

Vade Mecum

1. Something a person carries about for frequent or regular use.
2. A book for ready reference; manual; handbook.
[1620-30; < vade mecum lit., go with me]

The ASRA is committed to advancing the court reporting profession by promoting court reporters as experts in the field of verbatim shorthand reporting; by providing continuing education to its members; and by advocating quality service, high ethical standards, and state-of-the art technology.

Happy Summer All! Welcome to our second edition of the Mini Vade Mecum. So grab a coolie, relax in your favourite chair in the sun and enjoy!

WAY TO GO!
to:



Certified CBCs - May 2004

Sandra A. German, RMR, CRR, CCP, CBC, CSR(A) Edmonton, AB

Certified RPRs - May 2004

Rebecca Lyon, RPR, St. Albert, AB
Donald G. Meyer, RPR, Regina, SK
Nancy D. Nielsen-Gill, RPR, Vancouver, BC

(Should you pass any of these NCRA exams – and acquire some more letters behind your name – please let us know. It's a tough road studying & speedbuilding so some congrats are in order!)

Notice to NAIT graduates:

You must apply for full Certified Shorthand Reporter status within the ASRA after you have finished the NAIT program and have been working for six months. Also required is a letter of recommendation from your employer.



July 29-August 1

Annual Convention and Exposition - Chicago

High-Tech, Low-Tech, No-Tech: Realtime Considerations for the Vintage Reporter

By Vicki Hartmetz, RPR, CMRS

Court reporting is a fast-changing field with cutting edge technology used in broadcast, university, court, and deposition settings. Realtime is seen as the panacea for all reporters and is technology which sets the live reporter apart from less efficient methods of translation of the spoken word to written text. Even in the courtroom, realtime is taking hold as attorneys expect what is available privately to be available for their public trials. Court administrators see this form of record keeping as a way to save money in the long run, often without considering the true cost.

So, where in this menagerie do the reporters who work in the trenches and must make decisions regarding their future record-making capabilities fit? Much time is spent in reporters' journals and publications across the nation about being high-tech and cutting edge -- realtime, captioning, multiple users viewing immediate copies of what's being written in court proceedings, and high translations rates. What about starting on the road to high-tech? What is the minimum of equipment you need to upgrade to realtime? What are the advantages to upgrading to even a minimal level of realtime? Is even a minimal level of realtime better (for the reporter) than no realtime? What are the benefits to the reporter?

The No-Tech Reporter

Of course, in both freelance and official reporter settings, there are places for every kind of technology. There's even a place for mechanical recording in administrative meetings and courts where there is little or no need for a transcript to be prepared. In those areas use of a live reporter is a waste of resources.

In general courtroom settings demanding transcript preparation, we might find a reporter with no use for technology. The no-tech reporter may be a long-time official who may not have upgraded to more efficient writing and transcript preparation methods as time has been marching on. In court, this vintage reporter writes on a steno machine that may be electronic, but may also be manual. When a transcript is ordered, she retrieves the notes, along with typewriter and transcript paper, and types the transcript. At one time our vintage official dictated notes onto a tape for transcription by a typist, but returned to typing because good typists are hard to find these days. There is one saving grace: she does not use carbon paper for the file copy. In an effort to be somewhat progressive, she finally invested in a wordprocessor.

As reporting technology developed, the vintage official reporter, who we'll refer to by the acronym *VOR*, watched with interest computer-assisted transcription. While it looked like a good way to produce a transcript, it was so expensive, and since reporters in her district were responsible for all of their own transcription equipment, the investment was something that had to be worked toward gradually.

The Low-Tech Reporter

Luckily, the personal computer was invented and the cost of CAT software began to approach a reasonable rate. It was time for a decision to be made and step into the warm glow of technology. The drawback was when the *VOR* learned theory, computer compatible theory meant merely writing long vowels. Talk about conflicts! Regardless, *VOR* signed on for a stand alone PC CAT system with a brand new Smartwriter included. *VOR* learned the CAT software fairly well, although she wasn't a computer whiz. The rest of the PC and its function remained a mystery, but her transcripts looked good. Granted, those nasty conflicts made the editing process slow sometimes, but it certainly was faster than the more archaic process *VOR* used as a no-tech reporter.

VOR became comfortable with the use of reporter technology and CAT software continued to develop. Soon, realtime writing broke onto the scene. An-

other monumental decision loomed for *VOR*. Should the bandwagon be jumped on or was following along enough?

