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Keith Vincent

Eclipse User Settings, Programming The Slop Strokes Table

In a recent webinar about the Programming section of Eclipse user settings, I spoke about the Slop Strokes table. That prompted today's tip.

First, a clarification. **I am referring to the Slop Strokes table and not a slop-stroke style of dictionary entry.** The slop-stroke style of dictionary entry is used to improve conflict resolution. Thus, if you already have PART TPHUB defined as \part number\Part No.{#N}, you could define P-RT TPHUB as {=PART TPHUB}. Then if you accidentally leave out the A, Eclipse would follow the rules that the PART TPHUB entry has learned; however, you could still write P-RT by itself or with other strokes to mean other things. A Visualizer movie shows how such slop-stroke entries in your dictionary can help improve conflict resolution; but the Slop Strokes table has a different, more fundamental purpose.

The purpose of the Slop Strokes table is to correct certain steno strokes before they are ever fed to the translator. Let's say I go to the Programming section of Eclipse user settings and add W-BS=W-PBS in my Slop Strokes table. If I then accidentally write W-BS, the steno will be corrected to W-PBS before it's fed to the translator. In fact, if I look at the steno notebars, I will see the corrected steno stroke W-PBS.

You should only indicate steno in your Slop Strokes table if it would be part of a multi-stroke sequence and if it is a stroke that you always want corrected. I sometimes write TRAOE ("tree") when I want to write TRAOEU ("try"). I would never put TRAOE=TRAOEU in my Slop Strokes table. If I did that, I would not be able to write TRAOE without it appearing as TRAOEU; but there's lots of steno that I can mangle when trying to write a double stroke or a triple stroke. Here's an example. I write KP-GS KP-GS at the start of an examination. My Slop Strokes table contains K-GS=KP-GS and it also contains KP-GZ=KP-GS because, for me, K-GS and KP-GZ could not be anything other than a mistroked KP-GS.

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

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Update on Mini-Notebooks a/k/a Netbooks



Now is a good time to highlight some netbooks that have been released as well as name some top competitors in this class of computers. **A netbook is a new type of small, lightweight mini-notebook computer.** They typically come with Windows XP and are small, inexpensive and under-powered compared to full-size notebooks. Many people find the less-than-full-size keyboards to be cramped and not capable of touch-typing. I believe that they got the name "netbook" because they do not tend to come with DVD drives, making downloading software programs from the Internet one of the primary ways of installing software. I tend to think of them as almost toy computers because of how small most of them are. **Surprisingly, with a netbook and Windows XP, you may find that you can do almost anything you ordinarily would do with a computer, such as running your CAT software for realtime transcription.** Netbooks tend to cost from \$300 to \$500, which is one of the reasons for their surprising surge in popularity over the past 18 months.

Now I'm hearing that court reporters are using netbooks to edit transcripts and even for doing realtime jobs. I do not recommend a netbook as your primary computer. However, if you decide to use a netbook for realtime proceedings, be sure to have a full-size notebook or desktop at your home or office to copy those files for editing and, very importantly, backing up. Taking a netbook on the job and then producing your transcripts on your primary notebook or desktop computer could be quite convenient. Certainly, for traveling, you can't beat a netbook. You may even want to pack two netbooks with you in case your computer conks out or you'd like to provide one to an attorney or judge for viewing your realtime. If having a netbook enables you to sell more realtime hookups, it will definitely pay for itself in a hurry.

Samsung has released the brand-new NC120. \$465. This is the first netbook I know of with a full-sized keyboard and trackpad. This new 10.1-inch LED display netbook also has the now almost standard Intel Atom N270 (1.6GHz, 533MHz frontside bus, 512KB L2 cache)

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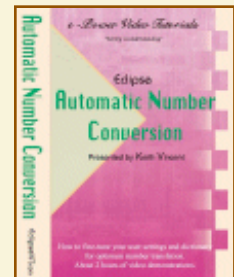
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Update on Netbooks *(Continued from page 2)*

processor with an Intel 945GSE chipset, integrated Intel GMA950 graphics, a 160GB/5400RPM hard drive, 1GB of DDR2-667 memory, WiFi, Bluetooth, three USB 2.0 ports, 3-in-1 memory card reader, 1.3MP webcam, Windows XP, and a handful of other features typical of most netbooks. The NC120 weighs 2.8 pounds. Samsung claims a battery life of up to 10.5 hours, which, if it's even close, would be great.

So what makes the NC120 stand out from the pack? Its full-size 12" notebook-style keyboard and large touch pad packed into a chassis that accommodates a 1024 x 600



10.1-inch LED display for one. With this full-size keyboard, netbooks are now ready for primetime it seems for you touch typists out there. The NC120 also has a very good speaker system, so you'll actually be able to

hear your audio playback without headphones. They have managed to accomplish this all while maintaining the extremely portable size that is one of the things that makes these mini-notebook computers so popular.

Samsung makes other netbooks, including the NC20, \$478.00, that has a 12" display as well as the larger keyboard. The NC20 does not have an Intel processor and is not as powerful or thin, but it provides adequate performance and a good deal for those willing to pay extra for a bigger screen and keyboard. The NC20 netbook is starting to get a little large for mini-notebooks; however, the 12" display will be quite enticing for some. The NC20 weighs 3.4 pounds.

Other very popular mini-notebooks you may want to consider are the ASUS Eee PC 1000HE, the Acer Aspire One, the HP Mini 2140, and the MSI Wind U120. There are new models coming out literally every day. Amazon.com has a great selection of netbooks. I've found that you can pretty much track the

latest and the greatest by looking at the best sellers in the netbooks category. In fact, **at the Amazon.com webpage for netbooks, you'll see that by default they are listed in best-selling order.** Of course, the Samsung NC120 may not have made the list yet because it's brand-new.

I'd like to disclose that I have not personally used any of the netbooks written about in this article. When the Eee PCs were first released, I used one to edit and do realtime with Eclipse; and I found that the software worked just fine. Netbooks have come a long way since then. I'm sure that these offer some great capabilities for court reporters to take advantage of either on the job, while travelling, or providing to clients for realtime hookup. This article is informational only. While I'm skeptical about trusting my work to a low-price computer, and I think you should be as well, I'm going to keep my eye on what's available and I may at some point be compelled to get one of these myself.

The Slop Strokes Table *(cont. from p. 1)*

Last year I met someone who writes FRPBLGTS FRPBLGTS to indicate Speaker #2. In other words, she writes two answer strokes in a row. However, she had not been able to add entries in her dictionary for all the many ways to misstroke FRPBLGTS FRPBLGTS. Thus, if she messed up one of those double strokes, it might not be seen as a sign to begin a Speaker #2 paragraph. I encouraged her to add some lines to her Slop Strokes table. FRLGTS=FRPBLGTS, RLGTSZ=FRPBLGTS, etc. Each slop stroke would be on its own line. Once this is done, it won't matter whether she mangles the first stroke, the second stroke, or both strokes. Eclipse will see two perfect steno strokes, and the Speaker #2 paragraph will be created.

The Slop Strokes table and the slop-stroke style of dictionary entry are two powerful tools. Use them well.

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