AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
ELECTRONIC
REPORTERS AND
TRANSCRIBERS

SOUNDBYTES

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

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Our First In-person Conference in Three Years is Taking Shape, and You Don't Want to Miss What's in Store for You in Milwaukee!

From Janet Harris, AAERT President

The time to meet again has arrived. For the first time in three years, the Board and our Professional Development committee are thrilled to host our 2022 Annual Meeting and Conference in-person this June 16-18 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Due to the pandemic, we have been limited to virtual meetings for the past two years. Your participation at our virtual meetings and conferences has been extraordinary, and the silver lining has been the success of our Navigating the Seas of Change Webinars.

Memberships and certifications are at an all-time high, and for this, we are especially grateful to our members for your support during a very challenging period in our history. Another unexpected consequence of the pandemic has been the surge of remote proceedings, the acceptance of digital reporting, the growth of online learning options, and a spike of opportunities for our members across all levels of the legal industry.

Digital reporters are in great demand, and this has placed a new requirement on AAERT: to meet the needs of our members with better resources, certification, and membership benefits.

Our roadmap is in place, and here is what we have done for our members lately:

- Earned pledges of $90,000 for our Certification Program
- Developed a new website
- Gone hybrid: building and hosting more frequent educational events, both in-person

and virtual
- Approved an exciting new marketing initiative to grow membership and certifications
- Increased the size of the board from 8 to 11 members as we expand our membership services

Stay tuned as your invigorated Board of Directors continues to push forward on several fronts in an effort to make your AAERYT membership experience more fruitful than ever before.

2022 Call for Board Nominations

It's time to get the Board member election process underway. This year, we have three Board members finishing up their current three-year terms. In addition, we will be adding three more members to the Board – in accordance with the AAERT bylaws – so we will need to elect SIX Directors this year.

The AAERT Board enacts the policies and procedures along with programs to benefit our membership; promotes digital court reporting and transcribing within the industry, and determines the direction of our Association. Serving on the Board requires a dedication to our profession and a willingness to put in some extra time and effort to help the Association continue to grow.

To be eligible to run for a board position:
- The person must be a voting member in good standing at the time of his/her nomination and election to the Board and must remain so during his/her term of service as a Director.
- The person must have been a voting member of the Association for a period of two or more years immediately prior to his/her nomination to serve on the Board.
- The person must have demonstrated active dedication to the mission and purposes of the Association during his/her membership.
- No more than one Association member who is a current employee, owner, shareholder, and/or principal of a particular company or organization may concurrently serve on the Board of Directors.

Do you know an individual, or individuals, who would like to aid in our mission? On March 16, all members in good standing received an email blast with a link to an online nomination form. If you know someone whom you think would be a good candidate to be a Director of the Association, please fill out and submit the form. You can even nominate yourself.

Nominations will only be accepted between March 16 and April 8.

Between April 11 and April 20, nominees will receive a questionnaire to complete and will have a telephone interview with the Nominations Subcommittee. Approved nominees will then submit a bio and headshot that will be included on the ballot.

Online voting will open on April 27 and will close on May 20.

If you have been active in the Association (serving on a committee, writing articles for the newsletter, etc.), please consider taking the next step by serving on the Board. If you're not sure you're ready for a Board position, but want to be more active in the Association, please contact any current Board member, Committee chair, or the AAERT staff and ask how you can get involved.

If you have any questions about the election process, please email aaert@aaert.org

The Nature of Words

Laurel Stoddard, CET

Someday soon spring will come and stay for a while. Even in Texas persistent incursions of arctic air are providing uncharacteristically late freezes and giving grief to the exuberant gardeners who have moved ahead with their plantings a bit too early this year. For once procrastination has paid off.

In this part of the world, if it's a bit nippy outside, one is likely to put on a jacket. Colder weather graduates one to a coat. In other locales, outer garments may be called parkas, anoraks, and cagoules, to name a very few, all sounding more elegant than a mere coat or jacket. But what is the origin of the names of these very basic garments necessary to keep warm?

The simple word **coat** is the oldest and was first used somewhere between the mid-13th and early 14th century and comes to us from the Middle English cote, from Anglo-French, and before that, German, similar to the Old High German kozza, a coarse wool mantle; also similar is the Old Saxon cott, woolen coat.

The word **jacket** came into usage a hundred or so years later, at the beginning to middle of the 15th century, from late Middle English, jaket, by way of the Middle French ja(c)quet, related to Old French jacquerie, peasantry, from jacques, peasant. One gathers that a jacket was not something worn by the higher classes at that point in time.

