

# Caduceus

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**1**

## **THE RANSOMWARE PANDEMIC**

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PH. D., C.T.

**2**

## **VICARIOUS TRAUMA AND THE PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER**

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**3**

## **FIRST ATA CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES FROM OUR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

1

**THE RANSOMWARE  
PANDEMIC****What is Ransomware?**

“Ransomware is an ever-evolving form of malware designed to encrypt files on a device, rendering any files and the systems that rely on them unusable. Malicious actors then demand ransom in exchange for decryption.”

~ US Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

In other words, ransomware holds the infected computer hostage until a ransom is paid. The ransom is usually requested in the form of more or less untraceable cryptocurrency. Ransomware attacks have been on the rise recently. More than 1500 businesses were recently affected by attack on the IT provider Kaseya. These businesses were end-customers of managed service providers (MSPs) who used Kaseya’s technology infrastructure to provide their IT services to the end-customers. The affected businesses ranged from a Swedish supermarket chain that had to completely close its small-town stores for a week to language service providers (LSPs).

There are two ways in which ransomware typically infects a computer system: either through a software vulnerability, in which case the infection can be of a larger scale, such as in Kaseya’s case, or through a user action, such as a click on the wrong website or opening the wrong email without a strong antivirus/firewall combination which leads to the download of malicious code. This malicious code, also known as malware, then accesses the content of the storage drives of the infected computer and encrypts the drives, rendering the data completely inaccessible for the user. In the case of a cloud provider, the storage drives holding the cloud data are infected and rendered inaccessible.

In some cases, the malware sends the data to the malware author before rendering the data inaccessible. The malware author then has access to all sorts of confidential and personal data, in addition to holding the infected machine hostage. Thus, ransomware is a twofold threat, rendering the infected system useless and revealing confidential information to unauthorized parties.

Recently, the number of ransomware attacks has risen strongly, leading CISA to publish a guide on ransomware<sup>1</sup> in September 2020, long before this July’s attack on Kaseya. Below are a few tips on what you can do to combat this ransomware pandemic, although a disclaimer is in order: I am not an infosec expert, just an informed end-user of IT services. I strongly recommend visiting the CISA website for further and in-depth guidance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cisa.gov/stopransomware/ransomware-guide>

## Information

Ransomware steals information and holds it hostage. By limiting the amount of information that's stored in a system, you can also limit the damage. In other words, if you process and store information, **limit the amount of stored information to information that you need**. For example, I recently completed the on-boarding paperwork as an independent contractor for an LSP. They asked for my date of birth. My date of birth is completely irrelevant, since I am an independent contractor, and even if I was an employee, it is illegal in most places to discriminate based on age. They are therefore processing and storing completely irrelevant sensitive personal information. So, if you store information, go through your files now and throw out everything you do not need. Keep the information you need, and if you're not sure, store the information you are unsure about offline on an external drive that you remove from the active system.

Conversely, if you provide information, **limit the amount of information that you give out for somebody else to process and store to the information that they actually need**. For example, if you are an independent contractor and an LSP asks you for your tax identification number, give them an EIN<sup>2</sup> (employer identification number, despite the name also available for freelancers) instead of your social security number. Likewise, nobody needs to know (or is actually interested in) your childhood phone number or other overly personal details that you divulge in those viral shares on social media. These can be used to socially engineer<sup>3</sup> answers to backup questions for logins.

## Authentication and Authorization

### Login Credentials

The next question to tackle is access to stored information. People typically restrict access to computer systems with passwords, fingerprints, facial ID, PIN codes, or two- or multiple-factor authentication (2FA, MFA). 2FA or MFA combines two or more authentication methods, respectively -usually on more than one device. Ransomware bypasses these authentication methods. Sometimes, this is because of a security flaw in the underlying software, as in the case of the aforementioned MSPs that were affected by the Kaseya attack.

**Other times, hackers and malware gain access because the authentication methods aren't strong enough.** And this is where you, the reader, need to pay attention. If your password is "123456" or "password," or any other password that can be found on this list of the worst passwords on Wikipedia<sup>4</sup>, please change that password immediately. The same goes for PIN codes. The FBI recommends the use of passphrases and/or 2FA/MFA. A passphrase is a combination of multiple words into long strings of at least 15 characters



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ata-chronicle.online/cover-feature/translation-scams-reloaded/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_engineering\\_\(security\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_(security))

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_the\\_most\\_common\\_passwords](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_most_common_passwords)

that don't form a sentence. Also, do not reuse login credentials for multiple accounts! Since most people have dozens, if not hundreds of accounts, I recommend a password manager<sup>5</sup>. Avoid password managers that allow recovery of the master password.

