



Institute of
Translation
and Interpreting

CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL
CAERDYD



ITI COFFEE HOUSE: ◆ PROGRESS TOWARDS A CODE OF ETHICS

CONTEXT: CODES OF ETHICS VS CODES OF CONDUCT

In the translation profession, it is common to use the two titles interchangeably, despite them fulfilling quite different purposes:

- A **code of ethics** is designed to convey a bigger picture, vision or overall philosophy of an institution or industry as a whole, and should help guide members' or employees' decision-making
- A **code of conduct**, meanwhile, outlines the concrete, small-scale behaviours expected of an employee or member, which should be enforceable rules with obvious applications

ITI currently employs a Code of Professional Conduct, rather than a Code of Ethics.

THE PROBLEM WITH CODES OF ETHICS / CONDUCT



Shortcomings include coverage, enforcement, and problems of interpretation and application



Existing codes are static, outdated, and overly prescriptive; many are lengthy and not user-friendly



Fail to address today's ethical challenges and emerging concerns like environmental sustainability, technology, and translators' emotional wellbeing

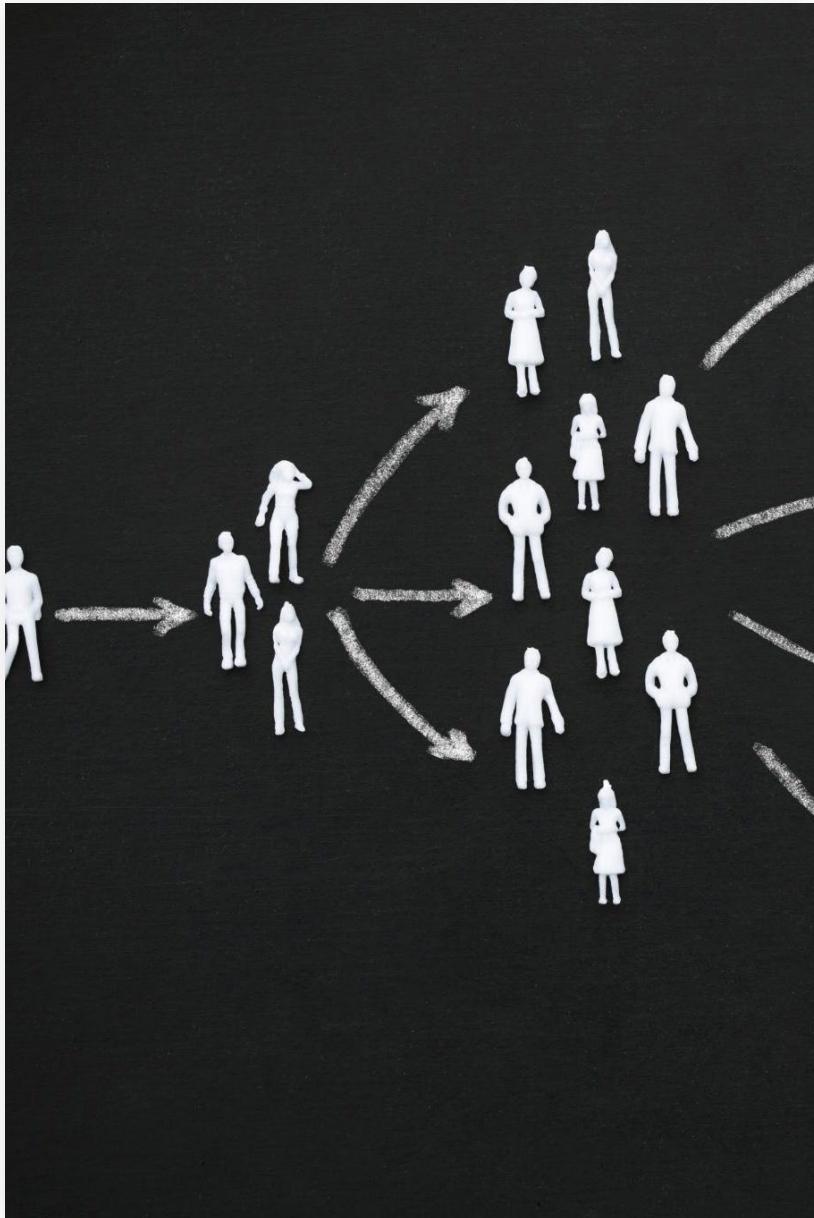


Updating codes is a tricky, debated process due to the inherent complexity of the topic and the many and varied viewpoints held by practitioners

