

# Transcript Formatting Documentation

[Express Scribe](#) is a free tool that can be used for transcription and timestamping. It is available for Mac and for Windows.

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## Workflow at a Glance

\*Occurs AFTER all audio editing is complete for a given file:

1. Transcribe the relevant parts of the interview\*\*

2. Timestamp the transcript
3. Format the transcript
4. Review all formatting guidelines
5. Record the interview metadata separately
6. (Split transcript into each language)
7. Save transcript and prepare for DH Press
8. Load transcript to DH Press Media Library and grab URL

**\*\*If you are working with multiple language versions of your interviews, translation should occur prior to timestamping. We recommend that you wait to split your transcript into each language version until after timestamping and formatting are complete. See [this example](#) of an unsplit transcript in English and Spanish.**

## Step 1. Transcribe

If you do not have a transcription, you will need to transcribe your interview(s). Partial transcripts may be used, as long as you insert timestamps in the transcribed portions.

## Step 2. Timestamp

- ☐ Insert timestamps into the entire transcript, even for sections that are not transcribed.
  - ☐ [Express Scribe](#) is recommended for timestamping.
  - ☐ ***Note that you can configure the display of timestamps in Express Scribe to match the format required for DH Press***
    - ☐ Preferences > Display > Time format > Format > **hh:mm:ss.t** (with leading zero)
- ☐ Follow the following formatting guidelines:

### Timestamp Format Guidelines

All timestamps must adhere to the following format:

[HH:MM:SS.ms]

or

BRACKET Hour(2 digits) COLON Minute(2 digits) COLON Second(1 or 2 digit) PERIOD  
Microsecond(1 or 2 digit) BRACKET

Note that DH Press 2.0 and later versions REQUIRE microseconds of at least one digit.

### Punctuation

- ☐ Use colons (:) to separate the hours, minutes, and seconds, with a period (.) to separate the microsecond.
- ☐ Use a bracket on either end of the timestamp.

## Hours

While Express Scribe provides timestamps in the proper format, it only uses one digit for the hour. You will have to insert a second digit.

- ☐ For interviews under an hour, HH = 00
- ☐ For interviews that are one hour long, HH = 01

## Example

This is what a proper timestamp should look like: [03:16:06.32]

03 = 3 hours

16 = 16 minutes

06 = 6 seconds

32 = 32 microseconds

## **Placement of Timestamps**

- ☐ Timestamps should be placed on their own line, with no other text next to them.
- ☐ You may need to break up the transcript to insert the timestamps if you want to insert timestamps mid-sentence.

## **Example**

[03:16:06.32]

the triage desk and told them who I was and that I was from Volunteer Women's

[03:16:11.79]

Medical, the women's clinic near Tyson Park. And the woman looked at me and she

[03:16:19.33]

smiled like very politely, "Oh yes, I know you," which was a great moment. Any

## **Frequency of Timestamps**

It is recommended that you insert timestamps in some measured and regular way across all of your transcripts.

## Suggested Approaches to Timestamping

- ☐ Insert a timestamp every 2 minutes of your transcript
- ☐ Insert a timestamp with every change of speaker
- ☐ Insert a timestamp at the beginning/end of excerpts you wish to share
- ☐ Insert a timestamp whenever there is a silent pause

\*In this screenshot, the section of transcript would correspond to a single row of data, which is delivered as an excerpt in DH Press:

```

[00:00:00.00]
Jessie Wilkerson: Now it's on. Okay.

[00:00:02.43]
Helen Lewis: Okay, we were talking about when I moved to Forsyth County and

[00:00:10.10]
discovered that this was a county with no African Americans, no blacks, in the

[00:00:15.45]
whole county and that some ten or fifteen years before had had this real race

[00:00:21.62]
riot kind of--not a race riot. They had accused this black of raping a woman, or

[00:00:27.76]
something, one of those episodes, and they ran every black out of the county,

[00:00:33.58]
took over their farms and whatever and they had to move. I was told stories

[00:00:41.91]
about how they hung blacks around the courthouse. I know they at least lynched

[00:00:47.65]
the guy that they were accusing of this, and I don't know how many others. Some

[00:00:53.24]
people maybe have done some research on it, but the stories were told. I could

[00:00:58.34]
just see bodies hanging all around the courthouse in my mind as to what

[00:01:02.56]
happened. So it was kind of a really [pause] horror. And then blacks coming in

[00:01:10.16]
through the town on trucks to deliver stuff to the stores were afraid to get out

[00:01:16.16]
of the truck. They would hide in the back of the truck. I found this to be just

[00:01:21.95]
horrifying, but somehow I never quite got it connected with doing anything about

[00:01:29.37]
it or thinking about it in that way.

[00:01:32.49]
My father came home from the mail route one day, and he said he saw this old

[00:01:37.46]
black man bicycling through town and he was on his way to Gainesville. And he

```

## Beginning and Concluding Timestamps

- ☐ You must include a timestamp at the start of your transcript, and at the very end.
- ☐ The beginning timestamp should correspond to the start of your audio file.
- ☐ The concluding timestamp should be the final thing typed on the transcript page, separated on its own line. This timestamp should correspond to the very end of your audio file.

