

Mastervoice PTP Trial Report: A cloud interpreting solution by interpreter consultant Eric Bauwelinck, owner of top 15 global interpreting company Mastervoice Ltd., and author of “Voices from Above” – A Journey from Onsite to Online Interpreting (2017).

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How it works: I Preparing your “Booth in the Cloud”

The Translation Commons Interpreting Think Tank Team has evaluated a new product, Mastervoice PTP¹ by consultant interpreter Eric Bauwelinck and online videoconferencing partner Teleportel. This browser-based Video Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (VRSI) application with real-time language distribution enables interactive natural dialogues between 2 (PTP) locations and allows for more participants in its MTP² version.

Before you start, make sure you have a PC that runs Windows 8, Windows 8.1, Windows 10 (recommended) or Mac OS x compatible with MS OS x 10.12 or above with an Intel Pentium 4 processor or later and a browser Google Chrome Version 36 or later. Furthermore, you will need a professional headset and a broadband Internet connection (both wired) with a minimum bandwidth of 300kb for the video and only 64kb for the audio; as well as a connected camera SD, HD or full HD.

You are required to run a first-time diagnostics test one day in advance of the planned session and at least one hour before all subsequent sessions. With the secured hyperlink identifying you as the interpreter, you connect to the user interface portal to test the audio microphone, by playing a test sound, as well as the speaker and camera. This is all you need to do before you start interpreting.

How it works: II “Interpreting from the Cloud”

After confirming the automated log-in code identifying you as the interpreter and pressing ‘Submit’, you will go to the Interpreter User Interface; which consists of two windows, one for each participant and each with a Cough Button and a Speak Button. As in a standard interpreter desk, the Speak Button changes from green to red once pressed to speak. After the first 7 or 8 minutes, I felt as comfortable as in the usual booth. I need to stress that I presently live in a very quiet working environment with a very low noise level and that is **an overall requirement for video remote interpreting**. The dialogue between speaker and listener was completely fluent with no noticeable latencies.

After enabling the camera, I was able to see both participants. However, the camera is switched off by default in the Interpreter User Interface for privacy and quality-of-service reasons (QOS) and to save bandwidth if needed. In cases where the camera is not activated by either the participants or by the interpreter, both windows show the status of the participants as well as a visual of presentations when used. This application is ideal for short dialogues or conference sessions between 2 locations with interactive simultaneous interpreting from and into the source and target languages.

¹ PTP: Point-to-Point

² MTP: Multi-Point

Sound quality for the interpreter – trial experience and audio standards

The trial was setup between Eric Bauwelinck and Arturo Bobea as participants. I was interpreting from and into German and Spanish. I could hear the participants very clearly and “with comfort”, even at a very low volume. Eric kindly explained that this is due to the symmetrical (up/down) communication - with minimum latency and real-time language distribution - that the PTP cloud solution offers. This can be combined with streaming to connect to larger international audiences.

For the tech-savvy or interested, the Internet-based application is **compliant with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) standards**. The audio requirements are compliant with ISO/IEC Internet voice coding and compression standards allowing the application to scale in the full spectrum from low bit rate speech input to high quality audio output.

For the less tech-savvy but tech-interested, like myself, the digital sound processing from this **100% cloud interpreting solution** relies upon the **use of audio-conferencing Internet protocols to enable real-time interactive interpreting** between 2 locations contrary to traditional video conferencing with dedicated onsite equipment in compliance with current standards for onsite equipment.

Eric Bauwelinck, author of “Voices from Above” – A Journey from Onsite to Online Interpreting

Eric is a practicing conference interpreter and an early forerunner entrepreneur trying to satisfy the needs and requirements identified for various interpreter market segments in the early days of video remote interpreting in 2010. He is convinced that the market acceptance will be accelerated by the **introduction of VRI and RSI in global organizations and institutions after their success in the private market**. In 2017, we can see that most global interpreting providers offer some form of video or remote interpreting services in response to an increasing customer demand.

Eric is the owner of Mastervoice Ltd. – at present the largest organization of conference interpreters for **onsite** simultaneous interpreting in the **European private market**. The disruptive, transformative journey from onsite to online interpreting is described in his book on video remote interpreting “Voices from Above” (www.voicesfromabove.com) – worth reading for its facts and visions.

During the course of the product trial conversations I was under the clear impression that I was talking to a genuine believer in high performance standards and an advocate for **the next generation of conference interpreters wishing to support their clients and add value to the online interpreting business; while in compliance with privacy, security and quality standards**.

Eric has a clear, distinct vision of the future of Human Interpreting from the Cloud. He believes that **onsite simultaneous interpreting will not be fully substituted by online simultaneous interpreting**, particularly in cases of highly dedicated meeting environments where **live human interaction remains the best of both worlds for the foreseeable future**.

MTV PTP & MTP: Potential market expansion for practitioners, providers and vendors.

In addition to the person-to-person (PTP) solution, Eric has co-engineered a range of remote interpreting solutions for both conversational and high-end meetings, including a **(multipoint) MTP** solution enabling online simultaneous interpreting with multiple languages and/or locations. **As opposed to the PTP trial** session I had the pleasure to evaluate, **the MTP solution has no limitations** regarding the number of languages, number of participants or number of locations. It is only dependent on the bandwidth offered by the supplier, as for any other remote service over the Internet. **More information on RSI/VRI can be found on www.mastervoice.eu.**

I believe **the interpreting industry has a role to play as an early pioneer of technological innovations** that will impact the way we work and communicate and I hope that the interpreter community will contribute by shaping it **in compliance with our quality standards and expectations**. Also, adopting new technological solutions can broaden our outreach to a much wider base and scope of potential users of simultaneous interpreting without the barriers of traditional equipment.

Mastervoice supports the concept of shared technology available for all buyers and sellers on the market: event organizers, end users, interpreters, consultant interpreters, international organizations and service providers offering interpreting-as-a-service based on monthly or annual subscription with pay-per-session options on the side of the end user clients who use this service. For this purpose it can be marketed **as private label application for personal branding**; which basically means that you can use your own name or company name when targeting your own clients and markets.

Eric's vision has much to offer:

- A **shared collaborative platform** to the professional market of interpreting.
- A **business model** that he firmly believes will become the new trend **for online simultaneous interpreting**.
- An **interpreting solution** that matches the **spirit of a new emerging reality of Collaborative Commons** facilitated by **Digital Transformation**

Thank you very much **Eric**, for all the insight you have given.

Thank you very much, **Diana Nisterenková-Chester** and **Jeannette Stewart** for **your help and contribution** to this article.