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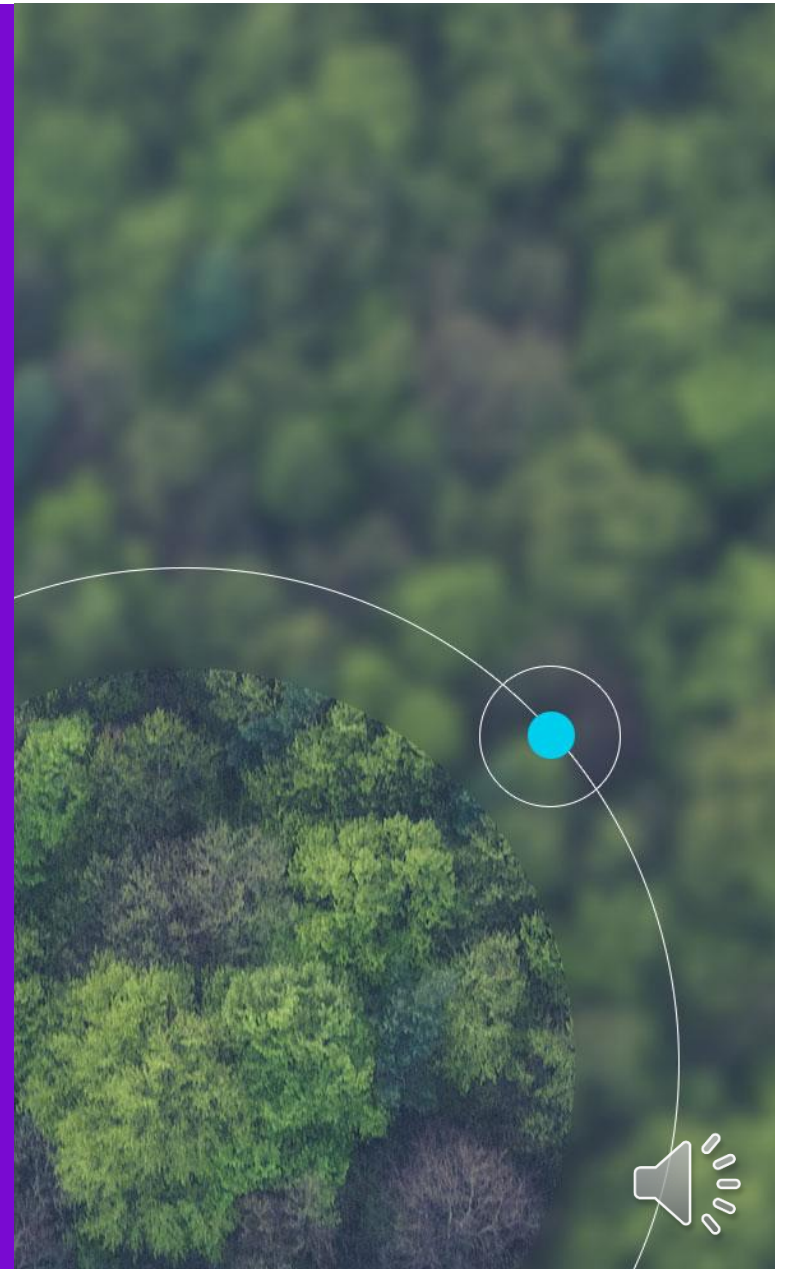
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A Brief Overview

- Blind spots and information flow

- What do translators really think of MT?

- The challenge facing translators

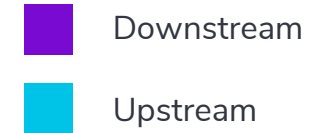- Impacts in the short and long term

- Recommendations

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Blind Spots and Information Flow

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Know How Your Information Flows

Downstream

Upstream

Decision-makers

Executives and
upper management

Facilitators

Middle management,
service coordinators,
project managers

Production

Translators, editors,
and other linguists

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What Do Translators Really Think of MT?

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Positive feedback

"MT frees me up for other, more valuable tasks."