## Access Control

The next question to tackle is who has access to what, and more importantly: **who needs access to what**. It is likely that nobody needs access to all the data that an organization stores. Thus, it is better to **compartmentalize** things, store things in separate databases, or in separate locations. This, of course, takes more work to keep up to date than an all-in-one system to which everybody has access, but when ransomware or another disaster strikes, **you'll be glad you didn't put all your data eggs into one system basket**.

If you are a solopreneur working from home, you might not think access control is relevant, but if you're sharing a computer with your kids, at least set up separate login accounts with possibly restricted access to your work data. Perhaps use a separate external hard drive that you can unplug and store in a secured place before they can download questionable games and chat software onto the machine.

If you're using the **cloud** to process and/or store data – do you really need to do everything in the cloud? A cloud account is, by definition, online 24/7, meaning hackers have literally all day, every day, to hack that account, in contrast to a system that you take offline after your workday is done. If you use cloud services, are your data encrypted? Is the encryption sufficiently secure? **Never store any important and/or sensitive data in plain text!** This may be obvious, but even Facebook ignored this obvious fact for years<sup>6</sup>.

Do you have **firewalls and antivirus** software in place? You need both a firewall and an antivirus. A firewall inspects communication packets that come in and out of your computer, sort of like a border guard. If it detects something potentially dangerous, it blocks that traffic. But your system can still get infected by a virus that sneaks in. An antivirus detects that virus when it's already on your machine and hopefully prevents it from doing any harm. That's why you need both.

## Prevention and Restoration

To quote Benjamin Franklin, "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," today this adage holds true more than ever. Look at your current system and setup and **think about the worst-case scenario and make a plan**. What would you do if your main computer system were unusable? What would you do if your external storage were inaccessible, be it because of ransomware or a simple hardware failure? Do you have a backup of your system and data? Is the backup accessible even if there is a complete Internet and/or power outage? What would happen if your data were broadcast into the dark corners of the web?

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-bestpassword-managers> or <https://www.wired.com/story/bestpassword-managers/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://techcrunch.com/2019/03/21/facebook-plaintext-passwords/>



You don't need to invent end-of-world nuclear war disaster scenarios. But for example, many years ago, my main computer suffered an overheating motherboard that proceeded to completely fry the hard disk and render all data completely unusable. This had the same effect as ransomware, meaning I couldn't access any of my data. Of course, unlike with ransomware, no sensitive data were disclosed to unauthorized parties, but ever since then, I make a weekly backup of all my data and store that backup offline on an external hard disk in a fireproof safe. In my risk assessment I concluded that I could live with a week's worth of lost data, assuming the fire isn't so severe that the fireproof safe goes bust. However, I couldn't live with a scenario where those data were divulged to unauthorized parties. Therefore, I opted for an offline fireproof, locked safe instead of cloud storage for my backups.

Now, if disaster strikes and you have a plan, **you are prepared**. You can quarantine an infected device immediately, meaning, you take it offline, wipe all the data and format the hard disk (experts recommend several passes), and restore things from your backup. If a cloud software or other online service is affected and recovery is not up to you, your aforementioned disaster planning should take that into account, too, so that you don't end up like the Swedish grocery store chain that had to close all their stores for a week. **Can you work, however haphazardly, offline in some analogous way?**

Also, analyze how the attack/disaster could take place – in cybersecurity parlance this is called **digital forensics**. How did this happen? How did you find out? How can you prevent this from happening again? If you were affected by a cybersecurity incident, **report** it to law enforcement **immediately**, e.g. the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center<sup>7</sup>, the Federal Trade Commission<sup>8</sup>.

