CIUTIBXL27

20–21 May 2027 | Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium

CALL FOR PAPERS

Racing the Machine or Reclaiming the Narrative: Human Agency in a Tech-Driven Profession

This international conference brings together translation scholars, professionals and trainers to place human agency at the centre of reflection on contemporary translation in a rapidly transforming language services sector.

The notion of "racing the machine" captures the sense of urgency currently felt across the translation and interpreting professions, as technological innovation advances at a pace that often appears to outstrip human adaptation. In this framing, professionals, trainers and institutions risk being positioned in a reactive mode, continuously adjusting to new tools and workflows rather than actively shaping their integration.

The phrase "reclaiming the narrative" foregrounds human agency not as competition with technology, but as the capacity to critically appropriate, guide and reframe it. While the characterisation of translation as a "tech-driven profession" is itself open to discussion, the increasing role of technology means that agency increasingly resides in the ability to set boundaries, define quality standards and articulate the value of human judgement in contexts where automation is expanding.

Rather than a binary opposition between humans and machines, the challenge becomes one of co-construction, in which all stakeholders actively participate in shaping how technologies are embedded in professional workflows, training and policy. Reclaiming the narrative thus implies remaining open to technological change but engaging with it in ways that preserve critical oversight, ethical responsibility and professional identity.

The current pace of technological change in translation calls for coordinated and forward-looking action across multiple fronts. Machine translation and generative AI are evolving rapidly, while training programmes, professional practices and regulatory frameworks adapt at uneven speeds. This situation creates both challenges and opportunities, particularly with regard to ensuring that translator education remains closely aligned with professional realities.

In this context, the conference seeks to provide an international forum for interdisciplinary, critical, empirically grounded and theoretically informed contributions examining the impact of artificial intelligence on translation as a practice, a profession and an educational field.

While translator education is an important strand of the discussion, the aim is to extend the conversation beyond translation didactics to encompass the broader professional, technological, institutional, ethical and societal questions raised by AI.

The diversity of positions within the translation community, including calls for greater caution around AI adoption, forms an integral part of this debate and points to the need for a measured and critically informed approach.

The conference therefore welcomes contributions that engage with these challenges and advance our understanding of AI's evolving role in translation, drawing on perspectives from across translation studies and related areas of inquiry.

Conference Themes

We invite submissions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Historical, contemporary and future developments in machine translation technologies
- The implications of technological development for translation theory
- Translator training, curriculum design and pedagogical innovation in the age of AI
- Quality norms, evaluation frameworks and "fit-for-purpose" translation
- Accessibility
- Reconfigurations of professional identity (translator, post-editor, language specialist)
- Translation policy, governance and institutional responses to AI integration

In addition to the contributions selected through this open call, the conference programme will feature panel sessions organised by the CIUTI Board.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

We invite proposals, in English or French, for individual research papers and posters which will be presented in a dedicated session. Abstracts should not exceed 300 words, excluding references.

Authors submitting a paper proposal are also invited to indicate whether they would be willing to present their work as a poster should no slot be available in the main programme.

All submissions will undergo anonymous peer review to assess their academic quality, relevance to the conference themes and clarity of presentation.

Individual presentations will be allocated 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for questions and discussion.

Detailed guidelines for poster preparation will be provided upon acceptance.

How to Submit Your Abstract

Step 1 — Create an account

If you do not already have a SciencesCONF account, register at:

https://www.sciencesconf.org/

Step 2 — Submit your abstract

Log in and submit your abstract via the conference website:

https://ciutibxl2027.sciencesconf.org/

IMPORTANT DATES

29 January 2027 — Abstract submission deadline

26 February 2027 — Notification of acceptance

20 April 2027 — Registration deadline *(date to be confirmed)*

19-20 May 2027 – General Assembly

20–21 May 2027 — CIUTIBXL27 International Conference, Université libre de Bruxelles, Brussels

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CONFERENCE FEES

Regular participants: €130

Students: €90

The registration fee includes the conference pack, book of abstracts, lunches and coffee breaks.

ULB ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Valérie CRATE, Frédéric LOHEST, Géraldine LONNOY, Jean-Manuel ROY, Sabine SCHMITZ, Sonja JANSSENS, Alba OCAMPO LAGO (Chair of the Organising Committee).

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CONTACT

For questions or additional information, please write to ciutibxl27@ulb.be.