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Business 101 for Translators & Interpreters

Office Electronics

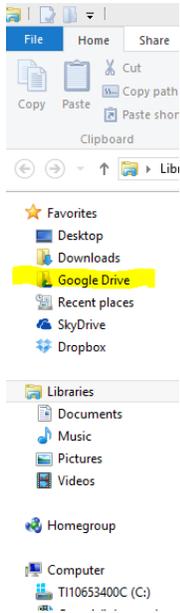
by John Matthews, MBA & CT
2013

Terri the Translator and Inez the Interpreter have worked hard to make their home offices as efficient as possible at the lowest cost possible, and these are some of the things they have learned along the way. They both have high-speed internet, so they decided to use it to its best advantage.

Online Storage

Terri found that storing all her translation documents, SDL Trados memories and termbases, glossaries, resources, etc. on the hard drive on her computer (the C: drive) slowed her computer down. Then she started storing these large files on peripheral disks and devices, but it got confusing, and she always was concerned about accidentally damaging them or backing them up so she didn't lose her treasures.

She is not particularly a Mac person or a PC person, but just wanted good, safe, reliable and free storage so she could access these files immediately from anywhere over the internet. There are a number of online storage services like Sky Drive, Cloud, Carbonite, Dropbox and others who provide similar services, but she decided on Google. They take care of the backup, virus protection, etc., the first 5 GB are free and she can buy more GB at a reasonable price, she can access her data from anywhere in a safe & secure manner, and no one else has access to it.



She opened a Google account, went to drive.google.com, downloaded Google Drive, and it automatically installed what looks like another drive in the folders on her computer, just like her C: drive, etc. She installed Google Drive on her backup computer too, so now she can access her documents from both computers.

Then she did a copy/paste of all her important files from her C: drive to her Google Drive in just a few minutes. After she was sure that the copy/paste was successful, she again copied that precious information to a backup peripheral drive and dated it so she had a backup just in case. Then she deleted all the old information from her C: drive, and since Windows automatically defragments and optimizes drives as part of regular maintenance, she soon noticed that her computer was running faster again.

Now when she works in Word, Excel or SDL Trados, she accesses and saves her data just like she used to, but it's all on the Google Drive. At the end of a translation, she saves the document to the Google Drive, she saves her translation memory and termbases to the Google Drive, she doesn't need to worry about backup or a hard-drive crash, and she can attach the document to her email directly from the Google Drive to deliver it to the translation agency.

Terri also realized that she could have multiple free online storage accounts, for example Google Drive, Sky Drive and Dropbox. They all appear as drives like her C: drive, they all appear on her Folders list, and they all appear on her taskbar. She decided to keep her current work files on one drive, her personal files on another, and a backup on the third.



Terri told Inez that she was concerned about someone else accessing her confidential information that she stored on the Google Drive. If someone got access to her computer, or she took her computer to the repair shop, or it was stolen, other people could access her business documents, tax records, bank statements, etc. Inez suggested that she create a User Account on her computer, give that User Account a password that was easy for her to remember, and that would be the main place on her computer where she does all her work. Then she could also create a Guest User Account without a password on her computer in case the guy at the repair shop needed to access her computer. Then she just logs off from her User Account at the end of the day. That way, when she starts back up in the morning, she logs on to her account on the computer and has full access, but when she has logged off and the computer is out of her hands, anybody else could log on only as the Guest, and the Guest would have no access to any of her documents or on-line storage.

Terri likes this idea. It's free, it's easy, it's safe.

FAX & E-Fax

Having a fax machine and a dedicated telephone line for the fax got to be expensive, and Terri began to understand that faxing was rapidly becoming an outdated technology in the translation business. All of the documents she had been sending by fax were ones she created on her computer and attached to e-mails anyway, and she thought about getting an e-fax number through an online service like GoDaddy, Ring Central, My Fax, etc., so she could send and receive faxes just like e-mail.

Actually, she found that no one still uses faxes, so she just gave up on faxing and relies on sending/receiving work as e-mail attachments. The agency she works with has an ftp, an on-line storage site where they keep large documents, and they have given Terri access to it, so her stand-alone fax machine has been relegated to the yard sale.

Wireless Printers

Terri finally decided to make her office paperless. She stores all her documents online on her Google drive, but there are still times when a translation agency will send her a non-disclosure agreement, W-9 or other form she has to fill out with a pen, then sign it and mail it back in. So she decided to get a medium-priced wireless printer/scanner. When the agencies send her those kinds of documents, she prints them, writes in the information with a pen and signs the documents, then puts the paper in the paper-feeder part of the printer, clicks on an icon on her computer desktop that the installation program put there, the printer comes to life and makes a pdf of the document which is automatically sent wirelessly to her computer desktop, and she simply attaches that signed pdf to an e-mail and sends it back to the translation agency. If the agency requires the actual document itself, she will mail it to them. If not, she just shreds the paper document and stores that signed pdf on her computer as her record.

