UNIVERSITYOF PORTSMOUTH

WHEN TRANSLATION MEETS TECHNOLOGIES:
LANGUAGE SERVICE PROVIDERS (LSPs) IN THE DIGITAL AGE

FOCUS GROUP REPORT

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Summary

The study found the following main points:

1. **Machine Translation (MT)**: Project Managers (PMs) are not sufficiently informed about how much their contracting translators are using MT. There is no industry-wide consensus about how much and in what way translators should use MT and not many LSPs implement an official policy about it. On the personal level, PMs are cautiously positive about translators using MT. However, their views on PEMT (post-editing machine translation) are generally careful. Although increasing uptake of this service is evident, participants voiced concerns about the financial implications for translators, inevitable change in the nature of translators' jobs and confidentiality.

2. **CAT Tools:** PMs appreciate the recent improvements in CAT tool technologies, but wish for an even higher level of cross-product compatibility, simpler interfaces and lower prices. There is no standard method of translation memory (TM) file management in the industry and practice differs greatly between LSPs.

3. **Interpreting-related tools**: Only about half of the LSPs of the participants in this study offer interpreting services or do so only at a small scale or outsource it because of the high level of equipment needs for modern interpreting services. While new digital technologies have some positive effects on interpreting services, they are also causing adverse effects such as lower pay structures for interpreters and LSPs (particularly in public service interpreting and remote interpreting).

4. **Training**: Principally, PMs expect freelance translators to obtain their own training with digital tools (such as CAT tools) as part of their CPD planning, but on a daily basis PMs are happy to teach them how to use the tools if that provides mutual benefits. PMs themselves are trained mainly in-house for their digital-tool needs because project management practice is highly company-specific and training materials available in the public domain are often not suitable enough for the company's needs.

5. **Paid-crowdsourcing business model**: This emerging translator procurement system is still relatively unknown amongst PMs. PMs strongly feel that this highly-automated business model would not be compatible with the level of control over the project management process they desire. Concerns over lower prices and image of the translation industry the model may instigate were also expressed.

6. **Communication tools**: PMs use various communication tools flexibly to maximise the efficiency of their operations. Email and social media are particularly important for them, but some concerns about possible misuses of these by LSPs and their effects on quality of communication and translation products were expressed. Low

trustworthiness of information on these media is also a concern for PMs.

7. **What technology is important for PMs**?: The participants said they value (in order of importance): 1) Tools for effective communication; 2) CAT tools and 3) Translation Management Systems (TMSs). They also value training because all players of the translation process being able to use digital tools efficiently is crucial for their operations. They are also aware that new online services and products, even those not directly related to translation, are becoming increasingly important for PMs to understand and cater for emerging client needs. These include cloud computing, API (Application Programming Interface), CMS (Content Management System) and SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to identify current trends and possible problems with technology use in the UK language service industry and share good practice and offer recommendations for effective and constructive use of technologies in translation. We aimed to find out the opinions and perceptions about technology use in translation businesses by UK Language Service Providers (LSPs), particularly Project Managers (PMs). This stakeholder group was chosen as study participants as they are the key people who have strong influences on all aspects of translation practice in the industry but form a relatively underrepresented stakeholder group both in public discourse and the research literature.

Participants

The focus group meetings were held as part of the University's public symposium "When Translation Meets Technologies: Language Service Providers (LSPs) in the Digital Age" on 9 June 2016 at the University of Portsmouth.

Sixteen participants took part in the focus group meetings. The participants met the following two criteria:

- The person worked for a UK Language Service Provider (LSP) or was a business owner of a language service company.
- The person assumed a project management responsibility in the workplace or oversaw project management operations.

The participants were recruited through two calls for participation:

- All corporate members of ITI (Institute of Translation and Interpreting) and ATC (Association of Translation Companies) were approached by email to take part. In addition, companies located geographically close to the location of the focus group meetings were solicited by telephone.
- An open call for participation was given on the symposium's webpage.

The size of the LSPs the participants worked for, measured by the number of employees, ranged from 1 (sole trader) to 150, with an average of 25 employees.

