



e-Tips Newsletter

March 31, 2005

Vol. 44

e-Tips that Stand the Test of Time: by Wil Wilcox

This month we're going to bring up-to-date some past e-Tips and provide new information on them.

Please keep in mind that because of the volume of e-mail we receive and the fact that we are volunteering our time and this free newsletter, we can't routinely answer individual questions by phone or e-mail, or consult on individual problems or purchasing decisions.

"We cannot do great things. We can only do little things with great love."

- Mother Theresa -

"Try to see yourself as others see you, and be prepared for a nasty surprise"

"The most crucial step toward solving a problem is to be able to recognize yourself as part of the problem"

Audiosync Without a Laptop - Updated

Olympus Digital Recorder, e-Tip 21, 11/26/02



Coollest Audio Backup Device: You can now do audiosync without a laptop computer. As we are increasingly using audiosync day-to-day on the job and beginning to go paperless, a digital audio backup device could never come at a better time. Using the Olympus digital recorders during the proceedings you can make a digital audio file backup without a computer. You can also kiss that cassette recorder goodbye and never turn a tape over again.

The Olympus voice recorders at <http://www.OlympusAmerica.com/> or <http://martelelectronics.com> retail from \$289 to \$449. The Olympus DM1 first reported on is being phased out. The recorders I now recommend are the DM20, DS2200 or the DS4000. The recording times vary from 11 to 179 hours with the DM20's built-in memory or DS Series removable XD memory chips. That's right, the DM20 does not have a removable memory chip, which is why the DS2200 or DS4000 may be your best bets. When preparing to record a long court proceeding, conference or deposition, using an AC Adapter, not batteries, is critical, so I recommend buying the AC adapter accessory so you won't depend on batteries. The AC adapter is included with the DS4000. By using the included USB connector, the DSS digital audio file can be downloaded to your computer and saved in standard WAV format in case your audiosync file doesn't record properly or is corrupted or lost due to a system crash during the realtime proceedings. Or maybe you don't have time to set up a laptop computer and are using a writer that makes time-stamps which will sync the WAV file to your transcript, no laptop and realtime required. Then you can use the audio file the Olympus records for audiosync while editing your job in Total Eclipse. I give these little recorders five stars for making digital audio backups.

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The Globaling Dialogue's "Guess" Button By Keith Vincent

As my writer gets older, I find I'm making more and more dictionary entries deal with shadowing problems. That is, I'm having to global steno that's almost identical entries that are already in my dictionary. It's got to be the machine, right?

Admittedly, I'm looking forward to the release of Advantage Software's Passport writer. Its optical sensors may even make stacking and shadowing problems a thing of the past.

In the meantime, I'm making generous use of the "Guess" button on the Globaling dialogue. How does this work? When you want to create a global replacement for steno that's almost identical to something already in your dictionary, just highlight the stroke(s). Use Hy-perkeys g, 7, 8, 9, or 0 for one-button highlighting of multiple strokes.

When the Globaling dialogue opens, the "Guess" button (Alt G) will do one of two things. First, it will consider the dropped/dragged keys that you've indicated in the "Translate" section of your User Settings. This may enable Total Eclipse to ask: "Are any of these entries what you meant to write? If so, pick one and hit the Finish button." When the list of choices is offered, I often find I can just press the Tab key and select the first one, then press the Enter key and finish my globaling.

You may ask: Doesn't Total Eclipse already offer automatic misstroke translation? Yes, but that's limited to one-strokers. Here I'm able to highlight *multiple* steno strokes and ask the program to guess the word or phrase that I'm trying to global.

If the steno stroke(s) that you've highlighted are not possible misstrokes for something that's already in your dictionary, the "Guess" will try a second approach. It will look for a phonetic match in the spelling dictionary. So you'll see the same kind of word list that comes up when you do a document spell-check. If you see the word you want, pick it and press Enter so that you can complete your globaling.

Either way, the Globaling dialogue's "Guess" button can save you a lot of typing.

