The American Translators Association

An Overview and Discussion of its Development as
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

Dr. Rusty Shughart
Chair, ATA Government Linguist
Outreach Task Force (GLOTF)
Saturday, 12 December 2020

American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators
Agenda

- Introductory Remarks and Overview
- Pre-presentation Exercise
- Overview – ATA and its Professional Development Programs and Initiatives
  - Governance and Administration
  - Information Resources
  - Services
  - Events
- Q&A → Break
- Discussion – Development of ATA as The Voice of Interpreters and Translators
  - Pioneers in the Founding of ATA
  - Development Timeline and Trends in ATA’s Programs
  - Government Linguist Outreach Task Force
  - Factors Influencing the Translation and Interpreting Industry
- Post-presentation Exercise, Q&A, and Closing Remarks
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Warm-up Question

The American Translators Association was established in...

A. 1781
B. 1883
C. 1959
D. 1967
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Question #1

ATA's membership consists mostly of...

A. Government and military translators in the U.S. (federal, state, local)

B. Government and military translators worldwide

C. Language Services Company staff interpreters and translators worldwide

D. Independent/freelance interpreters and translators worldwide
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Question #2

The success of ATA programs and initiatives can be attributed to…

A. ATA members who volunteer to support ATA as their professional association
B. The team of commercial contractors that provides administrative support
C. The large number of full-time staff employees at ATA Headquarters
D. Language Service Company employees who collaborate with ATA to shape the industry
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Question #3

ATA has 22 language and subject-specific divisions, the largest of which is the…

A. Spanish Language Division
B. Interpreters Division
C. Medical Division
D. Translation Company Division
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Question #4

The “flagship” of ATA’s professional development programs is the…

A. Interpreter-translator accreditation program
B. Interpreter-translator certification program
C. Translator certification program
D. Interpreter credentialing program
Pre-Presentation Exercise

Question #5

The primary factor influencing the commercial translation and interpretation industry today is...

A. Legislation

B. Technology

C. Mergers and acquisitions among Language Service Companies and related enterprises

D. Proper remuneration for interpreter and translator expertise and work

E. Innovation-standardization tensions within the commercial sector
Bylaws of ATA, Inc.

- Name and General Structure
- Purposes: Objectives and Means
- Membership: Categories; Eligibility; Rights and Privileges; Dues; Application for Membership; Disciplinary Actions
- Board of Directors; Executive Committee; and Officers
- Publications and Public Statements
- Annual Meeting of All Members
- Annual Meeting of Voting Members
- Chapters
- Divisions
- Robert’s Rules of Order
ATA Mission Statement

- Promote the recognition of professional translators and interpreters
- Advocate on behalf of the profession
- Facilitate communication among its members
- Provide members with professional development opportunities
- Establish standards of competence and ethics
How ATA Functions

Board of Directors (13)
- Active members of ATA who are elected by the voting membership at annual conference sessions
- Four Executive Committee officers serve two-year terms; nine directors serve three-year terms

Board Operations
- Fulfill duties and responsibilities stipulated in ATA Bylaws
- Develop strategy and provide “big picture” guidance
- Develop, recommend, and administer changes to Bylaws, as needed
- Convene four times per year; document proceedings for transparency

Standing Committees (5)
- Executive
- Finance & Audit
- Ethics
- Membership
- Nominating & Leadership Development

ATA Headquarters Staff (11)

Special Committees (16)
Divisions (22)
Chapters/Affiliated Groups (25)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standing (5)</th>
<th>Special (16)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive (Board of Directors)</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Business Practices Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Audit</td>
<td>Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominating &amp; Leadership Development</td>
<td>Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education &amp; Pedagogy (Non-ATA Programs)</td>
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<td>Governance &amp; Communications</td>
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<td>Honors &amp; Awards</td>
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<td>Interpretation Policy Advisory</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Nominating and Leadership Development</td>
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<td>Professional Development (ATA Programs)</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>Standards</td>
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<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Translation &amp; Interpreting Resources</td>
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</table>
## ATA Language and Subject-specific Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language (12)</th>
<th>Subject-specific (10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Language Division (ALD)</td>
<td>Audiovisual Division (AVD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Language Division (CLD)</td>
<td>Educators Division (EdD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Language Division (DLD)</td>
<td>Government Division (GovD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Language Division (FLD)</td>
<td>Interpreters Division (ID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Language Division (GLD)</td>
<td>Language Technology Division (LTD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Language Division (ILD)</td>
<td>Law Division (LawD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Language Division (JLD)</td>
<td>Literary Division (LD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Language Division (KLD)</td>
<td>Medical Division (MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Division (ND)</td>
<td>Science &amp; Technology Division (S_TD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Language Division (PLD)</td>
<td>Translation Company Division (TCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavic Languages Division (SLD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Language Division (SPD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ATA Chapters and Affiliated Groups