Four parallel focus group sessions were held with four participants in each group. The groups were arranged by the size of the company:

- Group 1: participants from companies which has 1-2 employees.
- Group 2: 3-12 employees
- Group 3: 15-25 employees
- Group 4: 19-150 employees

There is an overlap of numbers between Groups 3 and 4 because one company (of the business size of 25) sent two participants to the meetings. The focus group meetings lasted for 2 hours.

Questions were asked covering the following six areas, followed by two rounding-up questions.

1. Machine translation

2. CAT tools

3. Interpreting-related tools

4. Training

5. Paid-crowdsourcing business model

6. Communication tools

Findings

1. Machine translation (MT)

How much do you think translators should use MT in their practice?

Two ways of MT use were discussed by the participants: 1) use of MT as part of the translators' translation process; and 2) use of MT as part of the post-editing machine translation (PEMT) service offered by LSPs.

The discussions highlighted that participants were **not clearly informed about actual MT use** by their translators, i.e. how often or how much MT was actually being used by them. PMs and translators do not discuss use of MT openly and MT is even a 'don't ask, don't tell' kind of subject for them. PMs may find accidentally that their translators are using MT, but LSPs do not have a system in place to check whether translators are using it or not. In this environment PMs rely on translation quality as the benchmark of judgement, i.e. if the quality is low, they suspect the translation may be a post-edited MT output.

On a personal level, participants were **cautiously positive** about their translators using MT (e.g., it saves time), stressing that certain conditions should be met, for example, the use of MT for translation of suitable domains in effective language combinations or when the translator knows how to use it properly and the resultant quality is satisfactory.

On the corporate level, **no common policy about MT use** is in place across the industry yet. A small number of participants said that their companies ban their translators from using MT (mainly for reasons of confidentiality, e.g., risk of providing clients' data to free online MT systems), or have some sort of control policy (e.g., disabling MT plug-ins in CAT tools). Some companies have no policies in place at all. Even if a ban on MT is in place, PMs suspect that their translators may still use MT in their translation process (for example, they can copy and paste Google Translate output while un-checking MT plug-ins in CAT tools). Therefore they are aware that the enforcement of control policies is practically impossible.

The industry's recent shift towards PEMT was also discussed. Apart from one PM who notably stressed that PEMT is the way forward for the industry and translators should be prepared for this shift, participants were **by and large cautious about uptake of PEMT service**. While admitting that the move towards PEMT may be inevitable following the current industry trends, they were concerned about: a) its **financial implications** (the shift towards PEMT may lead to further drops in price for translation products, making the work less attractive for translators; b) its **lack of appeal as a job** for talented translators, i.e. post-editing is perceived to be a 'boring' job compared to traditional translation work (although, in contrast, a small number of participants thought it is a 'fun' activity, which can give you 'a little lift'); and c) **confidentiality issues** about the data which go through public MT systems. In addition, they believe that it is important for translators **to maintain a traditional translation skill set** (i.e. being able to produce high-quality translations without help from

technologies) so that they are capable of taking different kinds of jobs.

A small number of participants said their companies now offer (or are starting to offer) PEMT alongside their traditional translation services. Some started the service **to meet the requests of large-scale, tech-savvy clients**. One difficulty mentioned about PEMT is that the editing effort is difficult to measure, hence **pricing is not straightforward**.

Typical comments:

- If it's relevant to the project, [MT] can be quite a help.
- You may have decided as an agency or a company not to use MT, but your translators might be, so by default you are using machine translation.
- And perhaps stupidly, we don't really know exactly enough about [confidentiality issues]. And that's sort of the issue; because we don't know enough about it, we don't want to risk it.
- [Use of MT] is a really sort of murky, grey area, as far as our company is concerned. Personally, I don't have a problem with it, but I know lots of people do.

2. CAT Tools

2-1 If you could change one thing about the current CAT tools, what would you change?

The participants shared both positive and negative views. On the one hand, they recognise that quite remarkable improvements have already been made to CAT tools. On the other hand, they think there is still a lot to be achieved.

On the positive side, CAT tools have already improved to a great extent, for example, with the level of compatibility, user-friendliness, and the choice of tools available on the market. Translation memory (TM) files can now be shared between different products, cloud-based products facilitate access to some CAT tools and some products are good value for money or free. You can find some free training webinars of products too.

