



HANDOUTS

12355 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 610
Reston, Va. 20191
800-272-6272
NCRA.org

Making the Record

How can counsel and the court help with realtime?

Realtime translation begins with the court reporter, but he or she is not solely responsible for the quality of the translation. The participants' conduct in the courtroom can greatly affect realtime translation. If you look at the screen and see an increase in mistranslates or untranslates, several things could be happening. Confusing and less usable realtime translation may occur if there are words not in the reporter's stenographic dictionary, if people are cross-talking, if someone is talking too fast, if someone is not talking clearly, or if the court reporter is getting tired. Reporters cannot write what they do not hear or understand.

Speak loudly enough so the reporter can hear you, keep your voice up, and avoid trailing off.

It is important to provide the court reporter with a word list ahead of time. This list should include not only the witnesses' names, but any names that may be mentioned during the proceedings, any technical terms, geographical locations (including street names or business names), and any cases you anticipate citing. If the word's pronunciation is not obvious, it is helpful to know how to pronounce the name or term.

It is necessary to pronounce your words clearly. If a person says, "I saw 'em over there," the reporter can usually later determine from context whether that should be "him" or "them." It is sometimes difficult to do that while writing realtime. Court reporters also write phonetically. If you don't pronounce a word clearly, the realtime may be as garbled as your speech.

Cross-talking and talking too fast can have disastrous effects on realtime. Although the court reporter may be able to keep up with the fast examination or sort out two people talking at one time, the precision with which each word must be written for the computer to recognize it in realtime will suffer.

It requires a higher degree of mental gymnastics to write realtime. When the reporter hears a homonym such as the word "to," they must first determine whether it should appear as "to," "two," "too," "2," or "11," recall the necessary steno stroke for the differentiation, and then write the word. Also each word spoken must be written precisely on the steno machine in order for the computer to be able to recognize it. This is both mentally and physically tiring. Taking regular breaks will help the quality of the translation.

You are an important part of a realtime record. By following these suggestions, you are helping to ensure a high-quality product.

What is realtime translation?

What you are about to see is realtime translation. The English text will appear on the screen one to three seconds after the word is spoken. This is made possible by what we call CAT or computer-aided translation.

There will be words that appear on the screen that may be either mistranslates or untranslates. These are not errors but simply limitations of the computer's stenographic dictionary. You will usually be able to tell from context what a given mistranslate or untranslate should be. If you should have any questions, please write down the page and line number of the word, the time that appears on the right-hand side of your screen, or a group of words for the reporter to search for later to find your questionable spot. The court reporter will be happy to assist you during a recess.

Do not be concerned over minor untranslates or mistranslates because if and when a written transcript becomes necessary, the court reporter's job is to go through a production process similar to word processing to prepare a certified verbatim transcript.

A mistranslate is a word or series of words that appear in English but are the wrong words. An example would be the phrase "to be content" may translate as "to beacon tent" or the word "mathematic" may translate as "math /MA /particular."

An untranslate is a word that may not be in the reporter's stenographic dictionary and appears either phonetically or in the stenographic stroking. This is particularly true of names, technical terms, or geographical locations. An example would be the name "Weist" might appear as either "weest" or "WAO*ES."

A helpful scheduling checklist

Did you ...

- send the notice to the court reporter? (Email is perfect.)
- indicate the type of testimony?
- indicate special delivery requirements?
- indicate the approximate duration?
- indicate special requirements (videotape, videoconferencing, realtime, daily or expedited copy, draft unedited transcript, etc.)?
- indicate whether the attorney will have his or own tablet/computer for realtime viewing or if you need the court reporting firm to provide one?
- indicate whether realtime will need to be streamed to an off-site location?
- indicate the complexity of the testimony so the firm can determine the skill level required?
- indicate your preference for going green (i.e., receive transcripts, invoices, and statement electronically)?
- know that we appreciate your time to learn more about our profession?