Next in time is the **parka**, defined as a hooded fur-lined garment suitable for arctic wear. The first known usage was in 1625. The word is Aleut, from the Russian dialect, ultimately from Nenets, a Samoyedic language of northern Russia.

Late in the 19th century comes the **anorak**, a hooded pullover jacket long enough to cover the hips, which came into usage in 1877, from Greenland Inuit annoraaq,

A newcomer in the language of outerwear is the **cagoule**, a lightweight anorak, sometimes knee-length, from French. The very latest of these terms, it appears the cagoule came onto the market in the 1960s.

May we all soon enjoy the zephyrs of spring and the wafting fragrance of our favorite vernal blooms. Particularly pertinent this spring is a quote from Anne Bradstreet: AIf we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

Time to Shine

James Salandro, CER, AAERT Communications Committee

The reporting and transcribing industry often presents us with stressful situations. Frequently we are called upon to go above and beyond the ordinary expectations of our profession in order to capture the record, meet a last-

minute client request, juggle competing deadlines, or even singlehandedly salvage United States trade policy. Navigating these stressful scenarios successfully requires mastering the techniques of stress management. The website KidsHealth.org (wisdom from the mouth of babes) recommends following a three-step approach to dealing with a stressful situation: Assess the situation, commit to a positive attitude, and take action. I would like to relate a stressful situation that I found myself in while reporting and break down how I was able to implement similar techniques to bring the stressful situation to a favorable conclusion.

Assess the situation – describe the situation to yourself and explain what's stressful about it. Make sure that you honestly accept those stressful feelings.

My colleague and I were assigned by our agency to record and provide a sound system for a high-profile meeting with international delegations in attendance. Our client also arranged for simultaneous interpretation by State Department interpreters for the meeting attendees. We needed to mic the tables where the panels would be seated, mic the interpreters and set up speakers so that the audience could follow the proceedings. We also needed to capture the record.

Typically, this wouldn't be all that challenging, but when we arrived one hour prior to the start time, nothing was set up. The client was usually meticulous in arranging tables, seating, and the proper positioning of the interpreters, but this time there was bupkis. My colleague and I called our point of contact who was nowhere to be seen and explained the situation. The point of contact started making heavy breathing sounds on the other end of the line and wheezing noises. We asked for clarification. The point of contact sputtered, "I'll...we'll...we're coming to meet you immediately!" Click. Dial tone. At that point, my colleague and I started unpacking our equipment so that we could move expeditiously in the moment of truth. We knew that a storm was brewing.

The point of contact arrived with an entourage. She looked at the room and said, "I can't believe they didn't DO ANYTHING! My boss is going to kill me!" At that moment the preposterously overconfident building setup crew arrived and started arguing with our point of contact over when exactly the room was supposed to be set up. Despite the confusing back and forth, the very obvious answer was that the conventional practice was to have the room ready prior to the meeting start. The setup crew relented and finally agreed that yes, the room should indeed be ready for guests, dignitaries, and other participants prior to the actual start of the meeting.

Now that everyone agreed that the room should be set up, there was bewilderment over how the room should be arranged. My colleague and I watched as the agency entourage and crack setup team debated about the placement of tables, interpreters, and audience

members. The two of us reporters were stunned. How could presidential management fellows and highly compensated setup technicians behave so indecisively? I mean, these people were probably homeowners for Pete's sake!

At that moment the chair-arranger-in-chief screamed, "SOMEBODY NEEDS TO MAKE A DECISION HERE!" above a cacophony of, "we're getting fired" and "my boss is STILL going to kill me."

Given the deteriorating state of affairs and the fact that participants were beginning to arrive, my comrade (now this is war) and I decided to let our office know about the situation. The old man answered the phone and we gave him the scoop. He said something to us that sounded like, "I don't know what any of that means. I'm buying trousers on eBay right now. Just make it work." Well, that's why he was the boss.

My comrade dropped the microphone extension cables that he was holding, put his head in his hands, and started muttering repeatedly, "I'm really gonna need a drink after this." A cold, hard recognition of the situation was needed. Superman wasn't coming to save us. We needed to accept that and move from helplessness into action.

Commit to a positive attitude – don't let those negative feelings hold your head in the toilet bowl or put you in a trash can like the middle school bully used to do.

Someone needed to put their foot down and that foot was us. An active change of mindset was needed. I grabbed my comrade, looked him in the eye, said I would buy him a beer after we got out of this foxhole, and then I misquoted the film Braveheart. He seemed fine and focused after that.

