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Australian translators: missing in action? CAT and TM awareness over two years of the AUSIT-eBulletin

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ABSTRACT

How relevant is Translation Memory software for translators in Australia? This paper responds by examining the rich yet under-utilised source of email discussion lists. Following content analysis methodology, data from the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc. (AUSIT) eBulletin archive was keyword searched and subjected to computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The results indicate Australian translators' awareness of TM and other computer-aided translation (CAT) tools seems limited with respect to that of their northern hemisphere counterparts. The study argues that with near instantaneous communication redefining market boundaries, a failure to engage with what may be termed the *new translation paradigm* could cost the profession dearly.

WINDS OF CHANGE

There's a proliferation of jobs available where CAT tools are a requirement. There's that Trados again... (8:20 am)
Is it not happening in Australia? Or are the people working [with Translation Memory] not members of AUSIT (8:34 am).

I can assure you that it is happening in Australia, mostly by way of Australian subsidiaries of European companies - as far as I can tell. It is mostly engineering material at this point but I think it is only a matter of time till other sectors get onto it, as well. Most of the colleagues I have contact with in Germany are using Trados or Deja Vu regularly (9:53 am).

I use trados for one ongoing big project . . . however I recently downloaded wordfast and if I get around to it I'd like to use it for most of all of my work (11:36).

How easy are the CAT software to use? Are they REALLY USER-FRIENDLY? What about the cost? Do they come into the category of "value for money"? (6:13 pm).

February 14, 2002 was not a typical day on the AUSIT-eBulletin (messages archived at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AUSIT-eBulletin>) [1] because Translation Memory (TM) is not a typical item. Correspondence mainly relates to conduct, ethics, remuneration and employment issues, and in the two years since the list's inception in February 2001, threads like this are rare indeed. However, on those occasions when names like Trados, D j Vu or Wordfast do crop up, they hint at a nagging uncertainty in the profession's subconscious: are we getting left behind?

During the last five years there has been significant uptake of TM by freelance translators overseas; indeed, few working in institutional and technical environments in Europe and the US are reputed to earn a living without it. Yet TM is only the apex of a suite of computer tools that has been revolutionising the industry since the nineties: electronic dictionaries have largely displaced their hardcopy counterparts and the internet is now essential for corpus research, client communications and job-handling. In this swiftly evolving environment, email discussion lists are the new medium of professional information exchange. A prime source of peer support, they also provide a mentoring function for new freelancers entering this "brave new world". In such lists, the researcher has a visible, searchable vanguard that affords a privileged snapshot of the profession's shift to the digital age.

METHODOLOGY

While surveys, interviews, focus groups and other social research strategies could certainly provide valuable input, reviewing a discussion-list archive offers direct access to forefront practitioners. The data, moreover, is not produced in the process of research (e.g. surveys and

interviews) but rather exists independently – unsolicited, unobtrusively collected, and uncontaminated by the researcher’s *a priori* assumptions.

How representative then is the AUSIT eBulletin of the Australian scene? In the 1996 census, 2715 persons declared themselves to be practising translators/ interpreters, 884 and 1831 respectively (13 February 2003 8:05 pm; 2001 census data not yet available). By contrast, AUSIT membership at 30 April 2003 (the study period cut-off date) stood at 710 (9 April 2003 7:57 pm), with 308 e-Bulletin subscribers. Further, only a minority are active Bulletin contributors: of the 303 messages posted by 67 members during January 2003, 147 (47%) were from just 8 individuals (12%). In effect, potential respondents have been pre-sorted: the AUSIT list comprises a highly meaningful sample of practitioners with computer/internet skills, who are motivated enough to join their professional association’s discussion list.

Considering the topic’s focus, data type and volume, content analysis (as per [Bauer 2000](#): 131-151) was deemed most appropriate. With its capacity to process large amounts of material into a short description of features, this method straddles the quantitative/qualitative divide by both generating statistical information and allowing for content-sensitive quotations from which to extract meaning. Given the chosen methodology, the electronic data under consideration lends itself perfectly to computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). While this technique has its limitations (see for example [Kelle 1997](#)), these were greatly offset by its capacity to retrieve, code and execute complex searches, and to facilitate transparency and repeatability.