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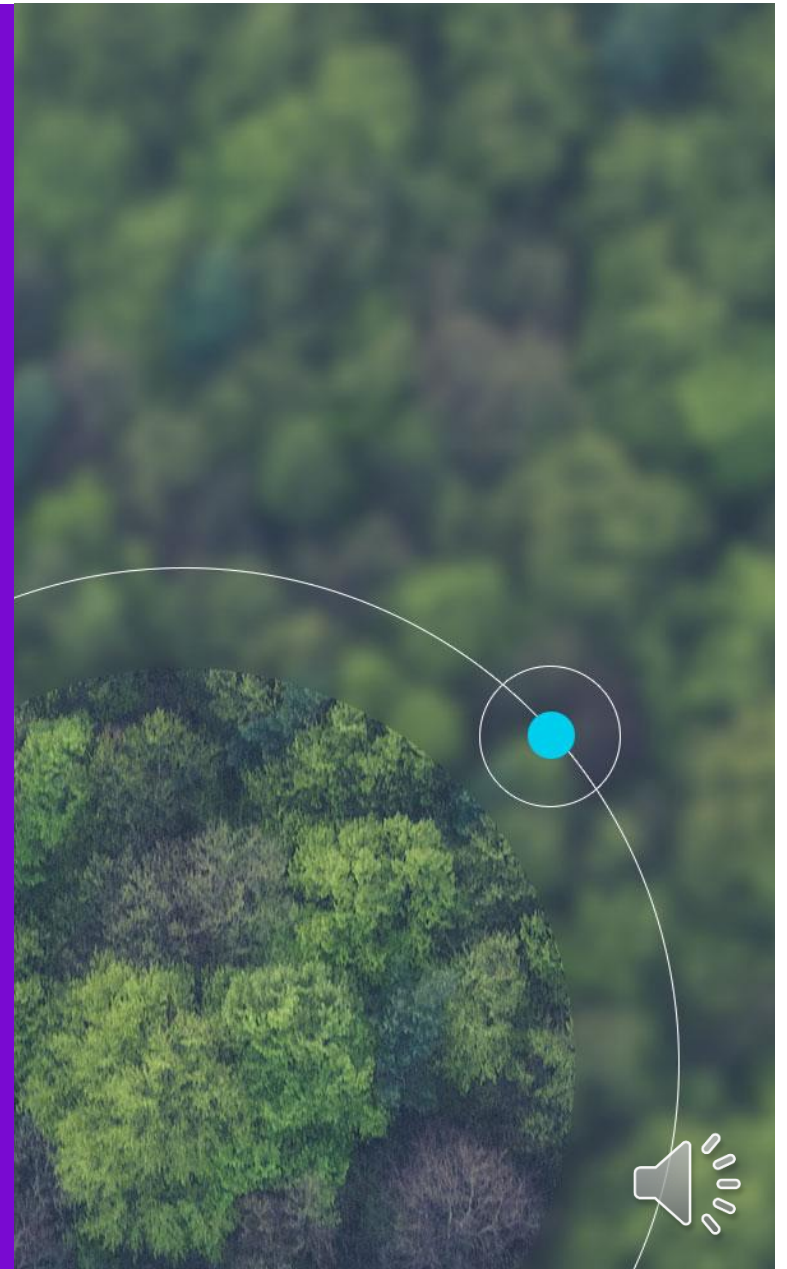
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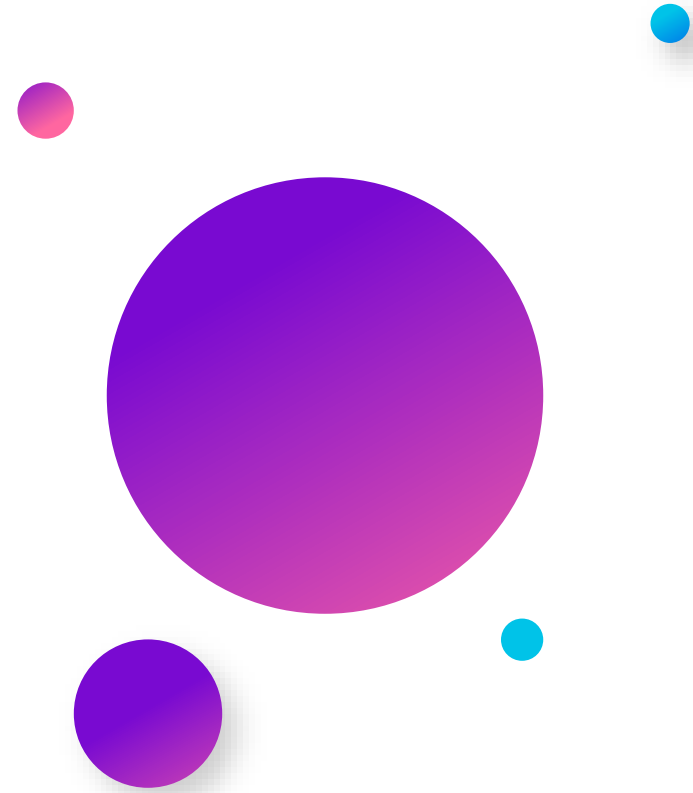
Negative feedback