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e-Tips That Stand the Test of Time: By Wil S. Wilcox

Google Desktop Search, e-Tip 42, 11/12/04 - Updated

Google Desktop Search just got even better. Using the Plug-In called eclipsegdsetup.exe which can be downloaded from the CR-Net in the Eclipse Updates section, Google Desktop Search can now search your Eclipse transcript files. Before downloading the Eclipse plug-in, please be sure that you are using the latest Google Desktop Search. If you've already installed GDS, and to make sure you're running the newest GDS release, go to the Google Desktop Search home page on your computer by double clicking on the Google Desktop Search icon on your computer, click on "About" at the bottom of the page, and find the "Google Desktop Search Build" text at the bottom of the About page. If the build number is 20050227 or higher, you're running the full-release version. If not, just download the new version and install it which will automatically update any previous version you may have. Then you can download and install the Eclipse plug-in. In order to index your Eclipse transcripts, you'll need to put a checkmark in the GDS preferences next to "Eclipse Crawler."

Tired of Windows Explorer?

As first reported in e-Tip 16, 7/9/02 - Updated

PowerDesk is a superb file manager. It offers single- or dual-pane file management windows which make moving or copying files by dragging and dropping a snap. Send files to your scopist or proofreader via your Website using PowerDesk FTP. It also includes SyncManager which compares files in two folders on your computer and synchronizes them which is excellent for backups. Plus it lets you zip and unzip files, and adds all kinds of other goodies. You can download a fully-functional but slightly stripped-down FREE version of PowerDesk 5 at:

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Please keep in mind that because of the volume of phone calls and emails we receive and the fact that we are volunteering our time and this free newsletter, we can't routinely answer individual questions by phone or email, nor consult on individual problems or purchasing decisions.

Past e-Tips Revisited

by Keith Vincent

Recently, I spent some time converting to PDF format all the e-Tips that Wil Wilcox and I have published since June 2001. In doing so, I was pleased to notice that the advice we've shared has held up quite well with the passage of time.

For example, in e-Tips 21 and 22 from November and December 2002, Wil and I and Jeff Rusk discussed using a digital voice recorder to create a backup recording that could be synchronized to the Total Eclipse transcript. This means that an Eclipse user does not have to set up a computer for realtime translation just to have the advantage of synchronized audio playback. Of course, when Advantage Software's Passport writer is released, you won't even need the digital recorder. The Passport itself will be able to record and play back audio that is synchronized with your steno and text.

I notice that another CAT program is bragging about recently adding this functionality (they call it EZ-Sync.) For what it's worth, Eclipse users have had this ability for almost 10 years. Even back in 1996, the DOS version of Eclipse could play any WAV sound file. This feature was called MediaLink, and it was provided to Eclipse users at no extra charge. Naturally, it was integrated into the MS Windows version of Eclipse, and it was given the additional ability to play AVI movie files, too. The e-Tips I mentioned just give detailed instructions for synchronizing audio files that have been created by a digital voice recorder like those made by Olympus.

While I'm at it, let me revisit a few other e-Tips. Wil and I have received a lot of positive feedback about e-Tip No. 38, which was devoted to microphone monitoring during realtime transcription, as well as how to use the Treo 600 phone/PDA (now Treo 650) as a digital recorder. As I said, I find it really helpful to wear earphones and listen to what my microphone is picking up. Besides letting me know instantly if my microphone is not well positioned or if its battery is failing, using earphones greatly reduces the strain of listening.

By the way, when MediaLink was first offered to Eclipse users in 1996, the sound cards of many notebook computers did not allow simultaneous recording and playback. That's no longer the case. You or your scopist can listen to any spot in your audio file, even while sound recording is taking place during realtime transcription. However, you'll want to be sure you're using at least Version 3.2.1.18 of Total Eclipse. If you don't have this version, you can go to the "Help" column of menus within Total Eclipse, go to Internet Support and download EclDevUp.exe from the Updates page.

So much for audio. Now a quick update on video. In October 2004, I described an affordable 30" HDTV-ready LCD monitor that I had found. Since then, it's only become more affordable. I have seen some reviews that find fault with the Westinghouse W33001 as a TV screen, but I use it primarily as a computer monitor that offers the added bonus of picture-in-picture. I still think it's a great screen, especially for captioners. So what's the update? It's becoming increasingly difficult to find picture-in-picture capability in any monitor. I do not see it in the recently announced successors to the W33001. So if you're interested in a monitor like the one I described, you can now find it for less than \$1300 at www.PCMall.com, but soon you won't be able to find it at all.

Looking for a past e-Tip? Visit the e-Tips page of my website: www.KVincent.com. There you'll find all previous tips can be viewed, saved, and printed.



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