However, there is still **room for improvement** in some areas. The most notable area is **compatibility** (or interoperability) between CAT tool products or even between versions of the same CAT tool. Although the increased choice of products on the market is welcome, this has caused increased compatibility issues. One simple method of sharing TM files between products is required. Lack of compatibility in algorithms for word count was also mentioned; not all products count words in the same way. Because all CAT tool products are designed basically to do the same job, some streamlining in product range is desirable.

The usability of interface is also an area where improvement is required; a simple and user-friendly interface is desirable. Participants said this has already been achieved with some new products. Products with a complicated interface (Trados Studio was mentioned as an example) require specialised training, which can be off-putting for users. They appreciate

that some products let the users change the interface according to their preference. Wordfast Classic's integration of Microsoft Word interface was mentioned as an example of user-friendliness.

Price was another area discussed by the participants. They said many products are still very expensive for freelance translators. They also noted that, for freelance translators, not owning CAT tools does not necessarily lead to not being commissioned a translation job, i.e., translators with good linguistic ability and specialised knowledge are often prioritised in translator selection.

Other items on their wish lists were: optical character recognition (OCR) function and CAT tools for subtitling purposes.

Typical comments:

- Now you can take a Trados file and put it into Memsource or Wordfast and use it, whereas years ago you couldn't. They are sort of compatible, not necessarily that user-friendly.
- I use so many CAT tools, it's like I would like to merge them all into one ultimate tool.
- They are on the right track having different types of versions: professional, freelance and starter, which are great, but still they need to be more affordable for the freelancers and for the businesses as well.
- I had to go into full-day training courses because I thought this is just too intimidating really trying to learn it myself.

2-2 Who should be responsible for TM management?

The discussions indicated that there is **no standard practice** about who manages TM files after a project is finished (i.e., updating and storing them appropriately). Some LSPs let their freelance translators keep the TMs; some get the TMs back from the translators and keep the files in-house; some return the updated TMs to the clients. They also agree that clients are normally not interested in managing TMs themselves and thus are not normally involved in TM management.

The methods of TM management **vary between LSPs according to their project setups**. It depends on such factors as: a) who has the best knowledge and skills of TM management in the project team; b) who supplied the TM originally; c) who owns the intellectual property rights of the content; d) the relationship between different parties; e) who is paying and who is paid to do the task; f) who has the time to work on it; and g) who owns the TM tool.

Most of the participants thought that **the project manager should be responsible** for TM management because PMs understand translation workflows better than other parties and TM management is part of their job. However, they also conceded that not all PMs in the industry are trained enough to manage TMs properly. This is partly because TM management is a complex task: labour-intensive, difficult and requires specific training and

time. It must, however, be done properly to be useful.

Participants also noted that there is, to a certain extent, **a benefit for the translators** in taking on the responsibility of TM management. Learning how to manage TMs can have a positive effect on their professional development as they can learn about project workflow. However, PMs acknowledged that TM management is a complex task for translators.

Most of the participants did not think the client should be responsible for TM management because they are not interested in it, they are not trained to do it, and they actually pay LSPs to do that for them.

In addition, the discussions unveiled **some grey areas surrounding TM management**. TM management implies copyright issues (who owns what and when and how long for?), access issues (who should be able to access what?) and ownership issues (what happens to the TM once it's returned to the client? Should the LSP keep using it?). There seems to be no consensus about best practice about these issues in the industry. However, the participants offered **some examples of good practice** from their own experience.

➢ The client should be advised to keep the updated TM in case the LSP becomes defunct or the client wants to change LSPs in future.
➢ LSPs (instead of freelance translators) should keep TMs in case they want to use in-house translators in future.
➢ LSPs may want to pay freelance translators an extra fee for maintaining a TM. In this way, when translators go on holidays, for example, they are more willing to lend the TM to the LSP.

Typical comments:

● As an LSP, we would see ourselves as responsible for the translation memory and responsible for keeping it up-to-date and responsible for ensuring it's used appropriately.
● I suppose if you as the project manager have got control of it, you can reassign it more easily.
● Ideally I would love control of it myself, but it would be one other task and it's difficult.
● At the end of the day, the majority of end clients are not educated enough in the translation field to know what they should be asking for.
● I want to give the translators responsibility for the TM, but sometimes if that translator goes away on holiday, how am I going to use that TM if they're responsible for it?