"This is more work than translating from scratch."

"I don't know why it's making these errors."

The Challenge Facing Translators

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A Challenging Situation

TRANSLATORS BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

LESS PAY

LSPs tend to prorate what they pay for MT post-editing services, sometimes to a significant degree.

MORE WORK

In particular, high-quality translators view poorly implemented MT as a hindrance to their work.

MORE TEDIOUS

Long intervals between retraining MT engines can lead to frustration on the translator's part.
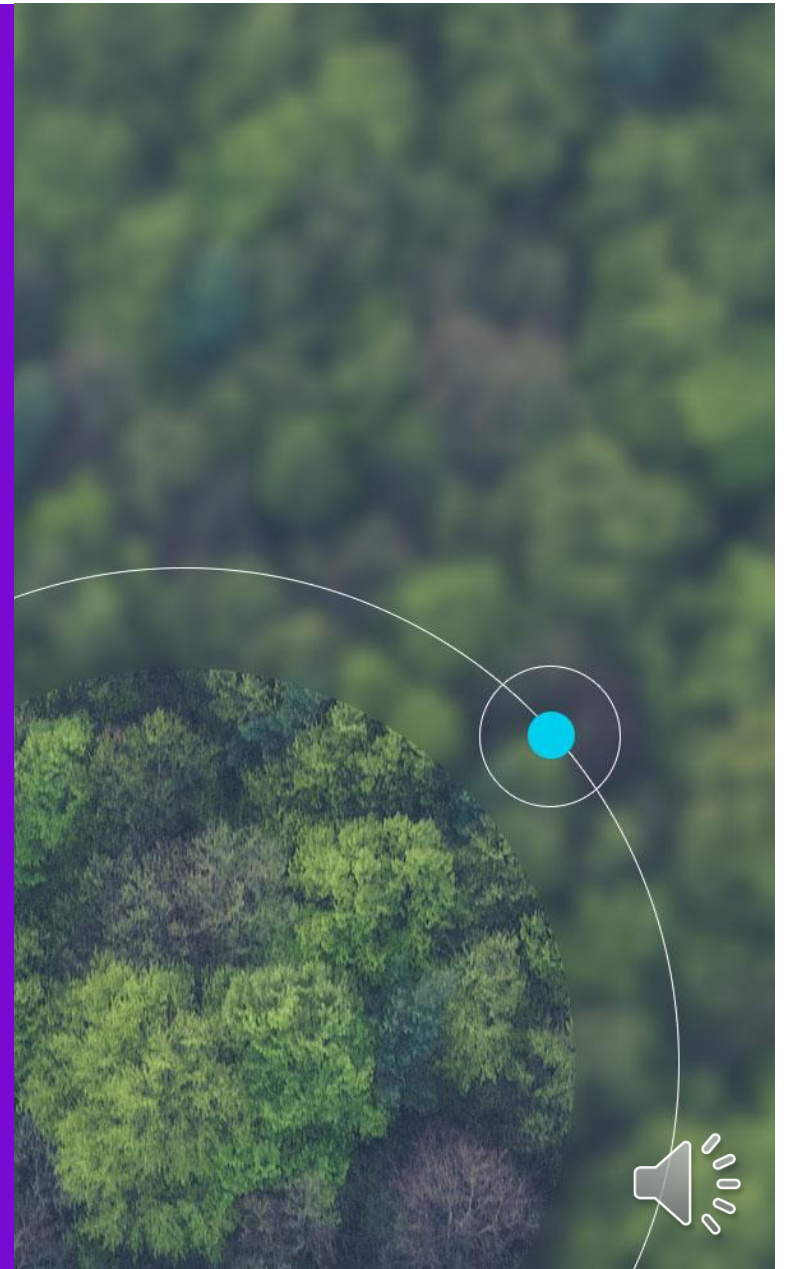
DEAF EARS

Bottom-up feedback that is ignored can act as a significant demotivating force.

