



**Winter 2017 e-Newsletter edition • Christine Randall, *Editor***



## **President's Message**

**By: Melanie Sonntag**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve at the helm of STAR this year. I'm excited to be part of a group that helps my peers achieve their professional goals and dreams.

Thanks, too, to Marjorie, Donna, Jan, Lisa, Merilee, Karen, Linda, Todd, Jim, and Susan for giving selflessly of their time and amazing talent. Our "Back to Basics" theme relies on our strategic plan outcomes of a few years back and new tag line: STAR is Stenograph Technology Agencies Reporters.

STAR is Stenograph. We are the official users group of a company which has supported the court reporting profession for decades. STAR's liaison committee works closely with Stenograph developers to create and refine the best writers, software, and related products on the market. Do you have

a suggestion? Please share!

I'm so pleased to get to work with Stenograph President Jeremy Steele, Marketing Director Star Levandowski, Director of Software Development Keith McCready, and Sales Director Gail Abraham to improve our strong support base for our members and consumers. Stenograph, like STAR, is here to serve you!

STAR is Technology. STAR members are some of the most forward thinking individuals I've ever met, and a conference surrounded by them takes my own brainstorming to new heights as I envision the possibilities that await our 10 fingers and powerful brains. Our vendors share products for beta testing with us because they know STAR members are high powered professionals who put new items to the test and share valuable insight about what the reporting profession needs and wants.

STAR is Agencies. Initially formed primarily as a networking group, STAR continues to prioritize sharing of insight, best practices, cases, and techniques among our agency owners. Along with intensive Case CATalyst training, our double tracked seminars on professional development provide the latest in business building, technology, creativity, and productivity, along with built in networking time at the inimitable STAR Lounge hosted by Irv Starkman the best networking spot in convention history!

STAR is Reporters. Many friendships have been formed over the years, and more are ready to be made. STAR conventions are held at highly sought after locations to maximize your vacation time and investment in professional development. Dinners and outings are designed to help newcomers forge immediate and long lasting connections.

Share the success of STAR with your colleagues when you discuss the many financial benefits from Stenograph for STAR members, with discounts on machines and software, including the amazing CaseViewNet. Your \$150 membership to STAR is practically free!

STAR is truly one of the best kept secrets in the reporting profession, and I'm excited about the opportunity to share it with our peers over the coming year. Let's get back to basics together and harness the power of collaboration, out of the box thinking, high level interaction and have some fun along the way!

I love the new vision statement from Stenograph,

"We're here to enable our customers to be the best they can be!" We mirror Stenograph, as that is STAR. We're supportive. We're safe. We're sharing. We're all about your success, individually and collectively.

I look forward to welcoming you to STARtech18 in Chicago in April and STARCON18 in New Orleans in October. Whether it's your first STAR event or on your can't miss it list every year, you'll enjoy being part of the STAR family. It's a great professional home!

## STARCON17: Success Doesn't Come Easy

By: Connie Psaros



We had the pleasure of listening to two speakers who offered valuable insights on their paths to unconventional careers: Jay Psaros, singer/songwriter, and Paul D'Angelo, attorney turned comedian.

Jay dropped out of college as a business major after two years to pursue a career in music as an acoustic guitarist. With hardly any experience under his belt, he got his lucky break about ten years ago as a minstrel in Boston's famed Medieval Manor dinner theater. Yes, that gig required wearing tights, but it was a steady and welcomed paycheck for a fledgling entertainer. Wanting to expand his career, Jay focused on writing his own songs, increasing his repertoire, and seeking gigs in bars and other venues.

Understanding the value of diversification, he pushed himself to pursue other opportunities in the music business. This led him to form his own record label, PB and Jay Records; write a column for South Shore Magazine titled "The Beat"; and build a business booking 170 acts a month at five-star Boston hotels and other venues. He has opened for award-winning artists such as Boz Scaggs, the Mavericks, Daughtry, Los Lonely Boys, the Original Wailers, and many others.

To date, he has released four CDs and has received some critical acclaim, most recently being named the New England Music Awards Performer of the Year.

The highlights of Jay's presentation revolved around providing opportunity, establishing community, self-sustainability, and the importance of morals and communication in one's dealings with others. Jay's understanding of the business side of the music business is a huge factor in his success thus far.

To please his parents, Paul Murphy dreamt of becoming a dentist until some grizzly photos caused him to rip up his first-semester check to Tufts University. Thinking a corporate lawyer would be a wonderful second choice, he earned a law degree but found that he was most happy making people laugh. What started out as a part-time gig after business hours turned into a successful career as a stand-up comedian under the pseudonym Paul D'Angelo. He traded in his briefcase for a microphone and has never looked back.