### What should you do if your personal data was compromised?

If your bank or credit card account was hacked, or your financial information compromised, let your bank, credit card company, and the credit bureaus know. Place a credit freeze and fraud alert with the major credit bureaus and see the FTC's instructions<sup>9</sup>. Hopefully, your social security number was not compromised because you used your EIN instead (see above). If your SSN was compromised, follow the Social Security Administration's instructions<sup>10</sup>. If any other information was compromised, you can place a Google Alert<sup>11</sup> to monitor the visible web for that information. Unfortunately, there is no monitoring service for the Dark Web, but sometimes some information trickles through into the visible portion of the web, which Google can see.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ic3.gov>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-credit-freezes-and-fraud-alerts>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ssa.gov/fraud/> and <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10064.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cfbtranslations.com/google-alerts/>

## Summary and More Information

Hopefully most of the above seemed just like plain common sense to you, however, I also hope that it has helped to see it laid out this way. In this article, I loosely followed the **NIST Cybersecurity Framework**<sup>12</sup>. The **Washington Small Business Development Center** developed a very readable **cybersecurity workbook for small businesses** based on this framework, which you can be downloaded<sup>13</sup>. I highly recommend going through this workbook, even if you are a one-person small business/freelancer. Remember Ben Franklin and his ounce of prevention!

*Carola F. Berger, PhD, CT is an ATA-certified (German into English and English into German) translator with a PhD in physics and a master's degree in engineering physics. She specializes in the translation of technical patents in the fields of robotics, electronics, artificial intelligence, engineering, and related subjects. She currently serves as the administrator of ATA's Science and Technology Division and as webmaster on the board of directors of the Northern California Translators Association, an ATA Chapter. It is in this latter capacity that she has gained a greater insight into matters of cybersecurity. Contact: [info@cfbtranslations.com](mailto:info@cfbtranslations.com).*

**CISA**, the US Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, has an entire sub-website on ransomware<sup>14</sup>, which includes the **Ransomware Guide** cited above and steps to take should your system be affected by ransomware.

Lastly, if you have not watched it, I recommend my **webinar on Scams Targeting Language Professionals**<sup>15</sup>, which is completely free on the ATA website. In the present context, phishing scams are especially relevant, because that's one of the paths for malware and ransomware infections. I have also written a few articles for **The ATA Chronicle**, which ATA collected along with a few other relevant resources on scams<sup>16</sup>. You can also read my article on **Phishing and Spoofing** on *Translorial.com*, the online journal of the Northern California Translators Association.

**Stay safe in cyberspace!**



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework>

<sup>13</sup> <https://wsbdc.org/protect-your-business/cybersecurity/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cisa.gov/stopransomware>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.atanet.org/event/dont-fall-for-it-scams-targeting-language-professionals/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.atanet.org/business-strategies/ata-members-and-internet-scams/>

## 2

## VICARIOUS TRAUMA AND THE PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER

### An interpreter shares her experiences.

-- Reposted from the online magazine, "[The Trauma & Mental Health Report](#)"

Imagine yourself in a situation where it is entirely your responsibility to ensure that someone else's voice is heard. Perhaps, that person is a refugee seeking legal aid, or a woman moving into a domestic abuse shelter, or maybe a young girl sitting in a police station describing her recent sexual assault. You are not the lawyer, social worker or detective investigating the case. Rather, you are the interpreter and it is your job to make sure the person gets the help needed.

Studies have shown that nearly all language interpreters experience some symptoms of vicarious trauma, burn out, compassion fatigue, or increased stress as a result of their repeated exposure to traumatic information and stories.

Vicarious trauma can be best understood as the absorbing of another person's trauma, the transformation of the helper's inner sense of identity and experience. It is what happens to your physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual health in response to someone else's traumatic history. Vicarious trauma can affect your perception of the world around you and can result in serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and addiction if untreated. Interpreters seem to experience vicarious trauma differently than other professionals providing aid since they do more than witness the trauma; they channel it.



The Trauma & Mental Health Report recently had the opportunity to speak with Simona, a Czech and Slovak language interpreter who works mainly with Czech, Slovak and Roma refugees and newly immigrated individuals; Simona spoke about her experiences as an interpreter.

#### Q: Can you describe your role and responsibilities as an interpreter?

A: As an interpreter we have our own code of ethics. I have to interpret meaning for meaning, everything that is said with accuracy and fidelity. There has to be confidentiality on my part which means I cannot share anything with anyone other than those I work with. I have to remain impartial and objective, and cannot show bias or preference for anything regarding the case. Simply put, I am not there. I do not have an opinion; I merely act as a channel for each side.

