e-CourtReporter Presents:

e-Tips Newsletter

No. 38 – June 29, 2004

""Liberty is the only thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others."
William Allen White

Wil Wilcox: Using the Treo 600 as a Digital Recorder
Keith Vincent: Microphone Monitoring

e-Power Video Tutorial Training

Whether you're an Eclipse beginner or a power user, you can learn a great deal with e-Power Video Tutorials. With these easy-to-use training tools, "Seeing is Understanding."

Total Eclipse Visualizers are short "how-to" videos that come with your Total Eclipse CAT software CD. Although each video lasts only 1 or 2 minutes, the Visualizers are too large to download.   So if you have downloaded Total Eclipse and want to have the Visualizers too, just call 1-800-800-1759 and ask for the Total Eclipse update CD from Advantage Software. A small shipping fee will apply.

Complete list of e-Power Video Tutorials available:

1. Total Eclipse Mini-Tour
2. A Total Eclipse Overview - *.3 NCRA CEU*
3. Keyboard Magic: The Realtime Editing Kit - *.4 NCRA CEU*
4. Interactive Realtime Transcription - *.3 NCRA CEU*
5. Eclipse Automatic Number Conversion - *.3 NCRA CEU*
6. Eclipse Form Fields and Automatic Indexing - *.3 NCRA CEU*
7. Translation Magic: Prefixes, Suffixes, Conflicts and More - *.3 NCRA CEU*
8. AccuCap: Total Eclipse Captioning - *.6 NCRA CEU*

 You can order or view samples of all e-Power Tutorials at: **http://www.KVincent.com**

Upcoming 3-day Total Eclipse e-POWER Workshops

Honolulu, HI   October 8-10, 2004

For more details: www.EclipseNT.com

Wil's e-Tip

PalmOne Treo 600 – A Digital Swiss Army Knife for Court Reporters

Now your cell phone can just about do it all. With the Treo 600 smartphone from PalmOne you get a cell phone combined with a Palm Pilot organizer all in one for wireless email, web browsing and a digital camera. One of the best things about the Treo 600 is that it has a keyboard on it. And now with the new software program called Audacity Digital Voice Recorder (DVR for short) it becomes a full-featured, professional-grade digital recorder as well.

As we are using audio synchronization more and more on the job and beginning to go paperless, a digital audio backup makes a lot of sense. By using the PalmOne Treo 600 with the Audacity DVR software during the proceedings you can make a digital audio WAV backup file without a computer and hooking up to do realtime. You can kiss that backup cassette recorder goodbye and never turn a tape over again.

The Treo 600 Palm smartphone retails for around $449, but if you buy it when signing up for a new cell phone plan or when renewing your contract, you may get a significant discount on it. The Audacity DVR software ($49 basic or $99 for the professional version) records directly onto the optional Secure Digital (SD for short) chip you can get for your phone. This is the same kind of chip that is used in many of your digital cameras. Your recording time will vary depending on the size of the SD chip, but suffice it to say that with a sufficient-sized SD chip you will be able to record multiple days of proceedings on just one SD chip. For example, a single 64 MB SD chip will enable you to record up to 22 hours of audio at a time.

Not only that, but using the included USB connector and cradle for the Treo600 you can download the WAV file to your computer so that if you have a computer glitch during your realtime or you forget to turn your audiosync on you will still have the WAV file. Then you can use this WAV file while editing your transcript just like you would if it was created on your computer. There is also a transcription program as part of this DVR package called Audacity Transcriber, but you would not need this if using your own CAT software to edit the transcript.

Be sure to disconnect from the cellular network before starting the recording so that your recording isn't interrupted by a phone call. Simply launch Audacity DVR on your Treo 600, and a very easy-to-use, tape-recorder-like interface will come up on the screen. Then all you have to do is click on the red "record" icon to start recording. I recommend starting the recording at the same time as you start your realtime so that the timecodes on the WAV files

will match up. Clicking on the little "file" icon in the right-hand corner of the DVR program screen will enable you to make notes about the proceedings on a "comment" screen. Doing so will not interrupt your recording.

