Language in the news

Interpreters want to keep up with world event but the big question is – how do they manage to? I asked a few and here are their answers.

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Published: May 25, 2005 Last updated: December 25, 2015

It’s common knowledge that interpreters stay well informed; one always observes colleagues toting around periodicals in several languages. But what do we do at home to keep up with world events or satisfy unchecked curiosity? It wouldn’t be difficult for my friends to guess that I have morning coffee in Bangkok with the electronic version of the New York Times, but what about other, less expected sources of information? I’ve been asking around and here’s what I’ve heard.

Thank go out to Tom Afton, Régine Temam, Bertold Schmitt, Silvia Camilo, Daniel Gile, Burckhard Doempke, Vincent Buck and Lucia Sánchez del Villar for contributing this article.

The world in French

The Courrier International, from Paris and in French, lives up to its name by offering a full range of articles on worldwide events. Extended access to online services is offered by subscription, but you’ll get a whole lot for free. I especially like their guide to online periodicals organised by continent and country. They also put out a weekly selection in Portuguese.

Photo credit: NASA

Iberian Peninsula

For people interested in the Iberian Peninsula, Estudos sobre o Comunismo offers a host of hyperlinks that may prove useful.

For Spanish readers, the Madrid daily El Mundo has an excellent and well-designed online edition with a full panoply of interactive features.

Vie-publique

This site will give you plenty of information on France: « Le portail "vie-publique.fr" s’inscrit dans l’action de l’Etat pour développer la société de l’information.

Ce service, édité par la Documentation française dans le cadre de sa mission générale d’information et de documentation sur l’actualité politique, économique, sociale et internationale, se propose de faciliter l’accès des internautes aux ressources et données utiles pour appréhender les grands sujets
From Asia, on line

Since I live in Southeast Asia, I like to keep up with information and analysis regarding this part of the world, and Asia Times Online gives me both. I enjoy the personal commentary and opinion pieces, and especially the AToL specials, such as “Sinoroving” by Pepe Escobar. The site also includes an eloquent image of the world at night. Also available: a Chinese edition.

Euro broadcasts

Voice and image through multiple video offerings are available at EuroNews, which claims to be “Europe’s news channel covering world news from a European perspective in a choice of seven languages… English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.” You’ll need Real Player – a link for downloading it is available on the homepage.

All Africa

For news from and about Africa, allAfrica.com: “Among the Internet's largest content sites, posting over 800 stories daily in English and French and offering a diversity of multi-lingual streaming programming as well as over 900,000 articles in our searchable archive.”

Radio days

Interpreting is a talking and listening profession, and several colleagues say they increasingly use internet radio. BBC Radio 4 is one favorite and says of itself: “Arguably, BBC Radio 4 owes much of its success to a 22-year-old Italian, a handbag-wielding Australian and an eccentric in a shed in Essex. The station was officially born in the year of free love and flower power, but its roots actually date back to the 1880s.”

BBC World Service also got a mention; it offers broadcasts in 43 languages. You can check out all the BBC radio offerings on their main site.

Inter Press Service

IPS “is a global news agency producing independent news and analysis about events and global processes affecting the economic, social and political development of peoples and nations, especially in the South.” IPS coverage is broad and often related to the subjects that we deal with in many an international conference. A Spanish version is available, as are selected articles in other languages. IPS is also associated with specialised sites, such as Imaging Our Mekong and AsiaAfrica.

World Facts

One colleague reports that her students often use the World Fact Book to look up basic information about countries and to consult figures and maps. Its list of abbreviations isn’t bad either.

Wiki Welcome
Several of our correspondents mentioned the Wikipedia. The English version has passed 500,000 articles and all content is offered free of charge. Readers are invited to edit information, but better consult the welcome page before trying that. This collaborative project has extended to other languages as well.

Recommended citation format: