

The Newsletter of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters

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From the CATI President

On ethics and the role of the interpreter

By Jackie Metivier



Humans are the only beings whose actions are influenced by a sense of right and wrong. Some theorists argue that it is something we are born with, others that it is a social acquisition. Whether inherited or acquired, moral values shape our beliefs on what is appropriate behavior and what is inappropriate.

Ethical issues affect an interpreter's performance whether he or she is aware of it or not. An interpreter's ability to communicate effectively can affect someone's health and well-being, their exercise of rights and/or obligations, and their perception of the world around them.

Thus, the responsibility an interpreter carries is significant. As we all know, the basic role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication, to bridge the gap between the two parties in terms of language and culture, and to convey the message accurately without adding, modifying, or deleting information. Therefore, the inter-

preter becomes the voice of those who speak. As a Chapter of the American Translators Association, CATI abides by the ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices (see sidebar on page 4).

Every professional in our field, ideally, should feel compelled to apply these principles every single day, to choose right from wrong, to act according to what is good not only for

Ethical issues affect an interpreter's performance whether he or she is aware of it or not.

himself or herself, but also for the people they serve and the profession itself. As professional translators and interpreters, that is our challenge: face our social responsibilities and make the right decisions for all involved.

This issue of CATI Quarterly brings you information about the role of the interpreter and the importance of interpreter training, also, the results of our carefully designed survey.

In trying to further educate translators and interpreters regarding ethical aspects of community interpreting and stress our Code of Professional Conduct, CATI organized an interpreter seminar on November 1 at Durham Technical Community College. **Eta Trabing** and **Yasmin Metivier**, two highly qualified instructors, as well as a panel of professional interpreters, shared

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The growing need for interpreter training

By Alice Bolaños



As practicing interpreters who are conscientious members of society – as well as active members of the Carolina Association of Transla-

tors and Interpreters (CATI) and the American Translators Association (ATA) – it is imperative that we do our best to improve our skills and

encourage other “bilinguals” who are serving as interpreters to do the same. We have all heard about disastrous attempts to interpret by someone who felt qualified for the job

or who, in some cases, felt compelled to fill the role of interpreter. Often, those who flounder in the profession feel they are doing an excellent job and have no need to improve.

This article is intended to do three things: (1) give real examples of untrained interpreter experiences, (2) highlight some opportunities to recommend training to not-so-professional interpreters, and (3) explain the need for workshops, seminars, and training opportunities to improve interpreter skills.

The Carolinas have received national attention due to the growth of our non-English speaking minority populations and our dramatic changes in racial and ethnic compositions. Since the 1980s, newcomers have included significant numbers of people who either were born in, or are children of people who were born in, Mexico, another Latin American country, or Southeast Asia.¹

Every day we hear about the arrival of foreign immigrants. A recent University of North Carolina (UNC) report states “...dramatic increases in the number of residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are occurring nationwide. North Carolina itself is experiencing an unprecedented influx.”

“Today, a growing number of the state’s residents are from Bosnia, Central American countries, China,

Laos, Mexico, and Vietnam. An accurate count of LEP speakers in the state is difficult to obtain, but it is estimated that there are between 250,000 and

300,000 Spanish speakers alone.”²

And there are an estimated 15,000 Hmong living in North Carolina alone.³ The North Carolina Census data reports that over 10 languages are represented by Limited English Proficient (LEP) students alone.⁴

This means in many households in North Carolina the primary language being spoken is not English. What a wealth of opportunity to develop the skills of bilingual people to become tomorrow’s professional interpreters! CATI, *carpe diem!*

Problems that can occur when untrained bilinguals serve as interpreters

Fifty-eight percent of LEP patients polled by the Asian Health Services in 1994 reported that they would not see a physician if interpreting services were not available.⁵ No wonder so many patients choose to bring family members, often children, to be their personal escort-interpreter. If I had a choice of either **no** care at all, or care with the help of a trusted family member as

... it is imperative that we do our best to improve our skills and encourage other “bilinguals” who are serving as interpreters to do the same.

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Ethics for community interpreters

By M. Eta Trabing

The following article is based on the author's presentation at the CATI "Ethical Aspects of Community Interpreting" seminar at Durham Tech. on November 1, 2003.



Definition of Ethics

(from *Webster's International Dictionary* and *Webster's New Universal Dictionary*)

Ethics – the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture, etc. (medical ethics, Muslim ethics); or the principles of conduct governing an individual or a profession: standards of behavior; or moral principles of an individual.

Professional ethics – character-

ized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession or an occupation: manifesting fine artistry or workmanship **based on sound knowledge and conscientiousness: reflecting the results of education, training, and experience.** (Use of bold is the author's.)

Definition of a community interpreter

An interpreter who works with clients in the community. This usually involves social and basic health-care services, education/schools, local government offices and very occasionally, legal and medical situations. This form of interpretation requires much personal interaction with the clients; it also requires knowledge of the clients' cultural background. Community interpreters, more than any other kind of interpreter, need to act as a cultural bridge between service providers and clients.

In the course of their jobs, community interpreters must adhere to *various* professional codes of conduct and practices or ethics:

1. Their *employer's* general code of professional conduct and practices
2. Their *job's* code of professional conduct (if you are a bilingual nurse, physician, technician, support personnel, etc.). When you are a bilingual staff member, you are not an interpreter unless you are in a triadic situation.
3. Their *personal* code of ethics and morals (religion, beliefs).
4. The *interpreter's* code of professional conduct (see below).

