

Hi again! It's me Sandra.

I've been getting some questions about my position as a Digital Court Reporter. Now that every courtroom in the state will be getting a brand new DAR system, I would like to clarify—more specifically—how the DAR system works, and what it is that I do.

Yes, Digital Court Reporters hit the record button, but there is so much more to the job. We are highly trained and skilled professionals who use a variety of tools to conduct our two main job functions, **recording and transcribing**.

Simply, **recording** the proceeding results in the digital audio file as the verbatim record. When the court reporter **transcribes** the proceeding, the written transcript becomes the official record.

Let's go into detail about these two areas of my position and focus on the tools I use as a digital court reporter.

Okay, first up, recording. To record a proceeding the digital court reporter uses a state-of-the-art Digital Audio Recording System, aka DAR. Every component of the system is carefully tailored to each courtroom for exceptional audio recording.

Our first device in the DAR setup are the **microphones**. The microphones are strategically placed at each party's location within the courtroom. The microphones convert sound waves of participants' voices into electrical signals. These signals then travel to the audio mixer.

The **audio mixer** sums the multiple audio input signals into one master output signal. The mixer levels are customized based on each courtroom's configuration to ensure the highest quality sound recording.

Okay, what about **power and storage**? Well, the DAR system runs on an individual power source, which allows for continuous recording during a power surge or power loss. The system retains copies of the audio recordings on local and remote servers to preserve the record.

Moving more into the software, the **FTR (For The Record) GOLD MONITOR** is the software used to record the proceeding, also allowing the court reporter to create log notes. The log notes are a detailed outline of the proceeding that are used later in the transcription process.

Next are something near and dear to the digital court reporter, **headphones**! During the proceeding, it is crucial that the court reporter conducts confidence monitoring with the headphones. This simply means the court reporter is actively listening to the recording throughout the entire proceeding to ensure every word is captured clearly.

Capturing all the visuals in the room is a **360-degree camera** giving the court reporter the advantage to view every angle in the courtroom while facing the computer screen.

The **clock** in the courtroom becomes illuminated when the system is recording as a visual cue to all parties that they are officially "on the record."

So those are the tools related to the recording part of my job, what about transcribing?

To transcribe a proceeding, the digital court reporter uses a sophisticated Transcription System. A key advantage of the digital court reporter transcribing directly from the audio recording is that they are able to listen as many times as necessary to transcribe exactly what was said.

The **FTR Gold Player** is the software used to playback those digital audio recordings. The software has features that allow the court reporter to isolate and amplify individual microphones. So, if there are two people speaking at the same time, or there is extraneous noise—such as paper ruffling—the court reporter is still able to transcribe exactly what was said.

To help with playback and aide in a speedy transcription, a **foot pedal** allows the court reporter to press three different switches to play, rewind or fast forward the audio recording while transcribing. Using the foot pedal allows the court reporter to keep his or her hands on the keyboard, for faster transcribing.

Further transcription software includes **Microsoft Word or Dragon Naturally Speaking**. The court reporter can type into Word or dictate to Dragon to produce the official transcript. Each court reporter uses various customized macros and quick text features that decrease keystrokes and increase transcription speed.

As you can see there is a lot of hardware, software and human power to run a Digital Audio Recording system in the state of Wisconsin. My hope is that this video gives you a clearer picture of the tools and processes used to do my job. Still interested? Check out our intro document, **Court reporters: Who they are, what they do, and where to apply** for more information about Digital Court reporting schools and employment info. Thanks for watching!