Live blogging from the Interpreters for interpreters workshop in Berlin

Colleagues will be covering a wide range of issues, such as how to train your hearing, new trends in media interpreting, provisions for old-age, and how to communicate in a world of soundbites

Vincent BUCK.
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About 100 interpreters are expected to show up at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin for this workshop organised by AIIC Germany, a region with some 300 members.

9:00

Almute Löber introduces AIIC Germany's second interpreters for interpreters workshop. We're meeting at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, known to Berliners as the 'pregnant oyster'. (In the 1970s, the building was also referred to as 'Jimmy Carter's smile'.) The swooping structure on the edge of Berlin's Tiergarten, Europe's largest metropolitan park, was designed by American architect Hugh Stubbins as a symbol of German-American friendship after the war.

Interpreting is team work yet interpreters tend to be very individualistic. We can overcome that seeming dichotomy for mutual benefit. Finding a buddy and training in tandem is a proven method for professional development. Do you want to get the most out of practise exercises you do at home? Find a like-minded colleague for maximum synergy:

1. Each of you should be a native speaker of the other’s B or C language.
2. You can use speeches from a growing list of online speech banks, recording your interpretation on a computer (using Audacity or similar software) and then giving each other feedback.

Interpreting.info has a very useful list of [recorded conferences or presentations for practising simultaneous interpretation](http://interpreting.info) and a question about how to [use technology for remote interpreter training](http://interpreting.info).

10:00

EU Commission staff interpreter Alexander Drechsel is talking about iPhone apps that interpreters may find useful. What Apps do you use? Leave a note on [interpreting.info](http://interpreting.info).

If you're going to be using Apps, Dropbox or anything in the cloud, please read the Terms of use, and be extra careful about security. You do not want to store your customer's confidential
documents on a system that is not inherently private and secure.

How about speakers coming to the booth with Powerpoint presentation on a memory stick? There's no USB port on an iPad...

**10:30**

AIIC Consultant interpreter [Sabine Breit](#) talks about no-nonsense communication.

Genuine communication requires both a speaker and a listener. In a conference setting speakers tend to occupy the whole communication space, with listeners left to their own devices to fill in the gaps whenever anything is unclear. The more abstract and artificial the talk, the more the listeners have to fall back on their own knowledge. And the message, if any, gets lost. "Garbage in, garbage out" may be the interpreter's only strategy with some speakers. But it's a losing strategy for everyone. A better option for the interpreter dealing with impenetrable language is to goad the listeners on to asking questions, and hopefully get the speaker to clarify the message.

Interpreters have a lot of accumulated knowledge about communication in multilingual settings. They should not be afraid to make use of it. Why not consult with a client before an event to assure that the message will not get lost, and everybody can make the most of the event?

**11:30**

[BDÜ-VKD](#) and AIIC have programmes to [give young interpreters a leg up](#). VKD's Sabine Nonhebel and Barbara Kagon talk about VKD's mentor-mentee scheme. In addition to providing information to junior interpreters, building trust between newcomers and senior interpreters is essential.

[Mara Sfreddo](#) explains that sponsoring interpreters to join AIIC is not to be taken lightly. AIIC's [Committee on Admissions and Language Classification (CACL)](#) is responsible for reviewing all applications. Sponsors, who must be long-standing members of AIIC themselves, are asked to vouch for the quality of the applicant, their language skills and professional approach, and whether they comply with AIIC rules. Observing team strength requirements and maintaining a professional demeanor at all times are especially important. For instance, you wouldn't sponsor someone whom you know happens to work alone in the booth.

Interesting question from [Ralph Gerhardt](#) about AIIC's twin role as a quality label and an association representing colleagues and acting as a trade union vis-à-vis international organisations. Doesn't the latter speak in favour of relaxing AIIC's admission procedure?

**12:30**

And now for something completely different - an issue we'd much rather avoid altogether but that everyone of us will need to tackle head-on at some point: old age, and how to provide for it. Germany is considering a [mandatory retirement pension plan for freelancers](#).

Bottom line: decide how much a month you'll need for 30+ years. Is 2000 EUR enough? Save up and invest in low-risk products. You'll need a capital of about 500,000 EUR to keep you going. Do the maths. Develop your savings plan and stick to it.

[Julia Böhm](#) has kindly given us permission to upload a [copy of her presentation](#).
14:15

Arte's chief interpreter Elizabeth Krone talks about media interpreting at the Franco-German broadcaster. In addition to traditional broadcasting, Arte streams programmes on the Internet. An interesting development is the use of media interpreters to produce the second language version of short videos. The job requires some basic understanding of audio editing software (ProTools) and good acting skills.

How does it work? You can read a short description in the final section of this recently published interview in Communicate!

14:45

Good interpreting depends on good listening conditions -- and good hearing. AIIC interpreter Claudia Krüger tells us about the constant interaction between voice, hearing and body.

Hear, hear! Claudia is no fan of in-ear earphones. Read this: How do simultaneous interpreters ensure that their hearing doesn't suffer in the booth?

15:15

Yoga for interpreters with AIIC Germany's Conrado Portugal. The room is very quiet and we're working to bring you a couple of pics...

Photo credits: Angela Keil
Photo credits: Claudia Ricci (who's now put down her camera to do the exercise)

Breaking news: yoga works wonders to relieve stress, even when you're a conference interpreter thriving on it.

16:30

Erika Levi discusses a social predicament facing interpreters: We're all competitors, but we depend on each other for effective team work. We're on our own when we switch the mic on, but we operate in environments with more or less explicit hierarchical rules that we are not necessarily aware of. This is a source of potential tension.

Artem Ponomarev: Take good care of yourself because no-one else will do it for you. As a freelancer, your main asset is your health.

Claudia Ricci on multitasking: Make the most of your available time. You can juggle assignments, organise teams and translations, and maintain a professional standard in each of your working languages if you know how to manage your time.

Erika Levi, an AIIC interpreter and a trained psychologist, addresses vicarious traumatisation in interpreters: As much as we'd like to believe that we are neutral in all circumstances, every interpreter will be impacted by traumatic content. If you interpret for the courts, accompany delegations on prison visits, cover traumatic events as a media interpreter, etc. don't hesitate to seek professional help and support. Question from the floor: who should be paying for it?

That's all for tonight. A big word of thanks is due to AIIC Germany and in particular Almute Löber for this year's wonderful Interpreters for Interpreters workshop. There will be more in the future.

More about the programme here.

Alexander Drechsel has storified the workshop here.
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