First, *VOR* would have to take care of those writing conflicts to become proficient in realtime. Being an official reporter, sometimes she didn't see how her writing affected the instant translation output for months. The only answer was to set up realtime and write for herself, resolving her writing problems as she went.

What equipment would *VOR* need? Of course, she already had a computerized writer that she had been using for her CAT system. Certainly, she would need to set up a computer in the courtroom or maybe even get a laptop. A realtime cable would be necessary to hook her steno machine to the computer. She was already on a CAT software, but she consulted her vendor and other reporters about how best to achieve realtime capability.

After plugging the cable into the laptop, *VOR* began to see the benefits of writing realtime, if only for her eyes. There was a lot to learn, and the process was slow. While her judge wasn't a tech wizard, he was amazed at what his reporter could achieve. She could look up requested testimony on his whim and also seemed to have a new bounce in her step. The direct benefits to *VOR* resulted in less transcription time and a new sense of enthusiasm for her work. Seeing her conflicts and untranslates quickly improved her writing skills.

The High-Tech Reporter

VOR is now completely involved in reporter technology. She has the newest CAT software, a new laptop with all the bells and whistles, and even a new writer. She writes realtime for her judge and has even tried hooking up to an attorney's laptop during a jury trial. She has a new confidence in her writing skill and is a technician to others in the courthouse. Just last month, one of the parties in a trial was deaf, and *VOR* provided instant translation so that the party could truly be a participant in her own case. When a disagreement arose over the testimony of an expert witness, *VOR* was able to provide contemporaneous information to resolve the dispute. What's more, *VOR* is preparing to take the Certified Realtime Reporter examination, which is a good thing, since the new state court administrator and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court have decided that all reporters in the court system in *VOA*'s state should be realtime certified in three years!

And the Point Is?

So what is the moral of this tale? Indeed, a vintage

official reporter can learn new tricks and new technology. It does benefit the reporter in time management, cutting transcription time, and making the reporter even more essential to the court system, if that is possible. Equipment for realtime is easily assembled at a reasonable cost and the latest CAT software can even be leased one year at a time.

There are choices to be made for all reporters regarding realtime, even for those who haven't embraced technology to date. Now is the best time to get on the road to realtime. Better get going!

Vicki Hartmetz, RPR, CMRS, is from Centennial, Colo.



ASRA ANNUAL CONVENTION **shindig**

September 18 - 19, 2004

Radisson Hotel
Calgary, Alberta

Positions for Re-election:
President
3 Board Directors

You might be a RCR (Redneck Court Reporter):

- ... if you've ever missed the verdict because you were mooning the defendant.
- ... if you use the pencil holders on your steno machine for cigarettes.
- ... if you have six steno machines and only one that works.
- ... if you have "y'all" in your dictionary.
- ... if your living room bookshelves are boards stacked on boxes of last year's steno notes.
- ... if you've prescribed the jury charge, and you call it up by writing "yada yada yada."
- ... if you've ever wrapped a fish in steno paper.
- ... if you've decided to get into captioning so you can work in your underwear without the judge getting so upset.

... if your clerk introduces the judge by saying, "Y'all git up, Bubba's coming."

... if you had your wedding reported so you'd have the vows in writing.

... if you watch Deliverance, and find yourself thinking, "How would you SPELL that?"



CLASSIFIED ADS:

Experienced scopist sought for busy reporter who is very anal and a perfectionist! If you have similar qualities and are interested in earning a few bucks, e-mail me! Also looking for a good proofreader. Litsa Konicki - lkonicki@shaw.ca. (Calgary)

This is to inform individuals who have training in Court Reporting with machine writing speed of least 200 words per minute and/or possess certification as Court Reporters that the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) located in Arusha, Tanzania, will organize pre-selection tests, for recruitment of Court Reporters to be placed on the job roster of the Tribunal.

Interested candidates are kindly requested to submit applications by completing a form P.11 (obtainable from <http://www.ictor.org/ENGLISH/opportunities/index.html>) before 15 July 2004, preferably by email, to the following address: ictor_personnel@un.org or enow@un.org

Or by post to:
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA (ICTR)
ARUSHA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE (AICC)
P.O. BOX 6016 ARUSHA, TANZANIA
ATTENTION: HUMAN RESOURCES AND PLANNING SECTION.

Or by Fax to:
(255)-27-256-5190
(255)-27-256-4373
(255)-27-256-4000
(1)-212-963-2848/49

Suitably qualified candidates will be informed by email of the date, place and time of the tests which will take place in Vancouver between 26 July and 30 July 2004.