CONCEPT OF POST-CODE ETHICS

Lambert's (2023, 134) “post-code approach” to ethics in the translation industry, where static, outdated, and prescriptive guidelines are softened, or even replaced, by dynamic, timely, and evolving resources on ethical issues:

- Post-code ethics replace fixed guidelines with flexible, evolving resources that adapt to changing challenges
- This approach allows nuanced ethical decisions that reflect technological and societal changes
- The model offers a framework adaptable beyond the UK to other regions and professions





The ITI Coffee House sessions

COFFEE HOUSE – FOSTERING AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS



"Places where people gathered to drink coffee, learn the news of the day, and perhaps to meet with other local residents and discuss matters of mutual concern."

Brian Cowan (2005). [The Social Life of Coffee](#)

CO-CREATION AS AN UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE



AIM: Foster collaboration between academic and professional voices on ethics in translation

- Project developed in a very organic manner, with an openness to new ideas and changing directions
- Benefitted from being able to utilise existing academic networks to identify receptive, like-minded contributors
- No predetermined outcomes in mind
- Commitment to sharing the outputs openly
- Outputs are genuine reflections of attendees' thoughts

HOW IT WORKED

- Series of lunchtime sessions across 2024 and 2025 held online via Zoom
- Sessions combined expert insights with practitioner-led dialogue for real-world experience sharing
- Informal, free-flowing conversations in a relaxed atmosphere
- Ethics treated as an evolving conversation with actionable insights co-created by participants and captured on Padlet
- Presentation materials and AI-produced summaries based on the transcript and Padlet published after each session

Breakout group 1

Discussion point 1: AI use in work processes and upskilling

1. How has AI impacted your preparation, delivery, or post-interpreting workflows, and what ethical considerations have arisen? What are the potential benefits and risks of using AI tools during interpreting sessions?
2. What specific upskilling or training would help you better leverage AI effectively and ethically in your work?

Discussion point 2: Role of stakeholders

3. What role should professional associations play in shaping the ethical use of AI in interpreting? Are there specific policies or initiatives you would like to see professional bodies adopt regarding AI use?
4. How can interpreters contribute to the development of ethical AI tools for our profession?

Discussion point 3: AI technologies use in sensitive settings

5. What uses and limitations should be recognized in the use of

Breakout group 2

Discussion point 1: AI use in work processes and upskilling

1. How has AI impacted your preparation, delivery, or post-interpreting workflows, and what ethical considerations have arisen? What are the potential benefits and risks of using AI tools during interpreting sessions?
2. What specific upskilling or training would help you better leverage AI effectively and ethically in your work?

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Discussion point 4: AI technologies use in sensitive settings

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Breakout group 3

Discussion point 1: AI use in work processes and upskilling

1. How has AI impacted your preparation, delivery, or post-interpreting workflows, and what ethical considerations have arisen? What are the potential benefits and risks of using AI tools during interpreting sessions?
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Discussion point 5: AI technologies use in sensitive settings

5. What uses and limitations should be recognized in the use of

Breakout group 4

Discussion point 1: AI use in work processes and upskilling

1. How has AI impacted your preparation, delivery, or post-interpreting workflows, and what ethical considerations have arisen? What are the potential benefits and risks of using AI tools during interpreting sessions?
2. What specific upskilling or training would help you better leverage AI effectively and ethically in your work?

Discussion point 2: Role of stakeholders

3. What role should professional associations play in shaping the ethical use of AI in interpreting? Are there specific policies or initiatives you would like to see professional bodies adopt regarding AI use?
4. How can interpreters contribute to the development of ethical AI tools for our profession?

Discussion point 6: AI technologies use in sensitive settings

6. What uses and limitations should be recognized in the use of

Breakout group 5

Discussion point 1: AI use in work processes and upskilling

1. How has AI impacted your preparation, delivery, or post-interpreting workflows, and what ethical considerations have arisen? What are the potential benefits and risks of using AI tools during interpreting sessions?
2. What specific upskilling or training would help you better leverage AI effectively and ethically in your work?

Discussion point 2: Role of stakeholders

3. What role should professional associations play in shaping the ethical use of AI in interpreting? Are there specific policies or initiatives you would like to see professional bodies adopt regarding AI use?
4. How can interpreters contribute to the development of ethical AI tools for our profession?

