

Some questions to ask before replacing your professional court reporter with a machine:

- Can the recording system discriminate between speech and background noise? Will it pick up table-tapping, coughing, paper-shuffling, etc.?
- Who will be responsible for the accuracy of technical terminology? What professional certification standards and training are required for this person?
- Will the system pick up hushed bench conferences? If so, who else will also hear these private conversations?
- Will the system inadvertently record confidential conversations between counsel and client?
- When will you know there is a problem with the system — when it happens, or after the proceeding is over?
- Will you lose opportunities to impeach witnesses because of an inability to easily and thoroughly research prior testimony on the spot?
- Will using audiotape, videotape, or digital audio move your court system away from integrated information systems?
- Who will be responsible for maintaining the log? What training, skill level, and certification are required? What other responsibilities will they have?
- Will a transcript be prepared from the recording? If so, who will key it in, how long will it take, and how much will it cost? How will “inaudibles” and “indiscernibles” be handled?
- What is the cost in time and money of not preparing a transcript, but instead simply reviewing the recordings?

- Who will certify the accuracy of the record?
- Are there potential problems of accessing the recording if ordered and transcribed weeks, months, or years after the original proceeding?
- Are there potential problems of reconciling multiple versions of transcripts if more than one reporting method is used, or if counsel independently prepare transcripts?
- What are the hidden costs of architectural modifications, cabling, maintenance contracts, and personnel?

There is always more to any easy solution than meets the eye, or the ear.

For more information about alternatives for preserving the record of trials and other proceedings, contact your state or local court reporters association or NCRA.



National Court Reporters Association

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21 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD USE A Professional Court Reporter





When the record matters, a professional court reporter is your best choice for accuracy, timeliness, and value.

1. Court reporters sort and discriminate between testimony and background noise. They can clarify inaudible or heavily accented speech.
2. Court reporters clarify technical terms.
3. Court reporters do not inadvertently record attorney-client exchanges.
4. Court reporters read back from any portion of their notes.
5. Court reporters certify the accuracy and integrity of the record and can testify to those points if necessary.
6. Court reporters undergo two or more years of academic and skills training.
7. Court reporters who are certified must demonstrate that they update their knowledge by earning continuing education units.
8. Court reporters capture proceedings digitally as well as on paper, facilitating their use in litigation support systems.
9. Audio and video recording systems produce recordings; court reporters produce digital and paper transcripts.
10. A transcript is a practical necessity, not a luxury, in all but the briefest or simplest of cases.
11. Due to variations in background, education, training, diligence, and other individual factors, transcripts prepared by different transcribers from the same recording will be different. Differences may or may not be resolvable by listening to the recording.
12. In most instances, transcript costs are similar regardless of the method used to take the record.
13. Many court reporters can provide realtime translation of proceedings on computer screens in court or depositions. This aids in reviewing testimony and provides access for witnesses or other participants who are hard of hearing.
14. Realtime transcripts can be telecommunicated or cybercast to allow participation by remote parties or consultants.
15. The court reporter's transcript can be synchronized with a contemporaneously made digital audio or digital video recording to provide the ultimate in a searchable multimedia record.
16. Court reporters may provide unofficial transcripts of testimony on paper or by electronic file virtually instantly.
17. People today want fast access to information. That is what court reporters provide.
18. Contrary to impressions people get, digital audio systems are not voice-to-text systems. Digital audio requires human transcribers to create a paper or digital transcript.
19. To create a searchable log of a digital audio or video proceeding, someone, usually a monitor, annotates trial activities. An accurately annotated log may help find a particular event on the recording; but it does not produce the transcript.
20. Court reporters provide their own equipment, thus making sophisticated digital technology available to the court system at no expense.
21. No expert who has come to our attention believes that voice/speech recognition technology will replace humans in the foreseeable future.