Community interpreters also sometimes have to do medical and/or legal interpreting, whether they have the specific training and

vocabulary or not. Thus, they should also become familiar with the medical and legal/court interpreters' codes of professional conduct. Some points are similar, others are not. For medical interpreter ethics, see the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association at www.mmia.org or the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters at www.CHIA.ws; for court interpreter ethics, see the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators at www.najit.org.

Community interpreters' Code of Professional Conduct

As a community interpreter, you:

- Must maintain **confidentiality** at all costs.
- Must discuss a case only with the staff directly involved, as appropriate, not with friends in other departments, relatives, or anyone else.
- May **not ever** give medical advice (no herbal teas, no aspirin, no health foods or herbs, no "healers," no referrals); it is considered "practicing medicine without a license" in this country and you could be prosecuted in a court of law (and some already have!).
- May, of course, make suggestions to contact other *public service agencies*, if the client requests your help.
- May **not** recommend a friend or someone you know if the client asks for a referral to a doctor or lawyer or nurse. Help them look in the Yellow Pages for one of their own choosing.

The CATI Quarterly

The *CATI Quarterly* is a publication of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters, a nonprofit organization to promote the recognition of translating and interpreting as professions in the Carolinas. Opinions expressed herein are the author's and not necessarily those of the Editor, the Association, or its Board of Directors.

Reader submissions are welcome. Suggested length limits are:

- Articles 1500 words
- Reviews 500 words
- Letters 300 words

Submissions become the property of the *CATI Quarterly* and are subject to editing. For details, see the "Submission Guidelines" at

www.catiweb.org/guidelines.htm

If you have questions or would like to submit an article, please contact the editor, G. David Heath, at

infoexact@mindspring.com

Please contact CATI at (919) 577-0840 for advertising information.

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The ATA Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices

I. As a Translator or Interpreter, a bridge for ideas from one language to another and one culture to another, I commit myself to the highest standards of performance, ethical behavior, and business practices.

A. I will endeavor to translate or interpret the original message faithfully, to satisfy the needs of the end user(s). I acknowledge that this level of excellence requires:

1. mastery of the target language equivalent to that of an educated native speaker,
2. up-to-date knowledge of the subject material and its terminology in both languages,
3. access to information resources and reference materials, and knowledge of the tools of my profession,
4. continuing efforts to improve, broaden, and deepen my skills and knowledge.

B. I will be truthful about my qualifications and will not accept any assignments for which I am not fully qualified.

C. I will safeguard the interests of my clients as my own and divulge no confidential information.

D. I will notify my clients of any unresolved difficulties. If we cannot resolve a dispute, we will seek arbitration.

E. I will use a client as a reference only if I am prepared to name a person to attest to the quality of my work.

F. I will respect and refrain from interfering with or supplanting any business relationship between my client and my client's client.

From the CATI President *continued from page 1*

their valuable information and experience.

This issue of the *CATI Quarterly* brings you articles about the role of the interpreter, the importance of interpreter training, and interpreting ethics.

It also includes the results of our carefully designed survey. This survey has accomplished its objective to obtain feedback from our members regarding what we are doing right, and what we can improve upon. So, if you were one of the 93 members who participated in the survey, thank you! Your board members are now equipped with plenty of information to make this a better association.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to **Dr Naomi Kleid**, a technical communication and usability consultant, who offered her experience in survey design and analysis to CATI on a *pro bono* basis to make this survey a success. Naomi, with help from **David Heath**, is truly the motor behind the changes that will follow. Naomi's analysis of the survey results for the CQ and the CATI web-

site begins on page 10 of this issue of *CATI Quarterly*.

Looking ahead, the board is busy planning the 2004 conference, which will take place on April 3, 2003 at Durham Tech. Next year, it's likely that our annual conference will be a joint collaboration between CATI and AATF (American Association of Teachers of French), AATSP (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese), FLANC (Foreign Language Association of North Carolina), and FLICC (Foreign Language Instruction in Community Colleges). Stay tuned for more updates. Links to the websites of these associations are now on the "Useful links" page of the CATI website at www.catiweb.org.

We have a large contingent planning to attend the annual ATA conference in Arizona. In fact, a few of our very own CATI members will be presenters! Congratulations to **Alejandra Koval**, **Ann Sherwin**, and **Graciela White** for further educating our profession at the national level.

Jackie Metivier

Upcoming events

International Festival in Raleigh

The International Festival in Raleigh will be held on November 7-9, 2003 at the Graham Building and Dorton Arena, North Carolina State Fairgrounds. More than 40 countries will be represented. For further information, please go to www.internationalfestival.org/index.html

ATA 44th Annual Conference

Join your colleagues for a rewarding experience at the American Translators Association 44th Annual Conference at the Pointe South Moun-

tain Resort in Phoenix, Arizona, November 5-8, 2003. The conference will feature:

- Over 150 educational sessions offering something for everyone
- The Job Exchange where individuals promote their services and companies meet translators and interpreters
- Over 50 exhibits featuring the latest publications, software, and services available
- Opportunities to network with over 1,200 translators and interpreters from throughout the U.S. and around the world

my interpreter, of course I would choose the latter. Another article by Dr. Glenn Flores states that Latino parents identified the lack of interpreters and Spanish-speaking staff (among other factors) as major access barriers to health care for their children.⁶

Serious consequences may arise, however, because "...translation of a medical visit by unqualified interpreters is prone to omissions, additions, substitutions, volunteered opinions, and semantic errors that can seriously distort care."⁷ While the patient may feel more at ease during the office visit with an untrained interpreter, by the time he leaves the doctor's office he will wonder if he should have ever made the appointment in the first place.