Discussion point 7: AI technologies use in sensitive settings

7. What uses and limitations should be recognized in the use of

Topic(s) discussed	Guest host(s)	Affiliation
Ethical payment practices	Anja Jones	Former Managing Director AJT
Environmental sustainability	Matt Riemland	Heriot-Watt University
Evolving translation technologies	Joss Moorkens	Dublin City University
Ethical practice within and outside of interpreting assignments	Rebecca Tipton & Beverley Costa	Manchester University & Pasolo
Trauma and audiovisual translation	Charlotte Bosseaux	Edinburgh University
Emotional wellbeing for translators	JC Penet	Newcastle University
Ethical issues in AI and interpreting	Rebecca Tipton & Deborah Giustini	Manchester University & Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)
The role of LSPs in supporting freelancers	Sophie Howe	Comtec Translations
Ethics in interpreting for vulnerable populations	Xiaohui Yuan	University of Birmingham
ITI's Code of Professional Conduct - review	Sara Robertson & Joseph Lambert	ITI & Cardiff University
Ethics and self-care	JC Penet & Katerina Perdikaki	Newcastle University & freelance
Platform economies in translation and interpreting	Deborah Giustini & Dr Gökhan Firat	HBKU & formerly Surrey University

ITI COFFEE HOUSE PROGRAMME

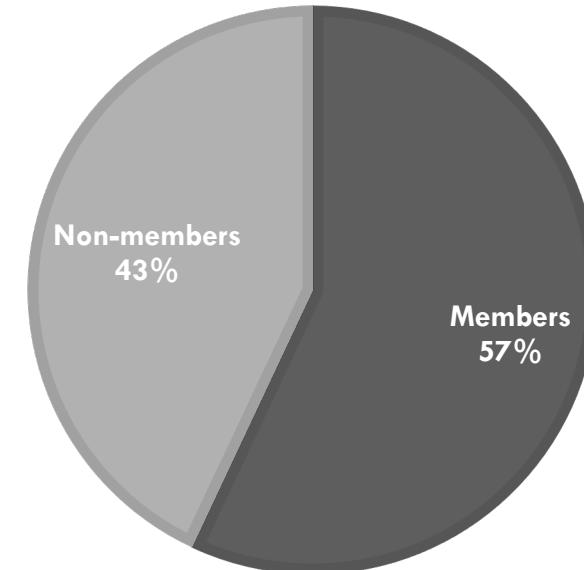
NUMBERS INVOLVED

12 sessions

596 total registrations

297 total live attendees

344 UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS



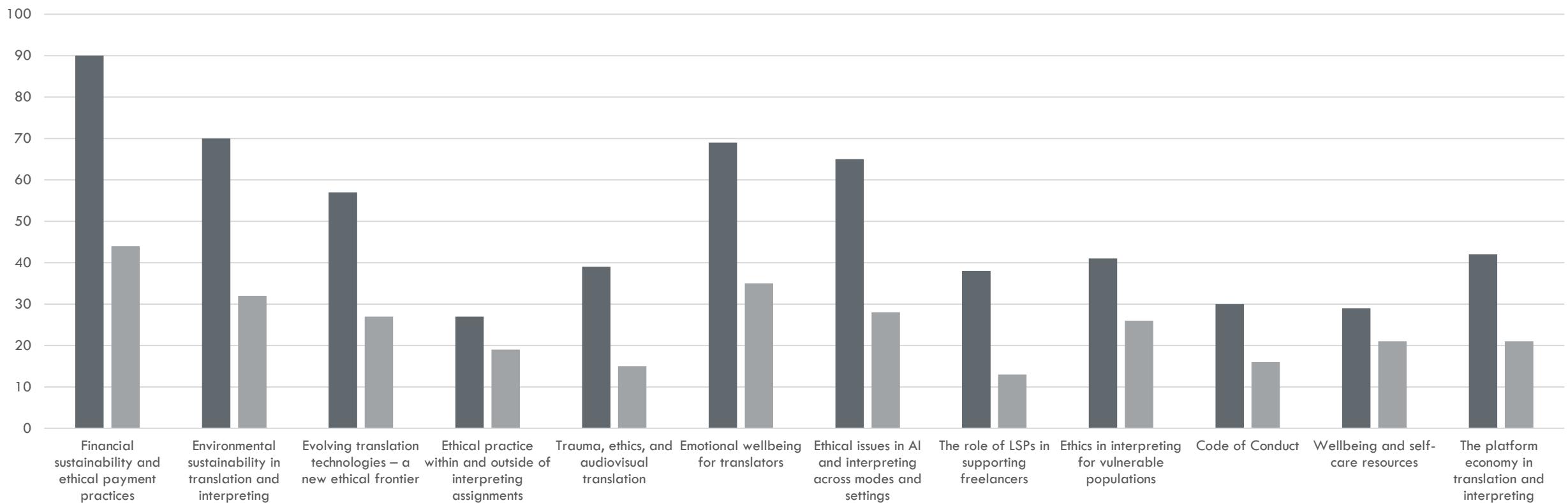
286 registered
for 1-2 sessions

22 for 3
sessions

37 for 4+
sessions

1 registered
for 11 sessions
(not including
me and Sara)

REGISTRATIONS AND ATTENDANCE BY SESSION (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)



HOT TOPICS

- **Environmental sustainability and business related topics dominated**
- **Wellbeing emerged as key concern**
- **Growing concern in technology and AI ethics, particularly around AI integration and ethical implications for professional practice**

Largest three sessions

Financial sustainability (90 - highest single session)

Environmental considerations (70)

Platform economy challenges (42)

Large sessions (60+): Financial sustainability, environmental topics, wellbeing, and AI ethics

Medium sessions (35-59): Technology, platform economy, ethics topics

Small sessions (<35): Specialised ethics topics, professional conduct

OUTPUTS

- A publicly-available web-based resource ('[Exploring ethics](#)') introducing the series and summarising all events
- Recordings of guest host presentations and/or slides from the 12 sessions and summaries of the discussions
- Article in the ITI Bulletin Nov-Dec 2024
- A [conference paper in Madrid](#)
