Language in the news

Worldwide ramblings on translation/interpretation as a profession, the conundrum of interpreting in situations/zones of conflict, craft in a commercialized world, and censorship run rampant. Read now before sites are blocked!

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NY City Translators
Take a look at the NY Circle of Translators' website and their newsletter, The Gotham Translator.
The March/April 2008 issue contains articles on translator compensation (is it possible to make a decent living?) and the play "Betrayed," adopted from George Packer's New Yorker article on the plight of Iraqi translators (see the Summer 2007 Language in the News for more).

You might also want to go back to October 2005 to read more about interpreters in conflict zones and the difficulties of being a translator in the USA after 9/11.

Craft
Bookforum offers an excellent review of The Craftsman by Richard Sennett, a work examining how we think about craft. "The craftsman is someone whose combination of skills and training cannot be readily understood if the old binary oppositions-head and hand, reason and labor, theory and practice-are taken as givens. The domain of craft, in Sennett's account, subsumes activities as unrelated as cooking, music, pottery, architecture, glassblowing, computer programming, and bricklaying."

Or this: "But what happens when shifting occupations becomes a necessity and even a norm: something you can expect to do more than once? What then remains of the autonomy and progress-mindedness formerly embodied in the aspiration to 'have a career'? The risks and the rewards of the marketplace disrupt the routines of even its more powerful members. What grounds for solidarity exist within any given class, let alone across classes?"

Professionalization
Take a look at Laurie A. Bolster's dissertation on professionalization and sign language interpreting. I found the "Literature Review" beginning on page 14 to be especially compelling - and pertinent for the translator/interpreter profession as a whole.

And while we're here, take a look at this Science Daily report on the ergonomic risks of sign language interpreting.

Making others audible
"At a time when the international English-language media ignores many things that are important to large numbers of the world's citizens, Global Voices aims to redress some of the inequities in media attention by leveraging the power of citizens' media."

"Global Voices is a non-profit global citizens' media project founded at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, a research think-tank focused on the Internet's impact on society."

**The challenge of multilingualism**

"In 2007, the European Commission created a new portfolio: Multilingualism. By creating this portfolio, attributed to the Romanian Commissioner Leonard Orban, the Commission wanted to bring its strategy of promoting multilingualism to the next level. One year on, where do we stand?" Mauro Morabito on The European Multilingual Challenge at cafebabel.

**Nets and walls**

"China's Great Firewall is crude, slapdash, and surprisingly easy to breach. Here's why it's so effective anyway." See *The Connection Has Been Reset* by James Fallows in the March 2008 issue of Atlantic Monthly.

Here's another: "Steve Marshall is an English travel agent. He lives in Spain, and he sells trips to Europeans who want to go to sunny places, including Cuba. In October, about 80 of his Web sites stopped working, thanks to the United States government." See *A Wave of the Watch List and Speech Disappears* by Adam Liptak in the NY Times.

And one more: "Using data from the Global Integrity Index, we put a U.S. court's recent order to block access to anti-corruption site Wikileaks.org into context. In summary: The Wikileaks.org shutdown is unheard of in the West, and has only been seen in a handful of the most repressive regimes. Good thing it doesn't work very well." See *Wikileaks and Internet Censorship - a comparative study* by Jonathan Werve. Check out the main page of Wikileaks while you're in the neighborhood.

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