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Adapting & Advancing in 2022

From Janet Harris, AAERT President



Members,

Happy New Year! Though the challenges of 2021 are behind us, I wish we could say we are leaving the pandemic behind as well. Instead, we are seeing temporary adaptations turning into permanent solutions. We've seen a huge increase in the number of remote proceedings, new platforms, and a surge in the development of technology. Staying abreast of all the changes in our industry is a great reason to stay in touch with AAERT and renew your membership.

In 2021 we held the first Digital Court Reporting Appreciation Day. This was a great way to engage our member practitioners and vendors, promote digital reporting and just have some fun along the way. Our total memberships increased, certifications exceeded our expectations and the association's finances are the best we've seen since AAERT was founded. Our AAERT Certification program reboot and development is well underway. We have forged alliances across the industry. The next year holds great promise for our members, and we invite your participation in our upcoming webinars and in-person conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from June 16-18, 2022.

Sincerely,

Janet Harris, CER, CET, CDVS

SAVE
THE
DATE

June 16-18, 2022

Westin Milwaukee, WI

Punctuation Personalities

Jen Krueger, CER, Associate Professor, Cuyahoga Community College



Producing a pristine verbatim transcript requires focus on the content and context along with perfectly placed punctuation. To ensure that picture-perfect transcript, the transcriber must have full faith and confidence in the placement of each piece of punctuation.

Drs. Joyce and Robert Hogan developed innovative personality testing. Their research led to the creation of the socioanalytic theory which is mainly used with regard to job performance and promotability. They recognized 11 personality traits that can cause disruption to one's career. Interestingly, those 11 characteristics can be matched to the 11 punctuation marks used in legal transcripts. Considering that a misused punctuation mark can disrupt or even wreak havoc on a transcript and consequently the career of the transcriber or court reporter, getting to know the "personality" of punctuation marks, can lead the transcriber to a flawlessly edited transcript.

1. The **bold** personality is seen as confident and entitled. Seems like the period, doesn't it? Pushing its way to the head of the popularity pool, the period is the most commonly used piece of punctuation, appears at the end of every statement, entitled to be there, and confident in its position.
2. The question mark has a **skeptical** personality. Cynical, distrustful, sensitive to criticism, it can be focused on the negative. Have you ever noticed that in a transcript? How many questions by attorneys have a negative connotation and begin with something like "isn't it true," or "didn't you say" something or other?
3. The comma, with its **leisurely** personality, is overly cooperative and wishing to be included in all kinds of sentences is also seen as privately irritable, stubborn, and rather uncooperative. Getting to know the comma requires time and attention as its cooperative initial appearance can lead to trouble. You must ever take the comma for granted, and you must make sure it is only and exactly where it belongs.
4. The **dash** possesses the colorful personality. It tends to interrupt instead of listen, seeks attention with its continual insertion into other people's words, or even seen as creating a dramatic imposition -- it is so darn pushy -- with a change of thought within one's own words.
5. The colon has a **diligent** personality. Bossy and with an in-charge personality, it typically introduces specific information meticulously, precisely, and is detail oriented.
6. The semicolon is **imaginative** as it thinks and acts in unusual or eccentric ways. It likes to be included in closely related ideas as well as separating items in lists that contain that leisurely comma that comes along for the ride.
7. The **mischievous** hyphen has a risk-taking, limit-testing, excitement-seeking role. Always modifying something or other, the hyphen turns the nearly "400-odd transcribers" into "400 odd transcribers of AAERT." Are the members really odd and

silly people, or are there approximately 400 transcribers among the membership of AAERT?

8. The apostrophe is **dutiful**. It does exactly what it intends to do. Never acting independently, it joins two words and makes them act as one, provides recognition of possession for one or more things with its particular placement. It needs to be included, is eager to please, and does not express disagreement – unless it is used inappropriately.
9. The parentheses, only used to surround parenthetical comments within transcripts, are **aloof** and indifferent to others' feelings. Their role is clear and they have no time for anyone else's feelings. You either need a parenthetical comment or you don't.
10. Quotation marks can be **excitable**, moody, and hard to please. Their place is often seen as unstable and can be nervously overused. Did someone actually say that or was that a comment of general reflection or summation? Is that quote short or lengthy, of multiple paragraphs so that the initial quote gets used more than the ending quotation mark? Always question the use of the quotation marks and make sure they don't upset anything. Ask yourself, do they belong or do they not?
11. Brackets are the most **cautious** of the personalities. Unassertive and not showing themselves too often, they are rarely if ever seen, and then only coming out to surround the Latin word "sic." It is never going to change, wants its role to be realized as a kind of warning to others and will not get involved anywhere else on the page.

So, with all due respect to the work of Drs. Joyce and Robert Hogan, and realizing both the court reporter's and the transcriber's detail-oriented, meticulous, caring personalities, putting forth the effort and getting to know the "personalities" of punctuation will lead to the successful presentation of accurately captured, edited, and proofread transcripts every time.

The Nature of Words

Laurel Stoddard, CET



While we try not to lapse into *schadenfreude*, literally harm-joy or enjoyment of others' misfortunes, we do enjoy word errors that give us a laugh (so long as we catch them before the transcript goes out the door). In these parlous times of COVID variants, we need all the laughs we can get. Hence our office's enjoyment of this exchange:

Q Have you heard the word "egregarious"?

A Probably.

Q Can you define it?

A The word used in the report you're referring to is "egregious."

The questioner was on to something, sort of. Gregarious and egregious do come from the same root. That root is *grex*, meaning herd or flock. The Latin *gregarius*, with *greg-* for *grex*, came straight from Latin into English usage in the 17th century, first referring to animals, those who tend to congregate rather than be more solitary creatures. It has come to describe to persons who are very social. Note that *congregate* also uses the root *grex*, as do *aggregate* and *segregate*. The *ag-* prefix in Latin, changed from *ad-* because it joins to a word starting with *G*, means to add to, and the *se-* prefix means apart.