Paul, an award-winning comedian, has headlined and performed at the Comedy and Magic Club, The Improv, Caesars Palace, and New York Friars Club, to name a few. He wrote/directed/co-starred in "A Fine Mess," which was featured at the New York International Independent Film Festival, and he has also co-starred in Showtime's standup comedy movie called "The Godfathers of Comedy." He has released DVDs, comedy CDs, has written two books, and has received many prestigious awards and accolades.

Paul's message to those in the audience is this: Your path in life may take unexpected twists and turns, and those twists and turns can lead you closer to your passion. Once you find your passion, you will never "work" again. Encourage your family members, people you know, young ones to follow their dreams and not to let the expectations of others dictate their career path. Paul would not have found his personal happiness working as a dentist or lawyer; rather, entertaining others and making them laugh is what he finds professionally fulfilling and personally satisfying.

Thank you, Jay and Paul, for sharing your personal stories. Feel free to visit their websites for more information: [jay-psarosmusic.com](http://jay-psarosmusic.com) and [pdangelo.com](http://pdangelo.com).

## STARs Needed

You have a chance to make our association even better! If you're interested in serving STAR on a committee or task force this year, please contact [Melanie.Sonntag@planetdepos.com](mailto:Melanie.Sonntag@planetdepos.com) or at 630.452.6236. All extra talent is welcomed!

# Find Your Voice

By: Linda Fifield

Consider this scenario: You arrive at a deposition and ask the attorney, “Would you like realtime today?” He answers, “I want realtime, but my other reporter doesn’t make me pay for it.” STOP. INTERNALIZE. What emotions and feelings are you experiencing upon hearing this? What thoughts immediately come to mind? Do you notice any changes in your physical being? Does this exchange paralyze you, leave you dumbfounded, or do you speak up?

Stenograph’s Keith McCready showed me an article on Imposter Syndrome, and it piqued my interest. Being involved in the management side of the court reporting industry, I have witnessed the challenges court reporters face when having to deal with any discussion regarding money; their inability to speak up when they feel they are not being seen, heard, or respected; or their hesitation to promote realtime as a premium service.

Taking the article back to Boston, I broached the subject with Dr. Jenai Wu, clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, thinking this would be a great topic to investigate as it relates to our profession. Having studied Imposter Syndrome and being a researcher, she developed a survey addressing observations and concerns Connie Psaros and I had about reporters in general. (Connie and I have worked in the court reporting business at Doris O. Wong Associates for over 40 years.) The survey was sent to the STAR membership. 140+ surveys were returned. Compiling and analyzing the data was an interesting exercise.

We were surprised by the survey results on many levels. We were not seeing what we thought we would. For example, one survey result showed that 75% of reporters were confident in their writing and didn’t feel uncomfortable writing “naked.” Then again, the survey was sent to STAR members whom we consider to be the profession’s elite. If the survey had been sent to the entire court reporting profession, the results would have been much different. That being said, what we could quantify was that:

- Court reporters are perfectionists.
- While 90% of the reporters wrote realtime for themselves or for counsel, less than 50% promoted the service.
- Independent contractors are more apt to sell realtime than those employed by a firm.
- Of reporters with more than five years of experience, two-thirds rarely or sometimes promoted realtime while the other third always promoted realtime.
- Reporters with writers one to five years old were more likely to promote realtime than those with older machines.
- Reporters in households earning 100K+ per year promote realtime.

The statistics Dr. Wu presented validated some of our initial thoughts regarding court reporters promoting realtime services to clients. For example, if less than 50% of the court reporters are promoting realtime and 90% are writing realtime, that is a 50% loss of opportunity to sell a premium service. The statistics also showed that those who invested in their equipment were more likely to promote the profession and stay abreast of the latest technologies and services, like realtime, than those who do not. Lastly, those who provided realtime on a regular basis enjoyed a higher income.

Generally speaking, self-promotion and sales do not come easily to the average reporter. So the question is: What can the profession do to help empower reporters to speak up? There is no easy solution. Experience and personality play a role in one’s ability to speak up, but what about those individuals who suffer in silence and have trouble finding their voice?

Court reporters, just the mere fact that you graduated when many more did not is quite an accomplishment. Go for the RMR, CRR, and RDR. Consider those certifications your bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D. degrees. Having those coveted credentials will give you a confidence boost, knowing that you have proven your skills and knowledge through rigorous testing and have earned the endorsement of your professional organization. You may not have a J.D. or an M.D., but do you think they could do your job?

