

Title of Session: Careers in Captioning Using Voice Recognition

Moderator: Renee Cohen

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Room: Comfy Conference

BJB2: lets start with the reminder that if you're new to Tapped In, go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat and select detach

BJB2: and then how about introductions, please?

BJB2: I'm a retired communications teacher located in Pennsylvania

MaureenB: Hi I teach 4th grade in Putnam County

BJB2: . o O (New York?)

ReneeC: Hi I'm Renee and I am facilitating the discussion today

MaureenB: yes NY

ReneeC: I'm in San Diego, used to be a court reporter and now provide captioning services using the same skills and equipment

BJB2: very cool

ReneeC: People may ask, what is captioning and why is it important

ReneeC: Captions render audio components of video or live presentations into text, which is an accessible and clear format for the more than 28 million individuals with hearing impairments in the United States today. But others definitely benefit from captions as well.

MaureenB: yes struggling readers

ReneeC: People with learning disabilities and language barriers too

ReneeC: and in noisy environments, EVERYONE benefits

MaureenB: like at the gym :)

ReneeC: exactly

ReneeC: or airports

ReneeC: Although I use my steno machine to provide captioning, it is now possible to use voice recognition

MaureenB: is captioning done on the fly for live shows?

ReneeC: which is much easier to learn

ReneeC: Some captioning is done on the fly, called realtime

ReneeC: Other shows use post-production editing

ReneeC: But captioning is used on more than just television

ReneeC: For instance, in classrooms with students who are deaf or hard of hearing

DavidW joined the room.

ReneeC: Hi David

DavidW waves

DavidW: Hi, Renee

ReneeC: Let me know if you can read the little bit of text we put up so far

ReneeC: or if you have any questions about anything

DavidW: Thanks - I'm one of the TI Help Desk volunteers

BJB2: does this mean the teacher does the captioning, Renee?

MaureenB: is it like Dragon Speak on Word Perfect?

ReneeC: The business I own and operate is mostly serving students. Please visit www.ecaptions.com

ReneeC: Yes, we use Dragon and Via Voice

ReneeC: and really, any voice recognition program will work

ReneeC: The professional versions have more features to make the work easier

ReneeC: Such as creating voice macros

ReneeC: For example, the captioner could say "SNOO" which is not an English word

BJB2: please explain a voice macro

BJB2 listens

ReneeC: but can be programmed to mean: new line, tab, all caps, NEW SPEAKER: cap the next letter

ReneeC: So one syllable does the job of about 20 keystrokes

BJB2: wow

ReneeC: and there are lots of tricks like that

ReneeC: to make the captioning go fast and smooth

ReneeC: like speakers

MaureenB: neat

ReneeC: Also, for deaf students, they need peripheral information

ReneeC: like a telephone ringing, or other sounds that may give meaning to what is going on

ReneeC: So voice macros can be used for that as well, to create parentheticals

DavidW . o O (to indicate emotional cues that may exist in the spoken language)

ReneeC: There are also breathing techniques and exercises to make the captions flow more smoothly

ReneeC: yes, exactly, David

DavidW nods

ReneeC: Skilled voice writers speak in phrases, and pause at planned intervals

BJB2: what would be the requirements for someone interested in this as a career, Renee?

ReneeC: Really, almost anyone could do it

MaureenB . o O (thinks BJB is looking for a second career)

ReneeC: I have a list of 20 questions that I developed that list the best candidates

BJB2 winks at Maureen

ReneeC: If one can answer 16 (80%) affirmatively, they are the best candidates

ReneeC: Even if it's not a new career, it could be a useful skill occasionally

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In order to assure a high level of success, prospective students should answer yes to at least 16 (80%) of the following questions before considering the training program.