Multiple Monitors

Terri had been using 2 monitors in her translation process: the monitor on her laptop, and another monitor that she plugged into her computer's VGA port.



With the Plug & Play process on her computer, it automatically detected the 2nd monitor. She put the translation documents on 1 monitor, and her online dictionaries and other translation resources on the 2nd monitor. Her cursor moved freely between the 2 monitors.

But having both the source document and the target translation document on 1 monitor made the real-estate size available to each document rather small, so she decided to get a 3rd monitor: 1 monitor for the source document; 1 monitor for the target document; 1 monitor for her online dictionaries. Her computer only has 1 VGA port, so she needed some kind of converter. She found a device called SIIG USB to VGA Adapter at her computer store for about \$50. She plugged the VGA cable from the monitor into one side of the adapter, and then plugged the



other side of the adapter into a USB port on her computer, and voilà, her 3rd monitor came to life, she could easily move her cursor among all 3 monitors, and she could also move the documents back and forth among the 3 monitors. In fact, she used a 19" HDTV as her 3rd monitor, plugged a TV cable into it also, and can toggle back and forth between the monitor and TV whenever she wants.

Dragon Naturally Speaking

Terri found this software to be a real time saver. She uses the Bluetooth headset that she also uses for her smartphone to connect wirelessly to her computer, and speaks naturally. Dragon recognizes her voice and types the dictation directly into MS Word or SDL Trados. It's just like using the voice recognition on her smartphone when she speaks an e-mail or text message rather than typing it. In fact, Dragon works well with the e-mail on her computer and also with instructions to open/close programs on her computer.

Telephone

Inez has two phone lines, a land-line phone and a cell phone. She got tired of paying exorbitant monthly bills to the phone company. So she decided to reduce her bills. She considered several options such as Google+, Vonage, Magic Jack and Skype, and settled on these choices.

Land-Line Phone: She bought Magic Jack Plus for about \$40 at Wal-Mart. That price included the service for the first year and she renews the service annually thereafter online. She chose her own phone number with any area code she wanted in the US or Canada, and uses Magic Jack either in conjunction with her computer or by just plugging it into an electrical outlet at home. Now she can make and receive unlimited phone calls throughout the US and Canada over her internet service at no further cost. The call quality is crystal clear. Since the phone that she plugs in is a landline phone with multiple wireless handsets throughout the house, she can use this system in any room with one of those handsets. Emergency 911 service is included.

And when she travels outside of the country, she still can make and receive phone calls to/from the US and Canada at no additional charge over the internet when carries a small handset and plugs the Magic Jack into her computer. That means that her friends and family in the US can call her using a land-line or cell phone through her local phone number with a US or Canadian area code, and can reach her as she travels through

Europe, Asia or anywhere else in the world where she has internet service. And she can call them in the US and Canada also from anywhere in the world using Magic Jack where she has internet service. No additional charges.

Cell Phone: Inez has a Skype account that she uses on her computer to make video calls around the world over the internet at no cost. She also downloaded the Skype app to her smartphone, registered a Skype phone number, and bought \$20 ~ \$30 of credit on Skype. Now she can make phone calls to and receive phone calls from any land-line or cell phone around the world for pennies a minute using the credit she pre-purchased, or she can simply use her smartphone and its built-in camera to make Skype video calls over the internet at no charge to her friends around the world who can receive her video call on their smartphone, tablet, computer, etc. No more high-priced international service necessary for her smartphone when she travels around the world.

Texts

Inez sends texts to her mother in South America, and Terri like to keep in touch with her son who is studying in China. All the family members have smartphones, but the texting charges had gotten to be huge. All of the family members downloaded WhatsApp, a free app for texts both domestically and internationally. It is internet based, so once both the sender and receiver have WhatsApp on their smartphones and are connected to an internet service, they can send texts at no charge to any another person who also has WhatsApp. Simple, free and easy.

Website

Both Terri and Inez wanted a website to promote their translation and interpreting businesses, but neither had the technical expertise to create a website, upload it to the internet, and maintain it. Website developers were fairly expensive also. They looked at GoDaddy.com, Yahoo at smallbusiness.yahoo.com, and 1and1.com, but decided to try 1and1.com for a variety of reasons including the fact that they could have an unlimited number of webpages. Both of them decided to use the Business Basic package at a total cost of \$9.99 per month. They were able to choose their own www.com names, customize pre-packaged website templates and make 2- ~ 3-page websites, typed information about their translation and interpreting services into the text boxes, information on how to contact them, and upload a few pictures and samples of their work. And, they can change the information anytime they want to by logging in, typing in the new information, and it's ready on the internet in real time. Simple and

easy. The company also has a toll-free number to call when Terri and Inez have questions and they found the pros at 1and1 to be helpful.