e-Power Video Tutorials presents:

e-Tips Newsletter

Upcoming Webinars
March 29 & April 14, 2011,
Marybeth Everhart & Scott Friend:
"Is your phone smart enough?"
.4 CEUs available

May 4, 2011
"Wireless Realtime with Bridge"
Keith Vincent.
More info at ReporterSeminars.com.

October 8 Seminar in Houston
"Simply Magic Total Eclipse 5"
More info at KVincent.com.

Advantage Software
Tech Support
24/7/365
1-800-800-1759

A Few Tips on Audio Sync and Speaker Identification

Keith Vincent

A few months ago, Federal Court reporter Jeanette Byers died quite tragically. I helped her colleagues transcribe some of her last hearings, and I thought it might be helpful to pass along a few lessons learned.

Because I wanted to take advantage of AutoMagic, I used Total Eclipse 5, and I exported the transcript as an RTF file so that final edits could be made by a co-worker on an older version of Eclipse. That worked well, and AutoMagic saved me huge amounts of editing time.

Fortunately, there was an audio backup on her Jeanette's steno machine. I suspect she used a good microphone because the audio was okay, despite the less-than-optimal courtroom acoutics. So that's **Lesson 1: Use a fine microphone and verify that you're producing an audio backup of good quality.**

Lesson 2: Do not use auto-pause during recording. When speakers start up again after a few minutes of silence, their first words may be totally absent. Especially important when the audio is recorded on an external device like a steno machine or a digital voice recorder.

Lesson 3: Learn the shortcuts for adjusting synchronized playback. I found it helped to place the cursor a few paragraphs down from the start of a transcript and then start the playback in order to check the synchronization. I then used these Eclipse commands as many times as necessary to quickly adjust the "timecode offset".

Alt+Up: Back 1 second   Shift+Alt+Up: Back 10 second
Alt+Down: Forward 1 sec.   Shift+Alt+Down: Forward 10 sec.

Once I was hearing the audio that matched the text, I could move around and edit as necessary. In a later paragraph, I might find that auto-pause had thrown off the synchronization, but these same commands made it easy to get back on track.

Getting into the Cloud

We've had several articles about online backup and file storage. Using the cloud offers many advantages. **Online storage services are getting better and better, Internet connections are getting faster, and those transcripts with their associated WAV files on our computers keep growing and growing.**

I've been recommending **SugarSync** for online backup and file storage since 2008. Another very popular service many reporters are using is **DropBox**. Microsoft offers 25 gigabytes of free storage through **SkyDrive**. **Google Docs**, docs.google.com, has been continuously upgraded and is offering more storage space all the time and at very reasonable prices.

Amazon has been selling so many DVDs, CDs and MP3 music downloads that it's very natural that they would offer you an online service to store all of your digital stuff too. Amazon's new service is called **Cloud Drive**. Everyone gets 5 gb of free space, but if you buy an album, they increase it to 20 gb free space. The associated Amazon Cloud Player lets you stream your music without having to actually download it to your PC.

With Amazon Cloud Drive you can store your documents, pictures, music and videos or pretty much anything you want. Cloud Drive is best suited for your own files and is not designed for sharing with others such as scopists and proofreaders. We'll have to see if in the future Amazon offers the ability to share your files. Because of Cloud Drive's lack of more advanced tools, especially file sharing, you're better off looking to Google and/or one of the other cloud services.

I've been using Google Docs all the time and am loving it. One of the primary things I use Docs for is for files that I want to send to my scopist. I also love the fact that Docs offers one more backup of those all important transcripts that we're working on.

Google Docs also works as a basic replacement for Microsoft Office Suite with the advantage of all of these files being stored in the cloud. You can create and edit text documents and worksheets or presentations. Having these documents stored in the cloud gives you the ability to later access them from any computer and even your iPad or smartphone.

e-Power Video Tutorials: e-Tip Special

Please use this order form to take advantage of sale prices (ends April 30, 2011).

