

Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann

ITIA Bulletin

December 2012

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December 2012

Editorial

Chaos in the UK courts continues to raise its head in the press and the row rumbles on about public monies spent (squandered) on sub-standard services.

Concepts such as 'low expectations' and 'risible penalties' are frequently bandied about - to what avail? The contract is still in place and expectations do not appear to be rising. We would really like to hear from interpreter and translator colleagues about their views on the current situation and also how interpreting in the public services works in your country.

Also included in this edition of the Bulletin are articles on topics as diverse as games, Google and the 7,000 languages spoken on our planet.

I have recently been invited to collaborate with Adam as co-editor of the Bulletin and do hope that this Hiberno-Polish alliance will entice readers to partake of our inter-cultural selection of interesting news and (hopefully your) views on any or all of the many fascinating aspects of our translating and interpreting work.

We will use the culturally neutral 'Seasons Greetings' to wish all our readers a very enjoyable end of year and a Happy New Year - with higher expectations!

Anne Larchet
Co-Editor

PAC Press Notice

21st PAC Report 2012-2013 The Ministry of Justice's language service contract

The Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MP, Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts, today said:

"Interpretation services are vital for ensuring fair access to justice. Yet when the Ministry of Justice set out to establish a new centralised system for supplying interpreters to the justice system, almost everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

The Ministry awarded the contract to a company, ALS, that was clearly incapable of delivering. The Ministry had been warned that ALS was too small to shoulder a contract worth more than £1 million, but went ahead and handed them an annual £42 million contract covering the whole country.

The Ministry did not understand its own basic requirements, such as how many interpreters it needed or in what languages.

And it ignored the views of interpreters, who were clear that they had serious concerns about the contract and were adamant that they would not work for ALS.

"Capita took over ALS in late 2011. They had no hope of recruiting enough qualified interpreters in time to start the service. The Ministry needed access to 1,200 interpreters when the contract went live; the company had only 280 properly assessed interpreters willing to work for it.



"Matters became even worse when the Ministry decided that the new service would go live nationally in one go. Many of the 'interpreters' it thought were available had simply registered an interest on the company's website and had been subject to no official checks that they had the required skills and experience. Indeed, we heard that some names were fictitious and one person had even successfully registered their pet dog.

As a result, the company was able to meet only 58% of bookings against a target of 98%.

"The result was total chaos. Court officials have had to scramble to find qualified interpreters at short notice; there has been a sharp rise in delayed, postponed and abandoned trials; individuals have been kept on remand solely because no interpreter was available; and the quality of interpreters has at times been appalling. "Despite this, the Ministry has only penalized the supplier a risible £2,200. This is an object-lesson in how not to contract out a public service."

Margaret Hodge was speaking as the Committee published its 21st Report of this Session which, on the basis of evidence from the Ministry of Justice, Capita and the Association of Police and Court Interpreters, examined the Ministry of Justice's language service contract.

Report summary

When participants in the justice system do not speak English as their first language, it is essential for justice that they are provided with interpretation services. The Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) provides translators and interpreters to defendants at particular stages of the justice process. Before January 2012, the Ministry generally booked interpretation services directly with individual interpreters, many of whom were listed on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). This approach was administratively inefficient; for example, individual Courts booked and paid interpreters separately. The Ministry decided to set up a new centralised system for procuring language services

intending the new system to be better quality, cheaper and more efficient.

In August 2011, the Ministry signed a four year Framework Agreement for language services with Applied Language Solutions (ALS), under which all justice sector bodies could enter contracts with ALS. It expected the Framework Agreement to be worth up to £42 million a year. In October 2011, the Ministry signed a five year contract under the Framework Agreement which went live nationally on 30 January 2012. The Ministry expected the contract to cost £18 million a year. In December 2011, after the Ministry had signed its contract with ALS, ALS was acquired by Capita.

The Ministry was not an intelligent customer in procuring language services, despite the risks posed to the administration of justice and to the Ministry's reputation. It is not clear how consultations with interpreters in late 2009 fed into the process after the 2010 General Election. In one consultation, held in Cardiff in 2009, there were no more than 20 attendees and the question of who assessed interpreters was raised but there was no feedback. Yet this was one of the issues that caused problems with the contract when it was let. The Ministry started the process without basic management information on language services, including the cost of interpreters or what languages were required in which locations and at what notice. Its use of a competitive dialogue process meant that it selected a single national provider rather than using a number of regional providers which could have had a better chance of meeting demand.

