

IN WHAT WAY CAN TECHNOLOGY ASSIST SHORTHAND?

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To use other means than shorthand to perform registrations is not new. For years it has been done in some parliaments and courts. And it does not have to be "high tech". A simple cassette tape does that. The question is: What is the best? What is more perfect? What is more accurate? Of course, a live stenographer + recording + technologies. The formula is simple for those who understand the subject. Nobody better than a live stenographer "packed" with all possible technologies. Also because the stenographer, by the characteristics of shorthand study itself, is a highly skilled person to distinguish and interpret sounds, exactly because shorthand is phonetic writing. A good stenographer (a responsible one, who daily trains shorthand speeds) has much more capacity to work in a legislative house or in a court exactly for this reason: his ear is better trained for the job, which means that he can distinguish sounds, even when the speaker has a bad diction. When not even a recorder can "get" the bad diction of a speaker, an experienced stenographer can interpret it, either by the meaning of the sentence, or by his great proficiency (through shorthand) to distinguish sounds and "noise sounds."

STENOGRAPHER AND A RECORDER COMPLETE EACH OTHER

In practical terms, a recorder and a stenographer complete each other in a very efficient and accurate way.

Nowadays, it is very common to hear the following questions: why a stenographer, when there is a recorder? Isn't it more practical to record and get everything from such recording?

When it comes to reliability, responsibility, the question should not be "what is more practical?" but rather "what is best?"; "what is more perfect?".

Regarding the assemblage of parliamentary speeches and debates (including CICs - Congressional Investigation Commission -, etc..), we can apply several different FORMULAS to establish what was said.

In order to make things clearer, I'm dividing into FORMULAS the many ways to use the recorder and the stenographer.

1st FORMULA: only the recording.

The quality is poor, specially when the recording is bad or the speaker has a horrible diction. The "transcriber" (not-stenographer) will have only one source to consult: the magnetic tape. What can be worse; there is the risk of the speech being totally lost in case there is a mechanical failure and nothing is recorded.

2nd FORMULA: Only stenographer (no recording):

This is the formula that has been used since the time of the Romans until recorders appeared. It has the disadvantage of being extremely stressful and generates anxiety and tension, specially when the stenographer has to face speakers who talk too fast or have bad diction. In this case, the stenographer must quadruplicate the effort of transcription as well as interpretation. Very frequently he will be required to make insertions (in the case of passages or words that have been humanly impossible to understand or grasp when writing in shorthand).

3rd FORMULA: Recording + stenographer

It is much better than the previous formula, considering that the stenographer, by nature, is a highly conditioned, skilled and trained professional in the difficult art of interpretation of sounds. It is therefore much easier for such professional to understand a recording, even when the sound is bad and when speakers have a bad diction.

4th FORMULA: Live speaker + live stenographer + recording

It is - undeniably - the formula that allows 100% of authenticity, reliability, fidelity and perfection. Here the stenographer has two sources to scrutinize: shorthand notes and recording. Even when the recording was not very good, it will be much easier for the stenographer, who performed live shorthand, to reconstitute the speech, because being live enables the stenographer to "feel the speaker", and follow everything that is

happening in the court. And vice versa, anything that the stenographer was unable to understand live, he will understand in the recording.

5th FORMULA: Live speaker + live stenographer + recording + computer

Here closes the circle toward total perfection.

Whereas the machine does not replace man: **THEY COMPLETE EACH OTHER EFFICIENTLY AND ACCURATELY.** The technology did not come to extinguish shorthand, but has given it a better quality.