Understanding Transcription Types: Verbatim and Simple



WORDS AREN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH

Professional transcription services work hard to capture precisely what you, as the client, need from the audio or video files they receive. For some, a comprehensive summary of the conversation or presentation is enough. For others, especially where the content is especially dense or complex, every word must be captured and accurately documented. For industry-specific work, such as legal cases, insurance claims, or even medical transcription, clients often need to capture everything that occurs.

THE NEED FOR EVIDENCE

Where litigation is involved in court documents and insurance claims, decisions in favor of the plaintiff or the defendant can amount to millions of dollars. As such, *verbatim transcription* can require the capture of every available sound or utterance – background noise, event noise (opening a briefcase, placing a cup on a table), coughs, sneezes,

laughter, or any other aside comments. The dialog also has to be documented in its entirety – accents, vernacular phrases, colloquialisms, repetition of words, pauses, stuttering, "Umm's" and "Ahh's" can all make a significant difference to the nuance and context of the language being recorded. The objective here is to take the reader to a place of near-immersion in the event without actually being there.

EXPERIENCE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Working with an inexperienced transcriptionist in order to minimize costs can prove to be an expensive choice here. A freelancer, who was busy transcribing YouTube videos before starting work on your project, will not have the experience needed with audio files to recognize ambient noise and accurately record it as an aside in the transcript file. In the same vein, a transcriptionist who lacks relevant industry experience will not be able to recognize technical or industry jargon nor to understand the context in which it was being used during the conversation. In this situation, the weight of the potential outcome should more than justify the expense of the most experienced and highest qualified transcription service available for the project.

YOU MAKE THE CALL

What you would like to receive from an audio file may end up being very different from what the transcription service is able to deliver. Even the most experienced and talented transcriptionist is limited by the quality of the audio file. If you are planning to ask for a verbatim transcription, make every effort to ensure that you will be delivering an audio file of the best possible quality to achieve that outcome.

If the capture and documentation of every single sound exceed your needs, an *intelligent verbatim transcription* or *clean transcription* may be better suited for your purpose. Here, the

transcriptionist is asked to filter out the extraneous noise and dialog in order to deliver an accurate summary of the conversation that took place. The reader of the file is accommodated by ensuring that repeated words, pauses, and any other utterances are removed in order to make the dialog easier to follow without altering the meaning, context, tone or pace of the original conversation.