



TCI Cheat Sheet

Stay Organized: Time Management

1. Keep track of your assignment due dates with a calendar, or even an Excel sheet. Also keep a spreadsheet of file details to refer back on. As you transcribe more files, you'll learn some files take longer to type than others. This will make it easy to see which assignments are worth taking.
2. Many transcribers work with more than one company, all with varying style guides. Keep a summary or "cheat sheet" of their style guides to reference when switching from one company's assignment to the next.
3. Always review files as soon as they're assigned to you and let your manager know about issues right away. Having an immediate sense of the quality will give you a better idea of how long the file will take to type. Listen for clarity of speech, amount of crosstalk, number of speakers and if the file is the number of minutes it's supposed to be.

Accuracy

1. When editing a transcript, it's always a good idea to go through it and listen to inaudible marks again. The inaudible parts that couldn't be heard the first time around can often be eliminated once you have a feel for the audio.
2. Be conscientious of Auto Correct in Word. For example, know the difference between 'there' and 'their' well because Auto Correct sometimes gives the wrong recommendation.
3. If there is enough information in a file to yield a person's bio with a Google search, skim it. Bios often contain industry-specific terms that you won't have to look up later.

Difficult Audio

1. Having a good quality pair of headphones can make a big difference in the accuracy of one's work. Headphones that enclose the entire ear or ear buds that go directly into the ear have excellent clarity.
2. Try using a program that enables clean-up of poor quality audio. Audacity, for example, can reduce noise, allowing speakers to be heard more clearly.
3. If a file has poor audio quality, try transcribing it in smaller chunks, and take breaks in between.
4. Go over the transcript multiple times to clean up any inaudible words missed the first time.
5. Avoid rewinding over and over the first time you hear a difficult word, you may start to understand the speaker better as the audio progresses. Write "inaudible" and once the



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transcript is finished, go back through it to see if more words can be understood that couldn't in the beginning.

Short-Cuts: Speed Up Transcription

1. Auto Correct/ Add To Dictionary: These functions automatically replace shorthand or abbreviations, allowing words and phrases to be saved with each new subject.
 - a. You can use Auto Correct to make shortcuts for words, names, etc. that you use often. For example, if you want to simply type "ir" for "Interviewer," then you would type "ir" in the "Replace" box and "Interviewer" in the "With" box. Once you click OK, then in your document, when you type "ir," it will automatically type "Interviewer." Be sure to include a colon behind "Interviewer" when you type it in the "With" box, and that way, you will never have to type Interviewer or Interviewee again. Simply type "ir," and hit your spacebar, and Interviewer (with a colon behind it) will automatically expand and be typed for you.
 - b. Since Auto Correct also corrects words as they are typed, Word will automatically capitalize the first word in a sentence or automatically insert hyphens in contractions.
2. Find/Replace All
 - a. Replace one word throughout the transcript. For example, change the spelling of a name, or even abbreviate speaker names and go back in later to replace them with the full name.
3. Foot Pedal
 - a. Increase your words per minute by giving your feet control of playback, leaving your fingers free to type. Most transcription programs support this feature.

Multiple Speaker Files

1. For files with multiple speakers, allow twice the time for typing 2-speaker files. You may have to listen to the audio two or three times to distinguish speakers.
2. Keep a list of speakers and their manners of speech at the top of the file in order to keep them straight, but make sure to delete your notes before you submit the file.



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Equipment

1. Transcription Programs

- a. FTW Transcriber: A highly recommended program; has many time-saving features such as automatic time-stamps: add time-stamps automatically at any interval as well as configure the appearance of the time-stamp. Time-stamp can start at any time, not just zero. Different settings for various client requests, called “configurations,” can be saved. Additional features: Stop watch, speed and volume control, foot pedal integration, quick keystrokes/shortcut keys.
- b. Express Scribe Pro: A popular program. Uses hotkeys to control playback when transcribing into other software (e.g., Word) and for time-stamping. Supports professional USB foot pedals to control playback and accepts a variety of file types.
- c. For the Record Player: Has four separate channels which can be individually controlled to manipulate speed and volume. This is useful when working with challenging audio.

2. Other Resources

- a. MPEG Streamclip is a great, free resource for transcoding files. Free video converter, player, and editor for Mac and Windows. It can play various movie files, not only MPEGs and can convert MPEG files between muxed/demuxed formats for authoring. This program can also encode movies to many formats, including iPod, and can cut, trim and join movies.
- b. VLC Player is free and can sometimes play files that other players can't.
- c. Audacity – program that cleans up bad audio by reducing noise.