

ISO Liaison Report to FIT Council

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(two standard updates: 17100 and 18587 were provided in Alan Melby's January 2015 report)

5/16/15

Dear Council members,

I am a member of several of the Standard Committees related to Translation and Interpretation. I have attended the past 3 annual ISO meetings and the next one is to take place in Japan on the last week of June. I will submit a report after that meeting to FIT Council. Every time there are comments requested for any of these standards, I will send these to Council members for them to provide comments from FIT as a liaison organization.

ISO/TC 037/SC5/TCG Terminology Coordination Group

This is a very important committee that was set up with the intent to harmonize the terminology section of all the translation and interpreting standards. What has been happening is that each group is defining the same term (i.e. translation) in different ways, not cognizant of terminology standards and processes, mostly to suit specialized parameters, not aware that the definition does not meet the needs of another specialization or contains terminology faux pas (i.e. include in the definition the term being defined). Therefore the committee, which was headed by Nelida Chan, terminologist, attempted to edit the definitions of the entire SC 5 in order to fit all the standards. In a way we were 'standardizing' the definitions, but the ultimate decision of accepting or not the edits still lies with the committee, so the process was less than efficient or effective with a lot of back and forth between this harmonization committee and each committee. Trying to convince several committees of a definition when they do not know and are not speaking with each other is practically impossible. The committee is currently inactive since the chair resigned. There are two issues at hand. Finding a chair has not been easy and deciding on process needing to be resolved (can this group supercede the definitions generated by each of the SC 5 Committees, for example).

ISO/TC 037/SC 5/WG 1 Translation

Standard 17100 The ISO 17100 quality standard is currently being discussed and it is estimated to be approved internationally by late 2013 or early 2014. This quality standard will be very similar to the current European standard for Translation Services Providers - EN 15038. EN 15038 will become ISO 17100. Translation services providers that are currently certified according to the European quality standard specific to the translation industry - EN 15038 - will not need significant adjustments in their quality management systems to comply with the new international standard ISO 17100. This standard will establish the requirements for translation agencies to provide top quality translation services. It is in the final stage of development within Technical Committee 37 of ISO (www.iso.org) and will soon be published. Its main purpose is providing a basis for the certification of TSPs (Translation Service

Providers) who want to demonstrate that they are able to provide professional human translation meeting the requirements of this standard. A TSP may be an individual translator working with a colleague who revises the initial translation, but a TSP is typically a translation company larger than one translator. The focus of this standard is on various aspects of the service, such as the selection of human resources (translators, revisers, reviewers, and project managers), records, and applying certain processes.

There has been extensive discussion of the criteria that determine whether a translator is allowed to work on a project that complies with ISO 17100; however, full consensus still has not been reached. Unfortunately, even though Alan Melby and I advocated for the category of non-profit professional association certification to be listed as a possible qualification, they were not at the last meeting in Berlin. I am not sure there is still time to change that but will attempt to find out.

ISO 18587- Post-editing of machine translation output

Also from ISO Technical Committee 37, is about post-editing raw machine translation. Its main purpose is to provide requirements for post-editing and criteria for selecting post-editors who are competent to perform this task. Note that post-editing is outside the scope of the TSP certification standard. In addition, the post-editing standard only applies to full post-editing, which results in output indistinguishable from professional human translation. So-called "light" post-editing has been excluded from the scope of this standard, which is still in the "Working Draft" stage and thus subject to substantive revision based on comments submitted to the team developing this standard.

ISO/TC 037/SC5/WG 2 Interpreting

ISO 18841 – Interpreting – General Guidelines

This standard will be the first international standard that applies to all interpreters. It is divided into three parts, the first part encompasses Overview, terms and definitions, Part 2: Interpreters, and Part 3: Interpreter Service Providers. Please bear in mind that in all the standards of SC5 many experts have argued that a practitioner who works directly for a company is also an interpreter service provider. Future standards for specialized fields will be drafted and this will be the umbrella standard, although it sets no standards for any specialization. (A standard for judiciary interpreting and translation has already been submitted, called Guidelines for language services in Judicial settings and it is expected that there will be proposals in the future for Medical, and Conference specializations.) The Judicial settings one, proposed by EULITA has received comments, and mine in particular were to separate translation and interpreting. The proposal was too European based and wants to mimic EU requirements. The committee has a meeting on April 7, 2015 to discuss all the comments submitted to the last version. In Japan we will discuss the draft by reading it together line by line; and the group shall decide whether another CD is needed or if we can go directly to a DIS. As with most standards the most contentious issue relates to the required qualifications for all interpreters. Canada is complaining that it is too high (thinking of the community interpreters and lack of adequate training) and Japan is complaining that it is too low, with countries all over the place. The PL has reiterated that other specializations can set their qualifications higher than the general interpreting, but not lower. It also plans to set a foundation for a possible

certification schema of generalist interpreters (as with Sign language interpreter certifications, which tend to be generalist) and also as foundation for a certification schema for interpreter service providers.

Question to FIT Council:

If FIT allows, the FIT, via the Medical Interpreting Committee could propose to ISO to develop a Standard for Medical Interpreting. We will await FIT Council's guidance as to whether it is interested in this and at what time. Other organizations are considering proposing standards for Conference and for Medical as Judiciary has already been proposed.

ISO/TC 037/SC5/WG 3 Facilities and Equipment for Interpretation Services

Standards 4043 (Booths for Simultaneous Interpretation) and 2603 (Mobile booths for simultaneous interpretation) are being reviewed by the Project leader (PL) after comments were given. My primary comments were that these standards are too narrow and only address conference booth and microphone equipment. They need to benefit all remote interpreters in all specializations who are using equipment for interpreting, versus just conference interpreters in an onsite setting. Other specializations are in dire need to adopt these, and conference interpreting is also changing rapidly to include equipment for remote interpreting versus traditional onsite booths. There are no active meetings or ballots at this moment.

ISO 13611 Interpreting - Guidelines for community interpreting.

This was published in 2014 and is now a guidance document available to the public. While it was well intentioned, and several years of work ensued, this guidance almost did not get published due to politics. Although the abstract includes legal interpreting outside the courtroom, its greatest weakness is that it removed Court Interpreting as part of Community interpreting, (at the request of several Court Interpreting organizations) and this was done mostly for political reasons, as Court interpreters did not want to see themselves being called 'Community Interpreters'. Therefore it is flawed in its grouping of types of interpreting. The term 'Community Interpreting' was also very debated, as it seems to institutionalize the idea that the interpreter is a bilingual from the community and not a professional. This is an umbrella term attempting to group several interpreting specializations together which are in very different stages of development. Medical and legal interpreters claim that their field is so specialized that any guideline or standard for community interpreting just doesn't meet their level of professionalization, educational, work opportunities, and working conditions. However the guidance provides great information about the diversity of services under this umbrella term, and can be purchased at the cost of CHF\$88.00 at:

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=54082

Respectfully submitted,

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