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*What is one major work challenge that you experienced and how did you overcome it?  
Please mention how the internet or technology helped you address this challenge.*

The biggest challenge I face as a professional court reporter is managing and organizing my time between court proceedings, transcript production, and studying for certification. I have been able to utilize technology in various ways to manage my time more effectively.

Over the past year, the speed at which I produce transcripts has greatly improved. The closer to real-time my writing is, the less time I spend on producing a transcript. I manage my dictionary daily, which improves my record and speeds up transcript production. I scan my notes after each hearing to review mistranslations, add new dictionary entries, and create new briefs for words I frequently misstroke.

I reduce the amount of time spent on transcript production by preparing for jobs in advance. Assigning speaker IDs and creating a job dictionary means spending less time after a hearing fixing job-specific names and terminology. Using the Brief It feature helps during a job because it offers briefs for multi-stroke words and phrases that are used more than once. Brief It makes my writing cleaner because it decreases the chance of a misstroke by reducing the number of strokes.

Being in court is a lot of "hurry up and wait"; so I use my time in court wisely. Often lawyers will need time to speak to clients before a hearing begins, or people are late or don't show up at all. I take advantage of downtime by working on outstanding transcripts between hearings. A veteran court reporter suggested I view my transcript on a tablet and use a stylus pen to make changes in red. This allows me to keep my job open on my laptop in case we jump back on the record quickly.

When dividing my time between court, transcript production, and studying for certification, it often feels like the day is simply not long enough. I use a time management application called Clockify, which acts as a personal timesheet to help me track how many hours I put towards different tasks. After three unsuccessful attempts at the RPR Testimony skills test, I set a goal to log 50 hours of testimony speedbuilding before attempting another test. I am proud to report that, not only did I meet my goal of practicing for 50 hours, but I also passed my most recent attempt at the RPR Testimony skills test. I plan to utilize Clockify to help track the number of hours I study for the RPR Written Knowledge Test before I attempt that in July.

An essential part of time management is remaining focused. I use an application called Forest, where I can set a 30-minute timer and plant a seed. If I focus on a task without using my phone to access other applications for 30 minutes, a tree grows from the seed. I can cultivate an entire forest through the completion of 30-minute tasks. I like to think of my forest as the place where all my career goals live, waiting to be realized.

The field of court reporting presents many challenges to those of us lucky enough to call this amazing career ours. With more technological support available at our fingertips every day, there's nothing we next generation of court reporters can't achieve.