

From the President

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Around our Center, there's an unwritten rule that "Peter gets techie info strictly on a need-to-know basis." It probably says more about my technical abilities than I'd care to admit, but after a lot of years together, it's a relationship that seems to work—or maybe everyone's just very polite. We all have our specialties. I suspect mine are networks of the people kind and the politics that inevitably go along with technology. I'm just very thankful that I belong to a group here, and throughout IALLT, that is by nature extremely supportive and generous with their knowledge and time.

The conference at Ann Arbor was a superb illustration of how that can work. Monika Dressler and her team at the University of Michigan probably had their 'moments,' as all conferences do behind the scenes. The hill-climbing is often what makes the view at the top even better. We saw nothing but the best. It was a large conference, with a very well-balanced and wide-ranging program (Bruce Parkhurst and her committee worked their magic again), but it still had that IALLT 'feel' that so many people comment on about our organization. Great job; wonderful conference in every respect.

IALLT 2003 demonstrated again that the one overriding common factor we have in supporting language learning and teaching is the sheer variety of technical skills and people—arts that we need. That comes out very clearly if you look at the IALLT Statement on Professional Responsibilities on our website. To be honest, we all know that the Statement was dated almost as soon as it was published. It is, obviously, a living document. It will change as we will. For instance, how many of you are now looking at wireless technologies, remote-access issues, or metadata and tagging standards? If the political will in post-9/11 Washington and post-July 2003 Brussels (new policy on Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity) to generate more competent speakers of the less-commonly-taught languages ever translates into reality, it is likely to involve some or all three of those technological concerns. Not to mention data-security. Those issues are just as much a concern for supporting the frequently-taught languages. (And—not incidentally—if you have experiences and comments about any of these emerging fields, and care to put them in writing, I can recommend a very good place to publish them: Andrew Ross, our almost-new Editor of this Journal will be happy to hear from you.

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The almost-new Board of IALLT that began its work at Ann Arbor inherited two brand new editions of our flagship Manuals (they can be ordered online, if you don't have them yet) and took on some new initiatives. For instance, we are re-starting the IALLT Monograph Series; and we will begin to survey the state of the LRC-nation, to create a better network and closer understanding of the different ways our members work. In a general sense, we want to continue raising the services to our members, so that IALLT plays its part in our members' earning the recognition of our increasingly complex professional contributions. In that spirit, we have recently: begun creating a new relationship with publishers of CALL software, through a digital exchange of their copyright materials and our own members' creations; filled a Council position to improve our relations with K-12 language teachers; begun exploring new possibilities for collaboration with our sister organizations, here and abroad. With your input, and contributions from an IALLT Council that has some new and very talented members joining a core of experienced members, we can look forward to a vigorous next few years. ♦