3. Interpreting-related tools

How much do digital tools contribute to your interpreters' practice? How do they

contribute to your interpreting project management?

Amongst the participating LSPs, only about half of them said they offer interpreting services. Others outsource it to interpreting-specialist companies, or do not provide the service at all. Some LSPs said they provide interpreting services only as 'added value' to their existing text translation service.

One of the reasons some LSPs choose not to provide interpreting services is **the equipment needs**, especially for simultaneous interpreting, as it requires highly specialised digital technology to operate the interpreting consoles (including infrared wireless headphones and microphones). This equipment is costly, cumbersome, and requires advanced technological knowledge, making it difficult for the LSPs to own it. This lack of ownership of equipment discourages LSPs to be involved in the service. Outsourcing has become one of the solutions for LSPs to overcome this change as a result. However, participants noted improved equipment leading to better working environment with interpreting booths (e.g., better quality headphones).

In addition, the interpreting market has **changed tremendously in recent years**. The profit margins from the interpreting market, specifically in public service interpreting, have plummeted. Some participants commented that **remote interpreting technology** (i.e., telephone and video interpreting, including Skype) has made provision of interpreting service easier in some areas (e.g., public service interpreting). This is seen both as **a form of progress and a disadvantage**. In terms of progress, it enables: global connections that would have been impossible before; improved identity protection of victims (in court interpreting); and cost-cutting (e.g., remote interpreting saving on transport, thus providing more access to interpreting services for victims in courts). However, these changes also have detrimental effects, especially on the pricing structures. Some LSPs reported that public service interpreting does not make much financial sense now, for both interpreters and LSPs. Additionally, a new payment method, where remote interpreting is charged by the minute instead of by the hour or the day, means a loss of income for both interpreters and LSPs.

With regard to interpreters they hire, the participants reported that, in their experience, interpreters like the human interaction associated with the profession and this might explain why the participants find that **interpreters tend to be wary of technology**. Given that the pool of professional interpreters is rather small (compared to text translators) and they are well connected with each other in a closely-knit professional community, recruiting new interpreters can be difficult as the recruitment process tends to rely on word of mouth.

Regarding future developments, LSPs think technologies in interpreting may develop further if **speech recognition interpreting using machine translation** becomes a reality. Some of them have started to receive enquiries about this technology from their clients.

Typical comments:

- We've been asked about [interpreting service], but I refer them straight on to other companies, because we just don't have the capacity to do it.
- We do the occasional one, but they're a pain (laughter).
- For us we are not big fans of it because we are normally working with providers so we do not have control to do with clients to the way their lines are set up.
- When I first started work it was probably worth about ten to 15 per cent of our business, and 90 per cent of that was business interpreting. The globalisation of the world has meant that has pretty much died now.
- We used to do an awful lot of public service interpreting. That has pretty much gone from us and it's changed a lot, and the expectations of what an interpreter does and his or her job role and how much they get paid for.
- There were three parties involved and one of them couldn't get there, so in the end it was done via Skype and seemingly worked very well.

4. Training

4-1 Who is training freelance translators with digital tools? Who should train them?

There were mixed opinions with regard to this question. In principle, participants acknowledged that it is **the translator's own responsibility to keep up with training** (via their own CPD planning). In reality, however, **PMs will help translators personally when there is a mutual benefit**. This includes situations such as where the translator has a high domain-specific expertise, which the LSP values over their technological skills, or where use of a particular product by the assigned translator is essential for a successful completion of the project.

PMs also thought that, although they have a role to play in helping freelance translators with their training, other entities should also contribute, including **universities** (via MA programmes and CPD courses), **technology vendors** (via product-specific training) and **professional associations** (e.g., ITI, CIOL, NRPSI, by giving guidance and providing courses and workshops). They highlighted that there are many different opportunities for freelance translators to get training on digital tools, such as workshops and webinars.

Participants also volunteered their views on translator education in general. They think that MA translation programmes are good for students to show their commitment to their chosen profession, but higher education training does not necessarily cater for real-life demands of the industry and this is something that needs to be addressed by universities.

Typical comments:

- As an LSP, and when we are talking about training and specific training to CAT tools, we might have 1500 freelance translators, most we don't use every day, some we do. I couldn't possibly spend the time and energy.
- There is a lot of online training. There is a lot of CPD run by universities, run by LSPs, run by technology providers, run by places like [names of online webinar sites].