A recent article published in *Nursing* 2003 speaks to the inadequacy of *ad hoc* interpreters.⁸ An often-quoted study published in *Pediatrics*, by G. Flores, *et al.*, states that while nearly half of the clinical encounters in this study used professional interpreters and committed errors, the *ad hoc* interpreters, including nurses, social workers, and family members, were more likely to commit errors with potential **clinical consequences** than the professional interpreters.

The study concluded "because errors by *ad hoc* interpreters are more likely to have potential clinical consequences, third-party reimbursement for trained interpreter services should be considered for patients with limited English proficiency."⁹ Often the results of this particular study are used to show the inadequacy of interpreters in general, but the conclusion clearly states that *trained interpreters* should be used in lieu of *ad hoc* interpreters.

Unbelievable stories

The following recent accounts from a UNC study illustrate how communication barriers can complicate the delivery of health care:

■ **In central North Carolina**, Hispanic residents have complained that they must wait longer than non-Hispanic residents to receive treatment from the local health department. When these residents **do** receive care, family members or unqualified health department employees translate during the visit, or they are asked to pay for each 15 minutes of interpreting.

■ **In central North Carolina**, a hospital used a child to translate during his parent's emergency room visit. As the boy and his parent left the facility, another LEP family arrived with an emergency. The boy had to translate during that visit as well.

■ **In South Carolina**, a hospital limited epidural anesthesia for women in labor to women who could speak English.¹⁰

A report from Utica, NY, describes how 11-year-old Ruvim Kluychits sat in the dermatologist's office with his non-English-speaking mother waiting for their turn. "They do tests and stuff," Ruvim told the reporter as he followed his mother into the examination room. "I have to translate. All these doctor words, like fever."¹¹

Suggestions for training

Concerns about clinical errors resulting from poor interpreting have been lively topics of discussion among CATI members and ATA members, and among the population at large. Medical professionals are concerned about the need for

additional policy work to determine what type of training is most effective in reducing interpreter errors, whether training should be mandatory, and, if made mandatory, whether appropriate training is available.¹² All of these areas are being, and very well should be, addressed by local CATI members to enhance the quality of interpreters in North and South Carolina. By joining forces with trained professionals and by educating leaders in our community on what qualifies a person to be a professional interpreter (i.e. not just a bilingual), we can increase recognition for our profession and boost the demand for trained interpreters.

When a CEO of a hospital states that his institution is responding to the influx of LEP patients by having "...some volunteer interpreters who are kind enough to come in and help us when we have a Hispanic patient,"¹³ we know we haven't educated the public on the role of the interpreter. Volunteer interpreters have value in the community, and perhaps CATI can play an important part in educating these bilingual volunteers on how to be effective interpreters.

If you know someone who is working as an untrained interpreter

On November 1, CATI offered a half-day session to teach the basics and cover the "Dos and Don'ts" of community interpreting. The program included the analysis of the video "Communicating Effectively through an Interpreter" as well as information on common pitfalls and cultural differences. For a report on the seminar, including pictures, go to the CATI website at www.catiweb.org.

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Ethics for community interpreters *continued from page 3*

- Must remain **totally** impartial; if there is even the *perception* of bias, excuse yourself and get someone else to do the job (if your client turns out to be your best friend's daughter, she won't want you to interpret what may get back to her mother).
- Must interpret everything **faithfully** and **accurately** to convey the content and spirit of what is being said and do it in the speaker's register.
- Must monitor yourself; if you find you made a mistake, go back and correct it.
- May **not** simplify or paraphrase, add or delete anything to what is said; do not give clarifying explanations.
- Must always use the first and second person (Do you ...? I do...), never the third (he says ..., she says that ...).
- Should interpret **everything** that is said. ("Oh, please don't tell anyone this but ..." is ethically unacceptable). The session starts when the interpreter is in the presence of the client and/or the provider, whether in a triadic situation, or before in a waiting room, or upon leaving the building or area. Interpreters may not keep secrets from providers or patients.
- Should pursue ongoing education and training – new terminology of all kinds, new medical technology, new idioms, new cultures, new dialects, etc., *forever!* Things are changing very quickly and interpreters must keep up.
- May **not** accept tips or gratuities or gifts from clients; gifts of food can be shared with the whole office

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The growing need for interpreter training *continued from page 5*

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Alice Bolaños works as a translator of automated health insurance documents for a leading health-care insurer in NC. She interprets benefits at enrollment meetings for health insurance subscribers who are Limited English Proficient. Alice holds a BA in Education from the University of South Florida and an MA in Management from Webster University.

Ethics for community interpreters *continued from page 6*

and you need to explain that you are not allowed to receive gifts from anyone related to your work.

