



# The MITA Reader

- June / July '07

## OmegaT & Interpreter SIG

*Mark your calendars for August 4, 2007*

At MITA's next regular meeting, at 3:00 p.m. on August 4, **Thelma L. Sabim** will bring a presentation on **OmegaT**, the free, open-source translation memory tool. Translators of all language pairs will gain from attending this presentation!

Thelma is a freelance translator (English/Portuguese) based in Austin, Texas. Certified by both the ATA (USA) and ABRATES (Brazil), Thelma has her BA in Economics and started out working for a power utility in Brazil. That was followed by five years as an in-house translator/editor and project manager for two translation agencies. In 1994, she joined the freelance world.

An experienced presenter, Thelma is a member of MITA, as well as of the AATIA and other associations. She has served as Treasurer for the ATA's Portuguese Division (during part

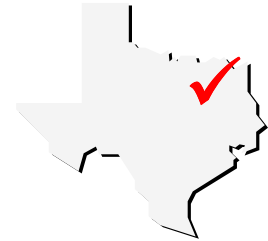
of the time that MITA's **Tereza Braga** served as an officer in that same division). Thelma has also given presentations at ATA annual conferences, including *Ergonomic Office* (1998), *Translators as Editors* (2005), *Open-Source CAT Tool—Free and Easy* (2006) and *Gas and Oil Potpourri* (2007).

Preceding Thelma's presentation and starting at 2:30, there will be a 30-minute meeting for interpreters regarding the start-up of an **Interpreters' Special Interest Group (SIG)**. The suggestion of MITA's **Luis Garcia**, current chair of the Texas Association of Judiciary Translators and Interpreters (TAJIT), the Interpreters SIG will focus on skill building and problem resolution within the interpreting world.

The August 4th meeting promises something of interest for everyone. Join us!

METROPLEX INTERPRETERS  
& TRANSLATORS  
ASSOCIATION

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Texas



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June '07-July '07

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## Survey Update

*Thanks to all who have answered the MITA survey. The survey is still open—so if you haven't responded yet, PLEASE DO! We'll be studying the results at the next SC meeting. (See your emails for the link to the online survey)*

## June 2, 2007 recap

On June 2, MITAns saw a demonstration of two software tools, SnagIt and Practicount, and our **María Yolanda Rivera** led us through the challenges of transcreation (translation of advertising and similar texts), offering timely insights and solutions.

The **MITA Reader** is published by Carol Shaw (info@nexuslanguage.com) as a service to the members of the **Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)**.

Submissions are welcome (begged for, actually); articles should focus on language, cross-cultural, linguistic, or industry concerns, and be of interest to our general readership (preferably not language or country specific.)

#### Upcoming Events:

August 4, 2007  
MITA meeting

August 24-25, 2007  
TAHIT Symposium,  
Houston

September 15, 2007  
AATIA—ATA certification workshop  
(www.atanet.org)

September 29, 2007  
ATA Certification Exam  
Austin

### August 2007

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	

### September 2007

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						

## AATIA announces ATA Spanish>English Certification Workshop in Austin, September 15

*Excerpt from press release provided by Esther Díaz*

This workshop will be led by two current ATA graders and will afford English>Spanish translators a valuable opportunity to complete a practice translation and receive feedback in person from the graders. The objective of the workshop is to familiarize participants with the ATA testing passages and criteria for grading and to help them assess whether or not they are ready to take the exam.

Although the workshop is geared mainly towards English-into-Spanish translators, **translators who translate from Spanish into English are welcome to attend for a reduced rate.** No Spanish>English practice tests or grader feedback will be given, but translators who work into English will benefit from the general information provided by the graders about ATA certification exams and from the discussion of the sample translations into Spanish.

*For more information, download the flyer at <http://www.aatia.org/dl/events/2007CertWorkshopFlyer.pdf>*

Visit us on the web at: [www.dfw-mita.com](http://www.dfw-mita.com)

# TAHIT Symposium set for August 2007

(Press release provided by **Jorge Ungo**)

In July of 2003 the Institute for Healthcare Advancement stated that \$73 billion is spent annually in unnecessary health care expenses due to the inability of patients to understand what medical providers are communicating to them. Since that time, issues of immigration, healthcare access, language and culture have dominated media headlines. Today 30% of the Texas population speaks a language other than English in the home with close to 15% recognizing their English comprehension as limited. As immigration and demographic trends continue to reflect growing diversity, stakeholders in the Texas healthcare system must continue to evolve in its approaches to ensuring effective delivery of services to patients with little understanding of the English language.

The purpose of the TAHIT Symposium on Language Access in Texas is to facilitate communication regarding language access issues in healthcare between government, providers, and individual stakeholders.

The Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators was formed to address the inconsistency in qualifications for professional interpreters in the state of Texas. TAHIT is working to achieve standard qualifications for the healthcare interpreter to ensure accurate transmission of vital medical information and provision of excellent healthcare to all, regardless of their ability to speak English.

