

Report of the New Media Group TTW 1997

I. Activities of the New Media Group

For 5 days, from May 12-16, the New Media Group of the 1997 TTW met to discuss translation theory and faithfulness and to make practical application of these to new media scripture productions. The multimedia symposium which preceded the TTW formed a valuable and stimulating background to the work of the group. Introductory papers on categorization and approaches to the issue of faithfulness were presented by Joy Sisley, Julian Sundersingh, and Robert Hodgson. A semiotic approach to the analysis of biblical texts and the faithfulness of new media scripture productions was presented and used during the week to evaluate several Scripture video productions. This was found to be one model that may be useful for translation officers in the evaluation of new media scripture products.

A working committee also met during the week and prepared a draft document of guidelines for the involvement of translation officers in new media productions. On the final day, this draft document was presented to the group for review and approval. The draft document approved by the group and being presented to TTW is in the form of an outline of material to be included in the UBS handbook being prepared on video production by the UBS Media Working Group. It is proposed that a working group of translation officers be involved in the preparation of the material related to translation for new media.

It was recognized that Bible societies are proceeding with the production of new media scripture products, whether they be regarded as Scripture products, Scripture engagement, Scripture study, or Scripture promotion materials. In any case translation officers must be involved in the process of assuring the appropriate and faithful use of Scripture in these products. Among the concerns expressed and discussed in the group were in what sense these products may be considered Scripture and the how translation officers who are trained in the translation of texts may be involved in the checking of new media productions. The group recognized the need for extensive education and training of translation officers in order to fulfill this new role in relation to new media products adequately. It was reported to the group that the UBS is preparing plans for such education and training.

II. Production and Evaluation Guidelines for Translation Officers Working with New Media Products

A. General Remarks

In producing and evaluating Bible products in new media, Translation Officers (Tos) must be engaged at five levels: Concept, Treatment, Script, Rough Cuts, and Approval. Tos must be particularly vigilant in those cases where a new media product claims to be

Scripture.

Ideally, TOs will work in teams or groups, meeting face to face or using modern communications technology. Where possible, more than one TO should be involved in a team or group.

During production and evaluation, TOs should concentrate on what they do best--advocating and assuring fidelity to the biblical message. In a spirit of cooperation, they should allow production experts to do what they do best--putting the biblical message in new media, but both involved in the total experience.

Scheduling the involvement of TOs in a production plan should be done with as much advance notice as possible.

B. Five Levels of Engagement

1. Concept

- a. TOs should provide an in-depth exegesis of the passage under consideration, giving information on focus, characters, and background.
- b. This exegesis should also indicate key images and sounds implicit in the biblical text.
- c. TOs should provide the production unit with this information in a form the unit's personnel can understand.
- d. TOs should check that audience research is conducted.

2. Treatment

- a. TOs should be involved in the development of all treatments so that the treatments in terms of purpose, outline, and narrative shape are appropriate to the exegesis of the passage.
- b. TOs should be involved in the analysis of the target audience and culture and should review all treatments to see if they are appropriate to the audience and culture being targeted.

3. Script, Scenario, Storyboards.

- a. TOs should evaluate all scripts and storyboards for faithfulness to the exegesis of the passage.
- b. TOs should evaluate all scripts and storyboards for appropriateness to target audience and culture.

4. Rough Cuts

- a. TOs should review the total presentation of the product to determine if it is faithful to the biblical passage and to assure themselves that it contains no inconsistent or contradictory material. Elements to consider include word, sound, image, purpose, and genre.
- b. TOs should determine if Scripture is the determining factor in the product.

- c. TOs should submit suggestions for all revisions and corrections to the production unit.
- d. TOs should check that pre-testing is done of the rough cuts.

5. Final Approval

- a. TOs should check to see if all corrections and changes have been made and if all additions are consistent with the biblical message and purpose.
- b. TOs should review the total presentation of the product to determine if it is still faithful to the biblical passage and to assure themselves that it contains no inconsistent or contradictory material. Elements to consider include word, sound, image, purpose, and genre.
- c. TOs should study the results of field testing and evaluation prior to approval by them and the review panel to which they belong.
- d. Continuing testing and evaluation should continue after the release and distribution of the production with TOs involved in the study of the results.

C. Conclusion.

As this draft of guidelines illustrates, the TOs should be involved in the total review process at both the level of production and evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Coordinators