1. Do you have good hearing?
2. Do you have a strong speaking voice?
3. Do you speak any other languages fluently?
4. Do you play a musical instrument?
5. Do you enjoy challenges?
6. Do you enjoy reading?
7. Are you able to focus and concentrate for extended periods of time?
8. Do you have a high degree of perseverance?
9. Do you enjoy traveling to new places?
10. Are you willing to learn new technology and methods?
11. Would you like to earn wages commensurate with your willingness to work?
12. Are you willing to take risks?
13. Do you work well independently?
14. Are you self-disciplined?
15. Are you punctual?
16. Are you computer literate?
17. Do you keep up with worldly current events?
18. Are you tolerant of others who are different or less fortunate than you?
19. Do you have a high level of professional integrity?
20. Do you enjoy research?

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MaureenB: very true

MaureenB: I am getting a hearing impaired child this year

ReneeC: There is a course being offered through Cal State San Marcos Extended Studies

ReneeC: teaching voice writing

ReneeC: Yes, Maureen, so this could be a good tool for you

ReneeC: the url for the course is www.snurl.com/cccourse

MaureenB: is it offered online?

ReneeC: yes, completely online

ReneeC: it is set up in modules, and it is available 24/7

ReneeC: let me know if that url works

ReneeC: there is a longer one, but I shortened it

ReneeC: with the snipit service

MaureenB: I would do it anyway but I have to look into getting school credit for it

ReneeC: it's so new that I don't think accrediting agencies have considered it

ReneeC: maybe you can pioneer getting credit for it

BJB2: looks like something a district would be interested in investing in too

ReneeC: Some people have finished the course in less than two months

MaureenB: We are forming a committee for using technology for our special ed populations

ReneeC: Yes, so any assistance you can offer in that regard would be great

ReneeC: It is a course which definitely deserves to have credit

ReneeC: It really serves so many populations and purposes

BJB2 agrees

ReneeC: Just realized I have not "detached"

ReneeC: should I do that?

BJB2: only if you are having trouble following the chat, Renee

ReneeC: not at all

BJB2: is captioning available in other languages?

ReneeC: yes, it is

ReneeC: The program Dragon Naturally Speaking offers several language

options

ReneeC: including Spanish, French, German, I believe

ReneeC: oh, and Italian too

BJB2: that might be an interesting option for ESL students

ReneeC: one of our captioners actually translates simultaneously

ReneeC: so she uses voice recognition to put Spanish text on the screen, when the speaker is talking in English

BJB2 nods. I would imagine you have to be pretty fluent in the language to do that!

ReneeC: Of course

DavidW: simultaneous translation is a specific skill, too

BJB2: but it would be the same as someone signing to spoken language

ReneeC: Yes, it is. And this particular person is very talented

ReneeC: Yes, and for me, using a steno machine, it's like translating the English to steno

BJB2 smiles

ReneeC: There are court reporters in some states that use voice recognition currently

ReneeC: California is not one of them

BJB2: the reason?

ReneeC: So, our voice writers mostly work with deaf and hard of hearing clients

ReneeC: The reason: slow to adapt

JeffC joined the room.

ReneeC: Hi, Jeff

JeffC: hi

ReneeC: any captioning questions?

BJB2: <http://www.ecaptions.com/>

ReneeC: yes, that is the company website.

ReneeC: and the course is www.snurl.com/cccourse

ReneeC: also, the service of captioning can be done remotely, where the provider is not on site

ReneeC: In that situation, the captioner receives audio from the Internet or telephone, and then displays the captions on a website for the viewer(s) to see

ReneeC: It can be done using WebEx, Adobe Connect, or several other platforms

ReneeC: Elluminate offers a free conference room which works quite well

ReneeC: for three participants (or fewer)

DavidW: Have you seen Wiziq, Renee?

ReneeC: No, I haven't

DavidW: <http://www.wiziq.com/>

ReneeC: I'll take a look soon

BJB2: WiZiQ is free and can accommodate more than three people at a time...

