They say good news have to be shared, don't they. Find out about the latest news and trends in remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) below! One of the good news about RSI is that it is here to stay!

Between my RSI and translation projects, I usually attend around two CPD events a month. I have recently attended three very enriching CPD events on brain health and resilience, and RSI, set up by a well-known health coach and a major RSI provider.

Gabriela Bocanete's webinar on **neuroplasticity, brain health and resilience** was an eye opener. We started with some gentle 'office yoga' exercises, to help boost brain health. Exercise is not only good for circulation, delivering more oxygen and nutrients to the body and the brain; it also helps remove metabolic waste, reduces stress, improves mood, and creates proteins that stimulate new brain cell formation. We were also reminded about the importance of avoiding too much stress and having a good diet (including fresh walnuts to help our brains) and a regular sleep pattern, to help the body's healing mechanisms. These simple things are so often forgotten, in our busy lives!

DS Interpretation Inc.'s (US) November and December 2020 'Coffee Chats' on **remote simultaneous interpreting** (RSI) were fascinating - with participants from 25 countries, and outstanding speakers: Henrikas Urbonas of Interactio, Toon Gevaert of QuaQua, Andrea Caniato, Sheila Shermet, David Violet and Klaus Ziegler. An online poll revealed that **Interprefy, Interactio, Kudo, and Voiceboxer** (in decreasing order) were **remote simultaneous interpreters' favourite platforms**. Interactio is used for EU meetings and has apparently gathered groups of up to 10,000 attendees … Anything is possible through technology! **QuaQua** (which means 'anywhere' in Latin) replicates the Bosch console conference interpreters used for on-site meetings before the Covid crisis.

Remote meetings in the language industry are growing, due to the restrictions linked to the Covid pandemic, as people have to work remotely, and **the trend is set to continue in 2021 and beyond**. However, it is thought that **hybrid meetings** will become more popular (with participants on site being streamed out), as the Coronavirus vaccine proves successful. Among exciting news for 2021 is Interprefy's roll out of a new platform interface for interpreters, and a new booking platform for their clients.

RSI interpreters stand out, not just through their **qualifications**, but also through their **training, certifications and experience, which are vital elements in RSI platforms/agencies using interpreters' services** - hence the importance of regularly attending CPD events. Personally, having a good visual memory, I like to take notes on my laptop during these events, so I can refer back to them whenever required.

With regards to RSI platforms used for events where interpreting services are required, **Zoom and MS Teams** might be simple to use and generally offer better sound quality (in the case of Zoom). However, they are generally not suitable for this type of event. Platforms like Kudo (and Interprefy, quite soon) provide **integration for Zoom and MS Teams**.

Despite interoperability being an advantage, platforms like **Interprefy, Interactio, Kudo, QuaQua and Voiceboxer** are increasingly popular. These well-known platforms will help **run events a lot more smoothly, facilitating better quality communication** between delegates and interpreters alike, and **enhancing sound quality**; **technical support** is also available before and during the whole event. These elements combined will **make a huge difference! Event organisers can book their events straight from the above platforms website**, which is an invaluable time-saver.

However, several factors will make an event truly successful. **The interpreters, delegates and speakers having the right audio equipment and internet settings** was the main factor in making an event successful - ideally a headset and a microphone, or a headset with integrated microphone, and an ethernet

connection through a router. In a poll carried out during DS Interpretation Inc.'s 'Coffee Chats', 32% of interpreters highlighted poor **audio** from speakers as a major issue, as well as clients not being sufficiently **trained** on the platforms they use, and them not being aware of **RSI best practices**.

Participants agreed that a quick reminder on the client's screen at the beginning of the event, reminding them about the **technical requirements and general guidelines** would greatly help clients, platforms/agencies and interpreters alike have a smoother and more pleasant experience of their event … and who doesn't want that!

Platforms not being ISO compliant in the practice (despite their claims), and interpreters being commoditised and too many technical demands being placed upon them, were other issues mentioned.

As part of continuous improvement, it was suggested interpreting platforms operators should make their platform more accessible to their clients by using a **tier system catering for their clients' varied needs**, and that **in-depth training and guidelines** should be routinely provided to the client before their event – as they are to interpreters. With a little bit of practice, RSI platform users will only wonder why they didn't use these platforms earlier!

As an alternative to the interpreters wearing a headset with an integrated microphone or a separate microphone, the effectiveness of using a sound card (worth around €12) and lapel microphone (worth around €10) - which is used for TV interviews, was demonstrated by one of the speakers. This equipment works, provided the interpreting platform gives enough bit rates and has the proper equipment to make them work.

The **unreliable sound quality** of the main platforms and the way they **fail to protect interpreters' hearing** and to abide by **standard health and safety measures** (for instance, to prevent **sound shock**, when a speaker's volume is very loud, after a speaker's low volume) was also mentioned as a common issue, which greatly affects interpreters' work in the shorter and longer term.

The participants all agreed clients are often unaware of simple steps which would make an event run smoothly, i.e.:

- Using a standard **ethernet connection** through a cable connected to a router, in order to ensure a stable connection. This is **simple, cheap and very effective**, even when the router is on another floor.
- Working in a **quiet room**, with cell phones/mobile and PC/laptop notifications on silent, windows and doors shut, no pets present, etc.
- **Switching the microphone on only when speaking, and switching it off when not speaking.** The background noise and overlapping voices can be very distracting for interpreters, who have to give 100% of their energy listening to, and interpreting, what the speaker is saying in the target language.
- Using **sufficient light** in the room where the event is taking place.
- During the event, the interpreter's work will be enhanced if he/she can see the speaker's face, lip movement and body language. To facilitate this, the speaker will need to put his/her **camera to eye level**.
- Allowing time for **interpreters and speakers to talk before the event starts**, so they can familiarise themselves one with the other.
- **Sharing the presentations** used during an event with the interpreters at the very least a few days before the event. This will greatly help the interpreters, allowing them to put time aside in their

often busy work schedule to prepare the relevant terminology (they receive presentations just the day before, in most cases).

If at all possible, the speaker should **use the same language throughout the event**, and avoid switching from one to the other, so participants and interpreters know which channel to use.

A bad connection from the speaker with intermittent sound, sound shock and a loud, distracting environment will cause fatigue for interpreters, and make their job a lot harder – and all should be done in order to avoid this.

The main platforms have advised they are intending to work on the points raised above, for everyone's benefit. Interestingly, these are mentioned in the latest draft of ISO 24019, which you will find at https://www.iso.org/standard/77590.html.

Following DS Interpretation Inc.'s latest Coffee Chats, **interpreters' recommendations (or 'Wish Lists') will be forwarded to the main interpreting platforms providers** … so watch this space!

I found out about **DS Interpretation Inc.'s Coffee Chats** while looking for CPD events on LinkedIn, and I would recommend them to anyone. **Do keep on eye on their invitation to their next Coffee Chat on LinkedIn in early 2021!**

I would just like to finish by wholeheartedly thanking Naomi Bowman, of DS Interpretation Inc., for the invaluable work she is doing on behalf of the interpreting profession, and on behalf of RSI.