The Ministry failed to undertake proper due diligence on ALS's winning bid. It did not heed financial and other advice that ALS was too small and would struggle to scale up to meet the Ministry's requirements in time. The Ministry also ignored strong opposition from the interpreter community. Interpretation is a specialised service. The procurement and later implementation might have been more effective had the strongly held views expressed by experienced interpreters and trade



bodies during the Ministry's consultation been given greater weight. The contract did not include a strong enough incentive for ALS to meet the requirements of the contract right from the start. ALS was acquired by Capita just before the contract started.

The Ministry went live with the contract when Capita-ALS had only 280 interpreters, available to work under the contract, compared to the 1,200 that the Ministry estimated were required. Capita-ALS struggled to recruit interpreters and make them available. As a result, Capita-ALS used interpreters who had not been properly assessed as required by the contract and this impacted on the quality of service and the quality of justice in the courts The Ministry did not conduct a proper pilot or a phased roll-out to ensure a smooth transition.

When the contract went live, Capita-ALS only met 58% of bookings and there was a sharp rise in the number of ineffective trials due to problems with interpreters. Postponing proceedings and delays which resulted in individuals being held in custody for longer periods creates an unnecessary extra cost to the Ministry. The Ministry was unable to quantify the additional cost to them of the failure. However Capita has only been fined £2,200 to date for failing to meet the terms of the contract.

Capita-ALS is now fulfilling more bookings, but it is still struggling to fulfil all and we are concerned that it may not be doing enough to recruit interpreters or to incentivise interpreters to take jobs in rare languages and covering all geographical locations. The Ministry cannot be sure that all interpreters working under the contract have the required skills, experience and character, partly because it is not yet inspecting Capita-ALS as it has the right to do under the contract. Too many courts are having to find their own interpreters which means that the purpose of the policy, to provide one centralised system, has not been met.

On the basis of a Memorandum by the Comptroller and Auditor General,[1] we took evidence from the Ministry of Justice, Capita and the Association of Police and Court Interpreters.

Original source http://tinyurl.com/azyh9pj

The full report can be found here:
http://tinyurl.com/b2rq2eh

Other recent articles on this topic:

Public Confessions of an Unqualified Capita Court Interpreter

- http://tinyurl.com/bjtq932
- http://tinyurl.com/arc5fo6
- http://tinyurl.com/bw5blcy
- http://tinyurl.com/acwmodz
- http://tinyurl.com/b72bnhm

Interpreting politicians: The work of parliamentary polyglots

Politics can be hard to make sense of at the best of times, but for parliamentary interpreters and translators it is a full-time job.

At the European Parliament, translation is a mammoth task. Since 2007, there have been 23 official languages spoken by the EU member states, each of which must be translated into the 22 other languages - a total of 506 possible combinations.

An army of 700 is employed to translate official documents such as agendas, draft reports, amendments, resolutions, written and oral questions, and minutes. Interpreting - which refers to oral translation - requires up to 1,000 interpreters to be on hand for plenary sessions of Parliament.

One of those linguists is Yorkshire-born Daniel Pashley, who is 39, and translates from French, German, Swedish and Dutch into English.

Pashley did not come from a multilingual family, but fell in love with languages at school. He went on to study languages at King's College London and took a Master's at the University of Bradford. Throughout this time he says he did not realise that it could be a career for him.

"I assumed interpreters had to be bilingual (brought up speaking two languages), but when I read that was not



the case I realised this was what I wanted to do. I had always felt very European and wanted a job where I could make the most of that."

Pashley insists that understanding politicians is no more difficult than understanding anyone else. "There is a lot of technical language you have to learn, but on the whole politicians are easy to understand and rather predictable. They use fewer colloquialisms than you would hear, say, in a soap opera or in a conversation on the street."

Frustration can arise from the process of consistently giving voice to someone else's opinions, he says, and it can take a while to learn to have confidence in your judgment of words and phrases.

