



Press Release

International Translation Day 2008

Terminology: Words Matter

In honour of International Translation Day 2008, the International Federation of Translators (FIT) pays tribute to terminology and the work of terminologists. All language professionals acknowledge the crucial role of terminology. How can we translate, interpret, write or localize in the most efficient manner possible without this basic necessity, words, and therefore terminology?

Words are essential, yes, but the specific need is for words *that matter*, words that describe a previously identified concept and that contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of communication in a given field of expertise, environment or community. Words that, once linked together in guidelines and recommendations, such as ISO standards, can help us prevent the breakdown of communication between speakers and can promote the interoperability of systems around the world. And finally, words that carry considerable weight when the circumstances so require. Affairs of state, public security, pandemics and natural disasters are examples of situations where clear communication, whether in a single language or in many languages, is essential. None of this would be possible without standardized terminology, which allows us to speak with one voice.

UNESCO and the United Nations have proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages and are asking Member States to promote, protect and preserve the diversity of languages spoken by people around the world. This protection entails recognition of the words used by these people, and specifically the terminology established by experts in all realms of human activity. These experts are terminologists.

“The first instrument of a people’s genius is its language,” UNESCO points out in its proclamation, quoting Stendhal. It is this instrument that FIT wants to promote by placing terminology at the forefront on International Translation Day 2008. The day’s theme will be *Terminology: Words Matter*, thus highlighting a profession that is still overlooked and yet indispensable; a profession that is often practised out of the limelight but that has an undeniable economic value; a profession that is on its way to gaining recognition in universities, where it will finally be taught as a discipline in its own right.

FIT invites you to pay homage to the work of terminologists, those creators of state-of-the-art technolinguistic tools, lexicons, glossaries, and terminology and linguistic databanks that constitute the work tools of choice for all language professionals, but most of all, artisans of *words that matter*.

The International Federation of Translators is the world federation of professional associations bringing together translators, interpreters and terminologists. It has 80 member bodies in over 60 countries and thus represents over 400 000 professionals.

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