

Translation Practice

Text: “Los dueños de los datos”, by Ignacio Escolar

Eldiario.es, 08/08/2020

El poder de **las grandes tecnológicas** es enorme. Son compañías tan poderosas que están transformando el mundo en el que vivimos, volando por encima de las fronteras de los países. **Sortean** las leyes **fiscales**, con su capacidad para pagar pocos impuestos por medio de complejas arquitecturas financieras que los estados donde se generan esos ingresos no son capaces de **perseguir**. Las leyes **laborales**, con esas plataformas digitales que están redefiniendo el concepto de precariedad. Las leyes sobre la **libertad de expresión**, con esta total falta de responsabilidad que permite a las redes sociales difundir mentiras y **calumnias** sin pagar el precio que hundiría a cualquier otro medio de comunicación. Las leyes antimonopolio, que **burlan** porque son regulaciones pensadas para un mundo que ya no existe, muy diferente al de hoy.

Saben más de nosotros que nosotros mismos. Es un nivel de información **masivo**, millones de veces superior a lo que ningún servicio secreto jamás soñó. Es muy complejo y muy rentable para algo muy **banal**: vendernos publicidad. Saben, casi antes que nosotros, cuándo hay algo que queremos comprar.

Los problemas más graves empiezan cuando los dueños de los datos también saben a quién vas a votar. Y cómo intentan que cambies ese voto, o que no votes. No se entiende la victoria de Trump, o el Brexit, o el auge de la extrema derecha en todo el mundo, sin la influencia de las estrategias de manipulación en redes sociales y las campañas de desinformación y de *fake news*.

El suyo es un negocio peculiar, porque gran parte de sus productos más conocidos –Facebook, Google, Gmail, Whatsapp, Youtube, Waze, Instagram...– son gratuitos. Y en ellos se cumple un **axioma** que también aplica a la prensa cuando se dedica a la propaganda: "Si no pagas no eres el cliente, eres la **mercancía**".

¿**Es un trato justo**? Depende de cómo lo mires. Tus datos, a cambio de un servicio de mensajería instantáneo y eficaz, de un correo electrónico gratuito, de un navegador GPS, de tus recuerdos de la infancia, de ponerte en contacto con tu **pandilla** del colegio, de no tener que pensar mucho qué serie nueva quieres ver, o qué canción quieres escuchar.

(361 words)

NOTE: The translation for this text is a bit freer than others. Some sentences have had to be restructured, and a few bits and bobs added to get the message across.

The main difficulties in this text are:

- Some vocabulary that has very specific translations (e.g. *calumnia*, *grandes tecnológicas*, all the legal terms) and other that is probably tricky to translate and can lead to false-friend translations (e.g. *sortear*, *burlar*, *masivo*, *banal*).
- The author has quite a flexible way of structuring sentences. The best example is the string of laws he refers to. He uses full stops to separate items of a list, so that sentences are actually verbless phrases. This could be confusing both in Spanish and in English. I took the liberty of adding some text in English to make it clearer.
- The syntax of some sentences in Spanish helps emphasise certain terms. In English, those syntactic twists do not always sound natural. Instead some words have been italicised (could be underlined in hand-written format), rephrased and added (e.g. *could ever dream of*), or shortened them for a snappier effect (e.g. *untraceable by*, *propaganda press*).

Text: “Data owners”, by Ignacio Escolar

Eldiario.es, 08/08/2020

The power of the **tech giants** is massive. These companies are so powerful / So powerful are these companies that they are transforming the world where we live, flying above country borders. They **navigate through** all sorts of **legislation**. Fiscal laws, with their ability to pay low taxes by means of complex financial architectures, **untraceable** by the states where the income is generated. **Job** laws, with digital platforms that are redefining the concept of precariousness. **Freedom of speech** laws, with that utter lack of responsibility that allows social media to spread lies and **libels** without paying the costs that would make any other type of media sink under pressure. Anti-monopoly laws, which these companies **avoid** because they are / for being regulations designed for a world that does not exist anymore, very different from today's.

They know more about us than we do. It is a **mass level of information**, a million times above what any secret service could ever dream of. It is very complex and profitable, aimed at something so **mundane**: selling us advertising. They know, almost even before we do, when there is something out that we want to buy.

The worst starts when data owners also know *who* you are going to vote for; and *how* they try to make you change that vote, or not vote at all. The victory of Trump or Brexit, or the global rise of the far-right cannot be understood without the influence of the manipulation strategies on social media and the campaigns of misinformation and fake news.

Theirs is a peculiar business, because a great part of their most-known products —Facebook, Google, Gmail, Whatsapp, YouTube, Waze, Instagram...— are free. And on those, the **axiom** often associated with propaganda press also applies: ‘If you are not paying, you are not the client, you are the **merchandise**’.

Is it a fair deal? It depends on how you look at it. Your data in exchange for an efficient instant-messaging service, a free e-mail system, a satnav, your childhood memories, being able to get back in touch with your school **gang**, not having to think too much about what series to watch next, or what song to listen to.