- Should **not** accept assignments for which you know you are unqualified or insufficiently prepared (whether for language reasons or due to the complexity of the subject matter).
- Should inform the provider and the patient if a word was used that you do not know, or if you did not understand something; better to be safe than sorry.
- Should inform the provider and patient if they are giving you too much information at one time to where you cannot interpret it accurately and completely. Ask that shorter sentences be used, or less jargon, or fewer acronyms, or whatever.
- Should settle any differences with staff members, providers, and patients/clients in a professional and appropriate manner – don't get into petty arguments and don't lose your temper.
- May **not** use your employer's Internet connection for your personal needs or entertainment.
- Should refrain from actions that will discredit the interpreter profession.
- Should **not** be critical of other interpreters to providers and not make disparaging remarks about providers to clients.
- Should show respect for all involved, addressing them in a professional manner.
- Should share professional knowledge with colleagues to improve the profession and your work.
- Should explain cultural differences or practices to providers and/or patients when appropriate.

- Should ask for and insist upon working conditions that will enable you to perform with efficiency and dignity (respect, fatigue, etc.).
- Should **not** take on assignments that violate your personal or religious beliefs; you cannot stop interpreting in the middle of a session just because you do not like the turn the conversation has taken. If you go against your personal and religious beliefs your interpretation will be biased!
- Should keep ties with relevant professional organizations.
- Should establish a pre-session mini-conference with the provider (if at all possible) and with the client/patient. Explain your role; explain how the interview will function; explain cultural differences when appropriate. Prepare a little 1-minute speech on how things will work, one in English for the provider and one in your other language for the client.

Occasionally, you may be asked to take on another "role" that is not strictly speaking that of interpreter. You must decide, based on the situation at hand, and your own common sense, and your knowledge of the consequences of doing so, just how far you wish to step out of the interpreter role. Because when you do, you are bound by a different set of ethics that you may not be willing to take on.

If you take it upon yourself to simplify what a provider says because you don't think the non-English speaker will understand, you will be editing and by simplifying; you probably won't be transmitting the *full* concept of what the provider meant. It is much more appropriate to ask the English speaker to bring his/her language to a level that the non-English speaker will understand. Just as she/he would if this were happening in English only. As the interpreter, you can always say, "Interpreter believes XXX has

not understood completely, could you please repeat that in simpler terms."

Occasionally, you may be cast in the role of "advocate." If your advocacy gets in the way of communications between provider and client/patient, then it helps no one and your impartiality is at risk. If after a session or interview, a client/patient requests help with other information, you may provide it, **if** this will ensure the quality of the care received or the health of the patient. But be prepared to accept responsibility when something goes very wrong because of some advice you may have given. People do not always listen to or comprehend all that is said and when asked who told them this or that, they will quickly say "the interpreter," and this is something you may wish to avoid!

If your regular job has to do with guiding and informing people on how, where, and what information and services are available, and you can do it in two languages – so much the better for the client/patient and your employer! But then you are not "interpreting," either; you are just doing your job bilingually. Remember, you represent your employer and your employer is liable for what you say and do, as are you, personally.

M. Eta Trabing, translator, instructor, writer, retired interpreter, ex CATI President, and owner of Berkana Language Center (see www.eberkana.com) has been in the T/I business for about 35 years and now lives in Pensacola, Florida.

North Carolina Office of Minority Health Spanish Interpreter Training Schedule

For the complete 2003 schedule,
please see the CATI website.

Focus on members

A column about CATI members and their activities



Anne Olving told the *CATI Quarterly* that she currently has about as much work as she can handle with teleinterpreting, other interpreting, and translations. "You can try and contract with companies such as AT&T or OMNI that need teleinterpreting services in all kinds of fields," she said.

Anne also reports that a man of Norwegian ancestry was referred to her for help with various translations, related, however vaguely, to his genealogical background. One of his requests was to help him with the etymology of his name. She has no source to search for that, and wondered whether members have any suggestions. (She did however suggest the "Sons of Norway" group and similar organizations.)

Karen Ordanic, an interpreter and translator for the languages of former Yugoslavia, recently returned from El Salvador where she spent two weeks as a simultaneous interpreter for Landmine Survivors Network (LSN).

LSN is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help mine victims and their families recover through an integrated program of peer counseling, sports, and social and economic integration into their communities. Today, LSN is concentrating its efforts on the mine-

polluted countries where many survivors live, including Bosnia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Mozambique, and Vietnam.

LSN's team in El Salvador hosted the core staff workshops where the teams from the member countries shared their experiences and planned their future work.

Sylvia A. Smith spoke at the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC) conference in October on the subject "Translating and Interpreting - When to Say Yes." This presentation provided an overview of the requirements, challenges, and opportunities that confront anyone providing translating and/or interpreting services. It offered some suggestions on when to accept T/I services and when to decline. Likewise, participants learned about quality of service, certification, training programs, ethics, fees, and resources.

Sylvia will also teach a translation course at NC State University in the Spring 2004 semester. She will teach FLG 311 "Introduction to Translation" on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at mid-day. Those who are not enrolled at NC State can take the course as part of the university's life-long learning program as PBS students. The prerequisite is completion of four

semesters of German, a placement test into the 300 level German courses, or the instructor's approval.

David A. Stephenson reviewed the Croatian-English Dictionary of Business and Government for the *ATA Chronicle* (July 2003 issue). As he pointed out in the introduction to his review, "The enormous changes that have taken place throughout Eastern Europe over the past decade and a half have often left the translator scrambling to keep up with new terminology." He concluded that the dictionary passed all of his tests for what should be included in such a work, "usually with flying colors."