The first step was identifying keywords to fully exploit Yahoo groups’ automated *Search* feature. Content-rich messages thus selected would then be entered into Nvivo2 (the chosen CAQDAS software) for coding and analysis. A lengthy trial-and-error process determined the set of most productive keywords. Of the many TM brands currently available only ten (D j Vu, Wordfast, Trados, Trans Suite 2000, Multitrans, Star-Transit, Catalyst, Metatexis, SDLX and Wordfisher) were considered, the criterion being those with the highest volume of messages, for which a public discussion list is available. Of the many possible CAT-related software types, two were ultimately incorporated: optical character recognition, used to digitalise legacy translations and source text for TM processing (searches on OCR plus leading brand Omnipage), and voice recognition, sometimes used for processing target text (searched by Dragon Naturally Speaking brand, or DNS). Machine Translation was searched by MT and the brand name Systran.

Usage of electronic dictionaries and glossaries was difficult to distinguish from that of their hardcopy counterparts; Merriam -Webster and Eurodicautom were entered with the expectation of learning how Australian translators handle this area. Google was king among search engines, Altavista only returning hits in connection with its Babelfish MT feature. Of international lists, Lantra-L was the most often cited. ProZ was the only productive Internet portal.

Interest in engineering aspects – localisation for instance – was tested with various keywords including ‘HTML’ and ‘engineering’, without result. Searches on text corpora-related software (i.e. Wordsmith) were also negative, despite their demonstrated relevance to translators ([Austermuhl 2001: 129](#)).

Graph 1 shows the total eBulletin message activity per month, and the number selected by keyword and entered into Nvivo (total 302 of 8160, or 1.7%). Two kinds of occurrences are recorded therein: number of messages, and also total hits, to help gauge keyword ‘density’. Table 1, below, summarises these results.

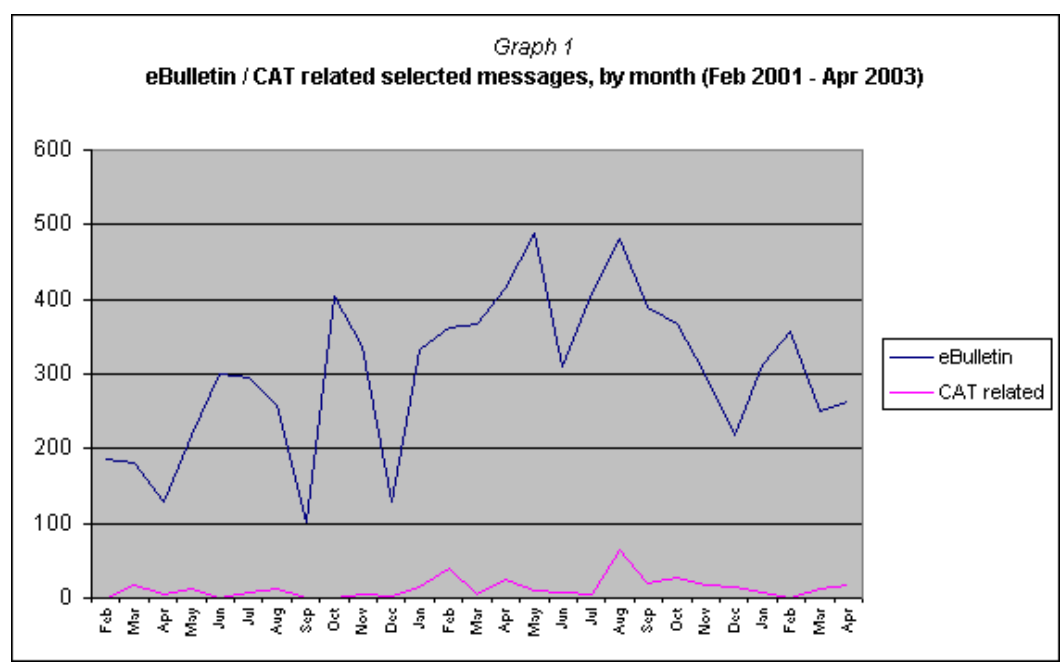


Table 1 eBulletin messages / CAT related selected messages, by keyword (February 2001-April 2003)

Keywords	Yahoogroups: hits at <i>Search</i>	Nvivo: total messages	Nvivo: total hits
TM brands & CAT			
Trados	169	93	280
Wordfast	130	77	218
D j Vu	53	33	52
other TM		3	9
voice recognition		7	15
MT	4	12	123
OCR: OmniPage	11	12	32
Terminology & web mining			
dictionaries: Merriam-Webster	2	1	1
glossaries: Eurodicautom	9		
discussion lists: Lantra-l	31	4	10
portals: ProZ	59	10	37
Web browsers: Google	40	6	7

Before fleshing out these numbers, with their context, we need to examine this ‘new translation paradigm’ in order to adequately contrast findings. Secondary sources allow us to paint – if only in rather broad brushstrokes – a picture of the situation for translators interfacing with the global market.

