

Speech-to-Text Services

Serving Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students

“Speech-to-text” is a generic term used to describe an accommodation where spoken communication and other auditory information is translated into real-time text. A service provider types what is heard and the text appears on a computer screen for the student to read. There are two basic systems which are used to provide real-time captioning: 1) Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and 2) computer-aided transcription (CAT).



Verbatim vs. Meaning-for-Meaning

There are two general categories for speech-to-text: verbatim and meaning-for-meaning. Verbatim providers type almost every word spoken, including false starts, mistakes, and filler phrases. CART is a verbatim system. Meaning-for-meaning providers will typically eliminate false starts and other extraneous information. Computer-aided transcription is a meaning-for-meaning system. Some individuals want to see every word of a lecture so they prefer CART. Others may request a meaning-for-meaning system if they become overwhelmed by too much text. Some individuals prefer different services for different settings.

Verbatim: We had to do, well, basically an inter-governmental agreement. We also did, we got some money from, I think it was the county, probably, because it was a trails— yes, I think it was county money because it was a trail system. And probably transit funds to cut down on— the theory is, you're cutting down on motorized use by walking, riding bikes, and things. The downside to that is we have to pass all our plans through the county. So it's another level of bureaucracy, you know, and of course it took a little bit longer to finish than had we just gone out on our own.

Meaning-for-Meaning: We had to do an inter-governmental agreement. We also got some money from the county because this was a trail system. And we probably got transit funds because we cut down on motorized use by promoting walking and bike riding.

The downside to this agreement is that we have to pass all our plans through the county. This adds another level of bureaucracy. It took longer to finish the project than if we had just done it on our own.

Remote Speech-to-Text:

Remote interpreting is still rare in the classroom; it may be helpful when an interpreter is not available. Providers access audio content with a telephone line or video conferencing software. The provider and student use software to connect their computers over the Internet so what is typed is viewed on both screens. Many systems allow consumers to use any device that can connect to the Internet - laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Reliable access to the technology and internet connections are important.

- Who is responsible for setting up the equipment, establishing the connections, and removing the equipment?
- What is the back-up plan for access if technology fails?
- Who is responsible for informing the remote provider and the consumer of an absence or late arrival?
- If a student or remote provider is late, how long will the parties wait?
- Who is the contact person if the student needs assistance?

Special Considerations:

To encourage a successful remote speech-to-text experience, the following guidelines address considerations before implementing the service.

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