M. Eta Trabing was teaching the Anatomy-Physiology class on August 27 and 28 at Eastern Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in Greenville, NC, for Spanish interpreters in the health field. Eta came back for the CATI program on November 1

Yasmin Wurtz Metivier taught the first day of the Level I Spanish interpreter course on August 28 for Wake AHEC in Raleigh, NC; the second day was taught by **M. Eta Trabing**.

If you would like to let your colleagues know about some of your recent or upcoming activities, please send an e-mail to G. David Heath, *CATI Quarterly* editor, at infoexact@mindspring.com.

If you enjoyed reading the President's message and the articles in this issue of *CATI Quarterly*, please consider contributing an article to a future issue. Like these articles, it could describe an interesting experience during your professional career or useful knowledge or skills that you would be willing to share with your colleagues.

Translation awareness

A letter from Mike Collins to the Editor of the *Durham Herald-Sun*

The following letter by CATI Board member Mike Collins, was published in the *Durham Herald-Sun*. It responds to a report of important evidence being dropped from the Mike Peterson trial in Durham because of the prosecution's inability to find a Court-certified translator.

I read with interest the recent report that an important piece of evidence was dropped from the Mike Peterson trial because of the prosecution's inability to find a Court-certified translator. [Herald-Sun, Aug. 27]. Other issues of late have highlighted the need for greater awareness regarding the translation and interpretation professions. These include the U.S. government's inability to process intelligence in a timely manner because of a shortage of translators, Hispanic residents who have been duped by bilingual con artists posing as lawyers, and the pressing need for qualified court and medical interpreters.

We live in an increasingly multicultural society, yet the misconcep-

tions about what it takes to effectively bridge the language and culture gap are as widespread as ever. Many do not realize that being bilingual does not qualify someone to be a translator or interpreter. Others are unaware there are professional translator and interpreter organizations, including the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters, on whose board I serve, and the American Translators Association.

I personally know of several people in the Triangle who could have translated/verified the piece of evidence that was required for the Peterson trial. The lack of court certification need not have been an obstacle to understanding the contents of a statement written in a lan-

guage other than English. And people who do not (yet) speak English should not be denied the services and protections the rest of us take for granted.

MIKE COLLINS

Chapel Hill

September 10, 2003

Mike Collins offered this comment to the *CATI Quarterly*:

"This is one way that individual members can help raise translation awareness. Every time a translation / interpretation-related issue comes up in the press, if a couple of people will write in, newspapers will begin to get the message that their readers are interested, and print more stories."



From the Editor's desk

Listening to our members

By G. David Heath

Like all professional associations, CATI places a high value on opinions and suggestions from our members. We need to know what we are doing right, so that we can continue to focus our efforts on those activities, and we need to know where we should improve. We also need to know what additional services we should provide to better meet the aims of the association and the expectations of its members.

For the *CATI Quarterly*, the members' suggestions from our recent online survey included more emphasis on business planning, get-

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cles, especially on interpreting topics. Many suggestions revealed a strong desire to share expertise with other members. For example, one respondent suggested a regular Q&A column. All these suggestions relate closely to the aims of the association.

Not surprisingly, a substantial number of respondents (34.5%) prefer the printed and mailed newsletter. However, the reasons for the

switch to web-only delivery have been thoroughly debated and are probably well understood. Nevertheless, a relatively small number of respondents report being unable to open or print the web-based *CATI Quarterly*. This will need to be investigated further, and plans are already being made to do that.

For the CATI website, respondents value the search function and members-only job-postings. They would like to see an expansion of the members-only benefits, and we are already planning to do this.

Dr Naomi Kleid, who designed the survey and analyzed the responses, suggested an idea that

Important changes in the ATA Exam Program for 2004

A number of important changes will occur in the ATA Exam Program starting with the January 2004 exam sittings.

New eligibility requirements

The most important immediate change is that candidates will have to provide proof of education and experience before they can apply for an exam. This change is to make the fit between candidate and exam more realistic.

In the past, there have been many beginners and people not yet working as translators taking the exam, and the exam is not directed to beginners. This lack of requirement is considered to be a significant reason why the exam pass rate has remained just under 20% for many years.

Now, candidates will have to provide proof of a level of education, or education and experience, adequate to meet the challenges posed by the exam material in order to register. To learn more about this requirement, please go to

www.atanet.org/acc/Eligibility_Requirements.pdf.

This substantial change poses new challenges that will cause registration to take more time. The candidate will have to gather this proof and have foreign documents translated before submitting them to us. ATA headquarters will check the provided proof before notifying the candidate that he or she is eligible.

The ATA exam year will change

A second change is the start and finish of the ATA exam year. This used to run from one Annual Conference to the next, with new passages issued at each year's conference. The current exam year actually ends with the conference in Phoenix in November. New passages will be issued for exam sittings starting with January 1, 2004. From now on, the exam year will be the same as the calendar year. In the past, the ATA has always kept the month prior to the conference and the month after the conference

free to allow graders to catch up with the end of the year sitting rush and then deal with the large number of exams taken at the conference. The difference now will be that the exam year will continue on even after the conference, while still leaving a month free.

The 2004 conference will be in Toronto, Canada on October 13-16. This means that the last exam sitting before the conference will be September 12 and sittings will start up again on November 20 through December 19.

Depending on approval, a name change

The third change will be a name change. This change depends upon the outcome of a vote by the membership at the conference, but, if approved, the credential's name will change from accreditation to certification. All currently accredited members will get a new certificate around the first of the year stating that they are "certified by ATA" in their language combination(s).

