



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
ELECTRONIC
REPORTERS AND
TRANSCRIBERS

SOUNDBYTES

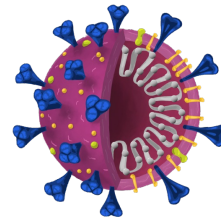
*Your Glimpse of Everything You Need to Know About
What's Happening at AAERT*

[Visit our Website](#)

COVID-19 Pandemic....Lessons Learned

from AAERT Advocacy Committee Members Jenni Burke & Aryeh Bak

Collectively we are faced with unprecedented and unpredictable times. Shelter in place orders following the COVID-19 pandemic have had staggering impacts on economies. Courts and the legal system, however, cannot remain shut. A functioning society requires public access to the legal system, so courts have been continuing the exploration and implementation of the many options available to aid in the continuation of legal proceedings, and many courts and their personnel, as well as attorneys and their clients, are immediately implementing the use of digital technology.



With the ever growing number of new legal cases filed each year, the legal system is one that cannot fully close. And yet, we also recognize the imperative to implement social distancing, which is contrary to typical courtroom protocol. Taken together, these have caused the court reporting industry to become more open and embracing of digital technology as a means to continue to serve justice, as well as maintaining judicial economy and efficiency.

The Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy has estimated that we should prepare for another 18 to 24 months of significant COVID-19 activity. In the past six months, more and more global agencies have had no alternative but to embrace change, adopt new policies and adapt best practices to coincide with digital technology.

As well as becoming accustomed to the use of more digital technology, legislation has ramped their efforts to ensure that the court reporting industry can still proceed with as many duties and responsibilities as possible even while maintaining social distancing. A prime example of this are the many bills that have been advanced and adopted allowing

for notaries to provide their services online, remotely.

Remote proceedings are a popular topic of conversation at the moment, and one of the biggest changes that we expect to continue. The thrust of implementing new technological best practices in our industry, ones that were likely to have been years into the future, is what has carried us to where we are currently today.

With new technology and processes implemented, the need for education and training all across the industry, from lawyers to witnesses, judges to court clerks, as well as court reporters and legal transcriptionists, has proved necessary to help businesses and agencies stay in operation, with learning how to use and implement more digital tools and technologies into their workflow processes.

Crises and economic downturns always generate an increase in legal activity, and news headlines are appearing rapidly. One can only hope that the industry is prepared to see an increase in workflow and production with these newly implemented/adapted tools and technologies being used in the workplace for agencies and businesses across the world.

It is very likely that the use of digital technology and tools will continue to be used well into the future, and many agencies and businesses will realize cost savings, but also become more effective and efficient with agency workflows and management.

COVID-19 source for up-to-date state court status and information:

<https://www.ncsc.org/newsroom/public-health-emergency>

Send Us your Nominations for AAERT's Professional of the Year

from AAERT Membership Committee Chair Victoria O'Connor, CET

Hey! I got a question for you. Yeah, you! When you hear the following attributes, who comes to mind first?



They haven't held the title of Professional of the Year at any time in the last 5 years.

They have been an active Member with AAERT for at least 3 years.

They can't stop helping out their industry friends. We're all in this together, ya know?

They love going to AAERT conferences and making new connections!

What?! There's a Committee they're not part of? No way! That's impossible!

OK, time's up! Now you've got the name. Act now, and nominate someone who meets or exceeds all of the attributes listed above for Professional of the Year.

Deadline is January 15, 2021. The lucky winner will be notified no later than March 15, 2021, and they will receive a commemorative plaque.

So, what are you waiting for? This year will be over before we know it. Fill out your nominations [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, you can send them to aaert@aaert.org or Membership Committee Chair, Victoria O'Connor, CET.

From the President's Desk

In preparation for a New Year, many of us spend this time reflecting on the past and preparing resolutions for the future. Based on the unpredictable twists and turns of 2020 and resulting endless stories of resilience, I have settled on just one resolution. It is from a quote by Vivian Greene, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass... it's about learning to dance in the rain."



This year we have made significant organizational changes to adapt and prepare for the future. The Navigating the Seas of Change Webinar Series has been a great success out of the pandemic storm that canceled our conference. Our regular certification test cycles were disrupted when the pandemic hit, and as a result we worked with our test company to allow testing all throughout the year. Currently, we are working to allow test takers to use their method of choice – keyboard, steno machine or voice recognition – to take the transcription practical exam. AAERT requires a passing grade of 98% accuracy of the final transcript submitted. The Certification Committee recognizes that our members use a variety of tools to produce a transcript, and all are welcome.

