



# Languages & The Media

10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Language  
Transfer in Audiovisual Media

## POST CONFERENCE REPORT

Smart Technologies  
Smart Translations

November 5 – 7, 2014  
Hotel Radisson Blu, Berlin



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## THE EVENT

Languages & The Media 2014, the tenth International Conference and Exhibition on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media, took place at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Berlin, from November 5 – 7, 2014.

An **international audience** of more than 240 experts from thirty-seven countries gathered at the event. This included researchers, translators, interpreters, software developers, and others who produce, market, or distribute audiovisual materials for information, entertainment, or educational purposes to discuss the latest trends and most pressing issues.

The Steering Committee included **Mary Carroll**, Carroll Communication, Germany; **Minako O'Hagan**, Dublin City University, Ireland; **Jorge Díaz Cintas**, University College London, UK; and **Yves Gambier**, University of Turku, Finland.

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The Conference agenda was created through a selection process combining a public call for proposals and in-depth research of the international media sector. The agenda encompassed twenty-three parallel sessions, including sixty-eight presentations, one panel discussion, one open forum, and four workshops. **Seventy speakers** gave talks on their fields of expertise.

The overall topic **“Smart Technologies. Smart Translations”** encompassed a large variety of themes: Trends in Dubbing and Subtitling; Challenges of Machine Translation; Crowdsourcing and User-Generated Subtitling; Sign Language; Semiotics; HbbTV; Market Approaches and Innovations; Video Game Localisation; and many more.



## PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Prior to the event on Wednesday, November 5, 2014, four workshops were held. International experts shared their experiences by presenting best practices and giving applied examples of their practical knowledge.

The topics of these hands-on sessions included

- **Project Management for Translators**  
Lindsay Bywood, University College London, UK
- **The A to Z of Audioguides and Co., Strategies for Designing Audio, Video and Multimedia Guides for Tourism and Culture**  
Josélia Neves, Instituto Politécnico de Leiria, Portugal
- **Post-editing for Subtitlers**  
Yota Georgakopoulou, Deluxe Media, UK
- **Audiodescription for Theatre and Opera**  
Elena di Giovanni, University of Macerata, Italy



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## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### FIRST CONFERENCE DAY

The opening panel discussion, entitled **Smart Technologies - Smart Translations**, gave insight into the issues and new challenges that media producers, distributors, consumers, and translators are facing in a world where new technologies are facilitating the creation and dissemination of new forms of content. It also set the tone for the coming two days of interesting exchanges and discussions.

The panel was chaired by **Jorge Díaz Cintas**, University College London, UK. Panellists included top-level professionals such as **Per Naucclér**, Nordisk Undertext AB, Sweden; **Yota Georgakopoulou**, Deluxe Digital Studios, UK; and **Susanne Magnusson**, Acapela Group Sweden AB, Sweden.

Looking back at debates that have taken place in recent years, the event's 2014 edition was yet another dynamic conference where panellists and the audience discussed the pressing topics related to today's challenges.

The first Conference day covered a wide variety of topics and subjects, such as machine translations, audio description, culture, working conditions, training, interpreting, HbbTV, as well as Accessibility and Access 2020.

The "Machine Translation" session placed particular attention on the fact that even though the results of machine translation are still unusable in most professional scenarios



today, the underlying problems and how they can be overcome remain unclear. Also discussed was how machine translations of subtitles can contribute to language and cultural diversity in the so-called subtitling countries.

“ Thank you for a very good days. Very well organization!  
Susanne Magnusson ”

In the "Accessibility" session, diverse presentations showed how new technologies can be applied to broaden accessibility in contemporary societies. A specific example explored the role of universities, such as the University of Western Sydney, in contributing capacity building in media accessibility in a multicultural and multilingual context.

One of the most discussed question of the first day, and one that picked up the theme of the entire conference, was whether new technologies are delivering smart translations. Doubts were raised in the session on "Technologies": While machine translation is attracting the interest of audiovisual translation professionals and industry stakeholders, some translators opined that machines would never be able to deliver human-like quality. And although some claimed that machine translation will allow for higher accessibility, others contended that it will only lead to lower prices.

The numerous sessions during the day addressed questions from participants, while the evening reception was an opportunity to continue the discussions and also to socialise with colleagues from thirty-seven countries.

“ Very well done, thank you for making this possible.  
Alina Hollenthoner ”



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Also discussed on the second day was one of the main current trends in subtitling: crowdsourcing. More specifically, the issue of crowd-subtitling was raised, including the technical knowledge required for active participation in this new mode of subtitling and the changes it is bringing to subtitling as a profession. The participants addressed the fact that it is unlikely that this phenomenon will disappear, and that adapting to it could be smoother if the process were mediated by knowledge obtained from research.