It is time to embrace the profession and the technology that sets you apart from everyone else and any other method. Promote yourself as a professional who plays an integral part in the legal system. Be proactive in helping your clients by providing services that will make their jobs easier. Don’t talk to them to sell them a service. Talk to them because you think

## What is Imposter Syndrome?

- ✓ Hold themselves to the highest, sometimes impossible standards
- ✓ Perfectionism, need to do everything flawlessly
- ✓ Overwork and overcompensate to reduce risk of failure
- ✓ Feel overwhelmed or disappointed if they fall short of such goals
- ✓ Making mistakes or not performing at top triggers feelings of shame and humiliation
- ✓ Difficulty accepting praise
- ✓ Rationalize (discount) positive feedback
- ✓ Over-affected by negative feedback
- ✓ Believe they don’t deserve their credentials, or it was an accident

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you have a service that might help them. In turn, you've developed a working relationship with your client, and you have the opportunity to increase your revenue stream.

Lisa Knight spoke about writing realtime. She said, "I'm already writing realtime. I'm already sitting at my machine. Why not ask counsel if they want it? You're on the job. You're writing the testimony. Why not get paid extra for doing the exact same thing you're already doing, writing realtime?"

Find your voice. Speak up when others want your services for free. Speak up when you have an opportunity to offer realtime. You bring value to the process. Speak up and put yourself in charge of your own destiny.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Dr. Jenai Wu who spent hours of research preparing for her STAR presentation of "Imposter Syndrome: Knowing Yourself and the Future of Court Reporting." Thanks also to Hannah Barrett, statistician, who helped write and analyze the survey questions, and Connie Psaros, RPR, CMRS, for her insight in addressing concerns/trends in the court reporting profession.



## Don't Get Burned by Your Backup

By: James Kuta, Sr. Product Manager, Stenograph

The NCRA recently shared a news report about how a house fire at a court reporter's home resulted in the Georgia Supreme Court tossing out the life sentence of a convicted murderer!<sup>[1]</sup> Why was the sentence dismissed? The reporter was holding onto the only copy of the 2009 trial transcript, and it was unfortunately lost in the house fire.

For most, a house fire is one of the worst tragedies imaginable. Just the thought of how much may be lost in the way of personal possessions, irreplaceable family heirlooms, cherished pictures, and, most importantly, life, sends

chills up most people's spines. When something like this happens to a court reporter, however, the potential tragedy is magnified by the impact it may have on the judicial system and community at large.

As with any situation like this, hindsight is 20/20. Ultimately, what's most important is realizing that something like this never needs to happen again. Having a backup copy of one's transcripts and notes at a location other than one's home is always the best way to ensure that the record cannot be easily destroyed or lost.

Of course, the easiest way to create an off-site backup is to use Case CATalyst's Cloud Backup feature. Cloud Backup creates a backup of your CATalyst files, transcripts, notes, audio and more, and securely stores them in the cloud! Because Cloud Backup is a HIPAA compliant cloud storage solution, your backup copies are protected from natural disasters and other sources of inadvertent loss. Many people think that a secondary copy, no matter what its form, provides adequate protection. However, if your current backup copies, or, dare I say it, "shoebox full of diskettes," are sitting next to your work computer, they are just as susceptible to damage as your originals.

Getting started with Cloud Backup is a snap! Just click the Cloud Backup icon located on the main tool bar inside of CATalyst version 17.5 or higher. After you create a Cloud Backup account, your first backup will begin. Future backups will happen automatically as you modify existing files and create new ones. If you use multiple computers, you'll want to sign into your Cloud Backup account on those too.

Cloud Backup usage is included with your Edge for CATalyst plan (CATalyst Support Contract). 100GB of storage space is included. If you don't currently have an Edge for CATalyst plan, getting back on one is probably less expensive than you think, and monthly payments are available. If you would like to learn more about Cloud backup or want to get an Edge for CATalyst plan, visit [www.stenograph.com](http://www.stenograph.com) or call 1(800) 323-4247.

[1] <http://thejcr.com/2017/10/07/house-fire-burned-mans-murder-conviction/#sthash.19vLkXUn.3FVZGpQd.dpbs>

# Using Antivirus Programs with Case CATalyst

By: Justin Sieger, Stenograph Support Technical Adviser

It is becoming more and more frequent that we hear a news report about a major company that had a data breach and customer's personal information was compromised, or a new type of ransomware is locking users out of their computer until the person pays a ransom in order to access their computer again. With new security threats being discovered all the time, now more than ever, having an antivirus program is an essential part of keeping your computer and your personal information secure.

