

## Computer tricks for translators

Talk by Eduardo Berinstein, ATA-certified English- Spanish translator, Federally Certified Court Interpreter, at the New England Translators Association 2017 annual conference

Thank you for inviting me to talk.

Thank you to the organizers of this wonderful conference.

Disclaimer: I will show you many different programs, but I don't work or represent any of the companies that sell them. They're simply the ones that I chose to use. There are many other brands that do the same kind of tricks.

Focus will be on Windows OS. But the same ideas can be applied to Apple OS and even open source operating systems.

I will talk about technology. So before I get to the point, allow me a little prelude.

Is technology good or bad? It is inevitable! It is here to stay.

Is technology inherently evil? It depends on how it is used.

Should we fear technology? I submit that we must embrace it and master it, so it doesn't master us.

Competing forces in the marketplace:

- Ever increasing demand for translation services: Translation powers the global economy!
- Dizzying pace of growth of new technologies
- Local translators now compete with translators worldwide
- Trend: Price per word decreasing, not increasing
- The only way to remain competitive is to leverage new technologies to work faster, more effortlessly, and to increase our productivity.

What sets us apart from machines? Our humanity.

Machines can only "translate" (transpose strings of words), sometimes better, sometimes worse (but they are getting better by the day! Key words: artificial intelligence, neural networks, deep learning).

Humans can mediate meaning. They can decide when it's better to translate less (for example, eliminate redundancies from a poorly written source text), when it's better to translate more (for example, add footnotes, clarifications), and in when it's better not to translate altogether (for example: TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs, the acrostic does not work on other languages, so we may rightfully choose to not translate the word TIPS).

Self-taught translators are at the mercy of their own intuitions. Informed translators are not prisoners of their own intuitions. They benefit from the discoveries made and shared by other translators. They don't have to reinvent the wheel. They can leverage collective knowledge. And this knowledge can be found in the realm of translation theory.

My personal take on this is what two previous keynote speakers at NETA conferences—Sergio Viaggio and David Bellos, as well as many others—have proposed: that good translators are not really translators, but interlingual intercultural mediators, in real life social transactions, between flesh and bone people, always in specific circumstances (time and place). They are not loyal to the “original.” The identity they seek is not between strings of words, but between thoughts, between what the writer means to communicate, and what the reader finally understands.

Language is a mere vehicle. Like [Jean Delisle](#), from the University of Ottawa, said, “Translators are authors with other people’s ideas.” And like any good author, they are good writers, good communicators.

They exercise a “responsible freedom.” The only limitations to that freedom are the tenets of the Code of Ethics.

That is what humans can still do better than machines. So now, let’s get to the point and talk about technology.

I have been translating since the year III BC (True: Since the year III Before Computers) ☺

I have seen many changes in the field. I will talk about three in particular that have greatly increased my productivity (computers, of course, but also):

1. CAT (Computer Assisted Translation) tools:
  - Translation Memory (for leveraging our previous work and “collecting royalties” on it)
  - Terminology Management (for leveraging our terminology research)
    - Terminology mining (for creating glossaries from legacy materials)
    - Alignment <http://www.youalign.com/> (for creating translation memories from bilingual corpora)
    - Glossary creation and conversion (such as the Trados app glossary converter)
  - Machine translation post-editing. **WARNING**: Must be used with caution (it can be a double-edged sword in the hands of the inexperienced, it can be used to exploit translators, it can raise confidentiality issues), but it cannot be ignored, and sometimes it can be extremely useful.
2. Speech recognition: Dragon NaturallySpeaking (demonstration)  
Text to voice readers: for example <http://ttsreader.com> (demonstration). There are many others.
3. Web search tools and electronic reference materials (dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias)  
IntelliWebSearch: <http://www.intelliwebsearch.com/version-5/>  
Babylon: <http://www.babylon-software.com/>

Platform: Windows or Mac?

I love Macs, I own one. The Mac external keyboard is wonderful, requires minimal pressure. Macs are very well-built machines, and very fast too. But I run Windows inside my Mac. With [Parallels](#) I can have both operating systems at the same machine). Why? There are more CAT programs for Windows than there are for Mac OS. Two of them in particular, which I use and rely upon all the time, are unavailable for Mac (Trados and IntelliWebSearch).