"I remember that once a delegate was complaining about a policy he felt was being protected unduly, calling it the equivalent of a sacred cow. I called it a 'holy cow' by mistake. Once I realised I had to fight a fit of the giggles, which is the very last thing you want to subject your listeners to."

'Puns and wordplay'

However, he says the job has its rewards. "When I hear someone laughing at a joke the speaker has made in a language they don't even speak, I know they're laughing because of me and because I've done my job properly."

But you don't have to go as far as Brussels to find politics in translation.

In the devolved legislatures, Scots Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Welsh are all official languages. The Scottish Parliament passed an act in 2005 to ensure it is accessible to Gaelic speakers and employs an officer who deals with Gaelic-language enquiries.

Stormont has two members of staff whose job it is to ensure the official record - the Northern Ireland Assembly's equivalent of Hansard - is available in Gaelic.

But speeches at Stormont and Holyrood in Gaelic are rare, whereas at Cardiff Bay members frequently switch between Welsh and English in the chamber.

Sion Edwards, 39, is an interpreter for the National Assembly for Wales. Welsh is his first language and the

language his parents spoke at home when he was growing up in Bangor, but he is Welsh-English bilingual. Edwards explains, "I started my working life as a text translator but soon found that a 'desk job' wasn't for me. Many people, particularly those used to the meticulousness of text translation, find the prospect of live interpreting horrendous."

But Edwards says it is the immediacy of live interpreting that appeals to him. "The chance to play a central role in the political process is exciting."

He wishes politicians could keep it simple sometimes.

"Puns and wordplay can be challenging and proverbs and literary and religious allusions are also a nightmare."

"A colleague who shall remain nameless once referred to the 'deprayed' communities of the Welsh valleys. Of course, what he meant was 'deprived'. I think the assembly members understand if you slip up once in a while."

Plain English

There are those who believe the politicians at Westminster could do with some interpretation of their own. The House of Commons is currently carrying out a pilot under which MPs have to provide explanations of any changes they propose to legislation, written in plain English.

The experiment was initiated by the Procedure Select Committee. The out-going chairman, Greg Knight MP, stresses that parliamentary jargon is there for a reason, but suggests there is room for improvement.

"Amendments have to be drafted in technical language to make sure legislation is precise, but it also needs to be transparent. Plain English is far more user-friendly, for both MPs and the public. Someone coming across Parliament for the first time will find it hard to grasp what is going on."

The select committee will seek responses on the pilot before deciding whether to take it further. In the meantime, spare a thought for those who spend their working lives trying to work out what politicians mean.



LANGUAGE FACTS

- There are an estimated 7,000 different languages spoken around the world.
- 90% of these languages are used by fewer than 100,000 people.
- More than a million people converse in 150 to 200 languages and 46 languages are thought to have just a single speaker.
- The UN has six official languages: Arabic,
 Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian.
- Each six-language meeting requires 14
 interpreters: three per booth for Arabic and
 Chinese, and two each for English, French,
 Russian, and Spanish.

Esther Webber BBC Democracy Live

Original source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19117167

Police admit using Google translation in terror investigation was mistake

Man accused of collecting money for Kurdish group said to have broken-down after being confronted with message that turned out to be harmless.

Copenhagen police have admitted to wrongly confronting a Kurdish man accused of financing terrorism with a text message that had been improperly translated by Google Translate, the computer firm's free, online translation service. The man reportedly suffered a breakdown following the interrogation and his lawyer, Thorkild Høyer, called the use of Google Translate unacceptable in legal proceedings.

"But it is even more serious in a case involving allegations of terrorism, and in which the accused are being held on remand," Høyer told Politiken newspaper. Høyer said the Google-translated documents violate Danish laws preventing investigators from presenting

people accused of crimes with false information, and he is demanding that all such documents be dismissed from the investigation.

The 50 year-old man is one of the eight Kurds arrested in September and accused of financing terrorism for collecting upwards of 140 million kroner on behalf of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is considered by the EU to be a terrorist organisation.

The money is alleged to have been passed on to the PKK by Roj TV, a Kurdish TV station based in Copenhagen. The station is itself currently involved in a court battle of its own over whether it is a propaganda instrument for the PKK between 2006 and 2010. In January, Roj TV was found guilty by the Copenhagen City Court and fined a total of 5.2 million kroner. The station's appeal is currently being heard by the Eastern High Court.