#### Q: What is an average day like for you?

A: I work with all kinds of service providers: Children's Aid Society, parole and probation officers, lawyers, police, hospitals, schools, courts, victim witness services, settlement workers, community workers, public health and home visitors, addictions workers, insurance companies, refugee shelters, shelters for women and children, emigration, social benefits tribunal and more.

An average day usually consists of two in-person interpreting assignments and a number of assignments over the phone. Most of the time I'm interpreting problems that are more extreme than the average person experiences because, considering the service providers I work with, there is usually a problem if the client needs their assistance.

**Q: Have you come into contact with vicarious trauma?**

A: I first heard about it during my interpreter's training. We were warned that there will be times when the job would be extremely difficult and that we may come into contact with traumatic situations that will affect us emotionally and physically. It was explained that journalists, humanitarian workers and health care providers can experience vicarious trauma because of what they witness every day. The difference is that I interpret both sides and I have to experience the feelings of those two sides. So, for example, if the doctor says something really painful to a patient, I am the one relaying the information; so to these people who don't understand English, I am the one delivering the news. But I am also the one who interprets the reaction and the pain of the patient to the doctor. Sometimes people get so frustrated that they curse and yell and I have to say it the same way, with the same feelings, because I must interpret meaning for meaning.

It's difficult to have to speak in this manner to a service provider, but it's not me who is talking. Again, however, in the first person I feel the emotion. Because you are constantly saying "I, I, I," you start associating with the story much more than if you were just reading or hearing about it, and you unwittingly start to absorb the trauma as if it were your own.

**Q: Can you describe your own experience with vicarious trauma?**

A: Without going into specific details, I can say that interpreting for victims of physical abuse and rape, or for a person with a terminal disease, are the hardest situations. Sometimes what happens is that a certain situation can trigger some of your own past experiences and negative emotions.

Even after twenty years, I'm sometimes reliving how difficult it was to be a new immigrant, how I felt that I was not accepted, that I was not smart enough because I didn't speak the language, and how much I missed my family and my country. There have been situations where I had to work very hard to compose myself, and after the session, I would sit in my car and cry. And, there were times when I would feel physically sick afterwards. I've only cried once during an assignment, but we are all only human and there are certain situations that are just too difficult not to have an emotional response.

**Q: Do you experience any other side effects?**

A: I experience their sadness, their pain, their emotional pain; but there have been times when I've actually experienced physical pain as well. When I interpreted physical abuse or rape, it was as though my body actually felt it. Occasionally I have nightmares or insomnia and I go back in my mind and I think about the person. Sometimes I cry and that helps me. I also appreciate my life and my family and friends much more, and try not to take them for granted.

**Q: What helps you overcome these negative symptoms?**

A: Truthfully, it always takes me a couple of days after a particularly hard case to go back to normal. It helps to talk to a friend who is also an interpreter because they understand better than anyone what this job is about, and that it can bring you into contact with very unusual and painful situations. Meditation and prayer help, and even watching a movie or reading a book can help me get back to normal.

Sometimes remembering that at least I can help the person in pain to express themselves and get the help they need makes me feel better. Also, starting on another interpreting assignment helps put me back in the present and reminds me that I have to remain focused on the task at hand. It's as



though I'm wiping the slate clean, so to speak, and moving forward. And, I have to remind myself that it's not my trauma, and that I can help.

**Q: Have your experiences affected any other parts of your life?**

A: Yes. Sometimes I get angry. I get angry that my friends and others take things for granted and don't see how difficult life is for so many. And I can't exactly explain it to them because of confidentiality. At home, sometimes I don't feel like talking for the whole evening because I'm still processing what happened.

After a particularly hard assignment, it's really difficult for me to read the newspaper or watch the news because I have a feeling that there is so much pain and negativity in the world, it can be hard to bear sometimes. I need some time and space before I can get back to my regular life.

**Q: Do you feel that there are any positive aspects of your experiences as an interpreter?**

A: Absolutely. I had a client and I went through her entire pregnancy with her. I was in the delivery room with her as well, and she had beautiful twins. I felt the joy of the parents and the doctors as well. Knowing that I help people to communicate makes it worthwhile. And when I start an assignment and people tell me they are happy that I'm there for them, that makes it worthwhile.

