certification programmes in the U.S.? Part 1

Certification is one of the most important topics in the U.S. translation and interpreting industry today. Rarely does one attend a professional conference without finding presentations on the topic. Numerous articles

have also been written on the subject, and, in 2003, ATA published an International Certification Study, compiled by ATA President-Elect Jiri Stejskal, consisting of 24 individual articles from The ATA Chronicle devoted to certification programmes around the world. These efforts have been key in helping interpreting professionals, and the public at large, to obtain information regarding current certification programmes.

To date, the objective of much of the information made available on certification-related topics has been to inform end users and practitioners about certification programme details, as well as to identify similarities and differences among programmes. This body of work has laid the essential foundation for much needed analysis.

An important next step for those of us interested in the future of certification is to analyze the information available regarding past and current certification efforts so that we can attempt to identify possible future paths. The purpose of this article is twofold:

- 1 To describe the history and status of several major certification development efforts for court and community interpreters in order to provide a broader understanding of the meaning of certification and what has been accomplished so far in the field.
- 2 To offer recommendations based on the lessons learned from interpreter certification development in other areas.

The discussion that follows is organized into several sections. First, the term certification is defined from the perspectives of different stakeholders. Government and professional organization initiatives for certification are reviewed, and a brief overview of training issues is provided to highlight these topics as they pertain to certification. This is followed by an analysis of certification efforts for sign language interpreters to illustrate how certification efforts unfolded in this particular area of interpreting. To provide more insight on the status of efforts in the medical interpreting profession, a description is provided of the foundation currently being laid for healthcare interpreter certification. Finally, several recommendations are provided to stimulate further discussion.

### Government and Professional Organization Initiatives

When the Federal Court Interpreters Act was passed in 1978, the law required Spanish federal court interpreters to pass a certification exam in order to

demonstrate proficiency. This was the first such government initiative.

Over the next two decades, several state court systems began to follow suit and develop their own programmes for state courts. In July 1995, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) created the National Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification, a multi-state partnership dedicated to developing court interpreter proficiency tests. This alliance allowed state courts to combine their resources to develop creative strategies for resolving their common concerns related to interpreter certification. Currently, 33 states belong to the Consortium. While the test forms used for certification are consistent across states, there are many differences in programme components and structure from one state to another.

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators also created a certification programme for judiciary interpreters and translators, at the request of their membership, with the goal of elevating professional standards. This programme is unique in that it certifies individuals to provide both interpreting and translation services in a wide variety of legal settings.

Variability of programmes across states is not exclusive to legal certification programmes. Some state governments, such as California and Washington, created certifications that are related to specific areas of healthcare interpreting, but do not necessarily cover the broad scope of knowledge and skills that make up the entire field. For example, the State of Washington's programme is run by the Department of Social and Health Services, and serves as a basic screening for mental health and social services interpreters.

The State of California has a state certification exam for court administrative hearing and medical interpreters. According to the candidate information on the CPS Human Resource Services website: "Administrative hearing interpreters are deemed qualified as medical interpreters." The site also states that the certification testing process for administrative hearing interpreters "requires demonstration of the ability to meet minimum performance standards in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, plus the ability to perform sight translations of written material and knowledge of correct usage of legal terminology," but the programme information also states that the process includes testing in medical terminology. Essentially, interpreters with this certification are certified to provide interpreting services during state agency hearings that take place

with administrative law judges and during medical exams conducted for civil cases in order to determine monetary awards or compensation. The Washington and California programmes do not encompass a full range of healthcare interpreting skills and terminology, and are not based on the National Standards of Practice issued by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.

### Training Issues

Some certification programmes effectively identify high quality interpreters through testing; however, certification programmes have historically done little to prepare interpreters for their exams. Many interpreters take these tests, but when the tests are rigorous, it is difficult for candidates to achieve passing scores without substantial preparation, training, and experience.