The TAHIT Symposium on Language Access in Texas will take place on Friday and Saturday August 24<sup>th</sup> & August 25<sup>th</sup> in Houston, TX. For more information, go to <http://tahit07.eventbrite.com>.

## The D word

By Carol Shaw, Editor

It is as inevitable as taxes and wrinkles. A client contacts you to ask for a quote on services, then follows up with, "Will you discount?" Maybe not in those exact words, but the intent is the same. My personal favorite is, "Is this your best rate?" I always want to answer with, "No, this is *your* best rate. *My* best rate is \$1,000 per word."

Humor aside, the question of discounting faces each of us from time to time. Depending on your workload, personal preference and client base, the answers can vary widely. Over the years, learning from experience, mistakes and other professionals in the field, I have found a few basic questions that need to be considered when the D word is brought up.

### ***Who is your client?***

Discounts given too easily are usually hard to get rid of later. If I have no history with a client, I'm much less likely to agree to a discount. Discounts to new clients generally become the rate they establish for all future jobs.

On the other hand, if the client is a long-standing pillar of your client base, you may want to consider a discount. They can tell you the reason for their request (highly repetitive text, unexpected budget shortfall) and then the decision is up to you. This type of partnership approach to the question of discounting depends on the level of trust and communication between you and your client.

Sometimes, your client is a colleague. In this case, a discount appears to be industry standard, in order to ensure that the colleague receive some benefit. It may be your work, but it is their reputation and their client relationship that are on the line and brought in the job.

### ***What are the payment expectations?***

Does this client pay on time, every time? Or are you still trying to collect on the job you did for them six

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months ago? The more the client respects your finances, the more realistic it is to consider a special discount for unusual circumstances. In fact, discounting can offer a way to encourage payment: I know at least one translator who routinely offers a small discount for payment within 10 days of service. The benefit to her cash flow makes the discount worthwhile for her.

### ***Is the discount a “double whammy”?***

Double whammy discounts can sneak up on you if you’re not careful. Let’s take the case of an interpreter who is asked to discount his hourly rate for a day-long assignment. When he gets to the assignment, he finds that the client had asked for a day “to be on the safe side”, but really needs him for only three hours in the morning. The rate, however, is already set and the interpreter has given up the option of taking an afternoon job. Ouch.

One common solution to this kind of double whammy is to quote by blocks of time rather than discounted hours. For example, the interpreter could quote (solely by way of example) an hourly rate of \$60, a half-day rate of \$220, and a full-day rate of \$400.

Another kind of double whammy comes from the client requesting a discount for a large project. The presumption, of course, is that the translator should give a discount because the overall job is so large that it will provide long-term stability and a large paycheck. However, big projects can also adversely affect your cash-flow and your relationship with other clients. If a translator accepts a 100,000 word project at a discount, and spends the next four weeks working solely on that translation, there is a four-week gap in billing. In addition, there are four weeks of distance between the translator and other clients whose jobs have been turned down in order to complete this one project. Two possible solutions here (if you want the job and have to agree to a discount to get it), are to a) extend your delivery time so that you can take jobs from other clients at the same time and/or b) request staggered payments, preferably with a down payment.

Another approach to discounting encourages a continuous flow of work. A certain experienced (and always busy) translator has a tiered discount structure with one of her clients. The first discount kicks in after the first 100,000 words. The discount increases at 250,000 words and again at 500,000 words. With that much volume, she has no problem agreeing to a discount.

### ***Agency vs. Direct Client***

Another thing one might want to consider is whether the client is an agency or a direct client.

Some professionals in our field don’t believe in giving agency discounts, and that is their prerogative. For others, it depends on what the agency does for them. A good client of mine (translation/editing) is an agency for whom I discount my rates. In exchange, they give me regular work, absolute reliability in payments, courtesy, fast answers to my text questions and jobs in fields that I enjoy. That protected relationship makes the discount a good trade-off for me.

An interpreter I know discounts her rates to a particular agency. The rationale behind her discount lies, again, in the punctuality of their payment. The area in which they are active is famous for late-paying end clients. Since the interpreter wishes to work in that area, the agency “earns” her discount by paying her promptly, regardless of whether they have collected from the end user.

If you have never worked with a particular agency before, research them before agreeing to any special pricing. There is no reason for freelancers and agencies to have an adversarial or feudal relationship: and there is no incentive to provide a discount when those conditions exist.

When dealing with direct clients, the partnership element is key. Direct clients are good candidates for fast-pay discounts, or other creative benefits.

The bottom line is: *what’s in it for you?* You’re in business to make money, and it makes little sense to discount your services “just because”. Giving discounts too easily can have a negative impact on your professional image. If you offer a quality service, you should expect to be rewarded accordingly. On the other hand, not giving them at all may keep you from a job or client you really want.

To discount or not to discount is a question to be answered only by each individual. But for those of us who do, on occasion, bow to the D word – we owe it to ourselves to make sure we’re getting our discount’s worth.

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*This is the first article in a series. In the next issue we will tackle errors and corrections. Being no stranger to either, I would like to thank **Mies de Vries** for her excellent input and editing skills on this article!*

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