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would move the CATI website and newsletter to the forefront of professional communication. She recommends that we provide links from one or two of the articles on the website version of the newsletter to a discussion forum for that article (see her comments on page 15). Naomi says that this would to create an active news-discussion community for CATI members, rather than just a read-only newsletter. Look for this new feature to appear

on the members-only section of the website in the next few weeks.

Many of these excellent suggestions would benefit from the help of CATI members. Contribute an article, write a letter to the editor, report on a conference, meeting, social event, or even consider contributing a regular column to the newsletter. The more members contribute, the more all members will benefit. This is **your** association!

A detailed report and analysis of the survey results for the *CATI Quarterly* and CATI website begins on page 11 of this issue of *CATI Quarterly*.

The next issue will include a report on the results for the CATI Conference and organization. To see all the results as downloaded from SurveyMonkey, please use the link that is now in the members-only section of the website.

CATI survey results

Part 1. CATI Quarterly and CATI website

By Naomi A. Kleid, Ph.D.



During September, 2003, e-mail invitations were sent to all CATI members asking them to participate in an online satisfaction survey for the *CATI Quarterly*, the CATI website, the CATI Annual Conference, and CATI organization. Out of 190 members contacted, 93 responded to the survey.

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Background

This article analyzes some of the data obtained from this survey. (See the members-only pages of the CATI website for the data.) However, before presenting the results, it is necessary to describe the survey itself. The survey was conducted at zero cost to CATI; the survey development and analysis efforts were donated by InfoExact, Inc., and the survey hosting was free from SurveyMonkey.com. However, to qualify for SurveyMonkey's free online survey service, the survey had to be designed to ask no more than 10 questions. To

meet this requirement and get data on the wide range of topics, we chose to ask many fill-in-the-blank questions that permitted CATI members to express their thoughts as freely as possible. We asked two questions that required members to select from among a set of satisfaction ratings. Our one remaining question asked members to choose a variety of responses that described their experience – that background and demographic question, which became Question 1, was extremely atypical of most survey questions.

Usually, a single survey question will address a single topic, and usually either a survey question will offer a comprehensive, yet mutually exclusive set of answer options or it will permit write-in answers. Consequently, respondents only need to think about one subject at a time and, in the case of selected answers that include an "other" category, the results can be expected to sum to 100% of the respondents answering that question.

However, Question 1 on the CATI

survey did not follow one of the standard approaches because, basically, it was trying to combine four questions into one. Question 1 was complicated and some of its answer options overlapped. Consequently, the data for related parts of Question 1 rarely tallied to 100%. In an ideal world, where we were not trying to save money, we would have asked several separate questions, rather than combining them into one question. Nevertheless, the data for Question 1 suggest some important trends describing CATI members.

Demographics

As can be seen in Table 1, 89 people answered the part of Question 1 that asked about the number of years they had been a member of CATI. More than 60% of the total respondent (93 people) said they had been a member of CATI for more than 3 years; the largest group within that segment said they had been a member of CATI for 6 to 10 years. While the percentage of continuing, long-term members is high, the percentage of relatively new members, those who help the society to grow, is also noteworthy. More than 20% of the respondents said they joined CATI within the past 12 months.

Answers to the background question also show that a high proportion (68%) of CATI members are members of other professional organizations. Many (60%) are ATA members. Quite a few (27%) CATI members belong to several professional organizations. Apparently CATI members value professional associations and the opportunity to network.

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Table 1. Duration on membership in CATI

Duration of membership in CATI	Number (out of 93)	Percent
I have been a member of CATI less than 6 months	13	14.0
I have been a member of CATI more than 6 months but less than 1 full year	7	7.5
I have been a member of CATI 1-2 years	12	12.9
I have been a member of CATI 3-5 years	14	15.1
I have been a member of CATI 6-10 years	28	30.1
I have been a member of CATI more than 10 years	15	16.1
Overall	89	95.7

CATI Quarterly

Table 2 presents some of the findings for the *CATI Quarterly* newsletter. It shows that while more than 50% of the members say they read every issue of the CATI newsletter, a sizable percentage (40.8%) skipped an issue or two during the 2003 calendar year. It would be interesting to know why these members missed an issue, especially since back issues are available on the website for viewing at the reader's convenience. Is there a lack of interest in the CQ, a problem of finding back issues on the website, a lack of time to read everything that is available, a reluctance to use the website, or some other problem? These are potential topics for discussion among the members or for a follow-on survey.

Almost 10% of the respondents either have never read an issue of the newsletter or have not read an issue this year. This may be due to the finding that 14% of the respondents have been CATI members for less than 6 months. Perhaps the newest members are still learning about the CATI benefits and are in the process of starting to read the

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newsletter. Certainly the longer-term members should have read at least one newsletter this year, if they wanted to, because, according to David Heath, everyone who was a member in March of 2003 would have received a paper newsletter that was mailed that month. Electronic distribution did not start until the beginning of June.

Most CATI members who evaluated their overall satisfaction with the *CATI Quarterly* said they were Extremely Satisfied (21 respondents, 25% of those responding) or Satisfied (49 respondents, 61% of those responding). Only one person said that overall he or she was Dissatisfied, and 11 said that overall they were Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied. (Four people did not provide an overall satisfaction rating and 8 people skipped this question, perhaps because they did not read a newsletter.)