Most certification programmes take an either/or approach, meaning that an interpreter either passes or fails, with no clear path for an interpreter who might not receive a passing score, but who shows potential for someday becoming qualified. If the interpreter fails, he or she must seek out training and other possibilities for gaining experience in order to produce a passing result with the next attempt. The cost of taking the test often represents a sizeable fee, so many candidates become frustrated and stop after the first try, even if they do have potential for someday becoming a highly skilled professional interpreter.

The lack of attractive compensation for interpreters also presents a dilemma. If interpreters are not hired unless they are certified, and they cannot pass a certification test without training and on-the-job experience, how will they obtain training, get experience, pass the test, and become certified? When programmes do not provide clear steps for individuals who show promise, but who do not yet have the required skills and knowledge to perform at the level necessary to pass a certification test, these individuals often become frustrated and lose interest in the profession.

Largely in response to the low passing rates for certification exams, certifying bodies have begun to acknowledge the need for training interpreters as part of a complete certification programme. For this reason, some members of the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification began to provide mandatory minimum training. Some court programmes offer orientation training prior to testing, but these sessions are usually short in duration and provide information on test specifications and logistics, while offering a basic

introduction to interpreting skills and knowledge of industry-specific terminology along with a minimal amount of practice.

Educational institutions and private companies offer programmes around the country to prepare interpreters for a range of interpreting settings. Programmes vary widely, from a 40-hour certificate programme at a community college to a graduate degree programme (for an example, see the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation). Because these programmes have different foci and areas of specialization in preparing individuals to work as interpreters, completion of an academic programme does not guarantee that a student will become certified. Another challenge is that with low rates of compensation for community interpreters, especially in the area of healthcare, there is little motivation for an individual to make the major investment required to obtain a university degree in interpreting. It is ultimately the individual's responsibility to seek out opportunities for education in a given field of study. However, the profession of interpreting differs from others in that most interpreters are expected to come to the job fully prepared, often without the benefit of any orientation, on-the-job training, or actual interpreting experience.

There is a lack of consistency in interpreter training programmes, which results in interpreters entering the field with diverse backgrounds and levels of experience. On one extreme, there are successful interpreters who come to their first day on the job with a graduate degree in the field. At the other extreme, there are individuals who start out in the field with no formal experience or training whatsoever and a minimal level of education. Both have the possibility of becoming highly skilled interpreters through a combination of practical experience and training.

It is still common in many areas of community interpreting to find working interpreters who have received little or no training. While it would be impractical for these interpreters to leave their jobs to pursue a full-time academic programme in interpreting, they do sometimes seek training for the purposes of learning how to do their job more effectively.

Some private, for-profit companies have begun to develop training programmes specifically for these interpreters, usually offering training programmes at a lower cost than academic institutions. These programmes are accessible to a wider audience and usually offer a more practice-oriented, hands-on

approach. Since these programmes often focus on providing the essential knowledge and training that are needed, less time is devoted to theory and history, with more focus on hands-on techniques and role-play scenarios that will enable the interpreter to begin practising immediately.

In addition, many of the state and federal government programmes, particularly the programmes for court interpreting, are enhancing and improving their inclusiveness by providing training opportunities or, at a minimum, a list of resources where interpreters can obtain more training. Also, many participants in programmes administered by state courts actually participate in a two-day training session led by professional interpreter trainers that serves as an orientation to both the certification process and the court interpreting profession.

In terms of converting a skilled bilingual into a professional interpreter, there is only so much even the best trainer can accomplish in a matter of days. At best, these efforts provide interpreters with a general orientation in order for individuals to obtain initial practice in interpreting skills and to gain an understanding of the profession prior to taking a certification exam.

### A view from our sister profession

A national effort toward general certification of spoken language interpreters in the U.S. is still in its infancy, while programmes of this nature for U.S. sign language interpreters are nearing adulthood. Taking a look at the road toward certification in sign language interpreting may provide insight into our current situation.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) was born out of a group of providers of interpreting services, though sign language interpreters did not have the benefit of government sponsorship or regulation in their early days either. Within the eight years that followed the establishment of RID, the organization formed a board, developed a code of ethics, and published a guide to interpreting for the deaf.

