

**PORTABLE vs. STATIONERY INTERPRETING EQUIPMENT**

***The pros and cons of using portable "whisper" interpretation equipment vs. a stationery booth***

"Whisper" systems provide the simplest and least expensive solution to language interpretation. They are easy to use, flexible and versatile.

There's a wallet-sized transmitter for the interpreter and the receivers with headsets for the listeners. They are small FM radios.

The signal is routed from the interpreter is received by participants using individual receivers and headsets. The systems we use are completely wireless. There is no interlacing of wires and no seating restrictions.

Portable equipment was first developed as a "tour guide" interpreting system.

We use it all the time for less formal occasions, e.g. training seminars and when a group of listeners needs to be free to move around. Our tour guide system is perfect for city tours, exhibitions and trade fairs, office visits, museums, etc. It works fine in a classroom environment too, however, you have to keep in mind that the interpreter WILL ALWAYS BE THERE IN FULL VIEW.

He/she has to be very close to the speaker AND the speaker's voice ideally should be amplified (otherwise the interpreter hears his own voice, which makes it difficult for him to work). The interpreter's presence right next to the speaker, i.e. in the very center of the classroom may help your presenters.

I observed on many occasions how a good interpreter assisted in facilitation of an exchange by being in the midst of a discussion. On the other hand though, his voice, albeit very quiet, is ever present and is heard by the speakers, who occasionally may get distracted by it. The sound of the interpreter's voice may also disturb other participants who do not need the interpretation.

If your budget will allow, you should use a full-size cabin. A full-size cabin will best support a professional image. It will get the interpreters "out of sight" and their voices will not interfere with the proceedings.

Where should the booth or booths be positioned?

The booth(s) should normally be at the back of the room, on risers, so that the interpreters have a clear view of the speakers. If it is not possible to give the interpreters a clear view, you should plan on providing a video monitor for each booth that can display both the person speaking and any slides or video that is being shown.

Below are recommendations from the manufacturers of this equipment:

### ***When to use a Portable Interpretation System***

- One on One Interpretation
- Depositions
- Courtroom Use
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Tours - Facility, Factory, Manufacturing, etc.
- Trade Shows
- Informal, small group events
- Short Visits at Multiple Venues

### ***When Not To Use a Portable Interpretation System***

- Two-Way Interpretation (i.e. Target<>English)
- Events with Q&A Sessions
- Multiple Language Events (3+)
- Multiple Day Conferences

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