

Transcription Tips

Software

You can use the old-fashion Word/media player combo, but this little program is free and will save you a lot of time. It also takes about five minutes to figure out: otranscribe: <http://otranscribe.com>

- Pros: Nothing to download. Plays video. Shortcut keys speed up your process. When you start playback again, it skips back one second so you can hear the last few words before continuing on. Very useful to make sure you're not missing words.
- Cons: Video doesn't appear to work in Safari. Chrome seems fine. Not sure about other browsers.

Typing

Whenever possible, make sure you know the spellings of names before you start. Lori may have an information sheet from your interview that can help. If you still come across a word you don't know, invent a spelling for it and stay consistent. It'll be easier to search and replace later.

Listen to the recording first for a few minutes to help you get used to the speaker's voice. People don't speak the way they write, so listening in for a few minutes may give you an idea as to their speech quirks and habits so you can even start to anticipate things.

As you're typing out your first draft, don't type out each participant's code every time you start a new line. Using the examples from the guidelines, *MSC and *PME, just start each line with "m;" and "p;" When you import your draft into Word for editing, simply do a search and replace on "m;" and "p;" with "*MSC:" and "*PME:" (including the tab after the colon – see here for more details: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/214204>). You'll save yourself thousands of keystrokes.

(You could probably do the same for other words that you end up using frequently. Just be sure to use unique shorthand, like "p;" for "*PME: ." If you use just "p" and then do a search and replace on "p," you'll end up replacing all instances of that letter.)

Once you get into a rhythm, if something stumps you, type XXX, add a time stamp, and come back later. As you continue, it'll become easier to understand the speaker, and you may also pick up more context that will help you decipher the parts you couldn't understand.

Other Tips?

If you have tips for speeding up the process, please let me know so I can update this document and send it back out to everyone: Lori Straus, lstraus@uwaterloo.ca, 519-888-4567 ext. 39267.