For an all-day proceeding you will want to have your Treo600 in its cradle and plugged into your power strip so the battery doesn't run out. The Treo 600 has an excellent built-in conference microphone that does an excellent job of picking up the audio. The Audacity DVR Professional version of the software has a microphone-boost setting that will double how well the Treo 600 picks up audio in the room. In my testing I have been extremely pleased with the sound quality of the recordings. There is no hassle of an external microphone with the Treo 600 when used as a digital voice recorder. It may even surpass the sound quality you are getting from your notebook computer. A word to the wise: Judges and/or attorneys attending the proceedings with their Treo 600 or other personal digital assistant (PDA) in tow also have the capability to record as well. I don't advise teaching them to do this, or we may find them digitally recording the proceedings on digital voice recorders and e-mailing them to transcribers and cutting us out of the loop entirely. We have to have some professional secrets, don't we?

One other big bonus of using the Treo600 is that it enables you to get Internet access for your notebook computer either in your court room or deposition suite. When the phone is plugged into your USB port and you have the PDANet for Treo 600 software installed you can use it to surf the Internet at speeds faster than traditional dial-up Internet access. Sprint PCS has the best Internet plan for the Treo 600 with unlimited Internet for just $10 added to your cell-phone bill. Don't try to use it as your only Internet provider though because by "unlimited" they are really meaning for use with your cell phone. However, used with discretion, you can use it to access the Internet on your laptop as well. By visiting the PalmOne Website or checking with your cellular carrier, you will see that many cell providers offer the Treo 600. With always-on Internet access, the judge and attorneys will be impressed that you are able to connect to the Internet and do online research and/or access your e-mail during the proceedings. This way you can e-mail transcripts to your scopist for editing and even send your realtime to the parties to the proceedings via the Internet, but that's a subject for another article on Internet realtime. Of course, you will need to temporarily disconnect from the Internet to use the Treo 600 as a digital voice recorder.

> Websites:
> http://www.palmone.com/us/products/smartphones/treo600/
> http://www.audiost.com/advr.htm
> http://www.audiost.com/transcriber.htm

How to Monitor your Realtime Recording

Hear better. Write faster. That's the essence of my tip for this month.

For years now, I've been keeping a small pair of Sony collapsible earphones in my computer case. I use them to check my synchronized audio file for making corrections during deposition breaks.

Recently I've started using these earphones to monitor my realtime recording. Some of you probably do this already. I have no idea why I didn't start doing this years ago. I can hardly believe how much it helps me write faster. With the earphones, I can hear better, even when a witness mumbles or when someone is speaking from the end of the conference table. Hearing better enables me to cut down my reaction time. It may even reduce some of the fatigue that comes from straining to understand what needs to be written.

Now, perhaps you don't record sound files. You can probably still use this tip. If someone asks, "Why are you wearing earphones," you can honestly say, "I'm just using my computer's built-in amplifier to help me hear what I need to write."

Here's how you can set up your computer to monitor what your microphone is picking up. First, plug in your earphones. If you're using an external microphone, plug it in. If it has an on/off switch, turn it on.

You probably have a loudspeaker icon visible in the system tray of your Windows desktop. It's typically in the lower-right corner of the screen. Right-click on the loudspeaker icon and select "Adjust Audio Properties." If you do not see the loudspeaker icon, you can always click on the "Start" button of your Windows desktop and go to the Control Panel. There you should be able to adjust the Sounds and Audio.

What you want to adjust is the **Playback volume** for the microphone. Now, you may not see a volume adjustment for microphone. If so, click on "Options," then "Properties." A dialog should open to let you "Show the following volume controls." Put a check in the box next to "microphone." Then press the "OK" button. (Some computers do not let you monitor the microphone. So it's possible that you will not see this option on your computer.)

If you now see a column for adjusting the playback volume for the microphone, make sure there is not a check in the box next to "Mute." With the volume levels well adjusted, you'll be able to hear very well indeed. If you forget to turn on your microphone, you'll know it instantly. If your microphone has a battery that's dying, you'll be able to tell right away.

An important note: Be sure to have your earphones plugged in before you attempt to monitor what your microphone is picking up. If your earphones are not plugged in, your computer's loudspeakers may produce an awful squealing noise if the microphone and speakers are close to each other. You won't get this feedback if your earphones are plugged in.

To help you picture this process, I've added a Visualizer movie on the E-Tips page of my website, www.KVincent.com. Just go to the description for E-Tip #38, where you see it says: "To download Visualizer, right-click here and 'Save Target' as a file on your Windows Desktop."

Hear better. Write faster.

Who Are We?

Wil Wilcox is a freelance court reporter in Los Angeles, California, and has been a technology consultant for reporters since 1995. Since 1998, he and Robert Denos have been the Advantage Software representatives for Southern California.

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