

Transcription News - 17th August 2022

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Good afternoon and welcome to the August 2022 edition of Transcription News from University Transcriptions and TP Transcription Limited. Our newsletter includes updates on our charitable foundation's work, automated transcription and advice articles on transcription. If you would like to get in touch with us to have any questions answered, request an article, or include anything in future editions please drop us a line to jonathan@tptranscription.co.uk



The Arun Sunshine Group, West Sussex - Ten Percent Foundation Award - £500

In the Ten Percent Foundation's latest round of donations, the Arun Sunshine Group has been chosen by the trustees to receive £500 to put towards equipment.

Background

The Arun Sunshine Group is a group set up in West Sussex in 2006. They provide recreational and leisure activities to adults with learning difficulties. Activities that they offer include computer games, arts and crafts, board games and jigsaws. On top of this, the group goes on outings to local establishments, like restaurants, pubs and bowling, as well as further afield, such as summer outings to the zoo, the Isle of Wight and Brighton.

Aims

The group aims to improve the conditions of life for its members, as well as to provide an environment where they can develop confidence, improve social skills and communication, make friends and have fun! They also hope to give carers a regular break, to help reduce the stress of their daily lives.

How will the donation help?

At the moment, the group relies heavily on charity to raise funds. Derek Moore, the leader of the project, said that the money “will be put to very good use as we desperately need to replace a lot of our age-appropriate puzzles and craft items.” This will allow the group to further improve the lives of its members, and to make their sessions more enjoyable for those involved. It has also allowed the group to buy a karaoke machine, which the members really love to use.

Future plans

The group is currently looking for more volunteers and trustees, so that they can continue to run their sessions and help their members. They have just received a Lottery Community Fund Grant, which should allow more of their sessions to run, and for more materials to be bought to entertain their members. For more information, see their website: <http://arunsunshine.org.uk>

Facts about learning disabilities

There are approximately 1.1 million adults with a learning disability in the UK. 956,000 of these are within England.

This means that around 2.16% of adults in the UK have a learning disability, which is equivalent to 1 in 50 adults.

On top of this, 2.5% of children in the UK have a learning disability, which is approximately 1 in 40. According to the NHS, learning disabilities can make it difficult for a person to understand complicated information, learn some skills, and look after themselves or live alone.

How long does it take to transcribe 20 minutes of audio?

A rule of thumb for transcription work is that if you are a professional transcriber (or transcriptionist as they are known in the US!) then it is likely to take four times as long as the length of the recording to turn an audio recording into a written document.

Assumption of a clear recording

This is based on the assumption that the recording is one or two people speaking, and the audio is clear, no-one is speaking quickly, and the accents are not too strong. This rule of thumb applies to any language around the world where the transcription is being done by a professional transcriber who is transcribing in their native language.

Hard to hear and other issues

Where this rule of thumb does not apply is if the recording is hard to hear, has a lot of background noise, the accents are strong, the recording device is placed quite a distance from the speakers, the type of file is not of sufficient quality in order to render accurate transcription (some types of audio file are better than others), the speakers are talking over the top of each other, the speakers are talking extremely quickly or somebody is mumbling.

Most professional transcribers will tell you that the vast majority of work is never straightforward!

Issues are common

The reason that transcription companies exist in the first place is because most recordings have issues like those above, which means that in order to get an accurate written version of an audio file, the actual time will very much depend on the specific recording. Furthermore, quite a few recordings will have subject-specific terminology that in some cases a transcriber may have been working on hundreds of similar recordings for the same client, and so transcribing is a lot easier, but similarly this may be the first time they have come across some of the terminology, which will slow

things down.

Most transcription companies pay for work on a set hourly rate, which is not the hourly rate for the time taken to do the work, but the hourly rate based on the length of audio. This gives both the transcribers and the transcription company certainty in terms of the cost, and enables accurate quotes to be given to clients.

Charged extra?

Some transcription companies will charge their clients extra for any recordings that are hard to hear, or they had problems with, or take longer to complete, because of some of the factors affecting the recording as above. Other companies, including ourselves, do not charge any extra for hard-to-hear recordings, or any issues that mean it takes the transcribers longer to complete the recordings. This is because we want to give our clients a set price for all work, so that our prices are set at the start of a project, and they do not change just because some of the recordings are hard to hear. Furthermore we would spend most of our working week informing clients of problems arising and asking for more money, which would of course drive us and all our clients nuts!

Human transcription – why do automated transcription companies recommend it?

This may surprise you, but some of the automated transcription services that are available online actually recommend that you use professional human transcribers for your work in certain situations.