- Additional, topic-specific content developed in response to demand (e.g. [Wellbeing: what works for you?](#))

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Introduction Ethical payment practices Environmental sustainability Technologies Supervision and support Trauma and AV translation Emotional wellbeing AI and machine translation

Exploring ethics

Introduction

In the autumn of 2024 we launched an initiative to consider the potential to create an ethical framework for ITI members. Our first event was an open discussion meeting hosted by Dr Joseph Lambert, which helped us to identify the range of topic areas that we want to explore in more detail.

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability in translation and interpreting
Guest speaker: Matt Riemland, PhD

23:01

We started thinking about ways we could build towards developing a new ethical framework for ITI members

I've been thinking about various aspects of ethics in translation for many years now, and for almost as long I've been really keen to revamp the ethical provision available to ITI members. I think that, in general type, or language, that guidance usually follows a similar pattern and covers the following: **code of conduct** and **code of ethics**. They are very useful, but they also have a number of clear limitations.

Codes of ethics are based on general principles: accuracy, competence, confidentiality, conflict of interests, communication, and respect for clients, colleagues and role boundaries. That list of course include many important areas, but they are often very general, non-specific, developing our skills, and ensuring that we actually have the necessary skills to complete our work to the standard that we expect. They also provide a general set of general principles to abide by. But even here there are some problems. For instance, when it comes to things like accuracy – codes often suggest that we should be accurate, but when translating – the stipulations are sometimes not realistic, advisable or achievable. For instance, removing elements is not only accuracy, but also a general principle.

Perhaps more problematically, codes are often based on the general ethical principles and current perceptions of professionals across the translation industry. However, as we know, there is a lot of technology, really – but the codes I've looked at don't even mention it, rates of pay, data privacy, bias, environmental protection, and so on. In fact, some of these codes are as well established across the sector, I'd argue that they don't adequately reflect what's actually happening in the industry. That's a problem, because it's not clear what's required.

