

Work and play

The German Network's ever-popular Work and Playshop took place in Manchester this year. Jack Corrigan reports



Jack Corrigan is a freelance German to English translator specialising in art and culture, food and drink, and sport and tourism. He is currently working on plans to expand his business, 8transl8, and can be contacted at info@8transl8.com.

As a newcomer to the ITI German Network, I didn't exactly cover myself in glory by arriving at the wrong Chinese restaurant for the opening Friday night dinner. I found some solace, however, in the fact that I was not the only one who had made the mistake. After consultation of the source text (GerNet emails) we discovered that the fault lay therein and not in our own incompetence. Thus justified, we set off down the road to join the others, the BBC's Nick Robinson and the Labour Party Conference to eat.

The following day's proceedings were at the YHA in Manchester's Castlebridge district, a recently redeveloped criss-crossing of towering bridges, canals, bars and the ubiquitous luxury residences.

Angela Sigee's introduction to specialisation quickly had me hoping that I wasn't going to be tempted, as was the contemporary of Leibnitz she quoted, to 'crawl away and die in a corner' in the face of universal genius. Fortunately, I was encouraged by the rather glorious-sounding notion of the 'Glücksspirale' and a rather more

negative idiomatic take on spiralling workloads (a godsend for the freelancer) involving the devil and the German anal obsession. Both were to be achieved by 'demand-driven independent learning' based on the two pillars of quality assurance and knowledge management.

Website translation

Iwan Davies opened with an ominous assessment of developments in website translation: previously perceived as complex, but actually comparatively trivial; now perceived as trivial, but comparatively complex. Any fears were quickly put to bed with an enlightening explanation of web page translation including feasibility and, vitally, what non-experts should simply steer clear of. One of the key points was that even

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Self-confessed geek Nick Rosenthal quickly won my favour by quoting David Bowie and insinuating the punchline to an unrepeatable joke in the early part of his presentation. Following on from where Iwan left off, he clarified some website translation processes and suggested a number of extremely useful downloadable software tools. He also advised us to keep an eye on the development of server-based TM tools.

A fascinating afternoon

After a genuine Mensa lunch experience at the YHA, Jackie Jones introduced the network to the topic of alternative and complementary medicine. This included mention of the infamous 'Wellness', an explanation of the different standards in Germany and the UK, and a group attempt to classify different types of therapies and remedies. The sector was identified, with reference to Angela's previous talk, as a potential 'demand-driven' specialisation for translators.

The final talk was presented by Heidi Kersch, who injected much needed discipline towards the end of a long day. She covered for Doug Lawrence, who showed something of his character in absentia by his choice of background pictures for his slides. Dialogue rather than dictat and the power of the translator as a negotiator in charge of (and constantly reassessing) their position were identified as key features of selling translations.

After the panel had provided answers to a barrage of questions, the day's proceedings came to an end. And quite fittingly, as that famous Manchester sun shone its last rays over the city, I began my John Wayne journey back to Devon.

Time to play

After Jack left on Saturday, delegates had a choice of a tour behind the scenes of Bridgewater Hall, a meal, or listening to the BBC Philharmonic at Bridgewater Hall. On Sunday, the group enjoyed a guided tour round the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, where Stephenson's Rocket was on loan.



Topics ranging from website translation to alternative medicine were covered