The police said no other documents had been translated using Google Translate, and that it was not a method they used.

"During the interrogation, the investigator used a Google-translated version of the contents of the text message and he should not have done that," Copenhagen police inspector Svend Foldager told Politiken. "There is not much to say other than it was a mistake. I know only of this one instance and I've never heard of it happening before."

While the police maintained that Google Translate will never be used again, they did indicate that the document in question had not been used in the decision to remand the eight accused.

The translation error was coincidentally discovered by a translator during the interrogation of the man. The Google Translate version of the message in Turkish read: "I call for a meeting."

But according to Høyer, the message was a massinvitation and part of a text-message chain without a personal sender.

Christian Wenande
Original source: http://tinyurl.com/bct73bq



Conference Report

The IV International Lucentino Symposium, "To be or not to be... an interpreter" new approaches to Training, Research and Professionalisation, organised by the Department of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Alicante, took place from the 8th to the 10th of November 2012. The purpose of the Symposium was to address the role of interpreting today, focusing on teaching and research in Spain, Europe and worldwide. The event brought together well-known figures in the interpreting field such as Erik Hertog, Sylvia Kalina, Anne Martin, Cecilia Wadensjö and Annalisa Sandrelli. Topics covered included professional ethics, quality of interpreting and interpreting and new technologies Professor Erik Hertog, of Lessius Hogeschool in Antwerp, in Belgium gave an interesting presentation on interpreting in conflict zones. He pointed out that Interpreting obviously often takes place in conflict situations and settings, whether it is in a courtroom, an asylum centre or a housing service. Throughout history and increasingly so in our modern globalised world, interpreters have found themselves involved in calamitous events, painful confrontations or indeed violent conflicts. Hertog drew attention to the demanding role of the interpreter in Kosovo and in Johannesburg. He referred to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa which would not have been possible without the work of interpreters who had no previous interpreting experience. The use of the first person 'I' can make it difficult for interpreters to distance themselves from what they say. Hertog cited a document drafted by AIIC and the Red Cross, which recommends changes for interpreters in conflict zones (see http://tinyurl.com/b9vfr9t). He also mentioned the Centre for interpreting in conflict zones in Geneva (see http://tinyurl.com/a3be6cb).

Cecilia Wadensjo, University of Stockholm, gave an interesting presentation on the development of assessment instruments in Sweden, where a state agency

has run authorization examinations for interpreters since 1978.

A round table on public service interpreters and gender violence discussed issues around this and it was suggested that there should be specialised training for interpreters who work in this area. The round table discussed how to achieve the necessary specialisation from the standpoint of research, training and professional practice in order to provide top quality interpretation in different areas and stages of gender violence assistance services.

Antoon Cox, Erasmushogeschool Brussels, spoke about the complicated situation in bilingual Brussels where there are three different types of government actors dealing with multilingual patient issues in the Brussels public hospitals. Firstly there are intercultural mediators who answer to the federal government. Second, Dutchspeaking community interpreters who answer to the Flemish regional government and finally, Frenchspeaking interpreters who answer to the French community government. Each of these three actors abides by a different code of ethics. Community interpreters are not allowed to be involved in cultural brokerage. Instead, they are expected to stick to the literal translation of what is being said and to not go beyond facilitating communication between patients and medical staff. Intercultural mediators are allowed to get involved in cultural brokerage.

Panagiota Karanasiou, of Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, said that even though interpreting has been essential for human communication and trade across boundaries since earliest times, Business Negotiation Interpreting (BNI) has never been seen, examined and analysed as a separate, distinct type of interpretation within the field of Interpreting Studies. BNI is distinctly different from any other liaison interpreting settings, in different ways, not least in matters of role and ethics. Interpreters are usually asked to participate actively in the interaction of those settings by amending, filtering or shaping utterances or even by actively participating in



the negotiation process. Being a professional interpreter in those settings entails employing different approaches, techniques and abilities.