THE NEW TRANSLATION PARADIGM

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic overhaul in the translation world. Only fifty years ago, translation still persisted with its timeless master/apprentice paradigm. However, this stasis began to break down under the increased translation volume and associated costs. Tertiary institutions shouldered the training burden, ushering in the academic discipline of Translation Studies. Meanwhile, some visionaries had been attempting to remove human translators from the equation, and although their machine-translation dream eventually collapsed, it laid important technological foundations. By the eighties, translators were abandoning the typewriter for the computer – first as a word processor, then as a tool for terminological research and client contact. The century ended with more turmoil as TM, in the process of increasing productivity and consistency, broke down concepts of text linearity and authorship at least as old as print itself ([Pym 2002](#)). Translation had finally made the leap from its eternal status as artisan endeavour, to a post-industrial service sector with a clear division of labour.

At this phase of the technological revolution, the world is being integrated into a single economic system whose *lingua franca* is English. Yet, paradoxically, translation demand is undergoing unprecedented and exponential growth. Community entities are responding to people’s greater mobility and increased need for access to services; multilingualism is fomented by the charters of supranational bodies such as the UN and EU ([ASSIM 1997](#)), and actively embraced by multinationals in their global marketing strategies.

Consider the (often abused) example of Microsoft. Apart from the occasional new launch, almost every two years a product upgrade appears. This requires printed information, web-based support, on-line help files, *plus* modifications to text in dialog boxes, drop-down menus, on-screen icons and even hotkey characters. Marketing imperatives dictate equal readiness in all languages, since simultaneous shipping (*simship*) is industry standard ([Esselink 2000: 261](#)). Linguistic content is no longer a last minute add-on, but a major parallel task (and potential bottleneck) in a big corporation’s workflow.

In effect, the major activity of corporate translation evolved from a mainly in-house concern in the 1980s to an outsourced service in the 1990s. Nowadays, a major client only requires a few full-time translators to maintain translation memory, address terminology issues, assess Quality Assurance, even translate when time permits. When large jobs are received, they are distributed amongst a network of freelancers – perhaps also using different time zones to advantage. The relevant section of in-house TM is also provided, guaranteeing uniformity of terms and significant cost savings for perfect and fuzzy matches. Lines are kept permanently open with technical writers (often translators themselves) and engineers, for real-time problem solving ([Rico 2002](#)).

These radical changes in information technology and corporate practices and needs have naturally placed new expectations on translators themselves, creating a new paradigm that challenges their adaptability. It is opportune to ask just how Australian practitioners are responding.

FINDINGS 1: THE NEW PARADIGM IN AUSTRALIA

Has post-industrial translation reached Australia? Consider:

Example A:

TransOffice is receiving another large project tomorrow and needs to increase its team of English > German translators. We are presently looking for 6-8 freelancers (familiar with telecom / billing systems) who are available to participate in translating an RFP for billing software from English into German.

Project begins on Tuesday, 15th October

Project ends on Wednesday 23rd October

Would anyone like to join our team? We need translators based in Europe, the US, Canada, South America and Indonesia or Australia, as we will be working around the clock on this project.

Would anyone who is interested please send their CV as a Word attachment in rtf format ... (14 October 2002 9:48 am).

Note the characteristic urgency: this project is large and there is only a week to do it. It will use a purpose-assembled virtual team covering all main time zones, each member seeing only isolated “chunks”: nobody can claim authorship of the target text. And what is meant by “based in... Indonesia *or* Australia”? If Australia is not prepared to handle the challenge, will these new opportunities gravitate north?

Example B: Note that the specifications emphasise “project” not “text”; subject knowledge is seen as an important qualification, and TM as essential – if only for its ability to give the translator access to text without violating code or formatting:

The texts are for global equities research and are submitted throughout the day GMT from 6.30 until 7pm and then out of UK hours by the hong kong and sydney office. . . A new analyst has joined the team in Sydney, hence our need to find suitable translators to work at this time. We currently have a team of translators who translate into german (15) and 3 into french. They all have experience of working either inhouse as a translator or themselves have been analysts in various large investment bank. . . File are in xml format – to be worked on using tag editor, trados. . . **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WHEN WORKING ON THIS FILE, [codes] ARE NOT TOUCHED AS THEY ENABLE THE FILE TO BE UPLOADED ONTO THE CLIENT'S SERVER AND THE WEB WITHIN 4 MINUTES OF BEING SUBMITTED.** . . I expect that there will be a nice amount of guaranteed work each day that we could offer (30 April 2002 11:35 am).

