



November 15th, 2019

Dear Interpreters,

Hoping to **trigger** some friendly **discussion** about digitalisation “hitting us straight in our faces”, allow me to share my **first time experience with InterpretBank**, or any **CAI-tool**, for that matter;).

Firmly imprinted in my memory is a huge, metallic cupboard standing at the entry to [The Centre for Translation Studies \(ZTW\)](#) in the Secretariat’s Sacred Halls at the **University of Vienna**, with a myriad of drawers, into which our lecturers deposited our **handwritten exams** with their corrections scores. **That was as recently as 1997.**

A short while ago, sensing the need to elaborate a comprehensive glossary from scratch for a shortly scheduled medical interpreting assignment, I felt motivated to download the [InterpretBank 6.58 trial version](#) hoping it would make my glossary creating process less tiresome, easier on my eyesight and less time consuming.

I first tried – no, not the **application’s user guide** that might have gotten me some answers quicker,-) than my “trial and error” approach pushing all available buttons & judging the outcome.

PREPARING FOR THE BOOTH WITH INTERPRETBANK

First, I fed the app a bunch of dedicated articles and then let it extract relevant terminology for the glossary. I thought that InterpretBank had extracted only 25 items whilst I, with my hungry interpreter eyes, had spotted many more. I was then lucky to find Adela Ibañez (www.qualityinterpreters.com) was having her own trial and error special weekend party with InterpretBank. The **25 items** were **only** the ones displayed on **the first page**. **Thanks Adela**, for the never to be underestimated “**Hurrah, you are not alone in this**” moment when I was “learning the machine”.

Adding terms from the preselection of terms extracted by the app to the actual glossary proved to be a bit **tricky**. Somehow, I lost my selections in ticked boxes on one page when moving to the next of the many pages. That was in spite of clicking “add to glossary” before switching to the next page. Also, the accuracy of the terms and expressions chosen by the machine was not as satisfying as I had hoped for. I wondered, for instance, how to refine the search to obtain more figures of speech my beloved human eye had already spotted with a quick browse. In this regard, I was happy to receive much appreciated feedback by the InterpretBank team explaining that term extraction does not yield the same results with all text types or text volumes. This is due to the need to offer term extraction for all possible users (i.e. not customized). **InterpretBank** specifically recommends **highly specialized and long texts**.

In addition, I found no way to display the results in a bigger font size to see less preselection results per page. This would have made the box ticking process of the preselected terms easier and would have saved my suffering clicking fingers from exhaustion.



I also let InterpretBank create its own trilingual glossary based on the glossary's title and then used the **app's integrated function** to search **IATE**, **MyMemory** and **Glosbe** for **available official translations**. If none are found it then obtains the target term using the integrated NMT. That, in some cases, did save me the effort of consulting these or other online resources. However, in other cases, as could be expected, it did not.

Being used to working with paper glossaries, I tried to print my final glossary version in rtf format. However, I **could not open it** on my MacBook running on the Mojave operating system.

INTERPRETBANK IN THE BOOTH

Once in the trenches, I enjoyed the **app's booth mode** with its quick switching between terms and their definitions, and the possibility of conveniently rearranging the glossary by putting the English or German or Spanish column first, second or third.

While exchanging Q&As with my booth mate Marianne Prischl (www.interpretesdeconferencia.com) before the session, Sergio Vañó Botella (www.iberwords-interpretes.com) proved to be a **greatly undigital**, much appreciated **human resource**. He shared his vast experience as a medical interpreter aiding us with subject-specific “terms and pitfalls” by just popping into the other booths – many thanks;)

So, were my **hopes** to relieve my Dr. Google screening and term picking efforts to produce a decent glossary **fulfilled?**

Yes and No: As a novel user, I **invested more time into “learning the machine”** than I would have having elaborated my glossary for this assignment in “the traditional way”.

Then again, I assume mastering all buttons, commands and options with more ease puts you in the position to establish the workflow/s best suited for each project and probably save quite a bit of time and effort.

THE DARK;)?) PATH OF DIGITALISATION

(Dark;) with a question mark, because, as a tech-interested interpreter covering several very machine related specialization fields with my translator's hat on, there IS one basic question nagging me - and that's TIME.

How do we, as interpreters, citizens, private persons and **as a society**, make **time to assimilate big changes** (e.g. workflows) **brought about by “AI” and digitalization?** **“Bigger, Faster, More”** still seems to dominate most of our markets, economies and mind-sets, despite social, technological and economic indications to the contrary, with the resulting pressure on our society and all its professions.

You might say, well, we will learn. Even our quite “untechnical” grandparents "learned" one of the big new inventions of the century, the Smartphone.

Agreed, but what is the cost in time and what are the risks of “falling behind” and not learning to cope with certain tools digitalizing our many and diverse professions?

LOST TALENT & KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

I am not so worried about the younger generations who probably already grew up as “digital natives”, like my niece, who at the age of two and a half could find her way around her mum's phone to view the videos she liked and not because Mummy had shown her.

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Nor am I worried about the, pardon me, “older” professionals, in the best sense of the word, who are maybe free to choose to opt out.

But what happens with all the talent, in different in-between “stages of adaption to digitalization” necessary to keep the knowledge transfer between generations flowing?

Last but not least, the speed of this digitalization wave is not comparable to any former industrial revolutions, which were nevertheless equally transformative. Also, getting familiarised with the “thinking patterns” behind InterpretBank’s multiple options, or, for that matter, any function with an algorithm behind, is hardly comparable to former transformative changes of our worlds?

Your input, positive, negative and all shades in between, **is not only welcome but**, I believe, **much needed**, to generate as many “**Hurrah, I am not alone in this**” moments as possible within our **International Community of Interpreters**.

@InterpretBank team, [thank you for your detailed and informative reply.](#)

@Our **International Community of Interpreters**, many **thanks** in advance **for engaging**. Tune in to on-going dedicated discussions joining the [LinkedIn group Interpreting Think Tank.](#)

@**All**, **please feel free to share** this user report where you see fit and many thanks for your TIME;)

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