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Over the past summer, I spent eight weeks in Miami, Florida working for the Inter American Press Association. My first memory at the organization involves me nervously waiting in the elevator on my way up to the seventh floor, where I would be working for the remainder of my time at the IAPA. I could not stand still. I was worried about being able to understand everyone in the office, worried my co-workers would not be able to understand me, worried that I would not do a good enough job. On top of my nerves, it was summer in Miami and needless to say, I was drenched in sweat, looking as if I ran up the seven floors of stairs instead of taking the elevator. As I look back on how nervous I was to start working, I cannot help but laugh.

During my time at the IAPA, I completed a number of projects. The first of my many endeavors involved researching how to use and present an online seminar, often called a “webinar”. After spending lots of time setting up and practicing my webinar, I attempted to actually host a webinar with one of my colleagues who had been interested in using the software in the future. Unfortunately, we found out it is quite difficult to have a webinar with only two people and ended up putting that project on the backburner. The information I researched, however, proved useful later in my internship as the colleague set up an inter-office webinar in order to practice using the software with different people in the work place.

In the second week that I worked at the IAPA, I set out researching new forms of technology the organization could utilize as a means of expanding their audience and readership. Seeing as the organization wanted to reach out to a younger audience, I quickly looked into

Facebook and Twitter. I was later told that I would give a presentation on this information, as well as information about using websites such as Newsvine.com and Digg.com and blogs as a way to expand interest in the IAPA. After doing preliminary research, creating a Twitter account, etc., I created a survey asking questions about which types of technology adolescents would most likely use if they were interested in following an organization or company. I sent the survey out to my “friends” on Facebook and used the data I received from 300 of the respondents in my presentation. Although this may seem like a lot of work, it was nothing compared to giving a presentation in Spanish in front of a room filled with Latin American Spanish speakers. I was extremely nervous for the presentation; however, my colleagues made me feel at ease and were very patient whenever I made grammatical errors. Upon finishing my presentation, which lasted around forty minutes, my colleagues asked me questions about my presentation and different aspects of the information I shared. The question and answer portion was all in Spanish as well. This was the first time I truly realized how much I had learned and improved during my time at the IAPA. I was able to not only give a presentation, but also listen to people’s questions and answer them without having prepared what I was going to say ahead of time.

After having learned about Twitter and its many uses, I was asked to write an article for the organization’s magazine, *Hora de Cierre*. I was really excited to help out however I could and quickly pumped out an article entitled “*Mi cómplice Twitter*”, in which I describe Twitter’s many uses (aside from a social networking site). It did not hit me until after turning in an initial draft that this article was not another paper I would be graded on or anything I was used to. I realized that I was going to be an internationally published writer. I cannot begin to describe how cool that was when I first saw my article in published form. Additionally, writing this article was an amazing experience because I had never had a native Spanish speaker read and

edit my writing, let alone making the corrections for me and formatting what I had to say. The difference between my draft and the final, finished copy were not as different as I had thought they would be in terms of grammar, and the way the editor cut and pasted parts of the paper to make it flow better was really neat.

During the last two to three weeks that I worked at the Inter American Press Association I spent most of my time creating a “How-to guide” to Twitter. I had not used Twitter before working at the IAPA, and it was a new form of technology that I needed to play around with before teaching the people at work how to use it. Upon mastering the ins and outs of Twitter, I wrote a thirty-five page how-to guide in Spanish as well as a thirty-five page how-to guide in English. Both guides took users step by step, providing information on how to set up an account, how to read and write messages on Twitter, and even how to join specific groups that might be of interest to the IAPA using a Twitter application called “Twibes”. Creating this guide was extremely tedious; however, I am glad I spent the time to do it correctly (inserting diagrams and pictures of the different screens users would see while using the site, etc.).

When I think back, comparing that first day in the elevator to my last day at the Inter American Press Association, I was a completely different person, aside from the sweat (it was July my last day and thus a lot warmer outside). Overall, I think that I did end up being a very useful tool for many of the people who worked at Inter American Press Association this summer. Although I mentioned four large projects that I worked on during my time at the IAPA, I believe I was very helpful to many of my colleagues, who would often have me complete smaller tasks such as sending out letters and creating a database of the names and addresses of the members of Chapultepec. After looking back on this summer in a completely objective sense, I successfully completed a large number of tasks, some large and some small, that somebody else would have

needed to complete had I not done so. What I am sure was refreshing for the workers at the organization was how I did the work with a smile, always eager for more to do. I feel as if I spent my summer working for a greater good and achieving far more than I ever would have with a summer job back home. During my time at the IAPA, I was given a few nicknames starting with “*el roboto*” (apparently I sound like a robot when I speak Spanish) and ending with “Twitter girl” (due to the amount of work I did based around Twitter). The work that I did at the Inter American Press Association is quantitative. The amount I have grown through that quantitative work is immeasurable. I can never put a number on how much the workers at the IAPA helped me, but I can feel it. I can now have full conversations with people in Spanish, without worrying about my grammar and whether or not it is correct. I am more confident when talking to Spanish speakers now that I am better able to understand so many different Latin American accents, due to the variety of accents I heard daily while at the office. The Inter American Press Association is a fantastic organization, comprised of intelligent and friendly people who truly made my summer in Miami an enjoyable and rewarding experience.