# PRESS REVIEW 2020

## CONTINUATION OF COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORMING ABOUT THE JITSI PROJECT AIIC SWITZERLAND

## A platform by and for interpreters: engaging with platform development to reflect a changing profession

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The interpreting world we once knew has been turned upside down by the Covid-19 pandemic. The "digital revolution" has suddenly and dramatically caught up with our profession. A new, hybrid market has emerged, attracting recruiting platforms which already existed before the crisis, but which have been quick to seize the opportunity. In the face of this new reality, AIIC Switzerland has set up a working group to consider a possible Jitsi platform, and it is this project we wish to support for the reasons set out below.

Of course, we will always prefer working on site, with sound coming directly from the meeting room, real-life colleagues, sound technicians and, more generally, a profession with human interaction. It's also true that AIIC should continue to promote on-site interpreting, above all for the good of our health and the status of our profession.

Nevertheless, we simply cannot ignore the tsunami unleashed by RSI. We've all been confronted with it, agreeing to work in "dispersed" teams, in spite of the dangers it poses to our markets and our health. Some people think these platforms will disappear or struggle once the pandemic is over; we're not so convinced. Now that a cheaper or in some respects more practical solution has appeared, it is highly likely it is here to stay, at least for the next few years.

The open-source, videoconferencing solution, Jitsi, would enable us to react to this tsunami. The project would entail creating an interpretation module for Jitsi.

Even though we might not be overly enthusiastic about RSI, such a solution would allow us to be more proactive and to regain ownership over this working tool.

Does AIIC have the appropriate legal status for creating such a tool? We would certainly need to seek legal advice on the issue. Does AIIC have the financial resources to undertake such a project? That is where we would need to show a capacity for innovation. While creating such a tool would certainly be expensive, we would be developing an entire interface to respond to our and our clients' needs. Therefore we have various ideas we would like to share. Couldn't we: reallocate to the project funds that had been set aside for events cancelled in 2020? Create a nonprofit association to enable us to raise funds (drawing on what has already been done to fund interpreter calendars)? Or use a crowdfunding approach?

In any case, it would be an opportunity to come up with an ethical solution: a platform accessible to colleagues everywhere (or to all members of an association), in collaboration with locally-recruited IT professionals, with no interest in recruiting interpreters on the other side of the world, and supported by a strategy to alert clients to the dangers of RSI. Furthermore, we would be able to set our own priorities and create a functional and professional tool (data security, user-friendly features, a real interpretation interface with a digital console, etc.).

By creating or supporting the development of a remote interpretation tool, AIIC would show itself to be a dynamic association ready to deal with the challenges of the day.  It could adopt a position that reconciles current realities with the protection of its members: RSI as a last resort, yes, but with an ethical tool, alerting clients to the conditions that are a prerequisite to professional service delivery, and without jeopardizing the health of interpreters.

The project would not be about promoting remote interpretation, but about reacting to changes that have been forced upon us. In our view, it would be well worth the effort.