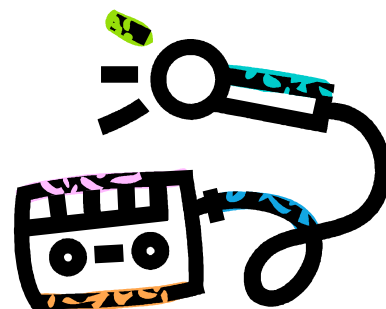


Transcription Guidelines

Recording meetings, conferences and interviews using digital equipment is rapidly becoming a preferred option to taking minutes or hand written notes. The advantages are clear in that more detail can be established and there is less likelihood of error. A professional, experienced transcriptionist can assist with the task of transcribing audio to text. Word Forward has experience in transcribing interviews, focus groups, meetings and conferences. The following tips have been provided to ensure you get the best from your recorded audio.

Recording / dictation

To ensure the best results from your recording, check your recording equipment parameters are on the most appropriate setting for the environment, whether it's personal dictation, a meeting, conference or lecture.



Try to limit background noise by positioning the recorder away from computers, fridges etc. Air conditioners often create significant audio interference.

Be aware that what the transcriptionist hears will be different to what you hear. Participants in a meeting have the advantage of being able to read lips, body language and facial expressions. Encourage respondents not to use gestures. Describe incidents where necessary e.g. "I am being handed a piece of paper."

Avoid rustling papers, scraping cups or knocking the table while talking as these background sounds can impact on audio quality.

Ask participants to speak clearly and not talk over one another; when two or more speakers contribute at the same time it can be difficult to decipher words.

If speakers are required to be identified, use names as much as possible. It can be helpful for each speaker to introduce themselves at the start of the recording and to spell names.

During a conference, supply audience members with a microphone for clearer audio. Investing in a lapel mic for personal dictation or table mic will also improve recording quality by capturing 360° sound.

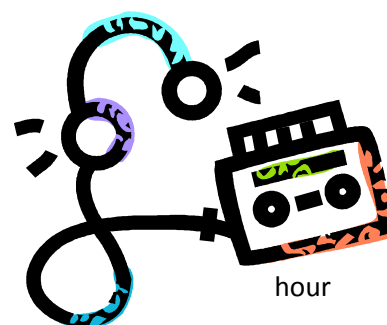
It is a good idea to test recording before commencing the actual recording to ensure all participants can be heard and the equipment is working properly. Check the recording device has sufficient memory or tape time and battery life to cover the event.

If recording a lengthy meeting, stop at least every hour and start a new file. This prevents a single file getting too big and unmanageable. Audio files are typically too large to e-mail. There are on-line facilities for transferring audio files but these usually have restrictions on file size. Word Forward provides an FTP service whereby audio files can be directly uploaded to our server for transcription.

Cont.

Transcription

Most professional typists will require three to four hours to transcribe one hour of clear audio. This is because the speed of speech is faster than most transcriptionists can type. Variations to this estimate will depend on the number of speakers, their speech rate, audio quality, accents, speakers talking over one another and technical content (unfamiliar terms). The professional industry standardⁱ allows one to transcribe 15 minutes of clearly recorded speech.



A final note: while they have a good ear for dialogue, the majority of transcriptionist are not linguistic experts. If speech during a meeting is unclear due to mumbling or accent, chances are it's not going to be any clearer for the person transcribing the recording. Although players provide the advantage of being able to repeat segments, a transcription should only ever be considered a record of a meeting and not a translation.

When requesting a transcription through Word Forward, please specify whether you require the dialogue to be transcribed verbatim or edited for clarity. If unsure, it can be helpful to advise what the recording will be used for. For example, research groups are best transcribed verbatim so that confidence in answers can be determined. Podcasts intended for reading on the web are usually best edited for clarity to ensure readability.

Standard format is Calibri 11 point, single spaced. Spelling and grammar will be Australian English unless otherwise specified on the work request form. Transcriptions are typically returned by e-mail in Microsoft Word format. Printed copies and CDs of the recording can also be supplied on request.



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ⁱ (Industry standards obtained from the Industry Production Standards Guide (1998), published by OBC, Columbus, OH, USA)