The bigger picture, the vision and the context

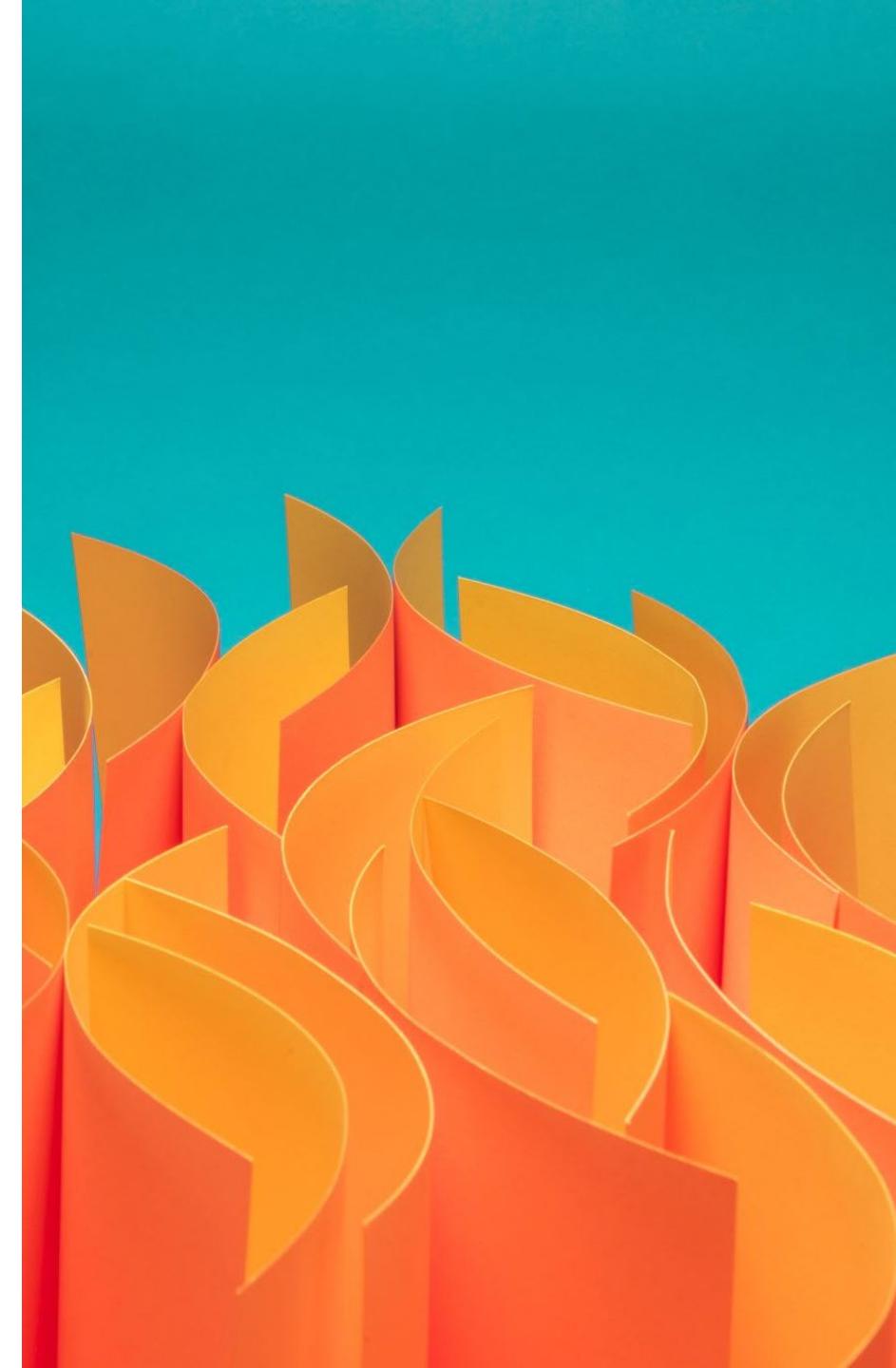
What we're aiming to do is to have a group of people including ITI chair, executive committee, Sure Roberts, and thinking about potential ways we could build towards developing a new ethical framework. We're also aiming to have a group of people from the industry, and from other professional bodies, to ultimately make some more tangible progress.

