

get a reply in that language."

In 2001, when the European Commission moved towards what the BBC termed "bureaucratic reform," the French and the Germans "detected a plot to secure the supremacy of English by stealth." Whether the result of a surreptitious plan or a mere fait accompli, the de facto language of communication is increasingly English. A decade ago, most EU documents were drafted in French. Now, says the BBC, "nearly two-thirds are in English."

In the meantime, though, most states zealously preserve their right to make their case in their national language. English-Estonian? Portuguese-Slovenian? Greek-Latvian? If you are a translator or interpreter with these language combinations, Brussels or Luxembourg may be the place for you.

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Legal Codes of Four Latin-American Nations on the Web

Allan F. Amaya

we had access to primary or secondary source material that would help us to see terms or expressions in context. Specialized dictionaries may thoroughly define these terms, but often do not provide examples of the proper context in which to apply them.

For example, when translating an order of extradition to be submitted to a sovereign nation to demand the return of a fugitive accused of a crime, wouldn't it be useful to have access to the penal code of that nation in order to track the corresponding terms habitually used in extradition matters of that nation?

Imagine my delight when through recent research I found the web site of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Dominican Republic, with links to the country's civil and penal codes as well procedural laws. Few web sites of foreign nations catalog their codes as thoroughly as has been done here. Of course, if it were only a catalog of laws, the web site would be of limited use, but the web page also contains links to the actual text of the codes.

Start your consultation on www.suprema.gov.do. Go to the drop-down list on the right, click "consulta" and you will see a list of links. Click on "consulta constitución y códigos." A page will appear that is divided in two. On the left is a drop-down list of topics and on the right is a window where you would enter the code or article if you knew the specific number you were interested in. However, if you just click on "ejecutar" you will get a drop-down list of articles by subject and number for easy reference. For example, if you were looking for the civil procedure code, you would see all 1,040 articles listed by topic and number.

The web sites of Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Venezuela are also well-designed and available for consultation. They are, respectively:

<http://www.lexjuris.com/lexleyes.htm>

<http://www.leyesnet.com/Codigos.asp>

<http://comunidad.derecho.org/pantin/legis.html>

(The Venezuelan site even includes some tasteful background piano music!) I hope you will find these four reference sites as enjoyable and useful as I have. These sites, and others like them, provide ample justification for computers and Internet service to be provided to interpreters at their worksites. Regrettably, many courts have not yet understood that interpreters require access to specialized reference material, most of which is readily available on the internet. We hope this anti-computer bias will soon be a vestige of past administrations.

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