Surely this is a bit of a regressive move back in time if the future of transcription is automation and artificial intelligence? As automated systems get increasingly clever for both transcription and translation presumably there will no longer be any need for human translators and transcribers to provide their services?

This may be the case, but we have been in business since 2003 and since that time we have been told continually that there is absolutely no future for human transcribers because automated transcription would be taking over.

Dictation vs Interviews

In the early days, a bit more of our work, but not a lot, was dictation rather than one to one interviews and focus groups (larger groups of speakers). Over time we have evolved into specialist academic and professional business transcribers, providing our services specifically where a high-quality level of transcription is needed. This can involve quite complicated recordings including extensive academic studies and projects.

This has not changed in many years. We offer transcription services to academics and business professionals and the overwhelming majority of our work is transcribing recordings that are fairly complex. They often involve hard to hear recordings, strong accents, transcription in other languages, and multi-speaker audio & video.

AI Transcription Software

A good number of the automated systems that are out there appear to run from just a couple of bits of code. Amazon has developed one automated transcription service that appears to be used by a number of the online automation companies.

Similarly, Zoom and Teams have automated systems operating to provide subtitling and transcripts effectively to their audio and video recordings and these are getting increasingly popular amongst researchers in order to transcribe their research interviews.

However, none of these have yet developed a way of transcribing complicated or multi-speaker recordings, and this is why automated companies will recommend the use of humans in a number of situations, rather than relying on their own automation.

You will find that if you try to submit a hard to hear or complicated recording to some of the larger companies, they will return it to you not completed, or you will get it back and the actual transcript will be completely useless because they would not have been able to pick up enough information to make it even worthwhile bothering trying to work from it.

We have written extensively about how some of the automated transcriptions we receive are so bad we very often have to work from scratch whenever a client sends us over an automated transcript, as well as a recording to get us to provide an accurate transcription of it.

Here are a few examples. We used the Amazon Transcribe system to complete this exercise.

The original recording of two English speakers reading questions and answers from a book

Q: In 1004 the people of Norwich made a deal with the Vikings to stop the raids. What did they agree?

A: The people of Norwich paid 'peace money' – a bribe. Of course the Vikings took the money and then robbed and destroyed Norwich anyway! Wouldn't you?

Q. In 1006 King Ethelred of England was worried that his nobles were becoming too powerful. He had one noble, Aelfhelm of York, murdered. What did he do to make sure Aelfhelm's sons didn't rise up in revenge?

A: Ethelred had them blinded. Nasty.

This is the Amazon Transcribe version of the recording

Q: Too intense for the people of Norwich made to deal with the Vikings to stop the rate. What did they agree?

A: The people of no rich paid piece money, a bribe? Of course. The Vikings took the money and then robs and destroyed Norwich anyway, wouldn't you?

Q: In 10. Oh, six. King Ethelred of England was worried that is, nobles are becoming too powerful. He had one Noble Alfama of York murdered. What did you do to make sure AI from sons did Right boys up in revenge?

A: Every word had been blinded, Nasty.

This shows the level of editing that is needed when dealing with the automated transcripts. We appreciate of course that no AI transcription service is going to be able to spell Aelfhelm and it is really impressive that the AI bot managed to transcribe Ethelred! NB: we have also formatted the above to add in the Q: and A: bits to the automated transcript.

Speed

The other issue is speed - AI tends to really struggle with speakers talking quickly, a problem if work is not dictation.

Here is an example - this is one speaker, reading an extract from a book.

The original recording of one English speaker reading from the book at a slow speed.

I respect a good check list, but I'm beginning to think my mother went overboard.

"Sorry, what page?" I ask, flipping through the handout at our kitchen table while mom, watches me expectantly via Skype. The heading reads Sterling-Shepard 20th anniversary trip: instructions for Ivy and Daniel, and it's eleven pages total. Double sided.

My mother planned the first time she and Dad ever left me and my brother alone - for four days - with the same thoroughness and military precision she brings to everything. Between the checklist and the frequent calls over Skype and Facetime, it's like they never left.

"Nine", Mom says. Her blond hair is pulled back in her signature French twist, and her makeup is perfect, even though it's barely five AM in San Francisco.

My parents' flight home doesn't take off for another three and a half hours, but Mom is never anything but prepared.

"Right after the lighting section."

Amazon Transcribe version (slower speaker version)

I respect Ah.

Good checklist.

But I'm beginning to think my mother went overboard.

Sorry. What page I ask, flipping through the handout at our kitchen table.

While Mom watches me expectantly via Skype.

The heading reads Sterling Shepard 20th anniversary trip.

Instructions for Ivy on Daniel.

On its 11 pages total.

Double sided.