We called to the agency smart boys and set up wizards to join us in a huddle and started to coordinate a plan.

To paraphrase the Good Book, "If you have but faith the size of a mustard seed you can successfully move tables and chairs."

Take action – what specifically do you have the power to change the situation for the better?

We went into action arranging tables, chairs, microphones, and speakers. Our poise and sense of purpose inspired the bickering agency representatives and set up gurus to follow our lead and unite as one body and spirit toward a common goal. Things were finally going our way when all of a sudden the French interpreter approached us and said that we had gotten it all wrong. I looked at him sideways like he had doubled-dipped a Dorito and he returned my stink eye with a snotty, "As everyone knows, the interpreters need a direct line of sight to the speakers so that the lips can be read." I felt like reading his lips if you know what I mean. Instead, I just politely asked what he would suggest we do now that the tables were very much in place and very much had microphones carefully and lovingly placed at the exact right optimal locations AND that the

meeting was about to begin?

Then he said something that was surely inspired by Charlemagne, Charles de Gaulle, Pepé Le Pew, and the spirits of all the great Frenchmen, "It's your time to shine!" Our Time to Shine. In my mind, I was slapping this man. But my heart knew that he was right. I mean, hadn't we been here before not an hour earlier? Didn't we lead the brave in trying to make this meeting a success? Could we not do it all again in ten minutes? Lather, rinse, repeat, success.

Smiles were put back on faces. Tables were quickly rearranged. Testimonies were tenderly placed and spaced out neatly for all attendees. The meeting began and ended. The record was captured. The universe moved on.

Conclusion

Our client was very pleased with the outcome of the meeting and appreciated our initiative. As a result of our ability to deal professionally with a highly stressful situation, our firm enjoyed a long and lucrative relationship with the client. Which meant that our boss could buy even more trousers on eBay. As many as there are stars in the sky. Reporting is just as much about self-mastery and people management as it is about having a thorough knowledge of one's equipment. Learning to cope with stress properly will help you and your clients be successful for years to come. I hope that you too one day find your time to shine.

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- Virtual career fairs

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Zulma Argueta, Winter Park, CO
Kyla Benson, Austin, TX
Kimberly Benton, Palm City, FL
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Mellissa Briggette
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CONGRATULATIONS!

Tech Corner: Choosing the right Computer

From AAERT Communications Committee Chair Benjamin Jaffe, CER

Going into a store or shopping online for a computer can be an overwhelming experience. What brand, what features, and what size components do I need to do my job? Well, the truth is most of it is just marketing noise like with a product, but there are some key factors you should consider when buying a computer.
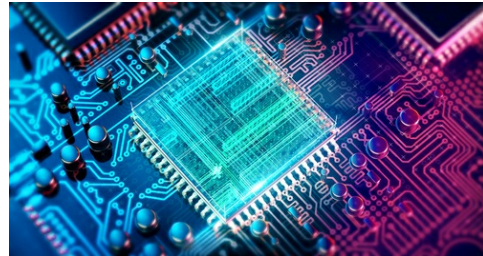
Brand vs. Operating System (OS)
The brand is not really important because most computers are comprised of the same parts sourced from outside the company whose brand is on the shell of the computer.

Although different companies have different return policies, warranties, and build facilities most customers never have the need to engage with a company in that way. The bigger factor that you should be looking out for is OS. Why because OS impacts the programs you can install on the devices and how the device interacts with the world it exists in. For example, Microsoft Word has a different installer for Windows, Mac, and Android systems which impact the look, feel, and functionality of the installed program on the computer. Additionally, digital court reporting software usually only runs on a Windows computer. If you buy a computer, that runs Mac OS for its sleek design you may not be able to use it to earn an income.

Processor Brand, Generation, and Series vs. Processor Cores and Speed

Computer companies love to use words like new generation, i9, Skylake, Ryzden7, or TurboBoost to describe their products. The truth is there are only a few major companies making processing chips today and they are all high quality. Intel, AMD, and Apple will make almost all the chips seen in laptops and desktops and they have been making chips for years, they are basically the Ford, GM, and Toyota of the processor industries. Like car manufacturers every year, or so, they come out with a new line of chips to hype to the public. Intel for instance is on the 12th generation of i-series processor, but for the average user, a generation 10 is not going to perform that differently from a generation 12. The real focus should be placed on the number of processor cores and the speed at which they run. For most digital reporting and legal transcription work, a 4-core processor will be more than sufficient. Cores also have threads; in most cases, this would be one or two per core. To simplify this think about a core as a highway and a thread as the lanes of traffic. Most highways also have speed limits, for a processor that is the speed, usually measured in GHz, and often accompanied by a boosted number. The boosted feature is used when your computer is under heavy processing load and will cause the computer to go faster but will heat it up and eventually cause wear and tear on the computer.

