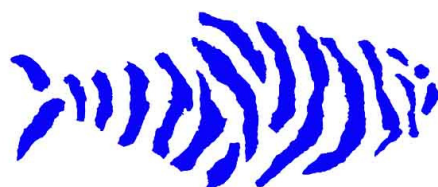


Transcription Style Guide

Rev. 2/08



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Introduction

Tigerfish generally follows the style guidelines set out in *The Associated Press Stylebook* rather than the *Chicago Manual of Style, Words Into Type*, or any other recognized source book.

This document has three sections:

- **Formatting Standards** – Containing information specific to transcription for Tigerfish, such as standards for speaker identification, formatting documents, time coding, and so on.
- **Types of Transcripts** – Contains information about the style of specific types of transcripts.
- **Usage Standards** – Listing some commonly used standards that appear in *The AP Stylebook*, as well as some exceptions and additional items that apply to Tigerfish transcriptions.

This is a living document and subject to revision. In addition, you may, from time to time, receive instructions specific to an individual job based on standards requested from a customer.

Formatting Standards

Before You Type:

This document assumes that transcribers are using Microsoft Word.

Before typing a transcript, please turn off all “Auto Format As You Type” features in Microsoft Word. To do so, go to the Tools Menu, then Auto Correct, then the “Auto Format As You Type” tab and uncheck all auto-formatting options.

Under the “Format” tab in Microsoft Word, select “Paragraph.” Set the line spacing option to “single.”

As You Type:

When switching speaker IDs or beginning new paragraphs, *manually* hit enter twice.

Tab once between the speaker ID and the text.

Do not embolden, italicize or underline words or phrases for added emphasis.

Do not include extensive descriptions of speakers' actions, unless requested by the client. When required, you may use the following:

- [Laughs] or [Laughter]
- [Applause]
- [Director's Comments], [Facilitator's Comments] or [B-Roll], to indicate off-topic discussion (the distinction between these will be explained later in this document)
- [Audio Gap], to indicate an extended break in audio
- [Start of New Interview], to indicate the change of an interview subject during a continuous piece of audio or video

Beginning/Ending a Transcript –

The first two lines of the document should contain the transcript filename (such as ABCDExxxxx12345_TRN10) and the title specified in the work order (such as Meeting Minutes 2.3.04). It is not necessary to include your name.

Begin all transcriptions with the notation [Beginning of recorded material] or, if appropriate, [Abrupt beginning of recorded material]. At the end of the transcribed document, type [End of recorded material] or, if appropriate, [Abrupt end of recorded material].

Do not mark [End of Part A/ Begin Part B] when a file is split into A & B parts, unless specifically asked to.

Example:

ABCDExxxxx12345_TTC
Dr. John Allende: On Water Fowl

[Beginning of Recorded Material]

Male Voice: I'm pleased and excited to introduce North America's leading authority on wild water fowl and their habitats, Dr. John Allende. Tonight, Dr. Allende will be speaking about the major differences between Trumpeter Swans and African Swans.

Dr. Allende: Thank you. Thank you. I'm so happy to be here. These two species of swan may look alike but they are far different.

[End of Recorded Material]

Occasionally, you might receive a work order specifying sections of recorded material to transcribe. In these instances, begin the transcription with [Recorded material beginning

at minute *hh:mm:ss*] and end the transcription with [End of recorded material at minute *hh:mm:ss*] substituting the correct times for *hh:mm:ss*.

If your on-screen time code appears as 1:01:01, add leading zeroes so it adheres to the *hh:mm:ss*, e.g. 01:01:01.

Save your transcribed document using the full transcript filename specified in the work order, such as ABCDExxxxx12345_TRN10. Be sure to include the TRN10 or other suffix.

Speaker Identification

Separate the speaker identification from transcription text with a colon (:) followed by a tab. *Do not* use spaces. Your final document will be formatted using a standard template that relies on use of the colon and tab to produce the final product for the customer.

Always attempt to identify the speaker. When possible, use the speaker's full name.

In **Focus Group Transcripts** identify the focus group leader as "Facilitator:" and use only "Male Voice:" and "Female Voice:" to identify participants. Trying to identify each speaker by name over the course of a long focus group gets too confusing. Consistent usage of "Male Voice:" and "Female Voice:" is best. *Do not* add numbers to the identification.

Use *only the following* speaker identification formats, unless otherwise instructed to do so:

- Male Voice:[tab] (Use initial caps on both words)
- Female Voice:[tab] (Use initial caps on both words)
- Interviewer:[tab]
- Respondent:[tab]
- Facilitator:[tab] (For focus groups)
- John:[tab] (When you can only identify a speaker's first name.)
- John Smith:[tab] (When you are able to identify a speaker's first and last name.)
- Dr. John Smith:[tab] (When you know a speaker's name and title in medical transcripts.)

If the transcript is titled "John Smith," and there is only an interviewer and a respondent, odds are the respondent is "John Smith." Use your best judgment, but go ahead and name the respondent as "John Smith," if it seems appropriate. In an interview situation "Respondent" is always better than "Male Voice."

