

## **Conference Report: METM2010**

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I recently attended METM 2010 (Mediterranean Translators and Editors Meeting), which took place from 28 to 30 October 2010 in Tarragona, Spain. The three-day conference programme included workshops, presentations and plenary talks and offered participants extensive opportunities for networking.

MET was established in 2005 as an association of language service providers (LSPs) working mainly into or with English. Members include both in-house and freelance LSPs. As part of the association's activities it holds an annual conference in a Mediterranean city. Previous locations have included Madrid and Split. In Tarragona, the conference was hosted in Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

The first workshop I attended was entitled "Revision matters", designed and facilitated by Barcelona-based translators Ailish Maher and Luci Vázquez. Given that all translators revise at least their own work, if not also the work of others, this was a very worthwhile event. Using a revision framework that covered the various types of errors occurring in texts, participants identified issues relating to areas such as accuracy, logic, idiom and layout. The 'fitness for purpose' of a text was another theme covered and a lively discussion ensued on the level of revision required and desired given the usual constraints of time and money.

The second workshop I attended was presented by John Bates, Head of the Language Service at Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona. Entitled "Approaches to effective paragraphing: the topic sentence revisited", this workshop was aimed at authors, editors and translators. It began by reviewing the traditional approach to paragraphing and its fundamental principles (e.g. topic sentences, unity, coherence). We then examined how paragraphs are constructed to ensure logic, sense, clarity and interest on the part of the reader. Both workshops were very 'hands-on' and informative.

Emma Wagner, from the Directorate General for Translation at the European Commission, delivered a very interesting presentation on the Commission's Clear Writing campaign, whose flagship publication *How to Write Clearly* sets out ten top tips for clear writing and is available in all of the EU's 23 official languages. Emma had some surprising information for into-English translators in particular. English is now the lingua franca of the European Union: 90% of Commission documents are drafted in English, 13% of those who draft these texts are native English speakers and 54% of those who draft English documents rarely or never have them checked. So: plenty of opportunities for English-language editors!

Jean-luc Dumont, an engineer who now trains other engineers, business people and scientists to communicate effectively, proved to be a very entertaining speaker on the somewhat dry-sounding topic of "Effective slides: design, construction, and use". While perhaps not so relevant to those of us freelancers who work alone and communicate

mostly virtually with our clients and colleagues, Jean-luc's presentation contained many practical and useful tips for anyone who needs to make presentations from time to time. It also struck a chord with those of us who translate PowerPoint slides sometimes overflowing with words.

One very useful panel discussion that I attended was on the subject of getting the most out of our working environment. Three freelance translators – Anne Murray, Ann King and Kim Eddy – presented a range of tried and tested practices aimed at saving time and increasing overall efficiency, or as they put it, ensuring 'money in the bank'. These included free desktop search tools, notebook software, a website builder and free backup software. They also covered hardware issues such as the use of two screens (or more!) when translating and editing. The discussion was particularly informative as many participants were able to comment on and add to the panellists' suggestions.

The entire conference was a very enjoyable experience, particularly as the conference organisers had arranged a number of social events including a reception, a dinner, a beach walk and a guided tour of Roman Tarragona. As with all translator events, there was plenty to discuss both at the talks and in the evenings – in some cases right through to the early hours!

For more information on MET, please see <http://www.metmeetings.org/>

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