www.iti.org.uk

11 BULLETIN November December 2024

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS SO FAR

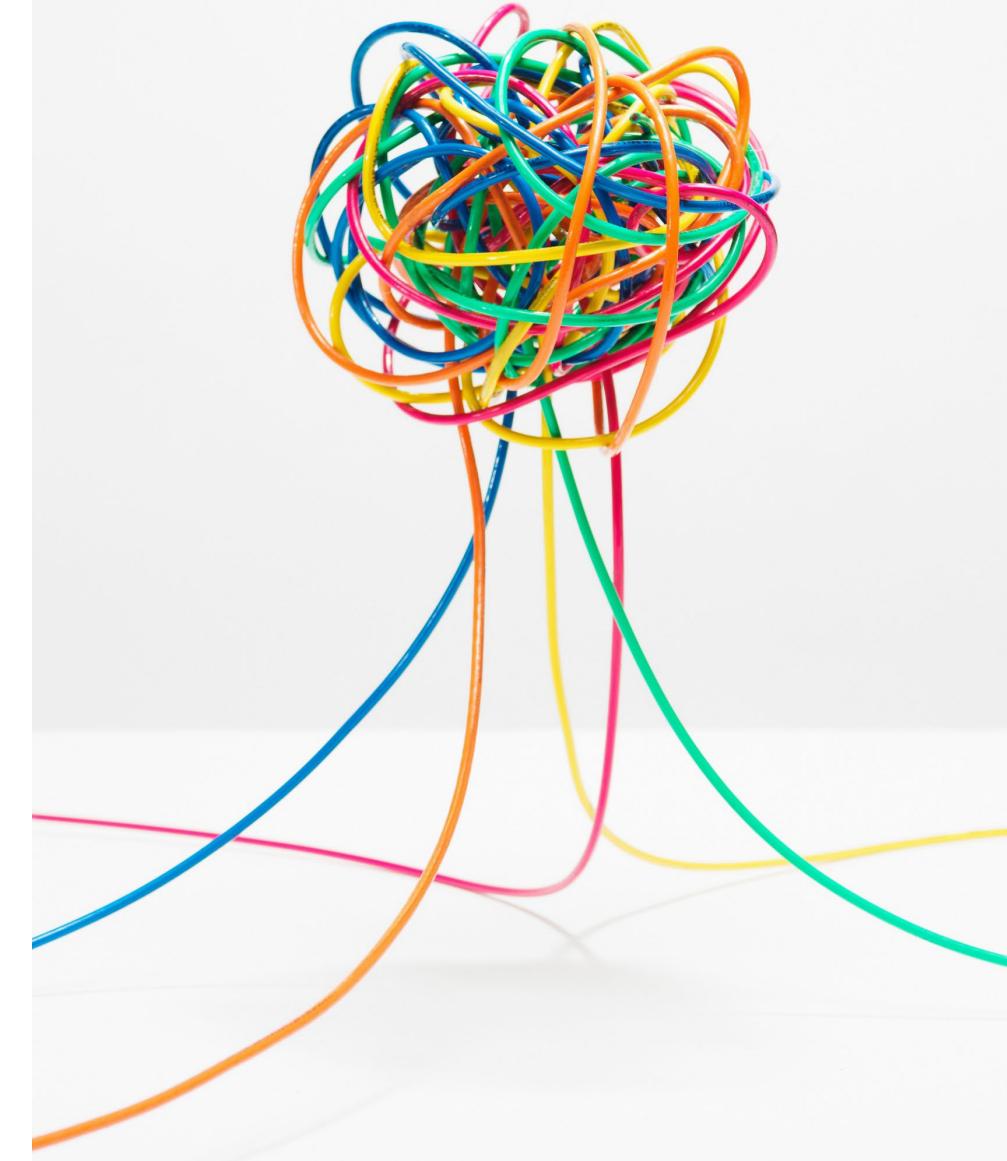
- Strong leadership and direction is required; although the outcomes were not predetermined there is still a need for a 'guiding hand'
- Collaboration is key; finding 'experts' was easy as one connection led to another and the academics participated because they could see value in the process
- A lot of work is need to make (often small-scale) progress so acknowledge – and celebrate – what has been achieved as you go along
- It's been fun!



THE MESSY REALITY

This kind of engagement is not easy.

- Professionals have limited time to commit; there's no guarantee that they will participate
- It's important to be realistic about what you can achieve, these things take much more time than you expect
- Ethics is a challenging topic and levels of understanding vary hugely; be prepared to invest time in 'warming up' your audience. Baby steps are required!
- Like AI, ethics draws strong, polarised opinions from everybody, regardless of the level of engagement/understanding