Do not use the following identifications: Speaker, Another Female Voice, Second Male Voice, Presenter, Moderator, Person, Child, Voice, or any other convention not listed above. Pick a speaker identification that fits best or contact Tigerfish for guidance.

Do not number speakers, such as Male Voice 1, Female Voice 2, and so on. This might be useful as you start the transcript if you think you'll be able to identify the speaker later and then use search and replace to update the identification throughout the document. However, if this does not happen, please remove the numbering before submitting your final transcript.

Time Coding

Definitions:

- **Embedded:** For our purposes, embedded time code is the time code track on the actual video.
- **Elapsed:** This is the running time code in the program with which you are playing the video. Always use the embedded time code, unless none is shown.

When creating a transcript with time code, use the following format:

00:00:00[tab]*Speaker Identification:*[tab]

NOTE: There are NO SPACES between tabs.

Example:

ABCDExxxxx12345_TTC

Dr. John Allende: On Water Fowl

00:00:00 [Beginning of Recorded Material]

Male Voice: I'm pleased and excited to introduce North America's leading authority on wild water fowl and their habitats, Dr. John Allende. Tonight, Dr. Allende will be speaking about the major differences between Trumpeter Swans and African Swans.

00:00:30 Dr. Allende: Thank you. Thank you. I'm so happy to be here. These two species of swan may look alike, but they are far different.

Male Voice: As I'm sure many of the people in the audience here tonight know, these two species of swans show strikingly different attitudes toward the protection their territory. Is that correct?

00:01:00 Dr. Allende: Indeed they do. Trumpeter Swans are the gentler of the two varieties.

00:01:30 They can be found in small lakes and ponds throughout the world, basking in the wonderfulness of simply being swans. It is a truly amazing sight. And, what a lovely call they have.

[End of Recorded Material]

Always use three sets of numbers for hours, minutes, and seconds. Add a leading "00:" if necessary.

Do not add milliseconds, frames, italicize, boldface or bracket the time code.

Unless otherwise specified, use the time code displayed in the video itself (embedded), not the time shown as elapsed in your player. For example, the time code in the video might start at 04:00:00 rather than 00:00:00.

When time coding an interview, only the respondent's answers need to be coded. For long answers, place a new time code every 30 seconds. However, time codes should only be inserted at the beginning of a sentence, so this is not a precise measurement. Place a new time code at 30-second intervals, or as close as you can get without breaking up a sentence.

Unclear Words or Phrases

Please make every effort to hear and understand what is said. Sometimes you can figure out a word by the context of what the speaker is saying. The Internet can also be useful. Google Suggest is a new product that suggest words based upon the letters you type: <http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>. Ordinary search engines are also useful; if your guess is close, the search engine will come back and ask, "Did you mean..." which often gives you the correct term. Or, search for something unique about the subject matter and you might find a document that contains the correct word. Company websites will often have a list of employees, which can be useful in the spelling of names.

When these methods don't work, follow these guidelines:

1. Uncertain how to spell a name.

If you are uncertain how to spell a name, take your best guess and put the name in brackets. If it is the name of a speaking participant, use brackets only for the first appearance of the name.

2. Unfamiliar terms.

When there is a term you are unable to identify, take your best guess and enclose it in brackets, such as, [hypogammaglobulinemic]. If you have phonetically spelled an unknown term in brackets and you subsequently come across the same term, be sure to use consistent spelling. If you learn the correct spelling of a word or name during the course of transcribing, please go back and correct the previous instances of the word.

3. Unable to hear anything.

If you *absolutely* can't make out the words at all, insert [unintelligible] in the transcript in their place. Use [unintelligible] only, not [?], [unknown], [can't hear], [inaudible], or any other convention.

Special Characters

- Ellipses: [. . .], an ellipsis is used to show the speaker has trailed off or has taken a long pause in the middle of a sentence.
 - **Example:**
 - The professor stated that Trumpeter Swans were large and white. . .right, Trumpeter Swans have webbed feet, as well.
 - The African Swan can be viewed as a metaphor for today's...

When using ellipses do not use Microsoft Word's "Special Characters." Make certain there is a full space between each period. [...] vs. [. . .]

- Hyphens and Dashes: [-], [--], Hyphens are used to connect stuttered words or letters. Dashes are used to separate an interjected phrase or when a speaker switches direction in the middle of a sentence.
 - **Example:**
 - Here we see the Trumpeter Swan -- sorry, wrong slide -- performing its ritual mating dance.
 - The African Swan is very aggressive -- now, shall we break for cookies?

However, please do not use en/em dashes. Always use the double dash. You can turn this feature off in Microsoft Word by going to "Tools" "Auto-Correct Options" "Auto Format." Make sure "Hyphens (--) with dash (—)" is not checked.

- Brackets: [], only use [], not { } or (). Bracket only uncertain spellings of words, proper names and [Unintelligible].

Remember, only bracket an uncertain spelling or proper name on the first reference.