Some comments reflecting the general positive evaluation of the *CATI Quarterly* include:

- "The *CATI Quarterly* makes me feel connected to my colleagues and my profession. It is a well done publication, reflecting our professionalism."

- "I like and enjoy the newsletter. The articles are insightful and useful."

Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of the newsletter. Most respondents were either Extremely Satisfied or Satisfied. (Note that a score of 1 meant extremely satisfied, 2 meant satisfied, 3 meant neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, etc.)

- Usefulness of information (overall score 1.95)
- Timeliness of information (overall score 2.03)
- Quality of content (overall score 1.95)
- Length (overall score 1.96)
- Design and layout (overall score 1.83)
- Support of professional development (overall score 2.08)
- Current frequency of distribution (overall score 2.04)
- Current distribution method (overall score 1.92)

While few people said they were dissatisfied or neutral about any of these factors, satisfaction was slightly weaker for:

- Support of professional development (26% were either neutral or dissatisfied)
- Current frequency of distribution (4 times / year) (20% were either neutral or dissatisfied)
- Timeliness of the information (19% were either neutral or dissatisfied)

Write-in comments help explain these points:

- Regarding ways to support pro-

Table 2. Frequency of reading CATI Quarterly

Frequency of reading the CATI Quarterly	Number (out of 93)	Percent
In 2003, I read every CATI Quarterly newsletter published so far (3 of them)	51	54.8
In 2003, I read 2 CATI Quarterly newsletters	19	20.4
In 2003, I read 1 CATI Quarterly newsletter	19	20.4
In 2003, I did not read any CATI Quarterly newsletters	6	6.5
I have never read a CATI Quarterly newsletter	2	2.2
Overall	97	104.3

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fessional development, the respondents offered many ideas for feature articles and ongoing columns, which David Heath, the CQ Editor, will consider.

- Regarding the frequency of distribution, one respondent said "It would be great if the publication could be available at least 6 times a year."

- Regarding the timeliness of the information, one respondent said: "I have seen the newsletter go through several forms over the many years I have been a member, and the now-outmoded print version was excellent. Perhaps now, on the web, it can be

more frequent — I see no reason why a web journal with no print version needs to be a quarterly, or indeed a periodical of any frequency. New material can be posted when it becomes available."

The *CATI Quarterly* received its best score for design and layout. Some comments include:

- "The *Quarterly* is beautifully presented/formatted, better than many other chapter newsletters if not better than all the ones I have seen. As is the website, it's one of the best!"

- "David does an extremely professional layout of the *CATI Quarterly*. He deserves highest recommendations."

About the current distribution method (an HTML-coded e-mail with links to printer-friendly files and a downloadable PDF file available from the website), one member said he or she was extremely dissatisfied, six said they were dissatisfied, and seven said they were neutral. When asked "How would you prefer to receive the *CATI Quarterly* newsletter?" 30 members selected the choice that said "as a printed and mailed publication, with simultane-

ous posting on the web." On the other hand, a total of 54 people selected one of the three electronic distribution methods offered as options. While electronic distribution is acceptable to a majority of the members who responded to the survey, a significant number clearly want a printed and mailed publication.

The following comments represent the opinions in favor of a printed newsletter:

- "I don't use it now. When it was mailed out I took it with me on as-

"Meeting deadlines is part of our culture and having timely information more so nowadays. You don't have to wait for your snail mail to arrive."

signments and read it during lulls and while waiting for clients to arrive. I referred to it also to keep up with upcoming events, and between times until the next newsletter arrived. I kept the newsletters filed and referred to them from time to time. It is a very useful tool for references, interesting articles and getting to know the members."

- "I really prefer the paper print. I used to read it every time when I got it and looking forward receiving it soon."

- "I am probably one of the few individuals who would much prefer the newsletter by mail. I'm much more likely to read it."

- "The web-based newsletter is great for reducing those piles of papers assigned to the 'I'll read it later' category. However, by not having a paper copy I miss the opportunity of reading a little here and there such as in the doctor's waiting room, the school car pool line (yes, I'm serious!), the hairdresser's or anywhere else where I would not normally bring my computer. I have to admit that receiving it by mail would be my preference as it helps to personalize an otherwise very isolating occupation."

On the other hand, some people liked the web version because:

- "The HTML coded e-mail with links to printer-friendly files is very useful because it enables me to print just the articles that interest me without having to print the entire PDF newsletter."

- "I read it, print it and save it in a file for future use."

- "Some of the benefits of having the *CATI Quarterly* accessible through the website are:

"1. Easy access 24 by 7 by 365

No more misplaced *Quarterlys* when you need it to refer to a good article or source for information.

"2. On-time information

Meeting deadlines is part of our culture and having timely information more so nowadays. You don't have to wait for your snail mail to arrive. On top of it, if you are on a trip and forget to bring a sample of the *Quarterly* or an article for reference, you don't need to panic just access the website and there you have it.

"3. Cost savings

The cost of paper and stamps can be used for other needs in the organization. Those 'return to sender' *Quarterlys* that got return because someone moved will no longer go to waste. Some of our members would find this benefit very useful particularly if you move or travel frequently. E-mail addresses do not change as often as your physical address but if you move, you have the confidence that you will receive your *Quarterly* by e-mail no matter where you are.

"4. Reduced administration tasks

Remember those 'return to sender' *Quarterlys*? Well it's much easier to contact someone by e-mail and update their personal information. What about if you changed your e-mail address? Then you will be missing that good reliable informa-

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CATI survey results *continued from previous page*

tion. In that case it will be up to the member to send a note to the administrative manager with a profile update."