Annalisa Sandrelli, of LUSPIO University in Rome, spoke about key developments in Computer Assisted Interpreter Training which basically involves using computer technology for teaching interpreting and outlined existing paradigms and approaches.

Mireia Vargas, Autonomous University of Barcelona, referred to the role played by agencies in determining outcomes in public service interpreting (PSI) in Catalonia, where public service interpreter employers are mainly public-funded associations and institutions. Her research was based on discourse analysis of in-depth interviews with interpreters working with the Chinese community in Catalonia and to the coordinators of the associations or institutions where these interpreters work. Relying on this qualitative approach to compare interpreters' and employers' views, she focused on issues such as their perception of the interpreters' role and functions, and the challenges both employers and interpreters encounter on a daily basis.

In her presentation 'Interpreting Learners' Coping Strategies in Consecutive Interpreting in China', Fu Liping, City University Hong Kong, referred to a research study referring to coping strategies in the process of Community Interpreting, in China. More than 20 strategies were identified, e.g. linguistic inference, questioning for clarification, selective attention, communicating with speaker, guessing with visualization, omission, extra-linguistic inference, getting the gist, simplification, taking mental notes, etc. The results indicated that students tended to use the strategy of selective attention in listening comprehension most frequently.

Finally, Vicente Guillot, Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, referred to the medical missions in developing nations. These are expanding thanks to new initiatives spearheaded by NGOs and medical providers from Western countries. However, the use of potentially

unskilled or untrained interpreters is increasingly called into question. Providing interpreting services for medical missions in different parts of the globe is becoming a challenge in part because many of the medical organizations rely on volunteers while others make use of local interpreters, some of whom may have no training or experience in the profession. This presentation examined some of the linguistic and cultural issues that may arise while at the same time examining the role of the interpreter.

One of the best things was being able to see sign language interpreters (students of IES Victoria Ken Institute in Elche) in action and their professionalism. I found it interesting to learn about technologies applied to training of interpreters, such as the use of virtual environments, to learn more about the reality of the interpreting market, particularly in certain sectors such as legal interpreting and to learn more about the Institute of Linguists certification and the latest on research in interpreting.

Miren Maialen-Samper For more info please check: http://tinyurl.com/b2af4g9

The cultural dimension in games localisation

As translators and interpreters know, it is very important to bridge the gap between cultures. In certain disciplines, the meaning and the effect that the text has on the reader is far more important than the words. This is especially true of localisation, which has been defined as the "adaptation of a product, application or document content to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific target market" (Ishida & Miller: 2005).

In the specific field of games localisation, this adaptation goes well beyond the words. As we all know, different cultures perceive things in different ways so, if a product is to be successful, it's important to make sure that it adapts to the target markets, as the picture below



amusingly shows. In fact, at least 50% of the revenue in games comes from localised versions (Chandler: 2006), which shows why localisation efforts should not be underestimated.

A while ago, I had the pleasure of witnessing a very interesting presentation by Melissa Clark-Reynolds, Founder and CEO of MiniMonos, a company which provides a virtual world for children in which they can create a monkey avatar, socialise with other monkeys and play mini-games. She spoke of how sometimes they release mini-games adapted to their local markets. One interesting example was a mini-game which involved monkey poo, as can be seen in the following pictures [to view the pictures follow the link at the end of the article]. This type of mini-game would have never worked in the Australian or New Zealand markets, for instance, where children are not as obsessed with their digestive system as they are in the UK. Despite speaking the same language, the cultures in these countries are different and being able to adapt to British "tastes" (if we can call it that in this case!) proved an extremely effective strategy, making this one of the most successful minigames for the company in the UK.

Another company in the world of online gaming, Zynga, famously decided to enter the Chinese market a couple of years ago. They rebuilt the game Farmville and, although the Chinese version is quite similar to the original Farmville, there are some changes that reflect the preferences of this target market. For instance, some changes were made to the colour palette and the plots of farmland are larger than in the original version. And some new crops were also introduced, as can be seen in the picture below [to view the pictures follow the link at the end of the article]:

These crops, like the ginseng or the Caterpillar fungus, reflect the kind of crops that would grow in the region. All this has huge implications for the games localiser, who must not only be a master of the written word, but also become a language consultant, and provide advice

to clients when they come across something that could cause a potential issue in the target market.