Even though the interpreter should be invisible and just channel what the parties are saying, it is inevitable that they find you comforting because you speak their language and you understand their culture. My job teaches me to treat people with dignity and respect regardless of their life situation. I have to be grateful for that.

-- Contributing Writer: Jana Vigor, The Trauma & Mental Health Report

-- Chief Editor: Robert T. Muller, The Trauma & Mental Health Report



*Robert T. Muller, Ph.D. trained at Harvard, was on faculty at the University of Massachusetts, and is currently at York University in Toronto. Dr. Muller is a Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Trauma & Dissociation (ISSTD) for his work on trauma treatment. His newest therapy book, "[Trauma & the Struggle to Open Up](#)" was awarded the 2019 ISSTD award for year's best written work on trauma. And his award-winning therapy bestseller, "[Trauma & the Avoidant Client](#)" has been translated widely. As lead investigator on several multi-site programs to treat interpersonal trauma, Dr. Muller has lectured internationally. He founded an online magazine, "The Trauma & Mental Health Report," that is now visited by over 100,000 readers a year.*

3

## FIRST ATA CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES FROM OUR LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

### Alcira Salguero

As a bit of background on how I came into the interpreting and translating field, I worked in the corporate world for many years as a purchasing administrator in the areas of travel and conferences, engineering and construction, and lastly in biopharmaceutical. In December 2008 I was laid off from the corporate world.



Alcira Salguero, CMI

While I was working in engineering and construction, I met a very talented group of translators and a few interpreters as well. They supplied translation and interpretation services for another division of the engineering company. The more I learned about their jobs, the more I became interested. Thus, I decided that I wanted to become an interpreter and translator, which would be something I could do towards my retirement years. I was accepted in the Legal Court Interpreter program from San Francisco State University. I graduated in 2005. I continued to work in the corporate world, but I also accepted interpreting assignments on and off only to gain experience in the field.

During the economic crisis, faced with the job shortage, I felt it was time to emerge in a new career as a full-time interpreter. I had to knock on many doors looking for opportunities. I had the skills, but not much practice. One day, I had an “Aha!” moment and remembered that one of my professors from SF State clearly said: *“one of the best things you can do to succeed in the world of interpretation and translation, you must join some of the reputable organizations in your area. One of the most reputable worldwide is ATA.”* In 2010, my lucky star shone on me; I became an in-house interpreter for Sutter Health. I wanted to go to the ATA conference so badly, but I could not afford it. I saved, saved, and saved, and in 2012 I decided that my own birthday gift for that year was to go to 53<sup>rd</sup> ATA conference in San Diego and later spend a few days sightseeing San Diego.

My first experience attending 53<sup>rd</sup> ATA conference in San Diego was overwhelming, but it was the best thing I could have done for my professional development and growth. First, it took place at a fantastic, brand new beachside hotel in San Diego! There was a myriad of sessions being offered. Of course, it was my first conference and I wanted to DO IT ALL. But realistically speaking, it was impossible. Throughout the conference I met several interpreters from different areas of the country and we exchanged cards. Every session I attended was enlightening. It was right there and then that I found out there was a Medical Division. I realized how important that would be for me since I was still new in medical interpreting. I attended the meeting, and I had the pleasure of meeting Madalena, who was the Division Administrator and Tony, the Assistant Administrator. At that time, I volunteered for the role of Medical Division Secretary for one year. It was a pleasure to collaborate with both Madalena and Tony. Later, I had some personal challenges, but I have always remained on the sidelines as a supporting member of the Leadership Council, which I am delighted to continue doing through the present day.

### Mary Virginia Burke

The first ATA conference I went to was the biggest one: New York City, 2009. A couple of years before that, I had been to a Medical Division conference in Cleveland—my first out-of-town conference ever—and enjoyed it immensely. I roomed with Joan Wallace for that one, and it went so well that we did it again in NYC. So I went in already having met a number of MD colleagues, but then added



Mary Virginia Burke

many more over the course of the conference, as well as from the GLD. All those names from the listservs were finally associated with faces and voices. I attended a variety of sessions covering topics in medicine, translation technology, and business practices, but I think the one I liked best was about something completely unrelated to work: sutras and Sanskrit. Somehow I spent a lot of my time during that conference looking for food, not because it was at all hard to find, but because it was so hard to decide. In the end I didn't end up doing any sightseeing, but the giant poster of Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman at the theater across the street was indisputably scenic. We also got to experience the spectacle of Halloween night in Times Square, which was an impressive display of the bizarre. I'm not a particularly social person, but it was wonderful to meet so many of my colleagues and talk terminology, exclaim over dictionaries, and share tales from the trenches.

