



## *Guidelines to Multimedia Company's General Transcription - A Case Study*

LoveStreams Inc. is a multimedia communication company based in California. It offers webcast and podcast services of multimedia content to businesses, radio and television companies. The multimedia company besides providing webcast and podcast services also offers captioning and sub-titling services to its clients.

The production division of the company had difficulties in completing many of its assignments within a deadline that it promised to its clients. These assignments consisted of audio/video recordings of conferences, seminars, church sermons, business meetings, television and radio programs, which needed to be converted into text.

The company's in-house transcription division did not have adequate staff, and the local transcription company that it had hired, were unable to provide them with accurate transcripts based on its guidelines. LoveStreams Inc. approached us for providing them with transcription support, and sent us their quality guidelines that were as follows:

### **A. THE BASICS**

1. Do not include "um'," "ah," "er" or partial words.
2. Do not indicate in the transcript the sound of someone clearing his/her throat or someone coughing, unless it is a part of a discussion.
3. Eliminate false starts consisting of only one or two words if it does not change the meaning of the sentence. The intent should be to make the transcript readable.

<http://www.transcriptionsservice.com>

**EXAMPLE:**

“Do you – can you provide us with the information?”  
Mention \_\_\_\_\_ as  
“Can you provide us with the information?”

4. No corrections are required for improper subject-verb agreement

5. Brackets need not be included {[ ]}

6. “Yeah” instead of “yeah” needs to be typed.

7. “Huh” and “Uh-huh” are agreeable.

8. “mm-hmm” should be transcribed as

Mm-hmm. ( In acknowledgement. ) ----- use this sparingly

Mm-hmm. (In \_\_\_\_\_ agreement.)

Mm-hmm. (Affirmation.)

NOTE: Include "in acknowledgement" "in agreement" et cetera in the text for purposes of clarification. Type "mm-hmm" when it is the only verbal response or when necessary to the flow of the transcript. DO NOT type it if it is simply being used to convey one is listening politely or impatiently, as the case may be.

9. Do substitute "want to" for "wanna"; "got to" for "gotta"; "kind of" for "kinda"; "doing" for "doin"; unless you feel the word was purposely said that way for effect.

Do type "betcha" as in "you betcha."

Do type "ain't."

10. Do type "(sic)" to indicate that a speaker has misspoken. This should be used sparingly, however.

11. Do type "okay" not OK.

12. Do type "et cetera" not etc.

13. Do type "percent" not the % sign.

14. Do type "TV" not tv or t.v. or T.V.

15. Do type "pounds" not "lbs.;" "centimeters," not "cms."

EXCEPTION: When referring to weapons, i.e.: 50-mm guns.

16. Do not abbreviate words on the title page or in the body of the text. Speaker identifications may be abbreviated according to the speaker identification format guide.

17. Type acronyms such as NAACP, EDT, EST, OSHA, without periods. D.C., U.S. AND U.N. are exceptions.

- Places of two initials take periods: U.S.; U.K.; U.N.

- Academic degrees: B.A.; M.A.; Ph.D.

OTHER EXCEPTIONS: House and Senate bills: H. Con. Res. 106, H.R. 303, S. 207

18. People's initials:

- A. Three initials don't require periods. eg. JFK, LBJ, FDR.

- B. Type first and middle initials with periods and no spaces when followed by the person's last name: J.R. Ewing.

B. TIME

- 1. Three o'clock is written "3:00"

2. One thirty is written "1:30"
3. Two forty-five is written "2:45"
4. "Half past 4:00" is written as such.
5. "A quarter to 4:00" is written as such.
6. Three p.m. is written "3 p.m." (no zeros, lowercase p.m. with periods.)
7. Twelve noon is written "12 noon."

### C. NUMBERS

1. SPELL OUT the numbers one through nine, except when used in dollar amounts and ages; in citing votes, scores, poll results; and when used with the following words: percent, million, billion and trillion.

However, if the number is the first word of a sentence, it is always spelled out.