Do you like mice? Computer mouse makes you prone to repetitive motion injuries

Tendinitis

Carpal tunnel syndrome

(Some good tips on ergonomic use of the mouse to be found here

<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/cumousetips.html>)

Alternatives: trackball, trackpad, pen

Remember the importance of:

Ergonomics

Taking breaks. Set a timer. Every 45-50 minutes stand up and stretch!

But the best alternative to the mouse is to avoid it whenever possible by using keyboard shortcuts.

Two magical keys that many people are blissfully unaware of:

Windows key (the key immediately to the left of the spacebar)

Alt key (the key immediately to the left of the Windows key)

### **Useful shortcuts using the Windows key:**

- 1) Windows key opens the Start menu
- 2) Minimize all windows and discover desktop: Windows Key + M  
  
Tips:
  - Keep desktop clutter free
  - Use multiple desktops (Macs have had this feature for a long time, Windows added it in OS 10)
- 3) Move a window to occupy the left half of the screen: Windows key + left arrow  
Move a window to occupy the right half of the screen: Windows key + right arrow  
Useful for viewing to Windows and side-by-side (for example, source document on the left, translation on the right)
- 4) Maximizing the window: Windows key + up arrow
- 5) Restore down a window: Windows key + down arrow
- 6) Launching applications and opening folders and documents: Right-click + Properties + You're your shortcut key

Another quick way to launch applications without using the mouse: Pin documents to Start menu, press Windows key to open the taskbar, arrow down to the desired program and press enter

### Useful shortcuts using the Alt key

- 7) Alt + F4 (Close application)
- 8) Save As: Alt + F + A (Also useful: Close window: Ctrl + W)
- 9) How to make text larger and easier to read without increasing font size or changing the document format:  
  
First: File > Options > Advanced > Show document content > Show text wrapped within the document window  
  
Then choose Draft view and zoom in: Alt + W + E  
  
Alternate view: Print layout: Alt + W + P
- 10) Zoom in or zoom out: Alt + V + Z + Tab + Tab + type desired percentage number  
  
Alternately (but using the mouse): Ctrl + Mouse scroll wheel (works in any MS Office application)
- 11) Increase Indent: Alt + H + A + I
- 12) Decrease indent: Alt + H + A + O
- 13) To switch between different open applications: While Alt pressed, tap Tab  
Or while Alt and Shift pressed, tap + Tab
- 14) To toggle between two open applications:  
Alt + Tab  
Alt + Shift + Tab
- 15) Changing case of phrases or titles: Alt + H + 7
- 16) Set proofing language: Alt + T + L + L
- 17) Go straight to an item in a long pulldown list: Type the first or two letters of item you want to open
- 18) Copy format: Ctrl + Shift + C
- 19) Paste format: Ctrl + Shift + V
- 20) Increase font size: Ctrl + Shift + >
- 21) Decrease font size: Ctrl + Shift + <

22) Working with tables

Convert text to table: Alt + A + V + X

Convert table to text: Alt + A + V + B

Insert column to the right: Alt + A + I + R

Insert column to the left: Alt + A + I + R

Insert row above: Alt + A + I + A

Insert row below: Alt + A + I + B

Select table: Alt + A + C + T

Distribute columns evenly: Alt + A + A + Y

23) Change page margins: Alt + P + M + A

24) Move to the next field in a form or table: Tab

25) Move to previous field in a form or table: Shift + Tab

26) Convert text to bullets: Alt + H + U

27) Convert text to numbered list: Alt + H + N

28) Change paragraph specifications: Alt + O + P

29) Turn track changes on and off: Ctrl + Shift + E

30) Copy the names of multiple files: in Outlook: Select them + Right-click + Send to Mail recipient  
An email messages created with a list of the attached files, copy the list and voila!

Good resource for computer translation applications

Jost Zetzsche: <http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit/>

I ran out of time to talk about CAT (Computer Assisted Translation) tools: Translation Memory, Terminology Management and Machine Translation software.

To be continued at NETA conference 2018...