Example C: On the Japanese list, an agency is sought to manage a multilingual project: a manual to be translated into English, and then from English into other languages (English as the universal language for source text!) Price considerations are ranked with quality and speed:

Our company is looking for the translation service company who can deal with the translation into [22] languages in best price assuring the best quality and punctuality for the delivery (10 May 2002 6:14 pm).

Languages include French and Canadian-French, and Traditional and Simplified Chinese – note the importance of “locale”. Specialised DTP formatting (“FrameMaker 6.0, PageMaker 6.0, QuarkXpress...”) calls for TM, if only as a filter, and urgency – again – is paramount, with “ weekend/holiday support system” availability. Security is a further “expectable condition”, and indeed, commercial in confidence poses a dilemma: is it ethical to use the same memory database when translating for competing product manufacturers? And besides, who really owns the memory database created in the course of translating? ([Valderrabanos 2002](#))

Example D: Now that we have a feel for translation projects, the next example looks at the individual who directs them. Here a “translator coordinator” is required “to manage a team of 15 to 20 people”, and the job description is as much about translating as management, accounting, and translator training:

Qualifications:

- * 2 or more years of experience in software and manual translations
- * Coordination experience for translating teams
- * Experience in Word, Excel, TRADOS (Workbench/ MultiTerm)
- * Knowledge of accounting, HR, SCM, CRM is a plus

Responsibilities:

- * Coordinate software localize projects
- * Maintain term library and TRADOS memory
- * Assignment/ schedule management, translator training, etc (6 December 2001 2:30 pm).

There are not many messages like these in the AUSIT lists, but enough to prove the new translation paradigm is knocking at Australia's door. We might now ask how prepared the profession is to answer the call.

FINDINGS 2: WEB-MINING

A conventional image of the translator might be that of an erudite and elderly humanist working in a book-lined study, consulting weighty tomes and poring over abstruse terms. However, in the last few years web-based data searches have increasingly supplanted reference books that are often out of date before they are printed: the modern translator is a multidisciplinary professional working at a computer terminal, email-networked with colleagues and a keystroke away from updated electronic dictionaries and research tools. Book-browsing has been replaced by web-mining.

References to on-line dictionaries and glossaries are frequently found in the course of AUSIT-lists responses to terminology queries – often as tools that translators are encouraged to bookmark. As a case in point, eBulletin members are recommended in one message to access, among other interesting sites, Dictionaries Onelook (www.onelook.com), a portal indexing 833 dictionaries; Lexicool (www.lexicool.com) with links to over 1000 dictionaries and glossaries; Acronym Finder (www.acronymfinder.com), with over 252,000 definitions; Glossary Finder (www.jrdias.com/JRD-Links.html), with 4,910 glossaries, and the Merriam-Webster Online (www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm) (26 October 2002 10:34 am). ProZ (www.proz.com) is a popular portal, praised for its accurate NAATI profile (14 December 2001 8:52 am), and also for its KudoZ terminology feature, with translators worldwide giving articulate comments on its queries (7 March 2001 10:46 am; 20 January 2002 10:59, etc.). They do not seem as impressed with its employment services and other commercial features, however (15 October 2002 9:24 pm; 6 March 2001 12:08 am).

Discussion lists are valued:

One of the reasons for [the writer delivering good quality translation] is these Internet discussion groups. I use them intelligently. If I am not sure of something, I verify it, either on a discussion list or with other people I have access to, some of them in Germany (2 July 2002 8:51 pm).

There are a few references to Lantra-L (<http://segate.sunet.se/archives/lantra-l.html>, eight Australian subscribers in a list of over 1,100) and to user groups at Trados, Wordfast and D j Vu. These are resources to consult when the freelancer's irregular schedules allow: “.not busy this week. Time to catch up with the lists... (21 November 2002 9:49 am).

Amongst web browsers, Google (www.google.com) gets the most hits:

Take the word or expression you don't know and search on it in Google, with the language preference in Google set for your language pair. In the first instance, it will give you examples of its use in multiple contexts, which may give you a hint as to its correct translation. Secondly, it may give you the translation somewhere in one of the texts. Thirdly, you can refine your search by using 'search within results' and put in a possible or partial translation(s) of the word and see if it will throw it up for you. Ain't the Internet wonderful? (19 July 2002 3:40 pm)

Translators recognise the benefits: “The internet and Google have revolutionised the way I work. I never pick up a dictionary any more” (21 July 2002 5:09 pm). “The Web has leading-edge info that books and dictionaries take a while to incorporate” (28 September 2002 9:26 am). Interpreters benefit too, as they can research their assignments (28 September 2002 9:36 am). There is frustration, though, with the impermanency of the medium:

[the] main problem is that URLs change fast. I had bookmarks for several excellent glossary sites, which were no longer there two weeks later, so I now download all glossaries that I would hate to lose (27 September 2002 12:31 pm).