ONE QUESTION THAT REMAINS

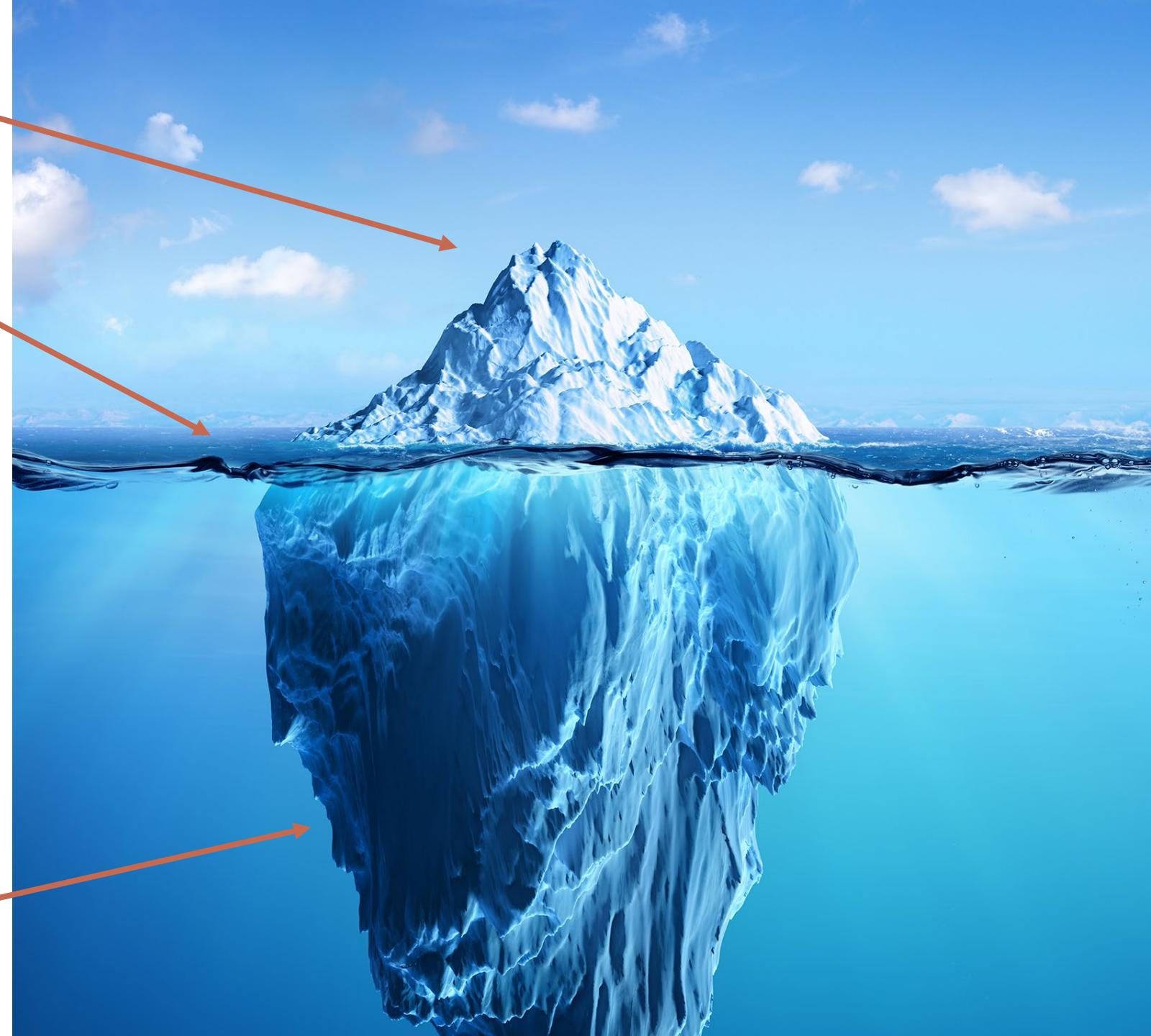
Engaging people who are
already interested is
relatively easy...

*But how do you engage a
wider professional audience?*

Our audience (attendees?)

Definitely no sharks!

The others





FINAL THOUGHTS ON ETHICS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- Ethical practice requires ongoing reflection, questioning, and adaptation to meet new challenges.
- Combining academic insights with practitioner experiences can help create responsive and effective ethical guidelines.
- Initiatives like the Coffee House emphasise collaboration and dialogue, and foster bottom-up engagement and inclusivity.
- A cohort of linguists now feel empowered and excited to talk to their clients / stakeholders about ethics

NEXT STEPS..?

- Survey of guest hosts and participants to evaluate their Coffee House experience
- Volunteer-led work to create "ethical guidance" for ITI members
- **Over to you: what should we do next?**