Some time ago, I was working on a Japanese game for a portable device. The title included a mini-game in which the characters had to compete to finish a big bowl filled with some type of alcoholic drink. The first one to finish it won the game, and the characters were depicted quite obviously drunk, and then complaining about having a headache the morning after. I had been told that the age rating of the game was 3+, so I immediately identified a problem and warned the client that a drinking minigame was going to be problematic in the target market, especially for such a young audience. All the translators discussed the problem as a team and we developed an idea to turn the drink into some sort of sugary potion and change the text so that the characters got a sugar rush instead, as children often get when having too many sweets. That saved the client a lot of time and money by not having to edit the game, and they were very grateful.

Other times, this cultural dimension can appear in the form of cultural references within the games themselves. For instance, in World of Warcraft there is a trinket called the Six Demon Bag, and its description text reads "Blasts enemies with the power of wind, fire, that kind of thing!". This is a reference to the movie Big Trouble in Little China, in which Egg Shen's describes the contents of his Six Demon Bag using the same words. In these cases, it's important for the localiser firstly to identify the reference, and secondly, to look for the equivalent, that is, the official version of the movie in the target market (whether it's dubbed or subtitled), and use the same wording in order to achieve the same effect that the original version of the game aims for.

Another important cultural aspect is related to characterisation. Many games contain fantasy characters such as orcs, wizards, fairies, but also pirates, gangsters and similar. The localiser will need to be familiarised with the way those creatures or characters speak in the target language and follow the conventions. It could be



possible that an equivalent accent might need to be found in the target language to portray certain stereotypes or, lacking that, the use of certain interjections, expressions or pet phrases. Rude language and swearing can be particularly tricky because, whilst the effect on the player has to be maintained, cultural sensibilities also have to be taken into account. Some languages and cultures are more accepting of this type of language than others.

Of course, all this doesn't mean that the content always has to be adapted. Sometimes aspects of the source culture have to be kept in order to maintain a certain local flavour. It wouldn't make much sense for a game clearly based in New York, where the city is central to the story, to have characters speaking with a very marked regional French accent, for instance. However, both localisers and developers need to be aware of these issues and use their skills and expertise to ensure that the localised product meets all the requirements and needs of the target market if the product is to be successful. After all, this is a business, and the better the quality of the localisation, the higher the potential for revenue.

Silvia Ferrero, EN-ES translator Director of MediaLoc, games localisation company Online source: http://tinyurl.com/a335zfd

Joining the ITIA

The *Irish Translators' & Interpreters' Association* is pleased to welcome new members to the association. We currently have the following categories of membership:

- Professional
- Associate
- Corporate
- Institutional
- Student
- Honorary

Professional Membership is awarded to translators or interpreters who meet the strict criteria of the ITIA based on qualification and level of experience.

Applicants must also achieve a PASS in the annual Professional Membership Examination (translator or interpreter) set by the ITIA.

Associate Membership is available to translators and interpreters who are starting out on their careers and to those who do not work full-time as a translator or interpreter. Many members avail of Associate Membership until such time as they have acquired the requisite experience and/or qualifications to apply for Professional Membership. Associate Membership is also availed of by people with a professional interest in the professions of translation and interpreting (e.g. terminologists, translation/interpreting tutors etc.) and by those who have a general interest in these professions.

Corporate Membership is available to translation companies. As this category is currently under review, we are not accepting applications at the moment.

Institutional Membership is available to bodies that do not function as commercial agencies, for example university centres for translation and interpreting studies or cultural institutes. Application documents for Institutional membership are currently being prepared.

Student Membership is available to persons undertaking undergraduate studies in any discipline or those undertaking postgraduate studies in translation or interpreting.

Honorary Membership is awarded by the ITIA AGM to persons in Ireland or abroad who have distinguished themselves in the field of translation or interpreting. For further details and application forms, please see our website at http://tinyurl.com/y65bgtb

New Associate Members of the ITIA - December 2012

SYLWIA LUBER

ENGLISH to and from POLISH – legal, medical, general, community, literature

JOANNA MCNAMARA

ENGLISH to and from POLISH – academic, architecture, culture, arts,



Contacting the ITIA

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