## Mery Molenaar

It is almost 8 am on a Thursday morning when I enter the lobby at the Denver Hyatt to attend my very first ATA conference. As a first-timer and being relatively new to the industry, I am just as excited as I am anxious about attending the conference. I have always been a bit of an introvert, and the last thing I want is to draw attention to myself, so after checking in, I quickly stick the "First-time attendee" ribbon into my pocket. I know these ribbons are meant to make me feel welcome, but all I really want today is blend in.



Mery Molenaar

I have been preparing for weeks—what should I wear, which sessions should I attend—and I designed and printed some gorgeous business cards, if I do say so myself. I head over to breakfast and feel like the new kid in the school cafeteria. I am determined to experience (and enjoy) every bit of the conference though, and for someone just getting started in this profession, networking isn't exactly optional.

It is no surprise that most introverts are nervous about attending conferences. Conferences reward extroversion, mingling and getting to know new people. Thankfully, over the years I have learned that being at a conference furnishes you with lots of topics to start a conversation; you might see someone else standing on their own, so head over and ask them which sessions they've been to, and what they thought of them. Segue into their language pair and specializations and there you have it: you're networking! Make sure to take their business cards and don't forget to hand them your own.

One other thing I have learned is that if you're not a people-person, visiting the exhibit hall during sessions helps. I don't like missing a session, but there is something to be said for avoiding the crowds and being able to talk to exhibitors one-on-one. And you may run into a few other introverts in the process.

## María Paula Plazas



María Paula Plazas

I was very excited to become an ATA member in January 2020! I read newsletters to learn more about our Association and attended a few online webinars as well. I joined several divisions and became the Social Media Moderator of the Medical Division in September.

I became an ATA member for several reasons, and one of them was to attend the ATA Conference in October as a member. However, due to the pandemic, my first experience at an ATA Conference wasn't as expected. It was a virtual conference and, even though I wasn't sure how it would be, it was an amazing experience! I had the opportunity to listen to great, experienced speakers and learn about interesting topics. What's more, there were lots of opportunities for networking. I met lots of friendly people and left with new clients! I really enjoyed the Conference and although I'm attending virtually again this year, I hope I'll be able to attend in person next year to meet face-to-face with my new friends.

## Tony Guerra



Tony Guerra

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While I had been an ATA member since 2005, it wasn't until 6 years later that I finally managed to get to an ATA conference. I'd been busy launching an interpreting department for a local language agency as its director, and had never been able to get away. Not that the desire wasn't there, but towards the end of October, a busy conference month, my presence was always required elsewhere. As grew the interpreting client base, we were fortunate enough to land repeat annual contracts with U.S. Chiefs of Defense, Asia Pacific Region, staffing their international conferences in places such as Hawaii, Korea and Australia, always with a need for 12 languages, hence 24 interpreters and supporting audio equipment. Precise, on-site supervision of such a complex multinational event was not optional.

Finally, a convenient shift in conference schedules provided an opening in 2011 for me to attend the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual ATA conference in Boston. It was indeed overwhelming in the number and quality of presentations, not to mention the extraordinary caliber of talented professionals present. Even then, I was juggling sessions, networking, manning our agency booth as well as our local ATA chapter table, representing the Board of Directors from the Delaware Valley Translators Association, where I ultimately served as president. I also had accepted the position of Assistant Administrator for the ATA MD Division, with Madalena as Administrator. During that year and throughout our four-year tenure, we established a strong alliance working for the Medical Division, and seamlessly collaborated on many Division conference dinners in many cities across the US, often teaming up with the Interpreters Division. Serving now on the MD Leadership Council is also rewarding, in that I can contribute my experience and lend my support to a wonderfully effective team at the helm of the division.

