

SPEECH TO TEXT REPORTERS – WHAT ARE THEY?

It is the role of the Speech To Text Reporter (STTR) to facilitate communication between Deaf/deafened/hard of hearing people and hearing people.

Speech to Text Reporting is a process of Verbatim Computer-Aided Transcription. It is NOT voice recognition or predictive text.

A trained Reporter takes down the verbatim spoken word on a Palantype or Stenograph keyboard. The specially trained Reporter types what she/he hears onto the Palantype/Stenograph keyboard. This is not typing every letter but words, phrases and shortcuts (thus enabling it to be verbatim.) The computer programme then translates into English, which then appears on the laptop screen/projector screen. There is not an Oxford English Dictionary in the computer, therefore, when words are new to the computer, it translates the typed text into what it thinks is being typed, and this then appears phonetically. A trained Reporter can write in excess of 200 wpm.

The job is to simultaneously translate the spoken word into English and ensure that it is displayed for a Deaf, deafened hard of hearing, reader to view. This enables the Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing person to follow proceedings on an equal footing with their colleagues.

STTRs cover exactly the same kinds of events as sign language interpreters and lip speakers, i.e. conferences, interviews, one to one sessions etc.

All Registered STTRs originally trained in Court. It takes up to 2 years to train as a Court Reporter, however to work for the Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, STTRs need at least 4 years court experience.

Rigorous training is undertaken in order to become a CACDP registered STTR. At present all STTRs have to pass the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters (BIVR) Membership exam, which examines grammar and verbatim skills. In order to take this exam, the STTR must have attained the minimum speed of 180 wpm.

To become CACDP registered, all STTRs must have a deaf awareness certificate and also have attended a training course on technical issues and working with other Human Aids to Communication. Thereafter, they will have to be endorsed by two deaf assessors appointed by the CACDP.

Once all these exams have been passed, only then can the Palantypist/Stenographer be classed as an STTR. They are then bound by a Code of Practice/Role and Ethics of an STTR and Disciplinary Procedures. The user can then be safe in the knowledge that when an STTR is used, the work produced will be of a high standard.

STTRs
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