Exotic formats bring on headaches for some. “How to translate a website? . . . Is there any way a non-technically minded person can do this without spending 2 days on copying/pasting and layouting?” (8 February 2002 22:01). And not only html causes problems, as the following thread shows:

I recently had to do a translation for a PowerPoint presentation and I found it surprisingly difficult and time consuming... In the end, I billed for my hours instead of doing a work count ... Any similar experiences? (26 November 2002 10:07 am).

I did the same thing over the weekend (Power Point presentation EN > GE), and charging by hour is the only reasonable thing to do. The same applies to some other jobs, e.g. development of glossaries, texts with lots of tables or chemical formulas . . . So, you did perfectly well. Welcome in the club! (12:16 pm).

Did well? Not everyone agreed:

If you use Wordfast, you just open the PowerPoint presentation first, then open Word and Wordfast, and tell Wordfast to prepare to translate the first sentence. Wordfast will reach out to the PowerPoint presentation, and take the words to be translated into a temporary word document

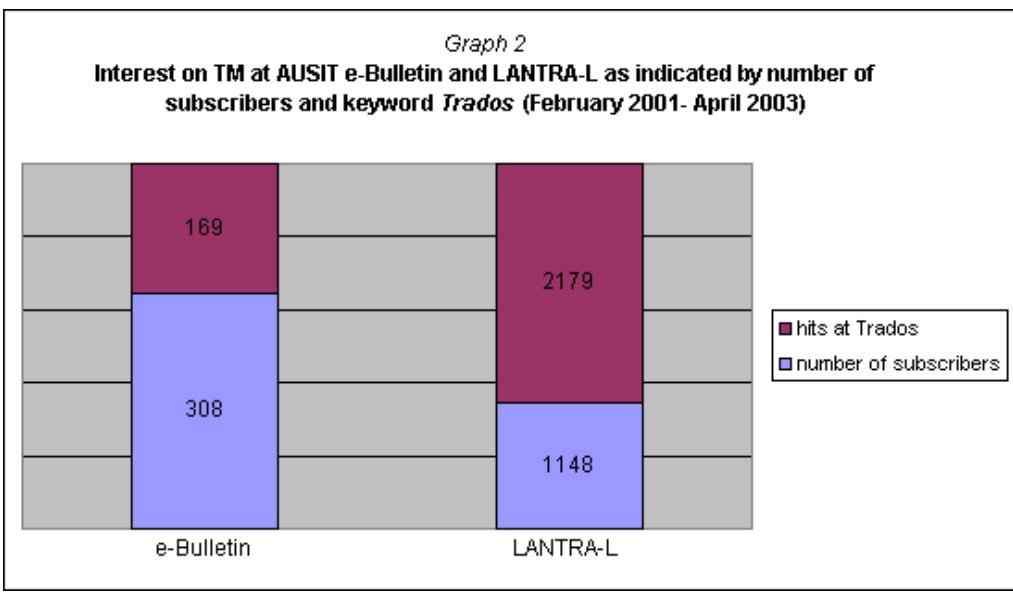
... When you have proofread and cleaned the translation, it should appear in the PowerPoint document with exactly the same formatting as in the original. Wordfast can be used to translate Excel files just as easily... (6:22 pm)

The above also goes for Trados, D j Vu and most other packages on the market. One of the main features of TM is precisely the presence of filters that allow the translator to work on fancy formatting without disturbing the embedded coding. Apparently, even professional translators remain unaware of what TM does.

There is however a willingness to learn: "I am trying to work out which is better, trados or D j Vu or even wordfast. However, the more I got to know them, the more I got lost" (18 July 2001 3:25 pm). The next section considers the efforts made to find the way.

FINDINGS 3: ON TM

Despite the fact that Australians generally consider themselves early adopters of new technologies, data in Table 1 and examples like the above point to the fact that Australian translators have failed to respond to TM with the same alacrity as their EU and the US colleagues. A rough comparison between the eBulletin and Lantra-L, chosen as the best known of generalist lists for professional translators, further proves it: the ratio between number of subscribers and number of hits by the keyword Trados for the period February 2001 to April 2003, presented in Graph 2, indicates almost twice as much interest in TM matters up north.



Trados is by far the most named brand in the eBulletin, followed by Wordfast and D j Vu. This reflects also the Lantra-L scenario: Trados is the undisputed leader and agency preference, almost but not quite the Word of TM. D j Vu comes second, its user friendliness, support, and Trados compatibility making it the freelancer's choice. Next is Wordfast, a Trados-compatible and comparatively inexpensive package (freeware until October 2000) that still caters to most translators' needs (more on Lantra-L and TM in Garcia 2003).

