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U.S. Department of Labor Projects Captioning and Realtime Reporting Opportunities to Grow by at Least 10-20% During the Next Decade
Reporting profession fast becoming one of the most technologically savvy

WASHINGTON, DC (February 6, 2006) – The World Series, Academy Awards, weddings, football games, classrooms, churches, television stations, home offices ... these are some of the work environs found today in the dynamic and growing profession once centered squarely in the court house or law office.

Careers in the reporting field – specifically, the verbatim transcription of the spoken word to print – include not only the standby field of judicial reporting, but also broadcast captioning, communications access realtime translation (CART) reporting and realtime reporting to the Internet (Webcasting).

And more and more reporters use realtime technology today that allows them to instantly convert their stenographic notes into English text. This text can then be displayed on a computer screen (for example if a deaf or hard-of-hearing student was using a reporter in a high school or college classroom) or large projection screens (for example when the President is speaking before a large arena audience).

“Careers in reporting can be very demanding but also very rewarding,” said Mark J. Golden, CAE, Executive Director and CEO of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA). “The profession runs the gamut from working in a courtroom or legal office to captioning live television to working in a classroom with individuals who may be deaf or hard-of-hearing or are learning English as a second language.”

According to NCRA there are approximately 35,000 judicial, broadcast captioning, CART and Internet information reporters in the U.S. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that reporting job opportunities will grow as fast as the average for all occupations through 2014.

Average Income

“Reporting can be a very lucrative career choice for many individuals,” said Golden. “It is a high-demand profession that offers significant opportunities to supplement income based on hours worked.”

A prime example is the increased demand for reporters that provide the closed captioning for television programs. Federal law now requires that all new television programming – including live news and sports events – be closed captioned. There is a severe shortage of qualified professionals to handle the demand required by Federal law.

In short, good-paying jobs are going unfilled.

- **Judicial reporters**, who are commonly known as official or freelance reporters and work in court or in depositions, earn an average annual income of \$64,000.
- **Broadcast captioners**, who work for television stations or captioning companies, earn from \$35,000 to \$75,000 and more a year, depending on assignments and workload.
- **CART reporters**, who supply communication access services for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, see annual income ranges between \$35,000 and \$65,000.
- **Internet information reporters**, who remotely caption to the Internet or provide Webcasting services, are usually paid at a rate of \$100-\$200 per hour.

“In addition, court reporting is now being recognized as one of the country’s top IT professions as reporters drive new technologies that allow them to work more efficiently,” said Golden. “It is a highly respected, challenging and vibrant profession with numerous career paths that gives professionals ample flexibility in schedule, nature and volume of work.”

Education and Opportunities

Top students are attracted to the profession because of its reputation and opportunities. Reporting careers require from two to four years of technical training. More than 100 private and public community colleges and universities across the country offer an associate’s and/or bachelor’s degree in reporting.

In recent years, the court reporting profession has made significant technological advances. Reporters are now using CAT, or Computer-Aided Transcription, that electronically links a stenotype machine to a computer. Stenographic symbols are recorded digitally and on paper. A computer program then translates the stenotype notes into English text that can be researched, corrected, telecommunicated, stored on disk, integrated with video – or simply printed out as a transcript.

Many reporters are taking their skills and technology to another level by offering realtime display of proceedings. Realtime can be expanded to include systems that convert spoken testimony into printed text or into captioned video for deaf or hard-of-hearing persons and into Braille or enhanced sound for persons who are blind or have vision loss. This helps courts meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“Reporting is an expanding profession that caters to a diverse range of individuals. Whether you’re a recent graduate, a single or stay-at-home mother, or someone considering an occupational change, reporting offers flexibility, good pay, and a career that allows you to give back to your community by providing essential services,” said Golden.

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NCRA is internationally recognized organization committed to being the leader in advancing the profession of those who capture and integrate the spoken word into a comprehensive and accurate information base for the benefit of the public and private sectors. NCRA accomplishes this through ethical standards, testing and certification, educational opportunities, communications, government relations, research and analysis, and fiscal responsibility.