Our newest endeavor is the formation of an Advocacy Committee, chaired by Aryeh Bak, to develop materials for our members to use, as well as to submit for publication to educate the legal community about digital reporting and transcription. Everything around us is changing and we are too. Our advocacy effort will also be seeking financial support from our membership and the court reporting community to support this effort.

Rick Russell, who has chaired the Government Relations Committee for many years, will be chairing the Legislative Affairs subcommittee and continue to monitor legislative efforts nationwide that impact our members.

We are grateful to the members of the Government Relations Committee for supporting the restructuring of this committee as well.

Another new initiative is our Charter sponsorship program. Charter sponsors support the mission of AAERT, provide products and/or services to our members. We encourage you to check out the benefits you can receive as a charter sponsor on our web page under "Sponsorships." We are grateful to have four new sponsors, Verbit, Milestone Reporting, BlueLedge, and eScribers supporting us as charter sponsors.

On behalf of the AAERT Board, we hope you too will find moments to "dance in the rain"

(or the snow depending where you are) this holiday season. All the best to you and your families! We'll see you again in 2021!

Janet Harris, CER, CET, CDVS
President

AAERT Welcomes New Charter Platinum Sponsors

AAERT is grateful for the support of its new Charter Platinum sponsors, BlueLedge, eScribers, Milestone Reporting and Verbit. Get your message, your product, your name and more in front of close to 1,000 AAERT members with every issue of our newsletter SoundBytes, hundreds of members through AAERT's Members-Only Facebook Group, thousands more potential members with every post on our corporate Facebook page and every event marketing email, and thousands of interested visitors to our website with your logo (linked to your website) scrolling across our home page! Or how about an opportunity to reach our contacts via direct email or a live vendor showcase webinar!? Our Platinum and Gold Annual Sponsors get all that and more!

Your company can still become a Charter sponsor by registering before December. Visit our [website](#) or download our programs [here](#).



An Uplifting Story From the Courtroom

from the Professional Development Committee

A woman appeared in court for a name change hearing. She moved from Somalia to the US with her husband and six children. At some point her husband had returned to Somalia. She was a single mother of six and working full time at Walmart. Some of the children had different last names either intentionally when they were born or because of an error at immigration. Mom was before the court to get consistent names for all of the children.

After asking the required questions for the name change and reviewing the documentation, the judge asked her "So how is it going?" She said things were going OK,

the kids were in school, she was working, and life was good. She had no complaints.

We moved on to the next hearing, which was another name change hearing. This was a young woman, probably age 18 or so. Since she was 18, she proceeded on her own with her two required witnesses, her mother and a good friend. She wanted to take her mother's maiden name because her father had not been a part of her life. The judge asked all of the required questions of her and her witnesses, reviewed the documents, and granted her name change.

At the conclusion of the hearing, they asked about the case heard previous to theirs, the woman from Somalia. They wanted to buy Christmas presents for the family. After receiving permission from the mother, they were given the genders and ages of the six children, and delivered to court administration that afternoon two Christmas presents, wrapped, for each child.

Upcoming Events

Navigating the Seas of Change

A webinar series brought to you by AAERT



Digital Court Reporting and Transcribing Best Practices Series

December 15, 2020

[>>More information & registration](#)

7:00pm - 8:00pm ET

Professional Practices and Ethics for Digital Court Reporting & Transcribing: A Webinar Panel Discussion with Experts in Digital Court Reporting and Transcription

8:00pm - 9:00pm ET

AAERT After Hours

Welcome New AAERT Members!

Dawn Alberts of Sobieski, WI
Nicola Boyle of Fairfield, Queensland
Brandon Bridges of Humble, TX
Anna Brown of Port Hadlock, WA
Cheree Carlson of Coon Rapids, MN
Nathaniel Carter of Milwaukee, WI

Our Newly Certified Members

Brandee Cain CET of Ashburn, VA
Amie Camilleri CET of St. Vellejo, CA
Alisha Daniels CER of Brooklyn, NY
Andrea Foy CET of Hamilton, NJ
Kelly Hipp CER of Bismarck, ND
Maria Hutnick CER of Medford, NJ