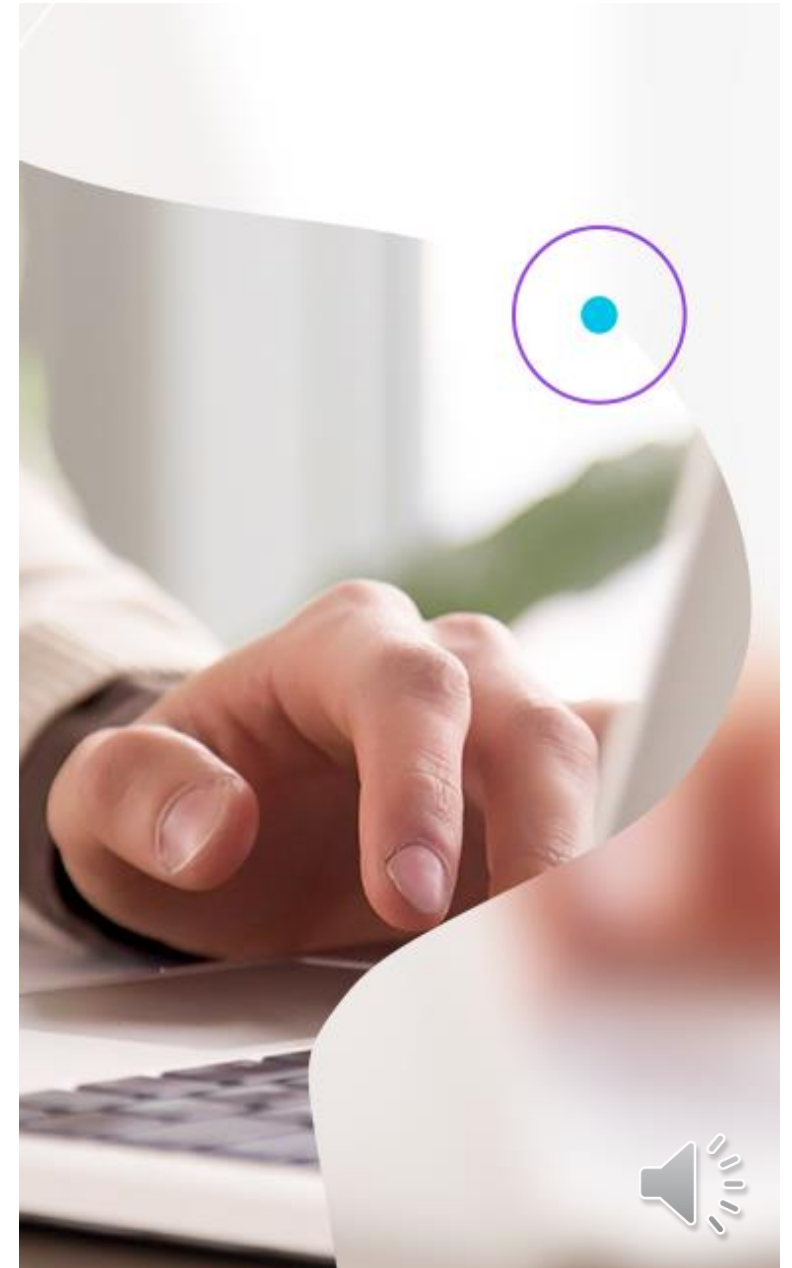"Is this kind of work still worth doing?"