Example start timestamp: [00:00:00.00]

Example concluding timestamp: [03:31:01.20]

Example of the end of a transcript:

[03:17:53.92]

JW: Well is there anything else you wanted to add?

[03:17:56.42]

HL: Maybe we'll have a little session in the morning before you leave.

[03:18:04.04]

JW: Yeah.

[03:18:10.99]

### Step 3. Format

Your transcript should be formatted accordingly (please consult the [examples](#) provided):

#### Speakers' Names (Interviewee/Interviewer)

- ❑ List the full name of the speaker (whether interviewer or interviewee) the first time he/she speaks.
- ❑ Use the speaker's initials every subsequent time he/she speaks. (Alternatively, you can elect to include the full name of each speaker each time he/she speaks, or you can opt to anonymize your interviewees' names.)

Example:

[00:00:00.3]

Renee Alexander Craft: Tell me, what is your name?

[00:00:04.9]

Simona Esquina: My name in Congo?

[00:00:06.1]

RAC: You have a Congo name?

[00:00:07.8]

SE: Yes.

#### Spacing

- ❑ Lines: Your document should be set to single spacing.
- ❑ Timestamps: Use an extra line space at the end of a sentence, before inserting a new timestamp.
- ❑ Sentences: Use only a single space between sentences. (Do not double or triple space between sentences.).
- ❑ Ellipses should be separated by spaces (. . . NOT ...).
- ❑ Dashes should be set off by spaces; two short dashes are recommended ( -- ).

Example:

[00:08:38.4]

SE: Because back when my father, who was the oldest Congo, would play, and certainly his (GE's) grandfather Zacarias Esquina -- that's what his grandfather was called. He was my father's brother. They played a different way. They had a responsibility to the Congo women. To the Congo women. They had a big responsibility to the Congo women. They went from house to house picking up the women for the Congo. And the same way when the Congo ended, they took each woman back to the house where they had picked her up. The King had a responsibility to the Congo women. Wherever he went, he would take them and he would drop them off. But not today. Today the King doesn't have, he doesn't

take responsibility for the Congo women. There isn't that responsibility that they Congos had before. Today no. The King is where he is. The Queen is where she is and the Congos are where they are. There's no formal organization. Because before, the King and the Queen -- named Merced -- would go out together. They organized themselves and they worked together to take care of the Congos, taking care of the Congo women and the palace.

[00:10:21.6]

RC: Wow.

## Use of Brackets

Brackets are primarily used for timestamps, but you may use them to insert a correction, clarification, or emotive response. Alternatively, you may use parentheses. Please be consistent throughout your transcript.

### Example using bracket:

[00:15:57.0]

CM: The only one that's here is him. Nowadays there has been some disharmony in the sense that various [devils] formed a group, without knowing the game, and they named a Major Devil. If I'm here dressed [as Devil] and a devil is over there, he has to defend that he's the Major Devil. But if I'm the Major Devil . . . [Laughs]

[00:16:21.0]

AL: Oh! Now I understand. Let me explain it to her [Renee].

[00:16:24.0]

AL: He was saying that you earn being Diablo Mayor you don't just . . . [inaudible] You have to go through a training, you have to know, you know, the steps, you have to know what you need to be doing. You need to go through all of that. [inaudible].

### Example using parenthesis:

[00:15:57.0]

CM: The only one that's here is him. Nowadays there has been some disharmony in the sense that various (devils) formed a group, without knowing the game, and they named a Major Devil. If I'm here dressed (as Devil) and a devil is over there, he has to defend that he's the Major Devil. But if I'm the Major Devil . . . (Laughs)

[00:16:21.0]

AL: Oh! Now I understand. Let me explain it to her (Renee).

[00:16:24.0]

AL: He was saying that you earn being Diablo Mayor you don't just . . . (inaudible) You have to go through a training, you have to know, you know, the

steps, you have to know what you need to be doing. You need to go through all of that. (inaudible).

## Handling Omissions and Redactions

- ❑ For sections that are not transcribed, please include a starting/concluding timestamp with the following text: *No transcript available*

Example:

```
[00:33:42.1]
No transcript available
```

```
[00:36:56.5]
GE: What do the Congos from Portobelo do differently from ones in other places
and why?
```

- ❑ For sections that are redacted, please include a starting/concluding timestamp with the following text: *Section redacted*

Example:

```
[00:33:42.1]
Section redacted
```

```
[00:36:56.5]
GE: What do the Congos from Portobelo do differently from ones in other places
and why?
```

## Special Characters

You may use special characters, such as accents, tildes, umlauts as needed in your transcript. Essentially, any character that can be represented in Unicode UTF-8 can be used in your transcript (provided you encode your transcript properly - see [File Formats](#) section).