ReneeC: just saw the first page...looks like another good platform to use

ReneeC: thanks for that

BJB2: it has voice and text chat

ReneeC: wonderful

ReneeC: after this chat, I will look at it in more details to see if they have any captioning options

ReneeC: it's different than chat because it keeps up with speakers

ReneeC: and it's not character by character

BJB2 nods

ReneeC: The speech recognition programs have dictionaries, so sounds = words, as opposed to typing

ReneeC: one letter at a time

DavidW: If you are using an online video conferencing system, can the speaker use voice recognition software to provide her/his own captioning in real time?

ReneeC: Some students may not like to have a captioner next to them, and that would be a good reason to use WizIQ or Elluminate

ReneeC: then they are not singled out of the population as different at all

ReneeC: also, in classes with many non-native English speakers, realtime captioning could be displayed

ReneeC: many studies have been done to show how captioning improves reading skills

MaureenB: I could see this on a screen behind me while I am doing a read aloud

ReneeC: yes

ReneeC: that's a good application

DavidW: Do you know of teachers who do this, Renee?

ReneeC: not offhand

ReneeC: but I will check into that

DavidW: Just curious as to how commonly that VR software might be used in a classroom setting

ReneeC: I think it is becoming more common

DavidW nods

ReneeC: although only a few have used it that way, I believe

MaureenB: teachers just have to know that the technology is out there

ReneeC: another benefit is that the text is preserved as an archive for future use

ReneeC: yes, and hence my participation here

ReneeC: to inform teachers

ReneeC: and others

DavidW . o O (and have some system to present the captioned text in the classroom)

ReneeC: it is really not difficult to set it up in a classroom that has internet connections

ReneeC: the captioner can be present on site, or in a "remote" location

ReneeC: there is a group called Liberated Learning in Canada, and they advocate for instructors to use captioning in all their classes

ReneeC: I can get the URL for that group later too

ReneeC: if anyone is interested

DavidW smiles

DavidW: Do you do any work with schools specifically teaching deaf students, Renee?

ReneeC: <http://www.liberatedlearning.com/>

ReneeC: Actually, yes

ReneeC: mostly universities that have deaf students

ReneeC: like SDSU, CSUSM, two local law schools

ReneeC: several community colleges

MaureenB: I am trying to wrap myself around this. Does there have to be another person to do the captioning to make those sounds to show punctuation and new sentences

ReneeC: the Liberated Learning project does not use additional people, but we do

ReneeC: the speech recognition software has some built-in punctuation features

ReneeC: and it is improving every day

ReneeC: with more capabilities, better artificial intelligence, etc

ReneeC: read the info on the Liberated Learning website for additional info on how they operate

ReneeC: it is really interesting

MaureenB: I would love to learn more if it will help my new student

ReneeC: Yes, it will help your student

ReneeC: I can help you with how

ReneeC: do you have my contact info?

DavidW: You'll receive the transcript as an email, Renee

ReneeC: ok, right

ReneeC: this is my first time doing this, so I have to learn too :)

DavidW: No problem - you're doing fine

ReneeC: thanks

ReneeC: So, in the last 5-10 minutes, are there other questions I can answer?

BJB2: I'll be sure to post this information to the special ed group

BJB2: we appreciate you taking time to present this information to the community

DavidW: Thanks for leading the discussion, Renee - it sounds like some cool technology

ReneeC: So, please let me know if there is anything else at the moment

ReneeC: thanks for your interest and participation

ReneeC: I wasn't even sure if anyone would join, so thanks for coming

MaureenB: I will pass the word about this technology to my new committee

ReneeC: Great, thanks so much

ReneeC: Please feel free to ask any follow-up questions, as they may arise

MaureenB: thanks Renee

ReneeC: I'm pretty good at answering email: renee@ecaptions.com

ReneeC: or renee.ca@gmail.com

BJB2 smiles...I was just going to ask you about that, Renee

ReneeC: Ok, so I will log off for now, and look forward to more chats in the future

MaureenB waves nite to all

DavidW: Thanks again, Renee

DavidW waves to Maureen

ReneeC: Bye, everyone

DavidW: Take care

DavidW waves bye