For some contributors – but not many – getting up to speed on TM, especially Trados, is a priority: "S.O.S....!!! DOES ANYONE OUT THERE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT TRADOS? PLEASE EMAIL ME" (24 August 2001 12:57 pm). They see a need for training and expect some outlay:

Is there anyone in Melbourne who is good with Trados and is willing to give me a few hours training in the basics. Naturally I expect to pay for your time (mates rates of course) (11 August 2002 6:01 pm).

Purchasers admit being unable to master it (27 August 2001 5:52 pm), but although still at a "crawling stage" (16 January 2002 10:20 pm) they are eager to "soldier on" (18 January 1:42 pm). A thread ran in January 2002 with a small "Trados user group" formed in Melbourne (18 January 1:42 pm). Calls for "hands-on" training are frequent but when the developer responded, cost – including flying a trainer to Australia – proved discouraging (16 January 2002 10:20 pm). CTC (www.ctc.com.au), the Australian representatives, gave a presentation for AUSIT members in Melbourne in January 2002 that was well received (18 January 2002 1:42 pm).

D j Vu also has its followers, who praise its user friendliness and excellent technical and peer support (17 July 2001 10.17 pm, 14 March 2001 10:48 am, 25 May 2001 6:47 pm). However, as with Trados, when training arises, so do cost objections (15 February 2002 8:31 am, 1:53 pm). Wordfast supporters managed to organise a session in Perth on October 25 -27, 2002, coinciding with the AUSIT National Conference. This brand seems to have the largest base of contented users:

i don't use trados but wordfast. does the same job (in my opinion) but is less expensive (free at the moment), doesn't mess up your pc, and doesn't require heaps of space on your hard disk, and is a lot easier to work with.(ok, i'm biased.)

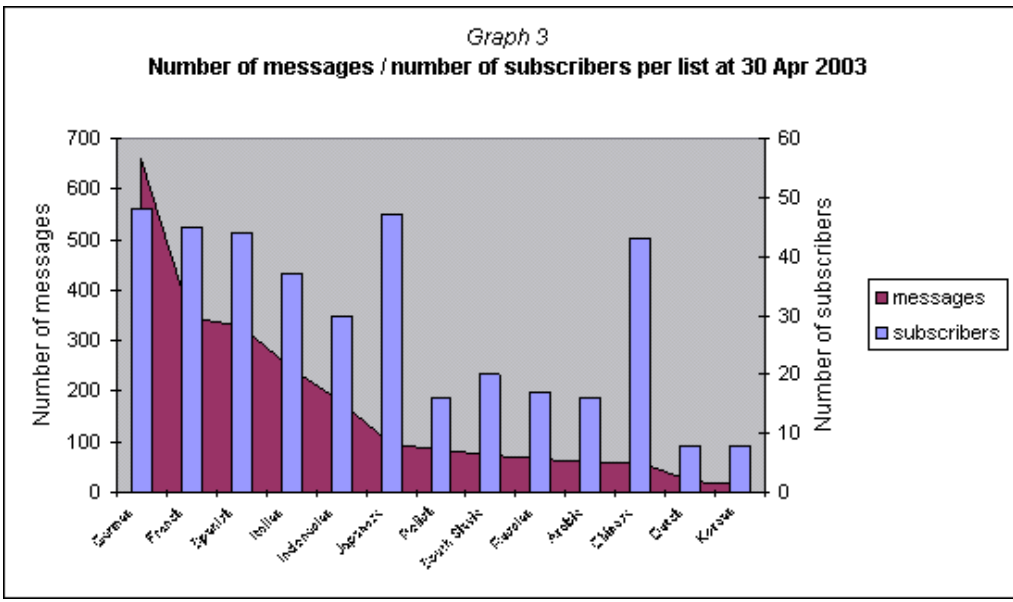
anyway, wordfast is compatible with trados. which means you can translate with wordfast, send your translation to the agency/client who can then use trados to clean up / edit / extract translation memory / etc. without any problems. (14 February 2002 12:12 pm).

The Trados demo, which is meant to win converts, is seen as very limited since, unlike the DejaVu offering, it gives little scope to “play” (18 January 2002 1:42 pm, August 11, 2002 7:29 pm). The Wordfasters feel “it is worthwhile to check Wordfast before committing to Trados” (15 August 2002 3:47 pm). Metatexis gets one plug for offering “all functions of a professional CAT tool like Trados or D j Vu. It is comparable to Wordfast” (3 December 2001, 8:54 am). Wordfisher scores only a single, passing mention (15 February 2002 2:08 pm).