Description	Sale Price
Keyboard Magic, 3rd Edition (for Total Eclipse 3, 4, or 5)	_____ **$59.95**
Disk exchange for owners of older versions	_____ **$20.00**
Shipping & Handling, $5 per disk	
(Outside USA, add additional $10)	_____
Total: (Checks only, please!)	_____

Note: We cannot ship orders that do not include shipping/handling fees.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ **e-mail:** _____

Mail to: Keith Vincent, 728 Tirrell Street, Houston, Texas 77019
For more info on e-Power Tutorials, visit: www.KVincent.com.

Auto-Brief Settings in Total Eclipse 5 – Keith Vincent

In e-Tip #108 (February 2011), I looked at new options for Auto-Brief in Total Eclipse 5. You'll find these at the "Realtime" tab of User Settings. Look for the "Settings" button next to the checkbox for Auto-Brief. Last time, I looked at display options. This time, let's see settings that affect what kind of shortcuts are offered.

"Suggest briefs automatically". That is what Auto-Brief has always done. It watches what you write in real time. The second time that you write a not-too-common word or phrase that takes at least three steno strokes (or the first time you write a word or name that takes at least five strokes), Eclipse suggests a shortcut. If you uncheck this box, then Eclipse will not offer any automatic suggestions. Thus, you can limit Auto-Brief to simply offering a shortcut when you request one.
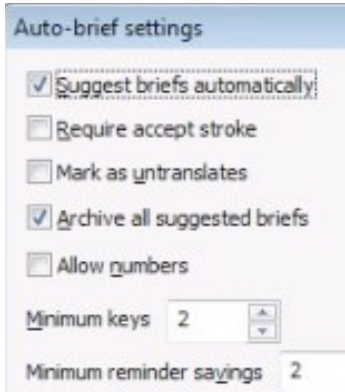
The purpose behind **"Require accept stroke"** is to keep an Auto-Brief from triggering accidentally. You'll need a dictionary entry for {ABACCEPT} and your metadictionary will need: {ABACCEPT}={/?ABA} If you're a voicewriter, you would define voisteno but the text of the dictionary entry would still be {ABACCEPT}.

Let's say I've defined S*EPZ as {ABACCEPT} and Eclipse offered "TO*P" as a shortcut for "topography". I like the shortcut, but I would have to write S*EPZ to accept it. Only then could I write TO*P in order to insert the word "topography".

What about **"Mark as untranslate"**? If you use that option, all words that translate from an Auto-Brief will appear in the color of an untranslate and you could find them by scanning for untranlates.

"Archive all suggested briefs" is an option that I very much like. When you stop translation, Eclipse creates a separate dictionary to hold all the shortcuts that it offered in real time. **If the realtime file was called "Today", you'd have a dictionary called "Today_AB".** That would show all the shortcuts that were offered, not just the ones that you used. You might find some great shortcuts that you did not notice while writing. If so, you could easily copy them to one of your other dictionaries so that you could use them in the future.

By default, Auto-Brief does not offer suggestions when it sees digits, but it can now do that for you if you put a

check in the box next to **"Allow numbers"**. This could be very handy if you're doing a job where some large numbers keep coming up over and over again.

To use "Allow numbers", you'll want to go to the Programming tab of User Settings. and modify your "Auto-Brief steno theory". You would add a line to guide Eclipse in offering steno shortcuts that are number-related. For example +#Z would tell Eclipse that any number-related auto-brief should add the Z key to the steno that it proposes from the number bar.

What if you don't use the number bar at all? You can still use this feature, but you would tweak your phonetics table to offer some guidance for numbers 1 through 9. If you want Auto-Brief to use TPH instead of the number bar's "9", you open the phonetics table and add TPH=9. Do this after the key combinations for letters. Here's an example of the end result:

TPH=n,in|kn,gn,en,nn
TPH=9

"Minimum Keys" is another option designed to keep auto-briefs from triggering accidentally. The default setting is 2, but it really refers to phonetic elements. Thus, I'd think of TPHEU as 2 elements, an "n" and a "i". **If you change this to 3, then every steno shortcut will be a bit harder to write and, thus, harder to write by accident.** I would not set this to anything higher than 3. In any case, if you're not having a problem, stick with the default setting of 2.

"Minimum reminder savings" is the last option that I'll discuss here. The default setting is 2, and that makes sense to me. Thus, **Eclipse won't remind you of a shortcut that's in one of your dictionaries unless it saves you at least two steno strokes.** So if you write "pneumonia" in five strokes and you have another entry in your dictionary that uses just three, Eclipse would remind you about that; but it will always offer the shortcut that saves the most strokes.