Egregious, from the Latin *egregius*, which uses the prefix *e-* instead of *ex-*, because it precedes a hard consonant, has the archaic definition of distinguished or eminent (kind of like outstanding in your field), but current usage means conspicuously bad, outstanding in your field in a negative way. The complimentary usage of *egregious* began in the early

16th century, but over the span of centuries it has come to be used exclusively negatively, in the sense of egregious behavior or an egregious error.

It is good that we who are passionate about words frequently congregate, whether physically or virtually. Sharing egregious errors is an effective way to remember and not repeat them.

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CONGRATULATIONS!



Tech Corner: Backup Recorders and Archiving of Media

From AAERT Communications Committee Chair Benjamin Jaffe, CER

Although this article was planned well before the Darrell Brooks hearing hit the news, it is great timing to talk about best practices for backup recorders and archiving media. Before we get too far in the weeds, the trial of Darrell Brooks was not required to be recorded based on Wisconsin Court Rule 71.01(2)(a). Based on media reports it does not appear that the recording was being continuously monitored by a digital court reporter, that there was any backup recording system functioning in parallel to the primary system, or that there was a



multifaceted archival strategy to save the files in multiple locations for redundancy. The only insight we have is from Holly Szablewski the district court administrator who is quoted in the media as saying “No recording is available from which to prepare a transcript. This may have been the result of human error or a technical malfunction.”

AAERT recommends in its Best Practices Guide that as part of your equipment you should have and use a “backup handheld recorder with batteries in case of power failure, separate from laptop (computer) system.” The separate part is key so that even if a cable fails, your computer crashes, or the power goes out you will still have that record.

Personally, I recommend recording in three places for extra security. If you are using a multi-channel recorder, like the Zoom H6, then you would record once on the computer, once on the H6, and once on a backup recorder. If you are using an audio interface device, like the Tascam US-4x4HR, then you would record on the computer and on two separate backup recorders. No matter your recording strategy, the backup recorder is an essential piece of equipment for any digital reporter.

Here are a few things to look for when picking out your backup recorder:

Battery and Plug-in Powered

A backup recorder needs to be the last line of defense for the digital court reporter in case everything else goes off the rails. In order for that to be possible it is best to find a backup recorder that can be plugged in, usually these days it is via 5W USB connection, and battery-powered. Some devices have built-in lithium-ion batteries, while others use off-the-shelf batteries. Each of these options comes with benefits and drawbacks depending on your personal habits and style.

Storage/Media

Like with the batteries some backup recorders come with storage media built into the device. This is great because then you do not have extra SD cards floating around, but it can also be cumbersome when offloading, requiring the device to be connected to the computer, sometimes even directly from an onboard USB plug. Cards can be a great option, but with some now as small as the nail on your pinky finger, they can be delicate and easy to misplace or confuse. Capacities for cards can range from 4GB (~4 hours) to 256GB (~250 hours).

Confidence Monitoring

Many backup recorders have built-in headphone ports that allow a reporter to check the functionality and quality of the backup recording. This is very important, especially for troubleshooting and confirmation of quality. Sometimes the ports can be bidirectional for listening and recording, which can be a problem for digital reporters, who need the built-in microphone to be picked up at all times to capture the entire room.

Microphone Pickup

Omnidirectional microphones are the most popular on

these types of devices because they pick up everything in a given area. This can also mean that noise and off-the-record conversation may be picked up. XY pattern microphones are gaining popularity because of their more powerful signal strength and directionality.



Archiving

Once your file has been recorded it is imperative that you properly archive the file with both redundancy and proper backups.

Redundancy

According to March 29, 2013, CNET article called Digital storage basics, Part 3: Backup vs. redundancy, redundancy, “means using more internal drives than necessary to store the information, or in other words, storing the same data in more than one place,” on an actively connected system. A simple version of this is having two drives in the same machine or network-attached storage (NAS) device that are identical mirrors of each other, this is called RAID 1. A more robust approach is called RAID 5 which requires at least three drives but only needs one of those drives as protection. RAID 5 is more efficient than RAID 1 but may require time to rebuild itself if a drive is lost. With RAID 5 and RAID 1 if a drive is lost no data is lost. Please note other RAID types exist and become increasingly complicated as the numbers go up.

For those doing large volumes of work and storing data for extended periods of time, a NAS can be a huge help. Here is a list from B&H Photo Video of NAS systems that can be configured to RAID 5. https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/search?q=NAS&sort=PRICE_LOW_TO_HIGH&filters=fct_raid_1233%3Araid-5

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/search?q=NAS&sort=PRICE_LOW_TO_HIGH&filters=fct_raid_1233%3Araid-5

Backup

Similar to redundancy, but different, backup, “means keeping separate copies of data in multiple places so that if something happens to one place you can turn to another.

The more copies of data you have, the safer it is,”

according to the article Digital storage basics, Part 3:

Backup vs. redundancy. With the reduction in the price of storage media and the numerous cloud storage options available, backing up has never been easier.

The best backups are kept offline and/or at a separate location. My recommendation is to back up all your data to two locations beyond the primary storage location. If the primary storage location is your computer, then you should copy the contents of the proceeding and keep one copy at home and one at the office. If you do not have a separate office location, consider cloud storage or a secure secondary location. When searching for cloud storage, make sure it is HIPAA compliant and extremely secure.



Conclusion

You are ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of the record. Take this seriously and make sure the record is secure and always retrievable.

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Stay Safe