#### Chapters (14)

- Association of Translators & Interpreters of Florida (ATIF)
- Atlanta Association of Interpreters & Translators (AAIT)
- Carolina Association of Interpreters & Translators (CATI)
- Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
- Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)
- Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MiTiN)
- Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA)
- Midwest Association of Translators & Interpreters (MATI)
- National Capital Area Translators Association (NCATA)
- New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)
- Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)
- Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)
- Northwest Translators & Interpreters Society (NOTIS)
- Upper Midwest Translators & Interpreters Association (UMTIA)

#### Affiliated Groups (11)

- Association of Translators & Interpreters in the San Diego Area (ATISDA)
- Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association (AATIA)
- El Paso Interpreters & Translators Association (EPITA)
- Houston Interpreters & Translators Association (HITA)
- Iowa Interpreters & Translators Association (IITA)
- Nebraska Association of Translators & Interpreters (NATI)
- Nevada Interpreters & Translators Association (NITA)
- New Mexico Translators & Interpreters Association (NMTIA)
- Oregon Society of Translators & Interpreters (OSTI)
- Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters & Translators (TAPIT)
- Utah Translators & Interpreters Association (UTIA)
Primary Benefits of ATA Membership

- Professional Information Resources
- Professional Services
- Professional Events
## Portfolio of ATA Programs and Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Resources</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* ATA Website</td>
<td>* Industry Advocacy</td>
<td>* Annual Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The ATA Chronicle</td>
<td>* Translator Certification</td>
<td>* Chapter and Division Events and Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The ATA Compass</td>
<td>* Directory of Translators and Interpreters</td>
<td>* Certification Exam Prep Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Podcasts</td>
<td>* ATA Newsbriefs</td>
<td>* Webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Listservs and Blogs</td>
<td>* Honors and Awards</td>
<td>* Support to Language Advocacy Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Special Topic</td>
<td>* School Outreach</td>
<td>* Board of Director Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>* American Foundation for Translation/Interpretation</td>
<td>* Special Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ATA Scholarly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monographs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key ATA Professional Information Resources

ATA Website
www.atanet.org; central repository of content; public facing and member only resources

The ATA Chronicle
ATA member-focused; bimonthly; hardcopy and softcopy versions; extra content online

The ATA Compass
Outreach-focused guide to translation and interpreting in the global marketplace

Podcasts
No charge; varying length; on demand; downloadable; 50 produced to date

Listservs and Blogs
ATA Divisions publish Listserv products; blogs offered at Chapters/Affiliated Groups

Special Topic Publications
Publications on special topics are produced as necessary, to include ATA Position Papers

ATA Scholarly Monographs
Peer-reviewed studies on professional issues in the global translation/interpreting industry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry Advocacy</td>
<td>“The Voice of Interpreters and Translators”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator Certification</td>
<td>Validation of professional competency with code of ethics; continuing education obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA Directory of Translators and Interpreters</td>
<td>“Find a Linguist”; self-declaration of language pairs; includes official certifications/credentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA Newsbriefs</td>
<td>Bi-weekly reporting to membership on translation/interpreting reporting in public media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors and Awards</td>
<td>Encourages, rewards, and publicizes notable work of seasoned professionals and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Outreach</td>
<td>Public relations initiatives at elementary, middle school, high school, and university levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Foundation for Translation/Interpretation</td>
<td>Support for charitable activities, education, and research on translation/interpreting profession.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# ATA Translation Certification Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Into English (14)</th>
<th>From English (16)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Conference</td>
<td>1,500 attendees; pre-conference workshops; 170 education sessions; 70 vendors/booths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter and Division Events and Activities</td>
<td>Chapters/Divisions offer regional and language/subject-specific networking events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Exam Prep Workshops</td>
<td>Mobile training initiatives provide cost-effective means to prepare for certification exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>Reasonably-priced professional education opportunities; live 60-minute online events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to Language Advocacy Day</td>
<td>Collaboration with major language advocates to promote multilingual communication services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Director Meetings</td>
<td>Board meetings are open to ATA members; transparent and participative process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>Hosting and participation in special events related to the translation/interpreting industry</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pathway to Professional Standing

