

Demonstration

Anna Tongue: Hi Ian. My name is Anna Tongue. I am an Electronic Note-taker. This means I record and transmit spoken communication for people to view on a screen. I have been working with deaf and hard of hearing people as a note-taker since 2001 and I set up NoteTaking Services in 2003. I was trained by CACPD which stands for the Council of Advancement of Communication for deaf people.

Ian Smith: How does electronic note-taking work?

Anna Tongue: As you have seen so far the two laptops we are each viewing are connected wirelessly. For you to view the same information on one screen that I am typing on another laptop requires specialist software called Note-Ed. Note-Ed was designed by Uclan (University of Central Lancashire). The note-taking software allows me to produce text on screen that can then be presented in a Word document format.

The software allows me to define the speakers using the 'F' keys at the top of the keyboard. I am also able to upload a complete dictionary of abbreviations to help me speed up my note taking capabilities. For example you will see some phrase come up on your screen quickly.

- Code of Practice
- Aims and objectives
- Terms and conditions
- Warranty and Liability
- Data Protection Act

I can also use my software to input information prior to an assignment when it is likely that specific text will be referred to. Earlier this year I attended a funeral to provide this service to the hard of hearing wife of the deceased. I used my software capabilities to input pieces of scripture that were going to be used within the service. For example:

1 John 4:16b, 18a “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in the. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

As you can see referring to specific pieces of text can be very beneficial for the reader, but this can only be achieved if material is given in advance of an assignment for me to input such details into this software.

There are other phrases which I use to direct and inform the client during an assignment which I will list now:

[Laughter]

[Applause]

[Check information]

[Check spelling]

[Break]

More general functions of the software enable me to change the size of the font, the colour of the text

or the background as you can see on your laptop.

Ian Smith: Why are there two types of note-taking?

Anna Tongue: I sent you an email before my visit to explain the two types of note-taking available. The first was live referencing and the second is precis note-taking.

Live referencing is what I am doing now by typing down everything that I would say to you. In a real situation I would take down what was said and by whom. I have to emphasise that it is not verbatim (word for word). In most cases people are happy for me to use my skills to translate the meaning of what is said without it being exactly word for word. The advantage of this also is that sometimes people decide to change what they have said half way through a sentence and if everything was recorded exactly as it is spoken it might become confusing for the deaf or hard of hearing reader. In essence, the fact that it is not word for word can eliminate the 'waffle' or 'unnecessary' words. That said, a highly skilled and experienced Electronic Note-taker on most occasions can use their abbreviations software to take notes verbatim if the speaker is talking at a reasonable pace.

Ian Smith: So what does precis note-taking mean Anna?

Anna Tongue: Precis note-taking is different in that it requires the skills of the electronic note-takers to record key points, facts and format the notes also. For example:

Survey of Equality within the Police force

The following facts show the outcome of a survey of employees in the Derbyshire Police force when asked if they believe there is equality in the workforce:

- 85% of people agreed.
- 15% of people disagreed. [Illustration purposes only – data incorrect]

With precis note-taking the style of the notes produced is more focused on the layout of the notes, recording key facts and data, and getting the gist of an event. Often deaf people who rely on BSL interpreters use an electronic note-taker to provide a record of an event they attend because they can't take notes themselves while watching their interpreter. As the individual was present at the event, summary or precis notes are usually a satisfactory record.

Ian Smith: How does a person receive their notes?

Anna Tongue: Notes can be provided to a client should they wish to have a record. This can be done directly providing a copy transferred to memory stick, sent as an email attachment or sending a hard copy through the post. I agree individual preference with each client.

Ian Smith: How should a person work with an electronic note-taker?

Anna Tongue: To prepare for an assignment I require the name of client, the clients special needs and service requirements, venue, title of event/session, start time, duration and contact details. In addition to these details materials I will request information in relation to the assignment such as an agenda, list of speakers, list of participants, handouts, presentation slides and/or handbook. This information is required to familiarise me with proceedings and to generate specialised abbreviations within Note-Ed's software. All information received prior to an assignment helps me to provide a more effective and efficient service.

Ian Smith: What equipment is required?

Electronic note-taking is a portable system. I will provide two laptop computers, two electrical battery

power leads and an extension cable. The client or venue must provide me with a power supply, a table to sit at and an office chair without arms where possible. When necessary a data projector/ screen will also need to be provided for a large group viewing.

Ian Smith: Do you work alone for every assignment?

Anna Tongue: If an assignment is expected to last longer than two hours it requires the services of more than one electronic note-taker. If electronic note-taking is required over the period of a whole day two electronic note-takers will be required working in 20 minute relays to maintain efficient and effective typing for the client. I will point this out when necessary. There is more information on general working conditions in my terms and conditions.

Ian Smith: Do you work to a code of practice?

Anna Tongue: I mentioned earlier that I was trained by CACDP. As I am registered with them I adhere to their Code of Practice. I am also a member of The Association of Note-taking Professionals (ANP) and follow their terms of practice also. Within the code of practice it states an electronic note-taker will not be a participant in any assignment and confidentiality will be applied. I can provide a copy of these terms of practice should you require them.

Ian Smith: Who have you provided this service to?

Anna Tongue: I have worked with a range of clients. My main clients include the deaf and hard or hearing. I am also able to work with people who have visual impairments, Dyslexia and manual dexterity problems. I am currently looking into support blind people by having notes turned into Braille.

Ian Smith: In which settings do you provide this service?

Anna Tongue: The settings I have worked in range from the conventional settings of meetings, presentations and conferences to the less common environments of court hearings, funerals and employment tribunals.

End of notes