- If we know that their skills in the particular area are good, then we sort of persevere and help them out with that, the lacking in the technology side of things.
- [An MA degree] is a sign that you're committed and you have a basic level of training.

4-2 Who is training project managers with digital tools? Who should train them?

The digital tools that the discussions covered most were CAT tool systems (e.g., memoQ, Trados), Translation Management Systems (TMSs such as Plunet, XTRF) and Microsoft products.

There is **a minimal expectation that universities provide the very basics** of project managing and digital tools skills on their courses. Most participants said that they **prefer to provide in-house training** to new PMs because project management systems and methods tend to be company-specific.

With regard to TM training, universities are expected to teach their students **basic principles of CAT tools** as the basic functions are the same across different products; once they are understood, training on different products is relatively easy. In addition, **knowledge of how to use Microsoft products** (particularly Word and its functions such as macros and quick links) is important. New recruits without such knowledge are difficult to train.

One obstacle mentioned in the discussions is the time it takes to devote to training. PMs are constantly busy and **finding time to spare for training is extremely difficult**. Therefore, external online training materials, such as **webinars provided by product vendors**, are very valuable and they try to incorporate them in their internal training. However, participants often find these materials unsatisfactory and frustrating as they do not cater for the company's specific needs and ways of using the products.

Despite time restrictions, **larger companies often provide structured training programmes** to new PMs, including internship schemes, on which they learn how to use CAT tools and TMSs. The general view is that it is in the company's interest to be responsible for training all PMs properly with digital tools as these tools (particularly CAT tools) are so important in their everyday operations.

Smaller companies, on the other hand, find it difficult to provide structured training to staff due to **lack of time and budget**. They are, therefore, keen to learn how other companies deal with the issue of training. They also prefer to employ someone who has a proactive attitude towards digital tools, not being shy or scared of trying out and learning new tools.

Participants agreed that, though the company can train employees with digital tools to some extent, **proactive self-study and peer-to-peer teaching** using various methods such as free online resources and industry reports and magazines is very important and this is how PMs actually keep up with the technological development.

Typical comments:

- I think the generic parts of the training could be handled on an MA course, but every company will have its specifics that are different.
- You fiddle around with it; you do webinars; you learn about it - or you don't.
- I'm happy to support my colleagues in learning when they've got time to do it, but the problem is finding a time when I've got time and they've got time.
- (About a certain product) They have an e-learning website, which is quite good. So what we do is, we take those videos and we ask the PMs and the interns to do some specific exercises on [the software], but based on our portals and there'll be a Q&A session, and that's it.
- I wonder if that's part of the problem why it's so difficult to find good external training resources. Externals try to cover everything.

5. Paid-crowdsourcing business model

If you already use this business model, what benefits (or disadvantages) does this model bring to your practice? If you don't, what benefits (or disadvantages) do you think it would bring to your practice if you use it?

In all groups the discussion started by the moderator's explaining what 'paid-crowdsourcing business model' is. Many participants did not know or know much about this business model and none of them said they use this model in their operations[1].

Although participants showed some understanding that this kind of new business model is **part of the recent global trend of the digitalised economy**, the reaction from the participants was mostly negative. This particularly revolved around **the issue of 'control'**. Although they were not so knowledgeable about the business model, they imagined that the highly-automated business model would not permit high level of control over the project management process. Their main concerns were related to control over matching adequacy (of translator and client), quality of translation, communication between translator and client, confidentiality of the document, vetting of translators and relationship management between translator and client.

Another negative reaction was related to **low prices** (financial implications for translators), **exploitation of early-career translators**, and encouragement of **race-to-the-bottom competition** between translators. They are worried that this kind of service will **damage the image of the industry** on the whole due to (presumably) low quality.

There were **only limited positive comments** (expressed in rather sarcastic exchanges),

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[1] Paid-crowdsourcing is an emerging LSP business model using an online translator-procurement platform. On the platform a buyer can upload a source text, receive an instant quote, place an order and receive the translation in a short turnaround time. The model allows the translation buyer to access a crowd of registered translators via the online platform without human brokering. The model is also called 'cloud translation marketplace' or 'on-demand translation'.

which included the convenience of matching automatically online, and lower prices and quick turnaround (for customers who are looking for quick and inexpensive translation) regardless of quality. However, there were also some limited but upbeat opinions that the model offers **a fun thing to do** for translators and can **be suitable to make use of the crowd's 'labour of love' culture**.

