



# The MITA Reader

## It's Party Time!

*MITAns celebrate the end of the year*

**By Carol Shaw**  
MITA Editor

On **Saturday, December 3, 2005**, MITAns will gather to celebrate the end of the year. The past two years, we have met at Italian and Mexican restaurants, respectively. This year, we're "moving" to the Far East. MITA's annual Christmas party will be held at the Grand Chinese Restaurant, at 635 and MacArthur, in Irving. (For those who need it, the restaurant telephone number is 972-830-9877. )

The buffet-style dinner will start at 7:00 p.m. Several prizes will be given away, with the grand door prize being a \$100 gift certificate.

The cost is only \$10 for MITA members and \$15 for MITA guests, payable at the door.

This has been a full and busy year for MITA. We have grown and continue to grow. New members have joined and existing members have remained involved. In May, we held a highly successful workshop day. Bimonthly meeting topics have ranged from Art and the Interpreter, to Literary Translation, to Business Practices.

Join us on December 3 to celebrate - and look forward together to an exciting 2006!



METROPLEX INTERPRETERS  
& TRANSLATORS  
ASSOCIATION

Serving DFW and North Texas



**Volume 2, Issue 6**

**October-November, 2005**

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## Another look at the Internet

by Mark Nicholson  
Special to the Reader

The internet has become indispensable to the way the world does business. What began as an efficient means of accessing specialized databases in the world of higher education has become so integral to most companies' routine operations that a small hiccup in the worldwide web can have far-reaching repercussions and cause loss of revenue.

I spoke with some colleagues and clients about how the internet has altered the landscape for our small sliver of the GNP. Christine Civiale Sherman, owner of Bastille Translation Service, points out that it has "leveled the playing field" by

offering smaller firms the chance to compete with larger providers. Linguistically, she says, the internet can be something of a mixed bag. It offers ex-pat translators an easy way to keep current with the latest terminology and written conventions of their native languages — something that can tend to wane after an extended stay abroad. However, the premiums that they could once command, especially in more exotic language pairs, are eroding since translation companies can now access those services abroad for less money.

Yvonne Stegall, owner of TransNation Translations prefers to rely on as many local resources as possible, but points out that the internet has been a

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**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS** — meet on second Saturday of odd months — at 3 pm at the home of Diana Ianariello.

**MITA  
Christmas Party  
December 3**

Join us for lively discussions and shared information!  
For directions, go to [www.dfw-mita.com](http://www.dfw-mita.com)

December 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**December 3:** MITA Christmas Party

**December 24-25:** Christmas Eve/ Day

**December 31:** New Year's Eve

**January 1:** New Year's Day

**January 14:** MITA Steering Committee

January 2006						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

*As we head into the holiday season, may we each become deeply aware of the joys and challenges we have been given. Drive carefully, be safe, and enjoy the unexpected moments!*

*And in the meantime:*

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**



**Steering Committee**

MITA's steering committee met on November 12 for their bimonthly meeting. Aside from putting the finishing touches on the Christmas party plans, members addressed the 2006 calendar.

On **February 4**, we will start off our exciting 2006 line-up for with a presentation by state and court certified interpreter, teacher and translator, **Eta Trabing**.

Check the website and newsletter for information other programs to be presented! **Remember, anyone wishing to join the Steering Committee meetings is welcome!**

# How-To, MITA Style

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During the regular meeting on October 1, 2005, MITA members focused on business practices. Co-chairs **Maria Elizalde-Honaman** and **Marilyn Retta** guided the discussion through agency and end-client expectations. Topics ranged from budgeting time realistically, and following up on deliveries to protecting a client's privacy and building (or increasing) clientele. Webmaster **Diana Schultz**, who is also the local Bowne Global liaison, offered some additional insights as did veteran interpreter and teacher, **Buddy Strittmatter**.



Marilyn Retta and Maria Elizalde-Honaman led the discussions

Not everything about business practices is serious....



Buddy Strittmatter provided some additional insights



## ...Another Look at the Internet

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boon in locating new talent. Her firm once succeeded in scheduling a patent litigation interpretation in France for a desperate US-based client within twenty-four hours using the ATA's online directory and Mapquest. Despite her fifteen years' experience in the translation industry, she says that such an assignment could never have been coordinated that quickly just ten short years ago.

I got my first translation job right out of college in 1986. Over the next several years I saw data processing grow more sophisticated (some of my officemates could still recall with horror the days of the typewriter) and savvier translators began using faxes and modems. I left the translation business when my father asked me to join his business in 1991. When he sold the company eleven years later, I decided it was the right time to go back into translation. What I found, having had very little contact with the industry during that time, was that the internet had changed everything. More access to information meant more competition for the available work. Profit margins were shrinking. Foreign competition was capturing a larger share of the domestic market. It felt like a brand new industry.

While I am still a relative newcomer to the business, my thinking now revolves less and less around where to find business but rather around how to get the best return on my time investment by optimizing my research time while avoiding less-than-helpful sites or downright risky web resources. I don't claim to have all the answers, but I have refined my method of searching for them. Even if it doesn't revolutionize the way you work, I hope it will increase your awareness of the kinds of resources that are available.

Speaking from the perspective of a French>English translator, I'll share three favorites that I seem to rely on pretty regularly. I've learned that no comprehensive resource exists, but used in conjunction with more conventional resources, they have proven quite helpful. First, there is [www.granddictionnaire.com](http://www.granddictionnaire.com). English<>French translators should bear in mind that it will return results in Canadian English. Take, for instance, "chiffre d'affaires". In the US we say "sales" or "sales figures", while in the UK it's "turnover". This site will indeed propose "sales" as one possibility, but if you were looking up "chiffre d'affaires brut", you would get "gross turn-over". For sheer nuance, however, you'll find the site is quite impressive.