A lively discussion took place during the session on “Dubbing” about the implications of intonations for dubbing and translation. In particular, doubts were raised as to machines’ role in regard to intonation in achieving natural dubbed dialogues.

The “Video Games” session highlighted challenges and possibilities in the realm of localisation. One issue raised was the translator’s authorship in game localisation, which is generally invisible. Another thread analysed the importance of translation quality in game localisation and useful parameters to help analyse it.

## SECOND CONFERENCE DAY

The second day of the event consisted of a variety of parallel sessions on topics such as markets approaches and innovations, semiotics, access to live events, ADLAB and AD, Sign Language, Crowdsourcing, Practice, SDH, Video Games, as well as Creativity and E-Motion, and Dubbing. During the Conference, it was frequently noted that there is a need to make cloud technologies accessible to visually impaired users and translators, as well as to address the challenges and possibilities of applying sign language to new technologies (e.g. sign avatars).

Of particular interest during the “Sign Language” session was the presentation of the project entitled “SignMedia SMART”, which demonstrated how a mixed team of deaf and hearing individuals developed an innovative multi-media sign-language lexicon for media-related terminology. During the session, interpreter activity in sign-language deployment in theatre was analysed: Assisting the deaf audience in reconstructing the sense of the performance, whilst delivering a rendition of the essential dialogue at a distance from the stage activity is a significant challenge for the sign-language interpreter.



“ It was a very good programme.  
María Gracia Torres Díaz ”



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## JAN IVARSON AWARD

An award created to honour Jan Ivarson, one of the founding members of ESIST and a long-time member of the Advisory Committee of Languages & The Media, was presented during the 2014 event. The winner was **Jorge Díaz Cintas**, the Director of the Centre for Translation Studies (CenTras) at University College London.

Cintas was the president of the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation from 2002 to 2010 and is now one of its directors. He also works as a freelance translator and interpreter, and since 2010 he has been the Chief Editor of the Peter Lang series *New Trends in Translation Studies*. He is a member of the international research group TransMedia and an expert board member of the EU LIND-Web. He has published widely in the field and is a long-time member of the Languages & The Media Steering Committee.

## EXHIBITION

The Conference was accompanied by a parallel exhibition that featured the following sponsors and exhibitors:

- **STAR Group**
- **Cavena Image Products AB**
- **Acapela Group Sweden AB**
- **AppTek, OONA**
- **Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg for HBB4ALL**
- **Euro Tape Media Services GmbH**
- **Screen Subtitling Systems**

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“ Well done! Great conference!  
Vitalii Vorobiov

”

## CONCLUSION

Over two intense days, the Conference touched a wide range of topics, many related to digital technology.

The event came to an end with an Open Forum titled “Preparing for the Future” that was chaired by Mary Carroll of Carroll Communication, who grouped the topics raised live at the event and also via Twitter. The gathering brought the audience to a lively discussion on what is next in audiovisual translation and how to face the inevitable coming challenges.

During the Open Forum, the ubiquitous topic of big data was discussed from various perspectives, with concern expressed about power and control, as well as practical issues such as the damage that bad-quality large-scale data can cause when used for machine translations. Other contributors highlighted positive aspects, e.g. the fact that due to improved data storage possibilities, live subtitling can now be saved, stored and used again. Especially in regard to machine translation, participants urged the owners of big data to make the masses of information broadly accessible toward improving translations delivered by machines.

The “cloud” and cloud-based systems were another topic raised during the concluding part of the Conference, and the question of whether the costs are in reasonable correlation to the revenue generated proved of interest to many participants. Two advantages of cloud-based systems were identified: client orientation due to a transparent workflow and the accessibility afforded to the visually impaired (due to the use of the latest programming that also considers their needs).

The final gathering also featured a discussion of how digital technology facilitates the possibility of broadcasting various language versions in parallel and might be able to foster language transfer through crowdsourcing. Another topic discussed was whether regulations and regulators are actually setting a positive framework for the industry or whether they are just trying to catch up with changes driven by the audience.

At the event’s conclusion, a request was made to the audience to work to become more visible to other translation experts in film schools and at film festivals, etc., in order to raise awareness of the discussions regarding language transfer in audiovisual media and present related concepts and solutions.

**For further information, please contact:**

ICWE GmbH  
Leibnizstrasse 32 • 10625 Berlin • Germany

Tel: +49 (0)30 310 18 18-0

Fax: +49 (0)30 324 98 33

info@languages-media.com

www.languages-media.com



[www.languages-media.com](http://www.languages-media.com)