

Signature

EVOLVE



OR ELSE



Association publishing teams that fail to adapt to a changing media ecosystem risk extinction. **PAGE 14**

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SAY WHAT?

In a world growing smaller every day, translating your message to an international community is worth thinking about.

They say the world is shrinking. You are just a few clicks away from a video conference with someone on the other side of the world. The price of tea in China does actually affect how much your Starbucks grande costs.

Association members are often not just down the street — they may be three continents away. So what happens when potential members or industry professionals don't speak your language? Literally, how does your English-centric content make it in another hemisphere?

It's a question Nicholas Strozza and the folks at Interpro Translation Solutions ponder every day.

"Many of our projects involve localization into a variety of languages simultaneously," says Strozza, Interpro's vice president of marketing and sales. "For example, for several of our clients, we manage multiple projects into over 30 languages concurrently."

After all, your message doesn't count for much if the people you are trying to reach can't understand it. *Signature* sat down with Strozza to find out more about the state of translation services in the association world.

signature: Interpro just marked 25 years in business. Recent pandemic-related shifts aside, how have you seen translation needs changing for associations?

Strozza: Probably the biggest change is what they are translating. It used to be mostly, if not strictly, translating papers



and studies. Now we see a lot more websites, surveys, video, and event interpretation.

Social media and online surveys have seen significant growth. They are easy to send around the world, and they are far more effective when they are in a person's native language. Even then, it's not so much the content that has changed — associations are still talking about their professions or industries. It's more a change of frequency and quantity. There are fewer huge white papers and more bite-sized elements.

signature: What do you say to associations who are eyeing free services like Google Translate?

Strozza: A lot of people think machine translation is a newer thing. It's not. It's been around for a long time. Some of the newer versions have a fancier package and might be OK for some things, but when you're putting your association's name on something, how sure do you want to be?

I've seen situations where something went through a machine and only a few changes were needed. But I've seen just as many where the output needed major reworking or was just not accurate. A good test: Go to a website in another language. Have the crawler or browser put it into English. See how good you think it is. Is that good enough for your members?

It's more than just swapping one word for another. There are grammatical issues, style, terminology, localization, and so on. The quality of the translation will reflect on the association, and you do get what you pay for.

Another thing we see is an association has someone in house who speaks, lets say, Spanish. Seems like that person could just handle all the Spanish translation, right? Well, what dialect do they speak? Are they also a subject matter expert? Will they know if a straight translation introduces a technical mistake? Translation is not a commodity; it's an investment.

signature: You've mentioned translation and localization. Can you elaborate on the difference?



Nicholas Strozza

"Being able to show people a range of lingual options is like rolling out a welcome mat."

Strozza: The easiest way to think of it is that translation is one word for another. Localization is tailoring those words for the market. The end goal is for the person who speaks that language to not know it was translated from English.

Sometimes it's about making an awkward translation sound more natural. But sometimes the meaning gets lost in translation.

One example: We worked on a flier for training courses. It said things like "easy as pie" and "recipe for success." In French, word for word, the meaning is lost. Baking a pie is not easy. To make the message make sense in French it needs to be "easy as saying hello" or "it's a breeze."

Some of it is imagery, colors, metric vs standard measures, and so on. Email blasts in February that reference cold or chilly weather don't make sense in the southern hemisphere where it's summer.

signature: How do those processes tie in with event interpretation, and how has that changed with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Strozza: Many associations were already hosting events, such as confer-

ences and webinars, that have global and multi-lingual audiences. Stay-at-home orders have moved many conferences completely online, but the need remains the same.

Even without travel costs, international events can be a hard sell. Though most people will be fluent in the dominant language where the event is being held, 9 times out of 10, they prefer it in their native language. Being able to show people the range of lingual options is like rolling out a welcome mat.

In-person events sometimes have on-site interpreters — there might be a booth for interpretation. But Remote Simultaneous Interpretation supports a wider array of languages. We do this by streaming the presentation's audio to studio. People can then listen to the interpretation via an app.

Interpretation is not the same as translation. For one, interpretation is in real-time. It conveys the meaning of what is being said, which is important when the word-for-word translation doesn't work.

signature: What's a future or emerging trend in this field that excites you?

Strozza: I'm starting to see associations writing with translation in mind. That is, they are writing their English content in a more deliberate way so it is more accessible to international audiences. It's more cleanly written, clearer, less marketing and salesy talk, fewer colloquialisms, and so on. It not only makes the content more effective in English-speaking areas, it makes it easier for non-native speakers to engage.

When you are developing content and writing with translations in mind — rather than as an afterthought — the focus is on including people, and they will be drawn to that regardless of what languages they speak. It's the difference between translation and interpretation. If the goal from the beginning is to get the message to connect with people, it's far more likely to be successful than if the goal is simply to put information out into the world.