2. Use the Arabic numeral for numbers 10 and above, except when the number is the first word of a sentence.

3. Roman numerals are used when appropriate: SALT II, King George V, Title VII.

4. Spell out fractions such as one-half, one-and-a-half, three-quarters, two-thirds EXCEPT when used in dollar amounts; in citing measurements; and when used with the following words: percent, million, billion and trillion.

5. Decades

- a. 1980s

- b. The '80s.

6. Age: Always use figures. Age expressed as an adjective before a noun, use hyphens (e.g. "A 9-year-old boy.")

## D. DOLLARS

1. Use the Arabic numeral(s) when dollar amounts are mentioned, except when the dollar amount begins a sentence.

In the body of a sentence:

- A. Thirty dollars is written: \$30.
- B. Thirty billion dollars is written: \$30 billion.
- C. Thirty to forty billion dollars is written: 30 (billion dollars) to \$40 billion OR \$30 billion to \$40 billion is also acceptable.
- D. One thousand dollars is written: \$1,000.
- E. One hundred thousand dollars is written: \$100,000.

If it is clear that a dollar amount is being discussed, you can clarify that.

EXAMPLE: "We have appropriated \$500 million with 300 million (dollars) going for new social programs."

## E. DESCRIPTIVE COMMENTS

1. Descriptive comments such as "laughter," "laughs/laughing", "applause" "cheers," "There was a chorus of noes," "in progress" et cetera, are written as parentheticals.

Here are some guidelines to follow in using them:

A. When it follows a complete sentence, type the descriptive comment with an initial cap and a period. Generally, we do not type these comments on a separate line. However, in some cases, you may feel it makes more sense to do so.

EXAMPLES:

- To get to the other side. (Laughter.) (Laughter, applause.) (Cheers, applause.)

B. At the beginning of a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

- (In progress) -- the Iraqis to conform to the resolutions. (Laughing.) That is the funniest thing I've ever heard.

C. In mid-sentence.

EXAMPLES:

- And we will not allow the Iraqis to hold the U.S. -- (applause) -- or its allies hostage.

## 2. (Cross talk)

This descriptive comment can be used in situations where everyone is talking at once to the point that their comments are indecipherable. This

sometimes occurs on shows such as McLaughlin Group and in the White House briefings.

In this situation, carriage-return to a new line, tab in, and type "(Cross talk.)" Carriage-return down to a new line and resume talking with the first audible comment.

### **3. Transcriber notes and comments.**

A. Should you feel the need to explain or clarify something, please make your comments parenthetically?

EXAMPLE: When a speaker's remarks are translated throughout, we make a notation in the transcript just above their first remarks:

(NOTE: President Yeltsin's remarks are through interpreter.)

B. When transcribing television programs with commercial breaks, type: (Announcements.)

### **F. INAUDIBLE, OFF MIKE, DOUBLE-DASH, (WORD OR WORDS?)**

1. Inaudible and off. mike

A. Use "inaudible" when something said is unintelligible, unable to be understood due to the speaker's accent or extraneous noise, such as a cough or laughter.

B. Use "off mike" when the person cannot be heard because they are not speaking into a microphone.

C. Type these in the same format as descriptive comments such as "laughter" and "applause."

EXAMPLES:

Q (Off mike) -- results of the invasion?

Q (Off mike.)

Q What do you think are the -- (inaudible) -- results of the invasion?

Q What have the Jordanians done to -- (inaudible)?

## 2. The Double Dash

In some cases it is better to begin and end incomplete comments with "--" instead of "(off mike)" or "(inaudible)".

NOTE :"(Off mike)" or "(Inaudible)" is preferable if it is a matter of more than a few words which cannot be heard.

EXAMPLES:

A. If the speaker allows their voice to fade out and drop to an inaudible level because the thrust of their comment has been understood and there is no need to continue the thought:

"Q So you feel there is no real need to --"

B. When the speaker's thought is completed by another speaker:

"Q So you feel there is no real need to --"

"MS. MYERS: -- supply them with weapons? No, we don't."