### ATA Support to Member Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Initiative</th>
<th>Initial Professional Education</th>
<th>Skills Development</th>
<th>Professional Practice</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATA Web Site</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ATA Chronicle</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Topic Publications</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATA Scholarly Monographs</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Information Resources

### Services

| Industry Advocacy                |                       |                       | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Translator Certification         |                       |                       | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Directory of Translators and Interpreters |                       |                       | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| ATA Newsbriefs                   | ✓                      |                       | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Honors and Awards                |                        |                       | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| School Outreach                  | ✓                      |                       |                       | ✓                        |
| AFTI                             |                        |                       |                       | ✓                        |

### Events

| Annual Conference                | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Chapters and Divisions           | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Certification Exam Training      | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Webinars                         | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Language Advocacy Day            | ✓                      |                      |                       | ✓                        |
| Board of Director Meetings       | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
| Special Events                   | ✓                      | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                        |
Break
Agenda

- Discussion – Development of ATA as The Voice of Interpreters and Translators
  - Pioneers in the Founding of ATA
  - Development Timeline and Trends in ATA's Programs
  - Government Linguist Outreach Task Force
  - Factors Influencing the Translation and Interpretation Industry
Pioneers in the Founding of ATA

Henry Fischbach
* 25-year ATA member – co-founding charter member
* Comparative Linguistics and Pre-Med
* Translator, specializing in science and technology
* Company (Bureau) Owner – The Language Service

Alexander Gode
* Co-founding charter member – ATA’s founding president
* Translator, specializing in Germanic Studies
* Led International Auxiliary Language Association
  * Interlingua Dictionary and Grammar
* Alexander Gode Medal for “outstanding service to the translation and interpreting professions”

There are 41 charter members of ATA
Timeline of ATA’s Development

1. Creation and Normalization
   - 1 May 1959 “Charter Meeting”
   - Recognition of Association bylaws by State of New York
   - Annual meeting of all members
   - Designation as U.S. affiliate of International Federation of Translators (FIT)
   - Growth in Chapters and Affiliated Groups
   - Growth in Language and Specialized Divisions
   - Creation of newsletters and directories
   - Normalization of code of ethics

2. Expansion and Refinement
   - Increase in membership, to include greater diversity
   - Expansion of annual conferences nationwide
   - Creation of accreditation exam program
   - Creation of Awards Program
   - Publication of Conference Proceedings in book form
   - Creation of Scholarly Monograph Series Program
   - Relocation of headquarters from New York state to northern Virginia

3. Development as Industry Advocate
   - Membership in Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL)
   - Development of Antitrust Policy
   - Initiation of pro bono volunteer services
   - Reclassification of translation and interpreting as professional occupations
   - Creation of Translation Services Directory
   - Creation of Certified Translator Program

4. Ongoing and Future Initiatives
   - Redesign of web site and web-delivered content
   - Institution of new Association Management System
   - Enhancement of social media presence
   - Creation and sharing of virtual conference content
   - Boosting of recruiting, membership, and retention initiatives
   - Expansion of public relations campaign, to include client education efforts

American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators
Notable Milestones in the Development of ATA

- 1959 (May) – ATA Charter Meeting
- 1959 (December) – General Meeting
- 1961 – Delaware Valley Translators Association
- 1961 – Registry of Translators
- 1962 – Designation as U.S. affiliate of International Federation of Translators (FIT)
- 1963 – California Chapter
- 1966 – Code of Ethics
- 1973 – Accreditation Exam (German into English)
- 1983 – Science and Technology Division
- 1985 – Japanese Language Division
- 1992 – Headquarters in Virginia
- 1994 – Executive Director
- 1996 – Website
- 1997 – American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation (AFTI)
- 2003 – Medical Division
- 2004 – School Outreach Program
- 2012 – The Voice of Interpreters and Translators
Recent Trends in ATA Programs

