



REALTIME

EPISODE 1

REALTIME READINESS

By Lynette Mueller

It is a period of ever-changing technology!

Court reporters, in the courtroom and deposition setting, are winning with tools and gadgets to help them work smarter and provide their important clients with the technology to assist them in their cases.

I admit that I'm a technology and gadgets geek. I was so excited that the new *Star Wars* film opened this past December.

Here are some quotes from the *Star Wars* series that relate to court reporters using gadgets and technology to help them provide great realtime output for their clients.

“Do. Or do not.
There is no try.”

— Yoda

Do embrace realtime technology. Use it to be more productive and provide clients with a service that they crave. If you do not, they may look to other reporters or other technology.

Some reasons that have been cited for *do not* include:

- writing is not good enough
- do not want anyone to see my mistakes
- hookups are intimidating
- overlapping voices can be distracting
- no control over the environment

Here are some ways to be more confident to do:

- improve by practice — write at least 15 minutes a day
- analyze your writing and keep a journal
- build your dictionary
- keep current with technology
- offer realtime to a client you are comfortable with
- let your software work for you
- relax and breathe
- stay positive

“In my experience, there is no such thing as luck.”

— *Obi-Wan Kenobi*

In order to be realtime proficient and keep their feed top-notch, all reporters should practice for speed and accuracy on a regular basis. Practicing and speed-building take time and hard work, but the benefits are enormous. In addition, being prepared for each and every job, whether it's realtime or not, means less editing time at the computer later.

Some things to do prior to each job include:

- create a job dictionary with brief forms, if possible, for all attorneys, participants, proper names, witnesses, case-specific terminology, and technical words
- practice new briefs prior to the job
- create a cheat sheet for the briefs during the job as a reminder

We need to educate ourselves as much as possible about the case-specific terminology for a realtime session and add brief forms to our dictionary in order to have our feed be top-notch. Our CAT software can help us, too. I love my BriefIt on my Case CATalyst software. During a recent fast-paced deposition, this brief form saved the day: AO*EUK (independent contractor). Embrace and learn more about your specific CAT software, and let it do some of the heavy lifting.

“In a dark place we find ourselves, and a little more knowledge lights our way.”

— *Yoda*

“It’s a trap!”

— Admiral Ackbar

Don’t get caught off guard. Be prepared for every realtime job by bringing cables, power cords, router, tablets, etc. This past month, I was scheduled for a daily copy trial in a rural town several miles from my home base that required me to stay overnight. In addition to my Luminex, laptop, and realtime software, I also packed up a mobile office that included:

- extra writer
- extra laptop with CAT software loaded
- iPads
- netbooks
- router for realtime feed
- portable scanner
- Dymo labeler for exhibit stickers
- office supplies (stapler, paperclips, binder clips, etc.)

Remember that Luke was not a youngling when he learned the Jedi ways. Reporters do not need to be younglings, either, to provide realtime. I am always striving to pick up better ways to write and tips and tricks from my colleagues (even after 30 years in this amazing profession). My colleagues are a valuable resource for me. All it takes to leap into realtime is the belief in yourself and your abilities, a strong desire, hard work, and the focus to get there.

May the Force (aka realtime) be with you!

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