Some members may not be comfortable printing articles from the newsletter; one clearly is having problems displaying the file. One person said: "I am unable to read the newsletter or print it because it

contains large blocks of solid black and some parts are missing..." CATI needs to learn more

about the printing facilities, browsers, and computing equipment the members are using, so we can solve these problems.

CATI website

As can be seen in Table 3, 14% of the survey respondents said that either they have never visited the CATI website or they have not visited during the past 6 months. We can assume that all of the respondents have computer access, because they responded to an e-mail

invitation to take the online survey. However, it might be helpful to know more about what CATI members use their computers for – other than e-mail – and whether they go to websites other than the CATI site. Perhaps the members who have not visited the CATI site are not in the habit of visiting websites;

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perhaps they prefer to use their computers primarily for e-mail.

We did not ask respondents to provide formal

satisfaction ratings on the website (which is something we should do next time); however we did ask for statements about what information the members used on the website and their comments or suggestions regarding the site.

The following are representative comments:

- "It is very well organized. It looks good. It is easy to use." "Nice design, easy navigation."

- "The searchable database is very useful for the general public. I would like to see more information/services being provided to members only."

- "I look for interpreters and have been satisfied with that info; It is good to have the info by zip code and by languages and alphabetically. I don't find it necessary to have headings where the interpreter/translator has no answer so you only see the heading and an empty space. I have liked the links. I could use dictionaries of all kinds in all fields!"

- "I look for information immediately relevant to my work such as job offers, links to language sites and most recently added information such as seminars."

- "I look for translators to help with various projects. Since they are listed by language, location, and area of expertise, it is very useful."

- "I usually go there for links to sites on translation issues, but I think the list could be more exhaustive. I also look for articles about topics I'm interested, but, once again, it could be more complete (and this could be solved by providing a variety of links and web resources.)"

- "As before, the website presentation is one of the best of all ATA chapters. I mostly look for new info, do not use it to find t/i as I have the directory and it's easier to look up there."

- "I go only when I receive an e-mail pointing out something new available there. I rarely use the electronic directory. When I do, it's usually to find a current e-mail address when an e-mail to the address in the printed directory bounces back."

- "I think a survey such as this is a really excellent idea. Would a members' forum be an option or something along those lines?"

Table 3. Frequency of visiting the CATI website

Frequency of visiting the CATI website	Number (out of 93)	Percent
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website more than once a week	5	5.4
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website about once a week	11	11.8
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website more often than once a month but less often than once a week	16	17.2
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website about once a month	19	20.4
In the past 6 months, I visited the CATI website every few months	27	29.0
In the past 6 months, I have not visited the CATI website	9	9.7
I have never visited the CATI website	4	4.3
Overall	91	97.8

Observations and recommendations

Several things about these findings surprised me: While 14% of the respondents say that either they have never visited the website or they have not visited the website in the past 6 months, almost twice that percent (26.9%) say they have not read more than one issue of the

CATI Quarterly this year. Why not? In order to read more than one issue in 2003, people would have had to get newsletter articles

electronically. However, they would not necessarily have to go to the website. They could click on the links to printable versions of the articles provided in the e-mail that announces the availability of each newsletter, and then they could read the articles that they print on their printer.

It would be good to know more about how CATI members use the website and the newsletter. Do some people go to the website but not read or print the *Quarterly*? Do some people read or print parts of the *Quarterly* without going to the website (by printing key articles from links in the announcement e-mail)?

Both the website and the newsletter provide valuable information to the CATI membership, but most of the membership seems to use (and perhaps, to think of) the newsletter and the website in different ways. Although newsletters and websites have traditionally served different purposes, there is no reason why they can't be better tied together. At least one of the write-in comments

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talked about this synergy, and many of the comments mentioned more services for members only.

As one response to both these lines of thought, I would like to propose what I believe is a novel use of a website, one that would move the CATI organization to the forefront of professional communication. I would like to propose that CATI make some of the key articles into vehicles for discussion. Instead of having articles and a newsletter that were simply read, CATI could have some articles become news-discussion vehicles. David Heath could provide a link from one or two of the articles on the website version of the newsletter to a discussion forum for that article. This would help CATI members participate as a vibrant online community, and some of the online newsletter

articles would serve as catalysts for that discussion.

One final comment on the survey, specifically on the response rate: In the past 18 months, we've created, administered, and analyzed surveys for three professional organizations – the Society for Technical Communication (STC) Carolina Chapter, the STC Special Interest Group for Usability, and now CATI. Of all the organizations, the CATI membership was by far the most enthusiastic: the CATI response rate was more than twice that for the other organizations and the number and thoroughness of the write-in comments were impressive. Each person who answered the survey had so much good information to share, and the tone of the comments was so positive and thoughtful. You are a great organization to work with.

Naomi A. Kleid is President of InfoExact, Inc., a consulting company specializing in training, usability, technical communication, and translation from French to English. David Heath is Vice President of InfoExact. Visit us at www.infoexact.com.

"CATI survey results Part 2: CATI Conference and organization" will appear in the next edition of *CATI Quarterly*.

We would like to hear from you!

If you would like to comment on any of the articles in this newsletter, please write the editor, G. David Heath, at

infoexact@mindspring.com

A selection of letters to the editor will be published in future issues of *CATI Quarterly*.