



# ADAPTING TO A MOBILE WORLD

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# Mobile Dictation Increases Efficiencies

by Donna Ezell of Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada, PLLC

*In early 2006, our firm restructured the support provided to our attorneys by deploying secretarial teams. The major goal of the teams was to provide an enhanced level of support to the attorneys and thus the clients; however, a secondary benefit realized was increased efficiencies reflected in our attorney-to-secretary ratios. Building on the efficiencies realized from creating the secretarial teams, in 2009, we introduced Team Central, a model under which our Level 1 through Level 4 associates, as well as other employed attorneys with little client interaction, would be supported by a team of highly qualified secretaries at ratios as great as 14:1 in some instances.*

Through this restructuring, we also identified a significant inefficiency in our process: the amount of time a secretary spent transcribing dictation and revising the documents before presenting a finished product. We were searching for ways to leverage the expertise of the secretaries in a more valuable supporting role to attorneys and clients. After polling secretarial staff, we discovered several were spending 15 to 25 hours per week transcribing dictation. We researched various resources that would enable us to reduce the time spent in manual transcription in order to meet our goal and increase productivity. After exploring many options, we ultimately chose Winscribe Digital Dictation in conjunction with speech-recognition software from Nuance's Dragon NaturallySpeaking. Speech recognition was a key factor for us as we were searching for ways to improve the turnaround of dictation

to transcription rather than just shifting the transcription of the dictation from the secretary to another labor source.

## DIGITAL DICTATION

When we implemented Winscribe using Dragon, our attorney-to-secretary ratio was 1.79:1. With the help of Winscribe, as well as the implementation of other technology advancements, we are now at 4.45:1. This is a significant improvement. On average, our attorneys produce 380 transcription jobs per month; with the introduction of Winscribe, we have been able to serve 81 attorneys utilizing one full-time transcriptionist for all our 13 offices. This has freed our secretaries to focus on more substantive administrative support for our attorneys.

Winscribe offers two methods for utilizing speech recognition with our Winscribe dictation system, and these can be used separately or in conjunction with each other. The first option is back-end or server-side recognition, whereby dictation is captured completely and, after the job is closed, is sent to a server where the audio file is compared to a voice profile and converted to text. They also offer front-end (client-side) speech recognition in which dictation is converted to text as the dictation job is created (*i.e.*, as the attorney speaks). With front-end recognition, the attorney would be more engaged in the document production process by ensuring text was formatted and edited properly from the raw recognized text. With this in mind, and to ensure our attorneys'

time was better spent serving clients than editing text and documents, we opted to utilize back-end speech recognition only.

### DICTATION WITH MOBILE DEVICES

Our attorneys use either handheld devices or their mobile devices (iPhone, Android, BlackBerry) to record dictation. The great thing about Winscribe is the attorney can choose a document template before dictation. For example, if a memo is needed, that template is chosen at the beginning of the dictation. This is a great feature as it allows the job to be delivered to the transcriptionist in proper format. The use of templates is a time-saving feature for the transcriptionist, which increases productivity for all. The mobile device also allows the user to tag the job with a priority rating as well as critical routing information, such as the matter number and any additional instructions. This provides the transcriptionist with information to assist in properly profiling the end product into our data management systems. Winscribe's workflow feature allows the production of notifications to the attorney once the job has reached the transcriptionist, which gives the attorney confidence in knowing the job is being processed.

After the attorney's dictation is complete, the job is ready to be uploaded. If using a handheld device, the attorney uses a docking system that is connected to his/her computer to upload the job to a centralized server. If using a mobile device, the attorney simply sends the job to the server with the click of a button. After being routed to the server, Dragon's back-end speech recognition steps in. The attorney records the dictation as usual, and the recording is converted to recognized text within the server. As a result, the transcriptionist only needs to proofread the produced text document rather than type the document from scratch.

### SPEECH RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

We are still utilizing Winscribe's speech-recognition component in order to "train" the user's profile for better speech recognition. This is an ongoing process that provides valuable results. We have had some instances of documents processed with approximately 97 percent accuracy, which could likely be further improved as we continue to invest more time in training the profile engine; the more we train the user profile, the better the results we achieve. This server-side speech-recognition technology deploys automated adaptation technologies to allow continual accuracy improvement without adding overhead to the transcriptionist's workflow.

In summary, Winscribe gives the attorney flexibility to use his or her preferred hardware. Winscribe Dictation has also allowed the firm to restructure its support staff team into a centralized group that handles transcription more efficiently and responds to atypical support situations — something a conventional secretarial structure may not be able to do. For instance, our litigators utilize Winscribe heavily during trial for such tasks as preparation of opening and closing statements and witness outlines after normal business hours with the confidence that the finished product will have a swift turnaround time in the early morning. 



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