My mother won and the

First time.

She on D dad.

Have, uh, that

Maybe on do my brother flowed.

For four days.

With the same over Nets.

Ondo Millet tree precision.

She brings to everything.

Between the checklist on the frequent calls.

Thank the sky.

Andre face time.

It's like they never left.

Nine moment, says.

Her blonde hair is

Pulled back in her signature French twist.

On her make up is perfect. Even though it's bad. The five a.m.

In San Francisco.

My parents flight home doesn't take off for another three on by a half.

Alice.

But Mom is never anything but prepared.

Right after the lighting section.

Not too bad, could be a lot better of course and accuracy levels are not high. However, things disappear rapidly downhill if the speaker gets faster.

This is the Amazon Transcribe version of the same text spoken more quickly.

I respect a good checklist, but I'm beginning to think my mother went overboard. Sorry. What page I ask with him through the hand on our kitchen table while Mom What should me expectantly via Skype heading, reads stealing chapter 20th anniversary trip.

Instructions the Ivy and Daniel in its 11 pages. Total double sided. My mother planned the first time she ever left me and my brother alone full days with the same thoroughness and military precision she brings to everything.

Between the checklist and the frequent calls over Scotland based time. It's like they never left nine months has her blond hair is pulled back in a symmetry French twist and her makeup was perfect, even though his body five AM in San Francisco. My parents fight home doesn't take off for another 3.5 hours, But Rome is never anything go right after the lighting section.

Accuracy Levels

The other point in relation to humans doing the transcript, is where a level of accuracy is needed on the recording.

Dictation is often absolutely fine to do with automated transcription services, because very often it is a straightforward matter of the automated system detecting individual words, and producing a transcript of it.

Unfortunately, when there are multi-speakers it suddenly gets very difficult for the automated system to detect the individual speakers, particularly where the speakers talk over the top of each other, and automated systems do struggle in these circumstances.

Professional human transcribers spend a lot of their time dealing with multi-speaker recordings, and it tends to be a specialism of our professional transcribers who have been doing the work for years, to be able to pick out individual words when the speakers are talking over the top of each other. We actually take pride in completing transcription projects and finishing them even if the work is very difficult to hear. We don't even charge extra for the service!

Charity Donations for 2022

TP Transcription Limited and University Transcriptions donate 10% of annual net profits to charity via the [Ten Percent Foundation](#), a charitable trust set up to distribute monies to charities in the UK and Africa. We have been doing this for over 20 years and by way of example in 2021 our charitable donation was £19,317.30. The Foundation never incurs any administration costs - all monies are distributed to charities.

Why do we donate?

We set up our companies over 20 years ago with the aim of being ethical in everything we did. As part of this we decided that a percentage of our profits should always be earmarked for charitable work and set the rate at ten percent. A sudden burst of inspiration meant we called ourselves the Ten Percent Group and it is what the TP in our name (TP Transcription Limited) stands for.

Nominations 2022

The successful charities this year were as follows:

Arun Sunshine Group - £500
Ichthyosis Support Group - £500
Men in Sheds - £500
The First Step - £1500
Rights of Women - £750
Cure Parkinsons - £1000
Prison Choir Project - £500
PACE Charitable Trust - £500
Dundee Stroke Exercise Club - £1000
The Proud Trust - £500
The Cure & Action for Tay-Sachs - £1000
Leeds Womens Aid - £500
The Children's Heartbeat Trust – £1000
Mynydd Isa & Maeshafn Cricket Club - £1400 interest free loan

We will provide an outline of each charity every month for the next 12 months and how the money has been spent.

We have a strict list of criteria in relation our donating which is available on the [Ten Percent Foundation website](#). Donations tend to be within the range of £500-£2000 per charity per year, although in the past we have supported charities over a period of 5 years with donations going towards specific ongoing projects.

If you have any questions about the work of the Ten Percent Foundation, please email jonathan@tptranscription.co.uk or visit our website at <http://www.tenpercentfoundation.org>

Recent Advice Articles

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The Transcription Society - providing professional accreditation to academic and business transcribers

The Transcription Society is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving standards in the transcription industry and providing accreditation to both individual and corporate members. The organisation is run on a not for profit basis and registered in the UK with Companies House. The society offers individual transcribers the chance to obtain professional recognition for their standards of work and provides corporate members with recognition that they subscribe to a professional level of industry standards for quality and ethics.

Needless to say, TP Transcription Limited is a corporate member and our directors sit on the board of the Transcription Society. For details of the transcription standards the Society promotes, please

visit www.transcriptionsociety.org.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our monthly newsletter and look forward to hearing from you if we can assist further.

Kind regards

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