Calls are made for independent advice and training (14 February 2002 9:53 am), and another question emerges: what exposure do Australian translation trainees get to CAT tools? Educators at RMIT and the University of Western Sydney reply “none”, adding that such training is common in Europe. “It's definitely time we caught up” (18 February 2002 9:55 am).

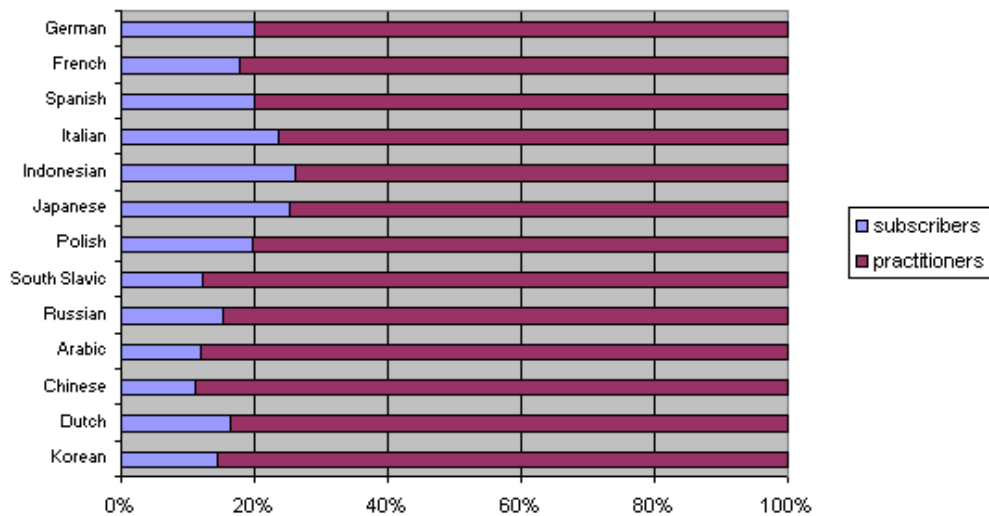
FINDINGS 4: LANGUAGE DIFFERENTIATION

Apart from the general eBulletin list, AUSIT established fifteen language -specific groups between November 2001 and December 2002 (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AUSIT-Arabic-eForum> etc.). Some are busy and well-subscribed, but most are quiet to varying degrees, in contrast with the brisk traffic of the eBulletin. Two of them (Greek and Vietnamese) have not quite taken off. As Graph 3 shows, German is the most active list in volume of messages, followed by French, Spanish and Italian (not necessarily coincidence, as the European Union sits at the core of the new translation paradigm). Next is Indonesian, its relatively high activity perhaps attributable to geographical proximity. Lists with the slowest circulation involve languages with non-Latin scripts.



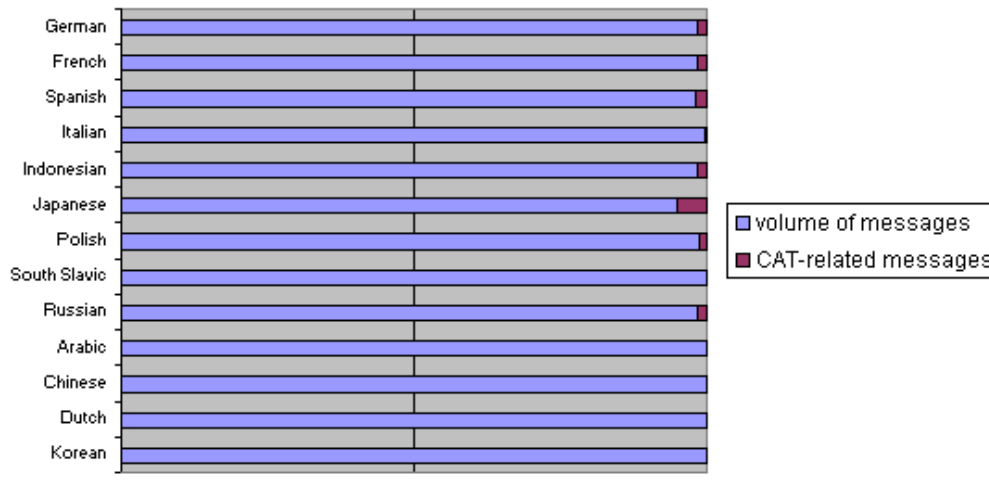
The bars in Graph 4, also sorted by circulation volume, a first indicator of a group’s position on the digital platform, show subscriber numbers per group, plus approximate numbers of NAATI Professional practitioners (source: Directory of Accredited and Recognised Translators and Interpreters at www.naati.com.au): EU languages are again ahead but it is, surprisingly, the Indonesian group that has, proportionally, the most members; again, non-Latin scripts seem slow to join, with the important exception of Japanese.