During the 1970s, "certifications" were in some stage of development. A Comprehensive Skills Certificate and a Master Comprehensive Skills Certificate, both generalist certifications, were offered, but were later discontinued, along with several other certificates. Between 1999 and 2003, RID joined with the National Association of the Deaf to create a task force that later became the National Council on Interpreting.

In 1999, two general tests were created: the Oral Transliteration Certificate (OTC) and Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI). Currently, RID's website lists 20 separate certificates. Of these, 13 were phased out or combined with or replaced by other certificates, leaving seven available: the OTC and CDI, the Certificate of Interpretation (CI), the Certificate of Transliteration (CT), the combined certificate (CI and CT), the Conditional Legal Interpreting Permit-Relay, and the Specialist Certificate: Legal. The seven remaining certificates encompass the necessary interpretation modes and types that respond more effectively to their community's needs.

### Lessons learned from American Sign Language Interpreter Certification Efforts

As we analyze the experience of our sister profession for answers and ideas about our own development, two major themes emerge. First, the majority of certificates (five of seven) that survived are general in nature, although two industry-specific (legal) certificates are still available as well. After decades of a concentrated, organized effort from national associations, the sign language interpreting community found generalist certificates to be of a primary and prerequisite importance. In fact, sign language interpreters must hold a generalist certificate before they are allowed to sit for a specialist exam.

A second emerging theme is that key associations have merged efforts, and the numerous certifications previously offered are being refined into seven more specific ones. The remaining certifications being offered no longer replicate other programmes. While two specialist certificates are offered as well, the core focus is on certifying interpreters/transliterator according to their specific mode or type of delivery, not according to subject specialty or industry. This is in sharp contrast to most certification programmes in the spoken language interpreting world, which tend to be developed within and geared toward a specific industry or setting (e.g., court, healthcare).

By Nataly Kelly  
nkelly(a)networkomni.com

Nataly Kelly is the director of product development with NetworkOmni Multilingual Communications. She is also a certified court interpreter (State of Missouri) for English and Spanish. A former Fulbright scholar in sociolinguistics, her current research interests are interpreter certification, quality improvement programs, and telephone interpreting. She currently serves on the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care's Outreach Committee.

*This article was originally published in the ATA Chronicle  
Part 2 of this article will appear in next month's issue.*

## ■ Employment

### DCU job offer

DCU Language Services is recruiting an administrator for its busy translation section.

Deadline for application: 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

Start date: 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2007

For further information please e-mail: [dculs\(a\)dcu.ie](mailto:dculs(a)dcu.ie) or consult web site: [www.dculs.dcu.ie](http://www.dculs.dcu.ie)

## Conferences, Calls & Courses

### University of Limerick Offers Two New Localisation Courses

Multinational games, web and software publishers are making their products available simultaneously in an increasingly large number of languages and for many different cultures. Experts estimate that the localisation industry servicing this sector is worth US\$9 billion and growing. This is leading to an increased demand for professional localisers with a thorough understanding of the technical and business issues involved. Responding to this demand, the *University of Limerick* (UL) will be offering two new postgraduate programmes in localisation, starting in September 2007.

The *Graduate Diploma in Localisation Technology* and the *Master of Science in Global Computing and Localisation* have been developed in close cooperation with eminent industry and academic leaders. Both will be offered on a full-time and part-time (one-day-a-week) basis and it is expected that significant grants will become available greatly reducing registration costs for EU-students.

Reinhard Schäler, Director of the *Localisation Research Centre* (LRC) at the University and course coordinator for these programmes, said "With the new programmes, we will prepare students both for demanding job opportunities in localisation and for serious research and development work in industry and academia. An increased emphasis on technical and business aspects together with the involvement of the internationally renowned *Kemmy Business School* at UL will prepare students for the most demanding jobs in the industry."

More information on these programmes is available on [www.localisation.ie/education](http://www.localisation.ie/education).

**LINGUISTICA ANTVERPIENSIA, NEW SERIES (7/2008)****Looking for meaning: methodological issues in translation studies****CALL FOR PAPERS**

*Linguistica Antverpiensia* is the journal of translation and interpreting studies published by the Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken, Hogeschool Antwerpen.