- Smart Quotes ["Look at the quotes around me, me being this sentence."]. Use only straight quotes in Tigerfish documents. To enable straight quotes go to "Tools" "Auto Correct Options" and select "Auto Format As You Type." Uncheck "Straight Quotes with Smart Quotes."

Types of Transcripts

Verbatim Transcripts

When a work order specifies a *verbatim transcript*, try to capture every word spoken on the recording, including stutters, false starts, and minimal responses.

For consistency, use *only* the following for *minimal responses*. Pick one from the list; use what seems closest to what is being uttered, and remain consistent with its usage:

- Uh
- Um

Do not use ah, oh, er, and so forth.

Use the following for *minimal positive responses*:

- Uh-huh
- Mm-hmm

Use the following for *minimal negative response*:

- Nuh-uh

Edit For Clarity

When you receive a work order that indicates that the transcript should be “Edited for Clarity” do not include stutters, false starts, repetitions, etc. Try to remain as close to the spoken material as possible. You want to maintain the cadence and meaning of the language.

Example:

- **Verbatim Sentence:** He, he wanted to learn more about sw-swans, you know, like he went out into the wild, the wilderness. He, um, he lived the life, the life of a swan. It-it was am-am -- I mean, who does that? He, like, he learned their calls, and wallowed in th-the muck. Wow. You know, some people call that dude crazy. I-I-I think he understood, man. H-he understood.
- **Edited for Clarity:** He wanted to learn more about swans. He went out into the wild, the wilderness. He learned their calls and wallowed in the muck. Wow. You know, some people call that dude crazy. I think he understood, man. He understood.

Video Recording Transcripts

In a video or talking head interview, occasionally there is discussion of camera angles, noises in the room, interviewee coaching, or other technical adjustments that must be made. Rather than transcribe such off-topic conversation, simply identify it as [Director's comments] in the transcript. Silent footage of scenery, landscapes, crowds, etc. should be marked as [B-roll]. Please ask if you have any questions about what material should or should not be transcribed.

Transcribe obvious questions and answers only. Often these kinds of transcripts will be shown on the work order as "**Summarize ???s, Verbatim answers.**" In this case, summarize the interviewer's questions, but be certain to capture the respondent's reply word-for-word.

Usage Standards

For general reference, please reference *The Associated Press Stylebook*. If you do any writing at all, whether transcribing for Tigerfish or writing a letter to the editor, it's an handy reference guide to have on hand.

Following are a few common things you'll encounter when transcribing and how Tigerfish prefers them to be handled. Some of these standards mirror *The AP Stylebook* and some, where noted, are exceptions to it.

Affect, effect – That one little letter change has confused more people than many other rules of grammar. As a verb, *affect* means to influence something (*That score will affect your average.*) while *effect* means to cause something (*A new President will effect many changes in policy.*). As a noun, *affect* is generally not used unless you're watching CSI and the psychologist remarks how the suspect has very little affect, meaning a lack of emotional response. *Effect* as a noun indicates a result (*The effect Katrina had on the Gulf coast will take years to repair.*).

All right – Okay, we acknowledge that the English language has many enigmas. This is one of them. While these two little words have often been morphed into the singular expression *alright*, technically that's not a standard usage. This one isn't a panacea, but please try to use *all right* and hyphenate when needed, as in, "he's an all-right guy." It'll keep the purists from knocking at our virtual door.

Email – Please do not use a hyphen. This is an exception to *The AP Stylebook* guidelines. Capitalize only at the beginning of a sentence.

Internet – Always capitalize.

Numbers - Generally, spell out numbers less than 10. Following are some exceptions to this, where you would always use numerical representation:

- Addresses –6 Maple St.
- Ages –A 2-year-old building
- Cents – 5 cents
- Dollars –\$5 – if the amount is in the millions or billions, then \$5 million or \$5.5 billion
- Dates – just as they appear on the calendar, that is, June 6, 2005 or June 6th
- Dimensions – 6 feet tall, 9-by-12 rug
- Highways – U.S. Route 1 or Highway 217
- Millions, billions – 3 million people, 2.75 billion chips
- Percentages – 4 percent (in technical documents, the alternate 4% may be used)
- Proportions – 2 parts water
- Speed – 7 miles per hour
- Temperatures – 8 degrees
- Times – 8 a.m.
- Military time – Do not use colon to separate hours and minutes
- When using a numerical representation, add an *s* with no space or apostrophe to indicate plurality: *In your 20s, you begin to think about a career.*
- Years are always represented numerically and can be shortened by replacing the first two digits with an apostrophe: *The '60s were a time of great social change in America.* Again, no space or apostrophe should precede the *s*.

Okay – Please use "okay" except when abbreviating the state of Oklahoma, which is OK, okay?

This is an exception to *The AP Stylebook* guidelines.

Online – One word, no hyphen.

U.S. – When abbreviating United States, always place a period after each letter.

Web site – Capitalize “Web,” and put a space between “Web” and “site.” When a speaker mentions a Web site address, type it just as you would if you were navigating to the site in your browser. That is, *www.tigerfish.com* is correct; *www dot Tigerfish dot com* is not.