



Freelancer spotlight

Gain inspiration
from other
translator's stories

Jo Bate-Clarke

Language pairs:
FR-EN

SDL*

Why did you get into translation?

I fell into languages quite simply because I didn't really enjoy any other subjects at school! I loved the challenge that learning French posed (plus it reminded me of happy family holidays in France!) and when it came to choosing a degree it seemed like the obvious choice! At this point I had no idea what I would do after graduating, but hey, I had 4 years to think about that. After graduating I got a job working for a large camping company as a buyer. It took 10 months of buying tent and caravan inventory and a lot of soul-searching for me to realise that I wanted French to play a much more central role in my day to day work. I applied to study a master's degree in translation studies at the University of Manchester and the rest is history!

What makes a good, professional translator?

Simply knowing two languages does not make a good translator. Translators need to be analytical, curious, have excellent research skills and an eye for detail and, perhaps most-importantly of all, have excellent writing skills in their target language.

Do you have any suggestions of first steps for people new to freelance translating?

While I was writing my dissertation for my master's I got a job working as a project manager for a local translation agency. This experience proved invaluable and I would highly recommend this path to any aspiring freelance translator. It gave me an insight into how the industry worked and equipped me with the practical skills I needed to eventually go freelance. I learnt about CAT tools, prospecting, price negotiation, file types, DTP, rates...the list goes on! I would also suggest registering with pro-bono organisations requiring translation. I found that the deadlines were often more generous (so I could fit the work in around my studies) and their acceptance criteria was less demanding.

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Where would you advise freelancers, who are new to the industry, to look for help?

Industry organisations such as the ITI and IOL are a great source of information and training. Proz.com is perhaps best known for its job board, but I use it mainly for its termbase and webinars. The company directory is also a great resource for finding potential future clients.

Any hints and tips for a successful career in translation?

Perseverance and dogged determination! You will have weeks with no work followed by weeks with too much work, you may get negative feedback and will probably receive very little praise, but you have to remember why you do what you do and keep at it!

How can technology help?

I am an advocate for using translation technology as it can often increase productivity and improve quality.

Specific SDL Trados Studio features or functionality you most like using or find of benefit?

I love the new merge segment feature! This not only allows for greater creativity, it also ensures that the TM is accurate in terms of source and target segment pairings.

Do you have any SDL Trados Studio hints and tips you might like to share?

After years of squinting at the screen in an attempt to read segments containing tiny text, I've discovered that you can easily set a minimum source and target font size by going to File>Options>Editor >Font adaptation>Adapt font sizes. This has changed my life!

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translation software
- **SDL Trados Studio** -
for free!