Graphics Card GBs vs. RAM GBs

Computer selection can be even more confusing when two different components are measured using the same scale. Graphics Cards are used to process the visual information seen on the screen, but even if your computer does not boast about a special graphics card it has one built in that is more than sufficient to run several monitors and display everything a digital court reporter or legal transcriber would do with no issues.

Graphics cards that advertise Gigabytes (GBs) of processing or fancy names like GeForce or Radeon are designed for Gaming and/or video editing and not needed for our industry. They also add additional weight due to more hardware and the needed cooling to support them, something you might not want if you move from place to place often. On the other hand, RAM Is critical to running your system. Most Windows-based systems will barely turn on and run at 4GB of RAM, 8GB would be my minimum suggested level for basic office work, and 16GB is ideal for anyone having multiple programs running and who records or playback media such as audio and video. RAM is the instant access storage location for data that allows functions to happen and for the computer to move quickly.

Think about it as if it was a bottle of water when you work out. In order for you to keep exercising you must hydrate, so you have a choice, grab a bottle for short-term water storage, like RAM for short-term computer memory storage, or run to the water source every time, on a computer that would be the hard drive. It is way faster and more efficient if you take a sip from the temporary storage container, the bottle, every time you need it rather than going to the water source. If you increase the size of the bottle, more GBs of RAM, you decrease the number of times you have to access the source, the hard drive.

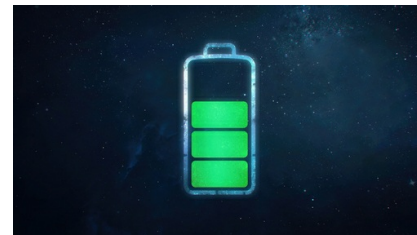### Screen Resolution vs. Screen Size and Display Outputs

In the consumer electronics industry resolutions gets a lot of hype. High Definition, True HD, 1080P, 4K, UHD, and so on, but does that matter for the computer user. The truth is yes and no. For a laptop, most screens have enough resolution that you can see fine detail, and with more digital court reporters and legal transcribers staring at words all day higher resolutions can actually make it harder to read text on the screen and you end up having to have windows zoom the screen. What will probably matter to you more is the size of the screen if you are a laptop user or the number of outputs for desktop use or a laptop user who connects to external screens. For me, I use a laptop with two screens, so I need a computer that has either two display outputs or has a USB-C port that allows for screen connection. Please note, not all USB-C ports can connect to a display look for USB-C with DisplayPort or Thunderbolt. If connecting via USB-C you will need an adapter to make it connect to a screen, usually through HDMI.

Battery Life vs. Hard Drive Speed and Capacity

I am not sure why battery life gets so much attention in the laptop market. Even though I have six laptops in my home at any given time it is rare that any of them are used for more than an hour or two at a time when not connected to a power source, especially my work-

based computers. Manufacturers love to advertise 4-hour batteries or 99kwh batteries, but I am just not sure that in the professional environment that matters, especially because those estimates are usually under low load battery saver situations. When I am looking for a computer, I am more worried about hard drive capacity, speed, and type. For me, there is nothing better than a solid-state hard drive. The technology has improved so much over the last several years that issues we used to have with wear out and continuous overwriting are a thing of the past. Measures in Gigabytes (GBs) like RAM or Terabytes (TBs), which is 1000 GBs, hard drive capacity is the number of computer programs, documents, photos, and videos you can store. An example of this is around 200,000 JPEG images can fit on one 500GB hard drive if nothing else was on it. The speed is based on how fast the hard drive can find and send the data to the processor. For spinning disk hard drives this is going to be measured in RPMs of the disk and is Interface Gb/s for SSD it will be measured in Sequential Read and Write Speed. The rule is the faster the better.

Conclusion

Ultimately choosing a computer is a very personal decision and often comes down to factors like size, weight, feel, color, or availability, but I hope this article will help clarify what aspects actually affect the performance of the machine and your performance as the

operator.

Join an AAERT Committee

AAERT is looking for members to join its Advocacy, Membership, Certification, Communications, Professional Development, and Leadership Development Committees. Anyone who is interested in sharing their passion and talents is encouraged to join! Fill out the application and email it back to aaert@aaaert.org

Committee Application

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