[www.eurodicautom.com](http://www.eurodicautom.com), is the official online dictionary of the European Union. Not as nuanced as the

Grand Dictionnaire, it often provides more context. Again, I would suggest caution as some of the terms it returns may have come from British resources. (Note: This site is no longer being updated. The EU's new site <https://iate.cdt.eu.int/iatenew/login.jsp> will be available at some point.)

Lastly, [www.ProZ.com](http://www.ProZ.com) is a translation community where linguists from all over the world come to exchange ideas and information, look for jobs, rate translation companies, and post technical help on hardware or CAT tools. Most importantly, it features an extensive term bank that, while moderated, should be handled with care as well. The KudoZ search features works best if you enter only one word from your search term. If the site returns some hits, what you'll get is input from one, and sometimes up to six or seven colleagues who will propose a solution to your query, often supporting their input with links to other sources or information.

Translators are human, however. While checking my translation of "cession d'activité", I once found that two translators had mistakenly understood "cession" as "cessation". ProZ contributors, moreover, are often native speakers of another target language but nevertheless will hazard uninformed guesses. Like a two-edged sword, this site is genuinely helpful but dangerous if used indiscriminately.

Of course, we're all familiar with Google and other search engines like AltaVista and Yahoo! Their distant cousin, the invisible web, is an important but little-discussed aspect of the internet. While not a new phenomenon, it has been getting quite a lot of attention in the cyber world owing primarily to the fact that it is proliferating so rapidly. BrightPlanet.com estimates that it is 500 times bigger than the visible or "surface" web. The invisible web contains essentially all the content that more standard search engines cannot or will not access. It is largely comprised of content-rich databases from universities, libraries, businesses, and government agencies around the world. There are literally "hundreds and thousands of publicly accessible databases," says BrightPlanet.com. No, believe it or not, Google and its relatives do not go out to the worldwide web and search everything that's out there. It just seems like they do. A wealth of information exists, however, that most surfers only find if they know where to look for it. Many of the resources you'll find here are not registered with the most common search engines (.pdfs, for example).

We all know the anguish of translating or interpreting poorly constructed sentences. But we rarely get faced with gems such as the following, taken from letters to the Illinois Welfare Department, requesting financial aid:

- I am forwarding a marriage certificate and six children. I have seven, one died, which are baptised on a half piece of paper.
- This my eighth child. What are you going to do about it?
- I am very annoyed to find out you branded my son illiterate. This is a dirty lie, as I was married a week before he was born.
- I answer to your letter, I have given birth to a boy weighing 10 pounds. I hope this is satisfactory.
- I am forwarding my marriage certificate and 5 children, one of which is a mistake as you can see.
- Unless I get my husband's money pretty soon, I will be forced to lead an immoral life.
- You changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make a difference?

## ...Another Look at the Internet

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Conventional search engines are created by applications called “spiders”, computer robot programs that “crawl” the web seeking search engine content. They navigate the web by following the links in the pages already found in the database of their parent search engine (“static” pages). Because the web can read them as .html text, they will appear in conventional searches. If they are not indexed in .html, they will be excluded but will likely turn up in invisible web resources. Rather than go over all of our options here, I suggest you investigate <http://www.invisibleweb.net/>, a directory compiled by invisible web gurus Chris Sherman and Gary Price. Keep in mind that the invisible web will probably be most useful in pre-translation research and perhaps less so with actual terminology.

But, Google continues to be a perennial favorite. Here are three quick tips for getting more out of Google that you might not be familiar with:

1) Enter your search term in quotes, and “+ English” (or your target language). Google will return sites including the term where the word “English” is included on the page. Sometimes it is a link to a translated page.

2) Suppose you find a page in your source language that appears to have an English translation. You click on “English” and get nothing. Try going to your URL editor, look for something that indicates the source page's language and manually change it to “en”. This little method worked for me on a page I found on Dell's Canada site: <http://www1.ca.dell.com/>

[content/topics/reftopic.aspx/gen/fr/policy?c=ca&cs=&l=fr&s=gen&~saction=010](http://content/topics/reftopic.aspx/gen/fr/policy?c=ca&cs=&l=fr&s=gen&~saction=010).

3) You've run across a term that's giving you fits: “rapport de confluence,” for example. “Ratio” is a likely translation for “rapport,” so enter “rapport de confluence” +ratio and Google returns two hits suggesting “bifurcation ratio” as a possible translation. This tip also works well when you know what one letter of a source acronym stands for.

As for determining which sites are reliable, don't underestimate the benefit of discussing them with colleagues and just using plain common sense. If the site is poorly designed and/or written, proceed with caution. Look up a few terms and check them against a trusted source. But if it's a site you think you might rely on frequently, ask around and listen to what others are saying about it. I love introducing colleagues to sites that will make their work easier and better — and have plenty of colleagues who do the same for me.

It has been said that any blessing has the potential to turn into a curse. What we all need to remember is that the internet is unregulated. I realize this is not exactly a revelation, but we should be aware that as professionals we are ultimately responsible for the quality of the work we submit to our clients and must, insofar as possible, keep any inaccurate or incorrect terminology from the web out of our final drafts.

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*MITA member Mark Nicholson studied both in the USA and in France, and has been a French<> English translator since 1986. Reprinted with permission from the Gotham Translator newsletter.*