

Q&A

Changing Your Dictionary

Have you changed your dictionary significantly since you graduated? How do you approach changing the way you write?

I have definitely changed my dictionary significantly since I graduated from court reporting school. I went to Bryan College of Court Reporting and graduated in 1987. Back then, Bryan had been teaching CAT-compatible theory for a little while, and I had been a computer programmer before CR school, so I knew that I had to have distinct outlines for the things I wanted to write and to have things translated properly even though, in the learning stages, I was a long way from writing for CAT for a living. Bryan didn't quite have computers up and running yet so we were still dictating, but the computer was always in the back of my mind. Back when I started, the CAT software wasn't even quite smart enough to handle, for example, prefixes and suffixes without defining the entire word. For example, one had to define PHAEUBG/-G as a separate entry of *making*. These days, one simply defines -G as the suffix -ing, and the software automatically transforms *make* into *making*.

I've been reporting now for approximately 19 years and have been realtining for only about three of those years, the first two being exclusively for myself. Even though I had been writing, keeping the computer always in mind as I was defining things, a student or newer reporter should always have an open mind in terms of writing style and should not worry

about changing words as the need arises. I'm also a beta tester for a major CAT software provider, so I've also changed things about my writing as the software has become smarter over the years.

As far as specifics go, I use a lot of macros for editing the transcript "on the fly," so those are the types of things I never even thought about doing until I was reporting for several years. I've got about four different alphabets that I use for stitching spelled proper names, glued letters for acronyms, etc.; and I've also entirely revamped my number-writing system to accommodate the smarter CAT software, so the word numbers — because I don't use the number bar and never have — get translated perfectly. Back in the day, numbers all had to be entered one at a time, which meant a lot of clutter.

And, as far as changing the way I write, when I make a significant theory or writing change, I try to make little notes and post them on my writer to remind me of the change. And it's also a good practice not to bite off more than you can chew when it comes to this aspect. Approach this change like adding briefs to your repertoire: don't try to change everything at once, but try to practice a few at a time until they become somewhat automatic.

*Harry Palter
San Diego, Calif.*

The operative word in this question is "significantly." No, I haven't changed my original dictionary significantly, because it was an excellent realtime, short theory to begin with. I have, however, made some changes inasmuch as I have created and added briefs, which have their own theory logic to them. I always check, of course, for any potential conflicts before adding an item. I also check the brief against any offered in

MEMBER PROFILE



Name: Kimberley Neeson, RPR, CRR, CCP, CBC

Occupation: Court reporter, CART provider, and firm owner

Hometown: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Member since: 1994

What do you love about being a court reporter?

Court reporting has provided me with so many diverse opportunities. From reporting interesting cases and making the difference in the life of a hard-of-hearing person to providing employment to a number of women (and men), this profession just keeps on giving!

What has been the highlight of your career?

I've been privileged to report many high profile cases. A few in particular come to mind, such as reporting highly confidential interviews in two notorious murder cases here in Ontario, reporting the trial of a Holocaust denier, and accompanying our then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien to the United Nations to caption the presentation to Canada of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Disability Award for the country's work in the disability area. I have also enjoyed mentoring reporters and captioners.

What are you currently reading?

Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles by Margaret George;
Anatomy of the Spirit by Caroline Myss.

What is your best memory?

Reporting commission evidence in Montreal, San Diego, and Jamaica!