Ronald Dooley of Fort Lauderdale, FL
Susan Evans-Melvin of Indianapolis, IA
Cristina Fernandez of Pembroke Pines, FL
Maria Gray of Surfside, FL
Patricia Green of Conway, SC
Jodi Haen of Redwood Falls, MN
Connie Hansen of Wautoma, WI
Julie Heath of Spokane, WA
Shervonne Hollis of Bermuda
Alex Hunt of Fargo, ND
Maria Hutnick of Medford, NJ
Sandi Kelley of Claysville, PA
Gil Kim of Plano, TX
Star Levandowski of Downers Grove, IL
Diane Moat of Kingston Springs, TN
Diane Otto of St. Joseph, MO
Sharron Phillips of Elizabethton, TN
Cari Powers of Coeburn, VA
Justin Rose of Fargo, ND
Jeffrey Sackheim of New York, NY
Frances Sanchez of Roanoke, VA
Candace Singleton-Perrin of Columbia, SC
Patricia Tuffield of Fircrest, WA
Jasmine Valdez of Lake Worth, FL
Karen Vornkahl of Baton Rouge, LA
Melanie Wadley of Watford City, ND
Alison Wimpfheimer of Fargo, ND
Natalie Young of Cape Town, Western Cape

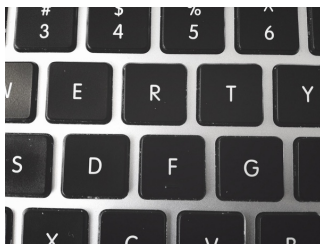
Melissa Looney ER of Maryville, TN
Vivian Marban CER of Yonkers, NY
Roger Meyers CER of Eaton, CO
Jade Miserendino-Espinoza CER of West Palm Beach, FL
Donna Morris CET of Orlando, FL
Elissa Newbrey CET of Gothenburg, NE
Mary Polito CET of Robbinsville, NJ
Lorie Slawsky CER of Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Bonnie Torrez CER CET of Loveland, CA
Andrew Wert CER of Lynchburg, VA

CONGRATULATIONS!



Tech Corner: Keyboards

from AAERT Communications Committee Chair Benjamin Jaffe



The feel, the touch, the layout, and the style of your keyboard matter. Changes to your keyboard can increase your speed, comfort, and usability. For example, even though I primarily work off a laptop, I plug in a USB keyboard, so I have a bigger typing area for my more blunt fingers.

QWERTY Layout

Most keyboards today are arranged in the QWERTY keyboard layout. Named for the top row of alphabet keys on your keyboard, this layout was created in the 1800s.

The goal was to resolve the issue of jamming typewriters. The inventor of the QWERTY keyboard laid out the keyboard so the typist would have a steady rhythm alternating left- and right-hand keys. It is often thought that the goal was to reduce the speed of the typist,

but actually the main goal was to avoid entangled typebars as a result of several keys being pressed simultaneously.

Even though we no longer use typewriters today the QWERTY keyboard stuck. There are non-QWERTY keyboard layouts that claim to be faster and more ergonomic. The most well-known alternative layout is the Dvorak.

Connection

When computers first hit the market, keyboards could only connect with a round port with pins inside called a PS/2 connector, this was also used for mice. Now keyboards can connect through USB, Bluetooth or 2.4Ghz wireless, or be integrated into your laptop directly.

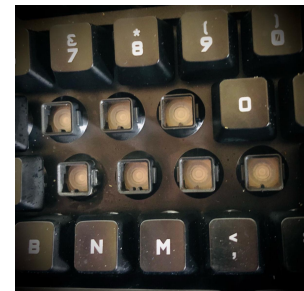
Generally, if you are purchasing a wired keyboard today you will be buying one with a USB connection. These keyboards typically have 4 to 8 ft cables attached to them and allow for nonstop use. They never need a battery, and have almost no downtime. A majority of these keyboards use the traditional USB-A style connector while some use USB-C.

Now if you are looking for wireless keyboards your options are a little more diverse and can change based on the computer you own. Many wireless keyboards on the market use Bluetooth to connect to the computer. This can either be through a receiver already built into your computer or a USB receiver included in the computer's purchase. Similarly, some keyboards use a 2.4Ghz wireless band that cannot be picked up by the building receiver on your computer so they will require the included USB receiver. Either way, wireless keyboards require batteries and may have downtime while charging or changing batteries.

Input Mechanism

Generally, keyboards have two styles of buttons, mechanical and membrane.