Translation is the transfer of a message: it is the travel of one meaning or set of meanings from one point in place or time to another. Translation studies relies so heavily on a concept of meaning, that one may claim that there is no TS without any reference to meanings. However, different approaches in TS refer to different types of meaning: some researchers are looking for lexical patterns (incl. collocation and repetition) in source texts and their translations, some studies concentrate on how the text utterances function within their immediate contexts (e.g. Nord), while others investigate the impact of the text as a whole on its audience or even society (e.g. Venuti's remainder of the translation).

Some researchers explicitly talk about meaning as a cognitive concept and say, for instance, that translators and interpreters construct or assemble meaning (e.g. Setton). Others regard it as a textual characteristic. In the latter view, texts themselves hold meanings, so translations can be compared in terms of meanings with each other, with source texts or with a comparable corpus. If a source text has The company became the major manufacturer of their fine ladies' gloves and the back-translation of a translation is The company became the major supplier of their fine ladies, it is possible to claim that the source text and the translation differ slightly from one another semantically. Implicitly, however, such a view, too, usually regards meaning as coming into its own when it is related to a person: it could be the meaning intended by the source writer, that construed or intended by the translator, or that construed by the reader of either the source or target text.

While meaning analyses in translation studies may not procure the total meaning of a text on their own, they do highlight different aspects of that meaning in source and target texts and contribute to our understanding of how translation comes about.

The key issue contributors are asked to address in this special issue of *Linguistica Antverpiensia* NS7 is the specific methods they use to discuss meaning aspects: how do they study meaning systematically when they aim to bring forward findings from which translation principles can be generalized? More specific questions, revealing the optimal fields of applicability of the different methodological approaches, reflect the various stages of empirical research:

- ◆ defining the concepts in research questions: in particular, what is the working definition for the notion of 'meaning' that researchers start from?
- ◆ defining the data: in particular, which are the units of meaning from which they start? Can they illustrate this by means of examples?
- ◆ analysing the data according to the best method available: how do they determine the meaning of a word, phrase, utterance, paragraph or text: which analytical methods are available to them? Do they work within particular strongly developed meaning frameworks (semantic? pragmatic? literary or stylistic? cognitive? lexicographical? ...)? What are the general principles and assumptions? Can this approach be called a meaning analysis model? Do they distinguish between different types of meanings? Which types are they and which are the criteria that distinguish them from each other? Which are the descriptive tools with which they refer to a particular meaning of a word, phrase, utterance, paragraph or text, and how do they decide which term to use to refer to a particular meaning aspect? How can electronic tools recognize meaning? To what extent can findings on meanings be quantified? In which cases is quantification relevant?
- ◆ discussing the method: does the mode of the languages involved have an impact on the method? Do the languages involved in the translation have an impact on the method? Does the directionality of a language pair involved in the translation have an impact on the method?
- ◆ discussing the results: what exactly is it that their results contribute to TS? What are the advantages of their approach over that of others?

Particularly welcome are representatives from specific semantic/pragmatic approaches, for example:

- ◆ Cognitive-communicative approaches (incl. relevance theory)
- ◆ Cognitive semantics
- ◆ Natural semantics
- ◆ Componential analysis framework
- ◆ Scenes-and-frames approaches
- ◆ Terminological approaches
- ◆ Example-based machine translation
- ◆ Statistical machine translation

**Deadlines**

Title and 15 line abstract: 1 September 2007 (notification 25 September). Paper: 31 March 2008. Languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish

**Contacts**

Please send abstracts to Sonia Vandepitte, *University College of Ghent*. Email: [sonia.vandepitte\(a\)hogent.be](mailto:sonia.vandepitte(a)hogent.be)

## ■ Contacting The ITIA

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### ITIA BULLETIN

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## ■ ITIA Resources for Translators

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* has compiled a series of useful information leaflets for translators and interpreters - both members and non-members alike. These leaflets are available from the ITIA website at [www.translatorsassociation.ie](http://www.translatorsassociation.ie).

- ◆ *The Translation Profession*
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