(Although the deadline on this posting may have just passed, if you're interested, do send in your application ASAP. As this is their second recruitment drive, they may extend the deadline.)

WACKY HEADLINES

EYE DROPS OFF SHELF

PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE

KIDS MAKE NUTRITIOUS SNACKS

STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE

LUNG CANCER IN WOMEN MUSHROOMS

QUEEN MARY HAVING BOTTOM SCRAPED

DEALERS WILL HEAR CAR TALK AT NOON

MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER DEATH

MILK DRINKERS ARE TURNING TO POWDER

DRUNK GETS NINE MONTHS IN VIOLIN CASE

JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT

COMPLAINTS ABOUT NBA REFEREES GROWING UGLY

PANDA MATING FAILS; VETERINARIAN TAKES OVER

POLICE BEGIN CAMPAIGN TO RUN DOWN JAYWALKERS

12 ON THEIR WAY TO CRUISE AMONG DEAD IN PLANE CRASH

KILLER SENTENCED TO DIE FOR SECOND TIME IN 10 YEARS

SAFETY EXPERTS SAY SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS SHOULD BE BELTED

2 SISTERS REUNITED AFTER 18 YEARS AT CHECKOUT COUNTER

MAN EATING PIRANHA MISTAKENLY SOLD AS PET FISH

ASTRONAUT TAKES BLAME FOR GAS IN SPACECRAFT

QUARTER OF A MILLION CHINESE LIVE ON WATER

INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN WHEN BAKING COOKIES

OLD SCHOOL PILLARS ARE REPLACED BY ALUMNI

GRANDMOTHER OF EIGHT MAKES HOLE IN ONE

HOSPITALS ARE SUED BY 7 FOOT DOCTORS

LAWMEN FROM MEXICO BARBECUE GUESTS

TWO SOVIET SHIPS COLLIDE, ONE DIES

ENRAGED COW INJURES FARMER WITH AX

LACK OF BRAINS HINDERS RESEARCH

RED TAPE HOLDS UP NEW BRIDGE

SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM

IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS

HERSHEY BARS PROTEST

WORD TRIVIA

PARADIGM was the word most frequently **looked up** in 1998 in the Merriam-Webster online diction-

ary. Some other words frequently looked up, besides obscene words, were **UBIQUITOUS**, **ESOTERIC**, **OXY MORON**, **SERENDIPITY**, **HUBRIS**, **OBSEQUIOUS**, and **ECLECTIC**. In 2001, the ten most frequently looked up words in the Cambridge Dictionaries Online were **SERENDIPITY**, **IDIOM**, **PARADIGM**, **UBIQUITOUS**, **DICTIONARY**, **PRAGMATIC**, **EFFECT**, **GRY**, **JINGOISM**, and **FOIBLE**. The most frequently looked up article in the World Book Encyclopedia is said to be **SNAKE**.

The words most likely to be **misspelled** (ratio of incorrect to correct spelling) according to a study of Usenet traffic some years ago were **DUMBELL**, **OCCURRENCE**, **MEMENTO**, **FRUSTUM**, **COLLECTIBLE**, **AMATEUR**, **DAIQUIRI**, **PASTIME**, **ACCIDENTALLY**, **PLAYWRIGHT**, **EMBARRASS**, **ACQUIT**, **HARASS**, and **PRONUNCIATION**. The same study showed the words most frequently misspelled (by gross count) to be: **RECEIVE**, **A LOT**, **AMATEUR**, **SEPARATE**, **REALIZE**, **THEIR**, **DEFINITE**, **INDEPENDENT**, **WEIRD**, **EMBARRASS**, **ARGUMENT**, **NO ONE**, **ACQUIRE**, **ACCIDENTALLY**, **OCCURRENCE**, **COLLECTIBLE**, **RIDICULOUS**, **MANEUVER**, **LIAISON**, **GAUGE**, **ATHEIST**, **GRAMMAR**, **SUPERSEDE**, **KERNEL**, and **CONSENSUS**.

The study does not reveal common errors such as IT'S/ITS and YOUR/YOU'RE.

A memory-help for affect and effect is **RAVEN**:

Remember, Affect is a Verb and Effect is a Noun.

GOOD SEARCH SITES:

For doctors' names this is great:

www.calgaryhealthregion.ca

and then type in "local doctor directory"

to search. Click on "1: Your Health" and it will pop up with an alphabetical list to choose from.



Thanks, Litsa Konicki