Vacation or “staycation”?  

The working interpreter’s life often involves frequent travel. So guess what we dream of doing when the holiday season arrives?

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So, summer’s over. Another holiday season has come and gone.

When people ask me what I did this summer, I will happily say that the highlight of my holidays was sleeping all those nights in the comfort of my own bed. I don’t know what other frequent travellers’ idea of a perfect vacation is, but for me, there is nothing better than just staying put, at home, in the company of my family. (Okay, I’ll admit that living on a subtropical island that is the destination of many holidaymakers probably sweetens the pill a bit, but I’m sure that I’d enjoy spending my holiday time at home just as much if I lived in a less idyllic place.)

The thing is, when you have to travel so much during the interpreting season, the idea of packing your bags and shipping out somewhere when you finally get a few weeks off is anything but appealing. I don’t think I’m alone in this, either. Often, when I ask colleagues where they plan to spend their Easter break, or where they are going for Christmas, they’ll give me a big smile (accompanied by a shiver of anticipation) and say, “We’re staying home!”

Of course, there's the flip side: staying home for too long is bad for business. No freelancer in their right mind would voluntarily choose to be unoccupied for almost two months running. As a matter of fact, around this time last year, I argued in a blog post (“The Long Dark Summertime of the Soul”) that the interpreter’s summer tends to be far too long, and that we would much rather be working, or at the very least engaged in some form of professional development, than sitting on our hands waiting for the season to start up again.

However, this year, I decided to take a positive spin on the lengthy, market-imposed summer break and saw it as a chance to enjoy some time off, connect with my family, recharge the ol’ batteries and get ready for the fall’s challenges.

How about you? Did your summer feature a vacation or a “staycation”? Maybe you were actually fortunate enough to be working, or you got a chance to do some professional development? And what exactly do we frequent travellers want from life, anyhow?

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