I can say that since that time and for the past 10 years, the conference has become a reliably sustaining tradition, one that continues to enrich me professionally, socially, spiritually and intellectually -even as I transitioned from managing interpreters and events to embarking on a freelance interpreting career in 2016. The challenge at any conference is to somehow reconnect with amazing colleagues, make new friendships and contacts, and absorb remarkable presentations as well as occasionally contribute one or two of my own, take in the sights and wonders of a new city, and fulfill a tight schedule of obligatory committee meetings and other volunteer commitments. In short, it is a guaranteed undeniable whirlwind, a rush of energy, of ideas, of meaningful and stimulating interactions. From serving as a Director on the ATA Board for 3 years, to functioning as National Chapters Chair for 5 years, to working the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, as well as being on the Speaker's Bureau of the PR Committee, I have received in return as much as I have given. For that, I am eternally grateful and look forward to many more ATA conferences to come.



Veronika Demichelis

## Veronika Demichelis

My very first ATA in conference in San Francisco in 2016 was such an incredible experience. I am so glad that it happened in the beginning of my freelance career, as it really set me on the right path right away. I was overjoyed to meet a vibrant, welcoming community of colleagues, and I remember the whole experience as a giant learning opportunity.

I really enjoyed the Buddies Welcome Newbies session, breakfast with the Board, the Welcome Reception, and the many, many sessions that I attended. I only wish I planned my schedule better and included some breaks--there are so many events and so many people to talk to that you need a breather every now and then. The Job Fair was an amazing opportunity to talk to language service providers and find job opportunities, and I still work with a few clients I met that day.



I really enjoyed the Brainstorm Networking session: what a fun way to discuss common “sticky situations” with colleagues and work on solutions together, all while making new friends! I also attended a few events organized by some of the Divisions where I am a member, and it was an amazing chance to meet people face to face, establish connections, and even find collaboration opportunities.

I have amazing memories from ATA 57, an event that truly made me feel at home in ATA and equipped me with the best tools, resources and knowledge to grow my translation career. I also felt encouraged to become an active contributor to the Association’s growth and look for volunteer opportunities. I have been looking forward to every Annual ATA Conference ever since, and I am very excited to meet old friends and make new ones at ATA’s 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference this year.

## Yasha Saebi

The first ATA Conference that I attended was in 2014 in Chicago, and I remember flying to Chicago with no idea what to expect. I never imagined that I was going to meet such a friendly crowd and continue going to ATA conferences year after year. Everyone was so nice at the Welcome ceremony the first night of the Conference. The conference attendees and ATA staff made me feel that I was one of them and belonged there. I am so glad that I enrolled and attended the Newbies session on the first day of the conference -because I was placed in a group with five other great ATA members, and we helped each other navigate the different events and sessions.



Yasha Saebi

Here we are, seven years later, and I am still good friends with two of them. One of them became my hotel roommate at the following year’s ATA conference. I highly recommend that first-time attendees take advantage of the Buddies and Newbies session!

I remember the Medical Division’s Dinner event in a cozy restaurant few blocks away from the hotel. It turned to a great networking event for all of us. As a new freelancer, I left with some great ideas and information for my business and lots of business cards from my new friends and co-workers. Breakfast with other Conference attendees is another of my favorite events that I truly enjoy. I met some of the most amazing individuals from all over the world during breakfast. At my first few conferences, I missed the After-Hours Café event, but later on I learned about it and fell in love with this Literary Division event.

It was during my second or third conference that I volunteered to serve on different divisions and Nominating Committees. I recommend all ATA members to participate in the division of their choice and share their expertise and help their division improve and serve fellow members. The Job Fair is the best place to be if you are looking to meet language providers and new clients. There are also opportunities to meet government agency representatives. I purchased my first CAT tool there with a great discount at the ATA Job Fair. Every individual that I met during the conference was somehow beneficial to my career. I even decided which CAT tool to buy based on a conversation I had with a colleague that I met in a shuttle from the airport to the hotel! Sometimes the CAT tool providers offer a special discount during the conference, and you also can attend a brief training and a hands-on practice session before buying a license. Overall, I always have a great time at ATA conferences and sometimes I stay a little longer and make a vacation out of the visit.

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## Caduceus Team

Andreea Boscor | Luz Miranda Valencia | Yasha Saebi