Typical comments:

- I want to see how things work; I'm interested in how it works.
- I know what you're talking about, I know the people you're talking about, but I've never investigated it.
- I think my problem with that, certainly from our company's point of view, would be that when we get a job in, we choose who's going to translate it quite carefully; 'Okay, that person's really good at that. They've done similar ones in the past.' Whereas if the translator's choosing themselves, then you haven't got that level of quality control.
- As long as the client knew what they were going to get, then I suppose it might work for some things, like if you've got a large volume of documents that quality isn't really going to be an issue.
- It depends how [translators] are vetted. How do the people sign up for [a company name] or whatever?
- I suppose it might devalue [translation] a little bit, if people are doing that so cheaply, because clients just look at the cost sometimes.

6. Communication tools

Imagine current communication tools did not exist in this world. How would your practice change? [e.g., translators' forums, social media, blogs, online interface portals etc.]

PMs use a wide range of tools for communicating and sharing information with translators and clients. The tools discussed in the groups include: emails, telephone, postal mails, Skype, WhatsApp, newsletters and social media (including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, ProZ.com, blog).

The main concerns of the participants revolved around two types of tools: email and social media.

Email

Many participants said that they appreciate email for its **speed**. It is a cost-effective, secure and convenient way of communicating with translators and clients (for both marketing and project management purposes). The convenience of email can contribute to translation **quality management**, for example, by enabling translators to look at the source text quickly before taking on the job, or by facilitating the proofreading process, enabling translators,

PMs and proofreaders to exchange files quickly. However, the convenience may cause lower quality when PMs are tempted to **misuse** it by, for example, splitting the job into smaller pieces for several translators to speed up the production process, or even collecting small pieces of 'sample' translations from translators for free to produce a stitched-up 'paid-for' product (explained as undesirable example of practice the participants had heard about).

Although email is convenient, it is **not always trustworthy**, for example, when it comes to fake emails from scammers pretending to be translators. In tackling those scam emails, social media (such as LinkedIn) and Translators Scammers Directory (http://www.translator-scammers.com) are useful for cross-checking translators' identities. A company portal is a good measure to avoid spam emails (with its messaging function) and keep confidentiality of client materials (there is no need to send clients' files as attachments to emails). Company portals are, however, not always popular with clients and translators.

Some participants expressed reservations about email's lack of human touch, specifically its limited ability to collect subtle information from and develop good **relationships** with translators/clients. They believe talking on the telephone or Skype is sometimes more useful to find out real needs and qualities of clients/translators but people (particularly young ones) are nowadays 'phone-phobic'.

Some raised concerns about the effect of email on **pay structure** (downward pressure) as email has made it easier for PMs to outsource work to translators who are based overseas.

Confidentiality and **file storage** can be an issue with emails (e.g., how to store finished translation files post-project). To overcome this issue, some clients prefer to have translators work in-house or to use a web-mail system via the company portal.

Typical comments:

- (Before email) it was a lot harder to do anything like marketing.
- I make sure that [younger PMs] pick up the phone and speak to, not just the customers, but also just as importantly the translators and the suppliers. That's what makes us, as an LSP, different to that very large LSP who hasn't got the time to do that and sends out automatic emails.
- (About simultaneously sending enquiry emails to several different translators) Those conversations when the translator comes back and says, 'Oh, I can do it.' and you say, 'Oh, it's already gone to someone else.' That's horrible. I've only had to do it with occasional urgent jobs, and I hate it.
- It's also given the LSPs the option of using translators in other countries where cost of living is much cheaper, and that's sort of race-to-the-bottom price strategies.

Social Media

PMs talked about their mixed feelings about the use of social media in their practice.

On the positive side, they find most useful social media's **information-sharing** property. Four advantages were talked about:

1) Research and knowledge contribution: ProZ.com is a useful tool for this.

2) Marketing research: Finding the company's own and rival companies' reputations on social media serves as informal marketing research.

