

An Invitation to Participate in Transcription Research

Greetings, members of OCRA. My name is Chad Iwertz, and I am a PhD student at Ohio State University researching the writing habits and practices of speech-to-text providers and CART providers. I have been studying transcription methods for 6 years, and for my dissertation work at OSU I have been primarily working with the Association of Transcribers and Speech-to-Text Providers to better understand the methodological practices of different forms of transcription.

At this point, however, my research is significantly underrepresenting verbatim forms of transcription. I am writing to you today (thanks to the support of the OCRA Board of Directors!) to invite you to participate in this research by sharing your experience as a CART provider in a short (less than 10 minutes to complete) questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is so appreciated: as far as I have found there is no similar work being done to understand the composing practices and methods transcribers from a variety of backgrounds employ to produce quality transcripts.

You can access the short survey here: <http://go.osu.edu/speech2text>

You may be asking why I became interested in transcription—what made me start studying captioning and the transcribing process?

I first experienced captioning as a young college instructor. In my second term teaching, years ago, a hard of hearing student utilized TypeWell to access my course in our face-to-face learning environment in Oregon. As a hearing person, this was my first encounter with captioning technologies in the educational environment. Aside from the occasional need to watch television with closed captions turned on (usually while watching British television in which actors had accents I couldn't understand), I have gone nearly my entire life without knowledge (as either a caption reader or caption writer) of the complexities of captioning.

It might be ironic, then, that from this one experience as a nondisabled captioning non-practitioner I formed the basis of my master's graduate thesis on disability and composition classrooms. Much of that study centered on my struggle to understand how access (specifically TypeWell captioning as a form of access in Oregon) worked and how legal histories of disability in educational contexts make access a simultaneously productive yet limiting force. I focused on how emerging work in disability studies complicated whose responsibility it is for creating accessible educational environments, traditional ideas of where and when formal learning happens in these environments, and who and what creates access to them. These were, I didn't realize at the time, *BIG* questions. Certainly ones that I could not answer in one case study.

If my early graduate work focused on how complicated access and how it's formed is, then my work since then has pursued a better understanding of how this well-intentioned complication of access directly affects disabled people who rely on it to access nondisabled spaces. The reason I've continued this work in captioning comes from conversations with Deaf and hard of hearing friends who have come out of meetings and conference panels not knowing what form of captioning they received in those spaces.

On a number of occasions, I've spoken with friends and colleagues who have received meaning-for-meaning transcription at events and had specifically requested or thought they were reading verbatim captions. I've also coordinated events on a number of occasions and found that requesting a certain form of transcription can be a complicated and polarizing process. On other occasions, friends have told me they didn't realize more than one option for captioning existed, or they were under the impression that verbatim transcription was the only form of captioning that existed.

A deep, pervasive lack of awareness and understanding of the different forms of captioning that exist, and the different kinds of access that are created through the practice of these different forms of captioning, forms the core exigence of my current work and my grounding research question: How and why do different caption providers write the way they do? It is my hope that by better understanding the unique benefits and limitations of different forms of captioning that caption readers, practitioners, and educational non-practitioners can better advocate for and participate in the forms of access they need and use in nondisabled spaces.

Every CART provider, transcriber, and speech-to-text provider I have met or spoken with is deeply committed to captioning advocacy, as I anticipate you are who is reading this right now as well. Ultimately, I hope that this research will help uncover places where we can better advocate for captioning in service of increasing access to otherwise inaccessible educational environments.

Thank you again for the work you do, and thank you for your consideration in contributing your voice to my transcriber survey: <http://go.osu.edu/speech2text>.

For additional information, please visit the ATSP Network's July 11, 2017 blog by [clicking here](#).

I look forward to sharing the results of the study and as always welcome continued conversation on this work. You can reach me at Iwertz.1@osu.edu.