Membrane keyboards have an electronic membrane underneath the keys that when you press a key it registers as a keystroke to the computer. Laptop keyboards and most desktop keyboards come with this type of keyboard. It is soft to the touch but can be slow to respond or cause an error when multiple keys are pressed at once.



Mechanical keyboards use individual switches per key, so every time you press a key you are activating an individual switch. Think of it like a super-fast light switch. This gives you tactile feedback that is similar to an electric typewriter and preferred by gamers and coders. Different types of switches can be used depending on the feel you like on your keyboard.



Style

Ergonomic keyboards are helpful for those with wrist problems because typing on a normal keyboard can put your wrists at an uncomfortable angle. Ergonomic keyboards allow the users to keep their bodies in a more natural position and keep their wrists

straight. Some ergonomic keyboards have a wrist pad for additional support for the wrists and hands. Other options include a split keyboard, where each hand rests at the most comfortable position with easy access to the keys.

Flexible keyboards can be rolled up and are very portable. These keyboards are not ideal for fast, accurate typing but great for those on the go and those who need to have a full-sized keyboard available anytime.

With or without a number pad is generally a personal choice depending on how you type and how wide you want your keyboard to be. For a digital court reporter, it might be easier to not have one and have a more portable keyboard or laptop keyboard with larger alphabetical keys. A transcriber may want one for faster typing of numbers and data input.

Other Options

If you are looking to be more adventurous, check out customizable keyboards. These mini keyboards can have between four and 200 buttons and allow you to change what each button does. These keyboards could be connected to reporting software to assist with speaker designations or combined with a text expander to make a transcriber's life even easier. Either way these very sophisticated devices allow you to control your workspace.



The Nature of Words

from Laurel H. Stoddard, CET

Since Texas, especially the central region, gets little in the way of snow, in this area many trees and bushes have evolved many trees and bushes that either are or appear to be evergreen. My favorite is the Texas mountain laurel, *Sophora secundiflora*, a true evergreen. Live oak trees, of the genus *Quercus*, and yaupon hollies, *Ilex vomitoria*, appear evergreen because they hang onto their leaves in fall and drop the older leaves as new ones appear in spring; the trees are never bare.

Because so many trees stay green, it's always enjoyable to watch as the deciduous leaves turn yellow, red, orange, and purple in the fall, in contrast to the still-bright green of the others. There are so many words for **green**. While we in this part of the world grow green beans, the French have *haricots verts*; this variation of green derived from the Old French *verd*. **Viridian** is a bluish-green hue, the word derived from the Latin *viridis*, green. One South American hummingbird is named the viridian metaltail due to its combination of colors.

Verdant is the adjective for which **verdure** is the noun. The use of these was first recorded in 1575; coming from Old French *verdoyant*, by way of Old French *verd*, from Latin *viridis*. Another variety of green is the greenish-blue patina that forms on copper, brass, or bronze surfaces exposed to air, called **verdigris**, derived from the Old French, *vert de gris*, meaning the green of Greece.

With all these lovely, more exotic variations, how did we come by the one-syllable, rather abrupt **green**? It came by a different route entirely, from the Old English *grene*, related to Old High German *gruoni*, meaning grow. Depending on how poetic or how direct we wish

to be, we can speak of either a **verdant** sweep of lawn or **green** grass. But whose opera would you rather listen to, Joe Green's or Giuseppe Verdi's?

We Have Badges!

Last month we sent out new electronic badges to members who are Certified Electronic Reporters and Certified Electronic Transcribers. Display your badge proudly on your email, social media and websites, and show the world you are certified in these wonderful professions! If you did not receive your badge, please email the office, aaert@aaert.org



Don't Forget to Join AAERT's New Members-Only Facebook Group

AAERT has established a new Members-Only Facebook Group to facilitate open member-to-member networking and dialogue and serve as a true benefit of AAERT membership. Members who are active in the open group that has existed on Facebook for several years are encouraged to join the AAERT Members-



Only Group. The old group was retired on October 31. We will continue to share information about AAERT activities and events for the general public and advocate and educate about our profession on AAERT's organization page.

Follow these steps below to join the AAERT Members-Only Facebook Group:

1. Navigate to the AAERT Organization Facebook Page.
2. "Like" the AAERT page.
3. On the top bar of the AAERT page you will see a "Group" heading. Click the "Group" heading.
4. Click "Join."

We are looking forward to our new members-only group where all our members can freely share and discuss their ideas as well as ask fellow members questions.

Stay Safe