3) Cost-cutting: Many tools are free. "Freebie" marketing is possible by getting recommendations on social media.

4) Recruitment of new translators: PMs' first ports of call are national professional associations' directories, such as ITI, CIOL (in the UK), ATA (in the US) and those in other countries which offer an English site. When those are not sufficient, they use social media such as ProZ.com or the translators' social media presence (on LinkedIn, for instance). ProZ.com is particularly useful when it comes to recruiting translators of minority language combinations. Social media also offers a means for cross-checking translator identity.

On the negative side, PMs expressed their concerns about the **lack of trustworthiness** and **confidentiality** of information:

1) Translator profiles on social media are not always accurate. Translators' peer-review ratings are not always trustworthy either. As a result, it often takes more time to vet translators than save time by recruiting them through social media.

2) Translators may post unfair comments on social media about LSPs. Once that happens, it is very difficult to restore reputation.

3) Profiles on social media sometimes become a target of translation scammers.

4) Translators' posting questions and information on social media has a risk of breaching a confidentiality agreement with the client.

Some participants also expressed their frustration and **concerns about downward pressures on prices** caused by use of social media such as ProZ.com.

Overall, participants shared their rich knowledge about how to use social media in their operations, but they also expressed their **uncertainty about how to use it most effectively** for their benefit. More information about good practice of social media use for the translation industry is needed.

Typical comments:

- On Facebook there are quite a lot of pages where you can join and I am a member of a lot of them and I find it interesting, just in case my agency ever gets a mention.
- (About ProZ.com) There are some language combinations I get that are very strange,

like Swedish to Czech. I use ProZ for that. We use it more successfully as a directory than anything else. It's definitely something we need at the moment. But we use it in a kind of very limited way, because there's just so many on there, and it's not always that clear how qualified they are.

- I wonder if translation companies would have the negative reputation if it wasn't so easy for one angry freelancer, who's been paid one day late, to go on and vent an incredible diatribe about how this company is awful. That sort of reputation would be so much harder to get out.

- (About translators discussing about translation companies on social media) You'll always have someone saying, 'Shall I give a free sample for a company?' and you'll get 50 people going, 'They're trying to steal your work'.

- (About recruiting translators through social media) I don't know how easy it is, or how many there would be. We're thinking of doing it, but I don't know.

7. Lastly …

7-1 Of all the things we discussed, what do you think is the most important for your work?

The following issues were highlighted in the discussion as most important:

1) **Tools for effective communication** between PMs and clients/translators: Participants value tools which enhance communication with important working partners because building a good relationship is essential for good project management.

2) **CAT tools:** CAT tools are now an essential part of the translation production process. PMs value their capability of enhancing efficiency of translation production, improving consistency of translation products and accompanying functions such as terminology management and project management.

3) **Translation Management Systems (TMSs)**: (see below)

4) **Training:** PMs think that it is important that all involved parties are properly trained with digital tools so that the tools can be used to their full potential for successful business.

7-2 Is there anything else we haven't discussed yet that you think is important for us to know about the use of digital tools?

The focus group questions did not ask participants to discuss **Translation Management Systems (TMSs)**, but participants felt they are crucial these days for their operations, e.g., for monitoring translation projects and sharing information among the team. One function which was highlighted as valuable is the one for searching and identifying past projects. Participants also shared information about the products they find useful. These included, in addition to proprietary TMS products such as Plunet, XTRF and LTC Worx, file searching software such as Agent Ransack and Copernic. Excel was also mentioned as a basic but still useful tool for project management.

It is becoming increasingly important for PMs to understand **new online services that the clients use in their businesses** even if they are not related directly to translation so that they can provide services which customers increasingly demand in the new digital environment. These include: **cloud computing**, **API (Application Programming Interface), CMS (Content Management System) and SEO (Search Engine Optimization).** LSPs are increasingly required to integrate their online systems with their clients' own platforms, such as procurement or translation management platforms. They also predict that freelance translators will need to up their game in these areas if they want to compete in the market.