C. When a speaker's thought is interrupted:

"Q When do you think --"

"MS. MYERS: We continue to monitor the situation."

D. When two people are talking at once and small portions of both comments are inaudible.

"MR. MCLAUGHLIN: If you were President Clinton and it was your decision to make, what action would you --"

"SEC. CHRISTOPHER: -- comment on a hypothetical question."

### 3. (Word or words?)

A. Sometimes it is better to indicate what you think you hear, if it seems to make good sense to you given the context, and to qualify it with a (?). You do not want to mislead the reader, so please use this option carefully.

EXAMPLES:

- A single word:

The reason for the ships' (presence ?) is to stop the flow of goods.

- A group of words:

The reason for the (ships' presence ?) is to stop the flow of goods.

### G. (ph) and (sp)

1. The news is full of new people and place names which you may be unable to easily verify with the resources available.

A. Use (ph) in the case of a name or place name with which you are unfamiliar.

EXAMPLES:

- Tariq al-Aziz (ph)
- The port of Aqaba (ph)

B. Use (sp) in the case of a name or place name which you can hear clearly but which has variant spellings.

EXAMPLES:

- Alan (sp) Jones -- (Alan could be Allen, Allan)
- Ambassador Clark (sp) -- (Clark could be Clarke)

## H. CAPITALIZATION

1. Capitalize only the formal name of an institution, entity, piece of legislation, law, publication or building.

EXAMPLES:

the appropriations bill

the budget act

the House office building

the Rayburn House Office Building

the department

the Defense Department

the Family Leave Act of 1993

the Capitol

the floor of the House

Acceptable:

"Ask over at State." (meaning State Department)

"He's over at Defense." (meaning Defense Department)

A. "administration," as in the Clinton administration is NOT capitalized.

B. Senate and Congress are capitalized. The adjective, congressional, is NOT capitalized.

C. Republican Party, Democratic Party are capitalized.

D. Cabinet is a formal name and is capitalized.

E. Capitalize the Fund and the Bank when referring to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

2. Capitalize formal titles only when used directly before a person's name.

"The president called Vice President Gore."

"William Cohen, secretary of Defense, met with Secretary Albright."

### 3. Directions and regions

A. LOWERCASE north, south, northeast, northern, et cetera, when they indicate compass direction the bird flew south; the wind came from the north.

B. CAPITALIZE these words when they designate regions: the South; the Midwest; Northern Virginia; Southwest D.C.

C. CAPITALIZE these words when they refer to political blocs:

- Russia is receiving aid from the West.
- Yeltsin is meeting with Western leaders.
- The North-South dialogue in Korea continues.

### I. IDENTIFICATIONS

A. We use the following identifications for speakers:

MR. : (generic male ID)

MS. : (generic female ID – never use MRS. unless it is the first lady)

MRS. : (first ladies only)

PRESIDENT (presidents)

VICE PRESIDENT (vice presidents)

PRIME MIN. (prime ministers)

MIN. (ministers)

SEC. (secretaries – not for undersecretaries, assistant secretaries or deputy secretaries – use MR./MS. for them)

GEN. (generals)

ATTY GEN. (attorney generals, including state attorney generals)

COL. (colonels)

MAYOR (mayors)

GOV. (governors)

DR. (medical doctors – do not use this for anything other than medical doctors (i.e. – not for Ph.D.s)

SPEAKER (speaker of the House)

SEN. (senators)

REP. (representatives)

AMB. (ambassadors)

CHANCELLOR (for the German chancellor)

KING (kings)

QUEEN (queens)

LoveStreams Inc. is now our privileged customer; we have been providing them transcription support for more than a year. The production division uploads the audio recordings through the FTP and we complete most of the audio-to-text assignments in 48 hours. The company now is in a position to honor all its

delivery commitment within the stipulated deadline, and has recorded a 25% increase in sales revenue, ever since they solicited transcription support from us.

**Source:**

<http://www.transcriptionservice.com/case-study-multimedia-companies-general-transcription-guidelines.html>