For a while I was seeing too many reminders. I did not change "Minimum reminder savings" to 3. Instead, I changed the setting next to "Reminders". I think I had it set at 7, and I reduced that number. I still want Eclipse to try to save me at least two steno strokes, but too many reminders would be distracting.

All these options make Auto-Brief even more powerful in Total Eclipse 5. Have fun exploring!

(Auto-Brief is just one of the topics in my October 8th seminar in Houston. For more info, visit KVincent.com.)

Getting into the Cloud – Wil Wilcox

Docs is very easy to use. It allows you to upload more than one file at a time. You may also drag and drop files to upload. In addition, you are able to share files and folders. For instance, to share a file or folder with your scopist, just right click on it in Docs and select share. Then they can access these sometimes very large files directly themselves without anything further required of you. When it comes time for the scopist to send the files back to you, they can use Docs to facilitate that too.

If you have a Gmail email account, you already have Google Docs. Just use your Gmail user name and password to sign on to Docs. I recommend Google Docs to everyone who may want an easy to use way of sharing files with others or even just a simple word processor without having to buy or install any special software. There are many cloud services suited to different needs. They offer you a great way to secure your files and many times even to share them too.
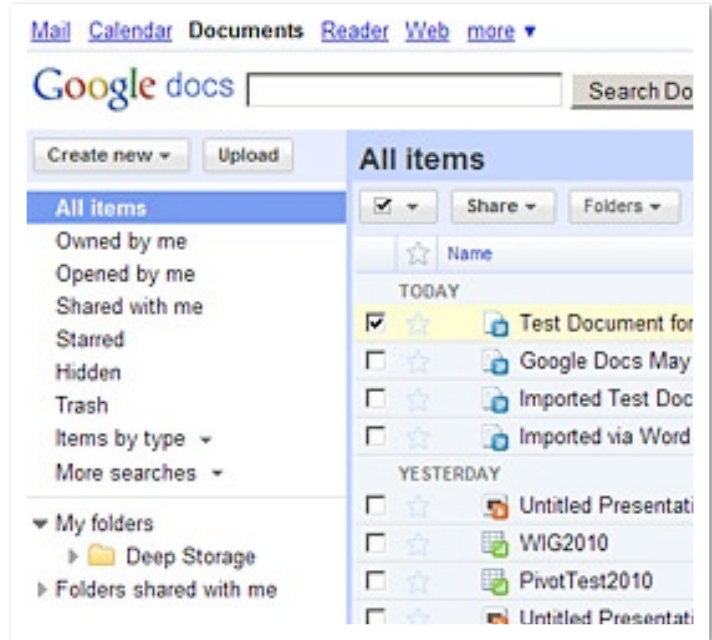
Audio Synch & Speaker Identification – Keith Vincent

Lesson 4: Use editing shortcuts for speaker identification. Here are the Eclipse shortcuts:

F2 - **Add** a new speaker paragraph

Ctrl 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - **Change** paragraph to Speaker 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Ctrl 8 - **Change** paragraph to THE COURT

Ctrl 0 - **Change** paragraph to THE WITNESS

Ctrl 9 - **Change** paragraph to different speaker

In other words, **F2 begins a new paragraph** where your cursor is positioned and it opens a list so that you can select a speaker (or add a new one).

Ctrl 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 0 change a paragraph to belong to a certain speaker, so they do not need to show a list of names. Thus, if you're in a question paragraph and you press Ctrl 1, it will change to a paragraph that belongs to Speaker 1.

Ctrl 9 also changes a paragraph to belong to a speaker, but it shows the entire list of names so that you can choose the one you want.

Lesson 5: For work that involves more than ten speakers, it makes sense to **add extra shortcuts (lower-case a-z) for picking a name off the list.** Go to the "Translate" tab of user settings, and click on "Speaker list". Then click on the line after "9" and use the "Change" button. In the field next to "Shortcut", type lower-case "a". Repeat that process for the rest of the alphabet. Thus, Ctrl 9 and then "a" would change a paragraph to belong to the 11th speaker on the list.