Typical comments

- We're implementing a new [TMS] system at the moment. I think the bigger you get, the more you need it. But I think even for a small company it's beneficial.
- I think integration of systems will be quite a big topic for discussion. It has a big role to play in reducing admin overheads.
- That's where the industry is going, it's becoming much more immediate, and the suppliers that jump on the tools now and get behind that immediacy are going to really succeed in the next few years.
- One thing I would say is for people not to forget what actually the customer has asked for. We, as an industry, sometimes spend too much time talking about industry specifics, which is fine, but actually it's the customer who is paying and who actually wants something.
- We are constantly responding to different demands and different services. People often have got no background or training in it and clients are wanting to buy it so we have to go and find a way to get training and experience in it to be able to deliver it.

Conclusions

The study has highlighted translation project managers' enthusiasms as well as concerns about current and new digital technologies in translation. PMs are performing a delicate balancing act in their busy working lives, constantly learning and adapting to use new services and products, assessing them in search of better ones, trying to accommodate increasing client demands, and when necessary, teaching others how to use them.

CAT tools, Translation Management Systems (TMSs) and emails are indispensable parts of their operations as those tools maximize the efficiency and speed of their work: PMs are constantly under pressure for speed in today's translation businesses. Social media and translators' forums are also important parts of their operations for recruitment, marketing and knowledge sharing. MT is making a stronger presence in the industry now and PMs' attitude towards MT is cautiously positive at the personal level (but see below).

While enjoying the benefits of those tools, PMs are also wary of some aspects of technology, which can be categorised into the following three areas:

1) **Confidentiality of client data**: This may be compromised by inappropriate use of emails, translators' forums (knowledge sharing sites), poor TM file management and inappropriate use of non-proprietary online MT systems.

2) **Translation price structures**: Many aspects of technological advancement have caused the recent downward pressures on translation prices. These include improved global/long-distance communication, increased use of CAT tools and MT and demands from tech-savvy clients who are quick to learn about new translation technologies. New business models such as paid-crowdsourcing and remote-interpreting are posing pressures too.

3) **Translators' morale**: Email is useful but can hinder personal communications between PMs and translators, which could affect trust building processes. Isolated chats among different groups (such as translators' chat groups) may create rumour-laden, demoralising communication environments. Lower translation prices from TM match discounts and/or lower unit prices of PEMT, as well as changing nature of translation work (if PETM becomes a mainstream, the job will become 'boring'), may put off talented translators from staying in the industry.

In addition, we identified the following two areas of concern which are particularly worth noting.

1. **The lack of knowledge and the associated 'don't ask, don't tell' attitude about translators' MT use**. Despite the recent media hype about new translation technologies (such as Neural Machine Translation), PMs are working in the dark about the actual use of MT in their operations and the industry. The industry also lacks the openness for discussion about this de-facto key technology.

2. **The lack of industry-wide consensus about best practice of TM file management**. While good-quality TM databases are much-sought-after resources for successful MT development as well as crucial part of CAT tool usage, no parties (PMs, translators or clients) seem to be seriously interested in managing TMs after a project is complete because of time constraints and the technical skills required. As a result, the ownership and intellectual property issues of TM files are left in limbo.

Recommendations

The focus group discussions have revealed that translation project managers are keen to learn and share information about the latest industry trends and good practice of digital technology use to improve the quality of their operations. However, it has also come to light that their access to such information is sometimes limited.

All stakeholders in translation have their roles to play in improving their access to information so that they can make informed decisions.

- Research institutions can carry out research to close knowledge gaps identified in this study and disseminate research outcomes to the industry.
- Industry associations can provide guidance and guidelines for LSPs.
- Technology vendors can provide training materials that cater for LSPs' specific needs.
- Universities can contribute by continuing their efforts of narrowing the gap between educational provisions and industry requirements for new recruits and freelance translators.

The followings are the areas where information sharing is most desired:

- ➢ The status quo of MT use in the industry.
- ➢ Best practice about how to use non-proprietary MT systems for translators (including legal issues).
- ➢ Best practice of TM file management.
- ➢ Legal issues regarding ownership and intellectual property of TM databases.
- ➢ New business models in the emerging digital economy.
- ➢ Best practice of social media use for LSPs' operations (for marketing and recruitment purposes).
- ➢ Good-quality, publicly-available training resources for translation-related digital tools, particularly for small LSPs who find it difficult to provide structured in-house training.

Above all, it will be beneficial for the whole industry to make a concerted effort to nurture an open culture where different industry players feel comfortable to discuss good practice of technology use in all areas.