Graph 4
Subscribers at 30 Apr 2003 / practitioners in NAATI directory



Traffic in these lists concerns terminology and jobs, interspersed with chat. TM and CAT related-messages are so infrequent that numbers allow us no more than a guess what may be only the starting point of future trends. This information, presented in Graph 5 as a proportion of all messages, show once again that the Japanese group ahead. Table 2 details these TM/CAT-related hits.

Graph 5
Volume of messages / CAT-related messages at 30 Apr 2003



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Table 2: CAT/TM hits on language specific lists

	German	Spanish	French	Italian	Indonesian	Japanese	Polish	South Slavic	Russian	Arabic	Chinese	Korean	Dutch
TM & CAT													
Trados	3	1	1	1		4							
Déjà Vu	1							1					
Wordfast			2										
other TM													
voice rec													
MT: Systran		1											
OCR: Omnipage													
Term & web-mining													
Dict: Merr-Webster													
gloss: Eurodicautom													
lists: Lantra...	2	1	1										
portals: ProZ	3						1						
browsers: Google	2	3	2		3	1							

Scanning the Table vertically, we see that the UE groups and the Japanese show the greater awareness of new technologies. Scanning the TM section horizontally, for German and Japanese we find the same Trados-related messages that appeared on the eBulletin, messages which showed the interest of international agencies in encouraging Australian translators to engage with the new translation paradigm. The Japanese group's position in Graphs 4 and 5 may point to its comparative advantage within this paradigm because of the fact that Japan shares with Australia a similar time zone. The Spanish Trados entry is a cry for information; the French contributor expresses indecision between Trados or Wordfast (the same contributor also sent both Wordfast items). For Italian, a quote is sought for a large (470,000 word) project into English, expressly specifying Trados and seeking "your best rates (in EURO per SOURCE word)". Incidentally, this illustrates the corporate strategy of getting the cheapest price through a species of electronic auction (7 May 2002 8:07 am). The German Déjà Vu entry concerns the translation of a related item, and the Russian one announces a users' list in the language.

Amongst web-mining indicators, Google got the most hits, but this valuable terminological and encyclopaedic resource still seems under-utilised: nil results for eight of the thirteen groups; the three Indonesian messages were from one sender. The terminology feature in ProZ gets two comments in the German group (same sender), while the third explains its use. The Polish hit comes from the sender's signature advertising their listing in the ProZ database. Lantra gets four messages in three language groups, all from the same individual.

Most members of language specific groups also subscribe to the main eBulletin, which seems to be where the important issues are canvassed. Language groups are there for terminological queries, and building solidarity in a very solitary profession.

TRANSLATION MEMORIES – OR REGRETS?

The preceding analysis gives a picture of where Australian practitioners stand with respect to CAT and TM, and brings some perspective to the necessary adjustments that must be made to translation practice. The new translation paradigm has already made contact at least with the German and Japanese groups, the languages that represent the most advanced economies in the non English-speaking world. Language-specific lists, including those two, show that CAT/TM awareness is at best weak, but the eBulletin shows there is a minority willing to engage with the internet as a documentation resource, and with TM as a translation tool. Graph 1 shows this awareness growing, with a bigger volume of CAT-related messages for 2002 as compared with 2001. Realisation seems to be dawning: anyone with an internet terminal can be at the global epicentre, and Australian translators, in view of their country's exemplary IT infrastructure, need not remain in the antipodes. Moreover, a failure to transcend boundaries may prove costly, particularly in the recent and highly lucrative sectors of technical translation, and software and web localization.

Certainly, list contributors have expressed concerns about shrinking local opportunities, whether from rationalisation of public translation services or a rise in practitioner numbers. Though relevant, these factors should not be permitted to obscure the burgeoning global market centred on CAT. Translators need TM and web-mining expertise as basic technical prerequisites, plus a can-do attitude toward computer engineering – xml, for example – and/or project management, if they want to fully integrate themselves into the new scenario outlined above.

The door is still open for Australia. TM technology is now easing into Asian scripts and right-to-left languages, and given our geographical location and body of translation professionals, the opportunities for growth are obvious. Not everyone may share the bounty, however: as regional agencies learn to value TM, work could soon dry up for those Australian freelancers unprepared to use it.

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NOTES

[1] All date/time citations pasted unedited from this AUSIT-eBulletin or the relevant AUSIT-Language-eForum. [Text](#)

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