- Rise of the interpreter portfolio within ATA
  - ATA: “The Voice of Interpreters and Translators”
  - Interpreter representation on ATA Board of Directors
  - Credentialed interpreter recognition in ATA Directory
  - Balanced program at ATA Annual Conference
- Prominence of the Annual Conference
  - Options for “virtual conference” participation
  - Wide array of exhibitor displays and services
  - Hands-on IT and CAT tools support (learning/troubleshooting)
  - Delivery of ATA Certification Exams
  - Employment Fairs and Social Networking and Wellness Events
- Webinars and podcasts – broad social media presence
- Seminars and training events
  - ATA Law Seminar and Certification Exam Preparation Workshops
The ATA Annual Conference

- Advanced Skills and Training Day
- Member Plenary Sessions
  - Annual Meeting of All Members
  - Annual Meeting of Voting Members
- ATA Certification Exams
- Educational Sessions
- Exhibit Hall
  - Commercial Vendors
  - Commercial Services
- Networking Events
  - Job Fair
  - Buddies Welcome Newbies/Savvy Newcomer
  - “The ATA Veterans Circle”
  - End of Conference Dance
Government Linguist Outreach Task Force

(1) Creation of Committee on Outreach to the Defense Language Community
* Authorized by ATA in April 2018
* 10 volunteer subject matter experts, led by ATA Government Division (GovD)
* Two group meetings and numerous individual meetings to generate report on issues and recommendations
* 20 recommendations were generated in the categories of Communication, Utilization, and Transformation

(2) Outreach Committee Findings Reported to ATA Board of Directors
* GovD Board Action Request (BAR) of 4 October 2018
* "Outreach Plan and Pilot Year Road Map for 2019": four-page summary of outreach committee findings including a three-year plan for 20 initiatives

(3) Approval of GovD Board Action Request
* Approved at by ATA Board of Directors at ATA Annual Conference in New Orleans in October 2018
* Authorized GovD to pursue "pilot year" proposals for 2019

(4) Creation of Government Linguist Outreach Task Force (GLOTF)
* Approved by ATA Board of Directors in February 2019
* 8 volunteer subject matter experts, led by ATA Government Division (GovD)
Military Linguist Professional Development

1. **Increased Capability, Effectiveness, and Efficiency**
   * Build on your general professional proficiency for improved language performance through ATA resources, including networks, mentors, webinars, and conferences (including chapters/affiliates)

2. **Broadened Expertise**
   * Expand your language performance capabilities through ancillary skills development, including areas such as domain expertise, standards development, and project management applications

3. **Applied Leadership Opportunities**
   * Add to your experience and visibility by active, voluntary engagement in the development of ATA products, services, and events, to include publications, conference speaking, and elective positions

4. **Certification as an Industry Professional**
   * Validate your performance competency as the ultimate recognition of your professional qualification by being a certified, voting member of the nationally-recognized leader of the industry
Military Linguist Long-term Career Enhancement

- Foreign Language Proficiency
- Technical Training and Competence
- Country and Regional Expertise/Cultural Knowledge
- Operational and Domain-specific Experience
- Proven Dedication to Excellence/Professionalism

Substantial Career Potential in the Interpretation & Translation Industry
GLOTF Three-Year Implementation Plan

Communication

* Establish communication mechanisms as baseline of ATA and GovD interaction with Defense Language Community

Utilization

* Build upon new communication base to maximize use of existing ATA and DoD programs and procedures

Transformation

* Create new and evolutionary developments to regularize and solidify the long-term relationship between ATA and DoD

Each phase builds on the success of initiatives undertaken in the previous year
GLOTF Accomplishments in 2020
## Factors Influencing the Translation & Interpreting Industry

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Language Services Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Civil Rights Act of 1964</td>
<td>* Machine Translation</td>
<td>* Global Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Community Interpreting</td>
<td>* Remote Video Interpretation</td>
<td>* Mergers and Acquisitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Affordable Care Act (ACA)</td>
<td>* Media Access</td>
<td>* Profitability and Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Judicial/Social Justice</td>
<td>* 5G/6G Speed/bandwidth</td>
<td>* Dynamic Influences of Legislation/technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Educational Interpreting</td>
<td>* Artificial Intelligence</td>
<td>* Industry/sector Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</td>
<td>* Entertainment/gaming</td>
<td>* Prospects for the Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* AB5/AB2257 (California)</td>
<td>* Virtual Reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>* PRO Act (Federal)</td>
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Contact Information

For additional information:

Visit: https://www.atanet.org/

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Contact: ATA Government Division

Rusty Shughart: russ4ata@yahoo.com