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Impacts in the Short and Long Term

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Short term

Translators dealing with poorly implemented MT are often unfocused, unmotivated, and less effective. This could produce the following short term impacts:

- Translators increasingly reject MT post-editing jobs

- Translators raise rates to compensate for prorated pay

- Organizations see declining quality, similar overall costs, and diminished capacity

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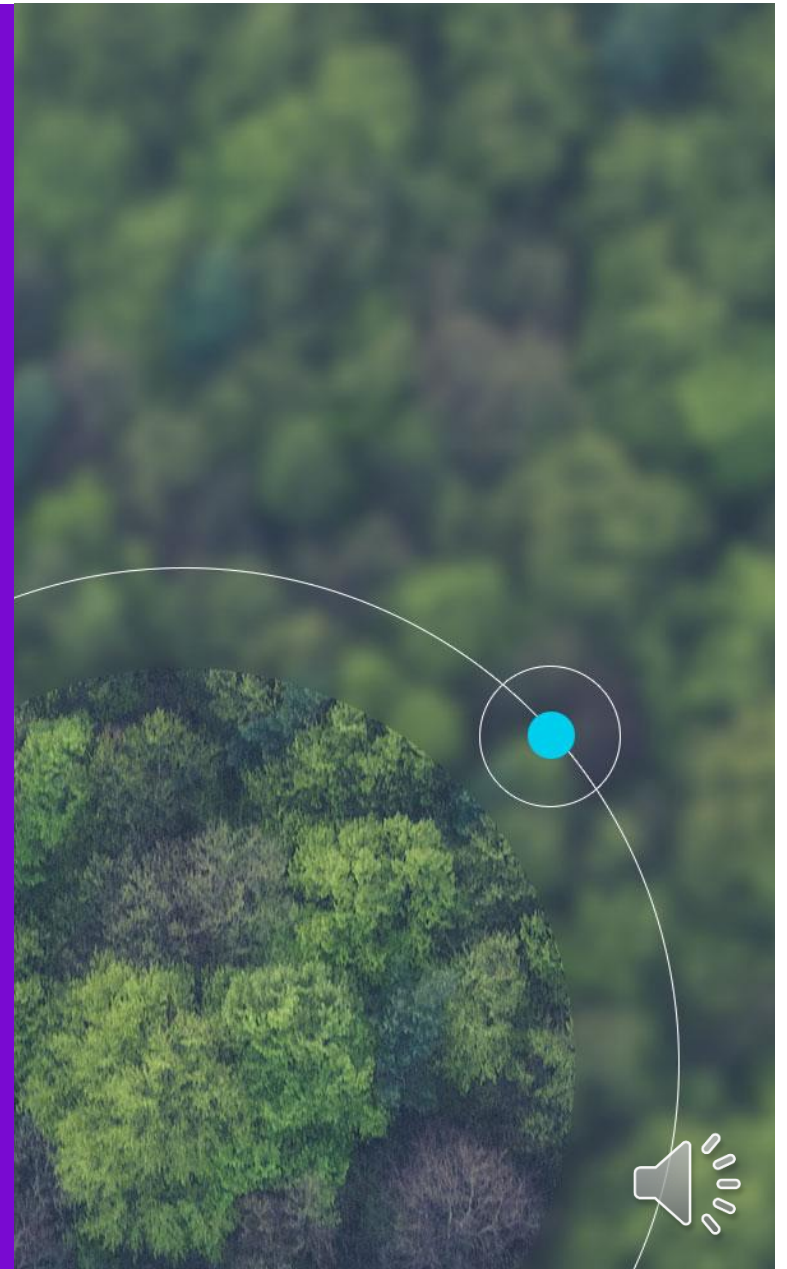
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Long term

Sustained negative attitudes toward MT and frustration with the post-editing process can be a serious demotivating force for translators. This can produce the following long term impacts:

- Translators leave the talent pool permanently

- The availability of highly-skilled professionals drops below critical thresholds
- Organizations face serious challenges to profitability and ultimately an existential threat

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Recommendations

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Countermeasures

KEEPING YOUR EYES OPEN

Be diligent in implementing MT

Give yourself the best chance for successful MT integration and translator retention. Don't rush implementation.

Don't reduce rates prematurely

Make sure your translators are fully on board with the concept of MT before you think about adjusting their pay.

Establish upstream feedback channels

You can't react to outcomes you don't know about. Take measures to acquire reliable, actionable information.

Act on upstream feedback

Use feedback to improve your MT systems and processes. It can help keep translators at the top of their game and bolster profitability.

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Thank You

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