## HTML

You can use [HTML tags](#) to create additional formatting for your transcript. For instance, you can apply tags to add bold or italicized text, or to create line breaks (as in the case of poetry). Please make sure your HTML tags are well formed so that your transcript does not produce errors; you can check your HTML code in the w3schools [“Try It Yourself” HTML test browser](#).

Example:

```
[00:00:04.0]
<em>Piede:</em><br/>
I shall stubbornly continue &nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; [A]<br/>
My generous exploit&nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; [B]<br/>
```

[00:00:18.0]  
<em>Piede:</em><br/>  
I shall stubbornly continue         [A] <br/>  
My generous exploit           [B] <br/>  
  
[00:00:27.0]  
<em>Volta:</em><br/>  
Make me, love, your choice offence         [b'] <br/>  
And even if I should die,           [c]<br/>

Which renders in the browser as:

[00:00:04.0]  
Piede:  
I shall stubbornly continue [A]  
My generous exploit [B]  
  
[00:00:18.0]  
Piede:  
I shall stubbornly continue [A]  
My generous exploit [B]  
  
[00:00:27.0]  
Volta:  
Make me, love, your choice offence [b']  
And even if I should die, [c]

## Step 4. Review

Make sure to review this formatting checklist to make sure your transcript is properly formatted (please consult the [examples](#) provided below):

### Formatting Checklist

- ☐ Transcript begins with a timestamp
- ☐ Speakers' names appear the first time they speak
- ☐ Speaker initials used all subsequent times
- ☐ All relevant portions of transcript contain timestamps
- ☐ Timestamps are on their own lines, with opening and closing brackets
- ☐ Timestamps are formatted as [HH:MM:SS.ms]
- ☐ There is an extra space at the end of a typed line, before a new timestamp begins
- ☐ Sentences are separated by a single space
- ☐ Missing portions of transcript are identified as either *No transcript available* or *Section redacted*
- ☐ Transcript ends with a timestamp
- ☐ There should be no other content/text on your transcript (no title, no details about the interview date / location; all of that should be included in the [metadata tracking](#) document)

## Step 5. Record Metadata

You will need to record the information about your interview (“metadata”) in a separate document, since it cannot be included in the transcript. Some recommended metadata include:

- ☐ interviewer name (First / Last)
- ☐ interviewee name (First / Last)
- ☐ interview date
- ☐ audio file name
- ☐ transcript file name (or names if using multiple languages)
- ☐ restricted (yes/no based on wishes of interviewee)
- ☐ additional notes (not required)

## Step 6. Save and Prepare for DH Press

### Filename

We recommend that you adopt a common file naming convention for all of your transcripts. For example: IntervieweeFirstName-InterviewLastName-InterviewDate

- ☐ Avoid using spaces
- ☐ Example: Jane-Doe-March2014.docx

### (Splitting into Multiple Languages)

If you are working with multiple languages, you should split the transcript into each language. This should be the final step in the process. Make sure each file includes:

- ☐ All timestamps (identical in each file)
  - ☐ Beginning / concluding timestamp
- ☐ Speakers' names

### File Formats

- ☐ Save your transcript as a .docx file
- ☐ Once all edits have been complete, resave the transcript file (using the same filename) as a plain text file -- select **Unicode UTF-8** encoding
- ☐ You should end up with two version of each transcript, e.g.:
  - ☐ Jane-Doe-March2014.docx
  - ☐ Jane-Doe-March2014.txt [this is the version to be loaded into DH Press]

### Audio File

Your audio file will need to follow the same [naming convention](#) as the transcript.

It is recommended that you make two copies of the audio file:

- ☐ The original WAV file (for long-term preservation)
- ☐ A compressed mp3 version (to load to SoundCloud for web streaming)

## **Step 7. Submit Transcript and Audio File**

- ☐ Load mp3 audio files to SoundCloud and grab URL for each audio file
  - ☐ Paste URL into a tracking document or metadata file
  - ☐ Do NOT load WAV files to SoundCloud as this may throw off the timestamps
- ☐ Load all transcript files into DH Press
  - ☐ You can load one at a time or in bulk
  - ☐ WordPress Dashboard > Media Library > Add New > Select file(s)
- ☐ Grab the URL for each transcript
  - ☐ Media Library > Select a transcript > View > click until you view it > copy URL
  - ☐ Paste URL into a tracking document or metadata file

## **Appendix**

### **Formatted Transcript (Examples)**

Here are some examples of properly formatted transcripts:

- From [Mapping the Long Women's Movement](#): [example](#)
- From [Digital Portobelo](#): [example](#)