An antivirus program is designed to detect, remove, and protect a person's computer from malicious software. Originally, antivirus programs looked only for viruses on your computer and removed them. Today's antivirus programs not only protect against viruses but also against malware, spyware, ransomware, phishing attacks, and many other cybersecurity threats. In fact, most of the common antivirus programs are an entire suite of services ranging from firewall and identity protection, parental controls and email scanning.

Many of the more popular antivirus programs like McAfee, Norton, and Kaspersky have a yearly subscription fee, but you receive more benefits like support, multiple device protection, and some include cloud storage. Free antivirus programs like AVG and Avast offer just antivirus protection with an optional yearly subscription with more security features.

What you may not know is if your computer is running Windows 8.1 or higher, there is already a free antivirus program installed. It is called Windows Defender Antivirus. Windows Defender works the same as many other antivirus programs but is designed by Microsoft to work with Windows to protect against viruses, malware, and spyware without being intrusive. It runs quietly in the background protecting your computer that you may forget it's even there. Did we mention that Windows Defender is free and already comes with Windows?

Stenograph does not recommend one particular antivirus, but we do recommend some type of virus protection be installed on your computer. We also recommend that the Case CATalyst installation folder, usually C:\CAT4, of Case CATalyst be set as an exception from being scanned by the antivirus. Setting the CAT4 folder as an exception would prevent the antivirus program from flagging crucial CATalyst files as security threat. Consult your antivirus documentation for information on how to set exceptions for a folder.

## Five Tips for Effective Blog SEO - Part I

By: Kimberley Neeson, FAPR, RPR, CRC, CSR  
(ON & AB)

There's more to blogging than putting words down on a page. Part I of this article explores tips and tricks to making the most of your blog, from creating categories through to Alt text!

- **Create general categories to index your blogs under**
  - Categories identify what your blog is generally about  
i.e. Court Reporting  
Transcription  
Videography
  - Categories can identify the type of document  
i.e. Articles  
Blogs  
Videos  
News
  - Categories assist readers in finding types of content on your site, and are mandatory in a blog posting
- **Tags describe specific details, just like a book index does**

Let's put *Category* and *Tags* together.

Example: Your blog is about realtime court reporting.



Your category is: Court Reporting  
Your tags could be:  
Court reporting  
Realtime  
Transcripts  
Instant transcripts  
Transcription  
Voice-to-text transcription  
Realtime reporting  
Your company name



- **Determine your blog goals**

In order to understand what keywords to use, you must think about what your SEO goals are.

Is it to...

- ...increase traffic to your website?
- ...get comments on your blog?
- ...get more shares of your blog?
- ...bond with your clients?

- **Internal and external links**

Internal links connect your blog reader to another area of your website. External links take readers away from your website to connect elsewhere.

Example: To read more about our realtime court reporting services, click here. (The link takes the reader to your realtime court reporting page.)

According to the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, 10% of Canadians suffer from hearing loss; our captioning services level the playing field for those who can't hear well. (The link takes the reader to CHHA's website where they provide the statistic.)

- Internal and external links improve your SEO ranking.
- Internal links drive your audience to other pages on your website.
- Google crawls through linked paths to find and index websites.
- For readers interested in your topic, linked pages add value.
- External links provide additional information to your readers, thereby adding value.

- **Add an image (or two)**

Images add interest and variety to your blog post.

Adding "Alt Text" attributes to pictures allows you to add a description to the picture and an opportunity to use your keyword in the process.

Part II of our article will discuss more obscure topics such as slugs, headers and long-tail and short-tail keywords.

*Kim Neeson is president of Neeson Court Reporting Inc., and also a working realtime reporter.  
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# Staying Ahead of the Demands of Technology

By: Pat Verga, Pengad



One of the effects of today's technology is that everyone is carrying multiple devices. Cell phones, tablets, laptops - you name it and someone is carrying it. And in the deposition environment, you may have a hard time finding enough electrical outlets for both you and your clients. If you're tired of carrying multiple power strips so you and your clients can plug in, you are going to love the ChargeHub SuperCharger.

The ChargeHub SuperCharger is a 7-port USB Charging Station that can solve the demands of needing to charge multiple devices safely and efficiently. This little gem was introduced at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) where it took home the award for BEST IN SHOW! It earned its award by combining its patented SmartSpeed Technology® that guarantees that the perfect level of power is delivered to your devices to achieve an optimal charge, and backed it up with extensive safety and energy efficiency testing including UL Listing, FCC, CE and RoHS certification, and attaining the newest high demands of Energy Level VI Efficiency.



Each port offers up to 2.4 amps of power, so multiple iPads are no problem. Place the hub on the conference table and you can charge your devices and share this awesome tool with everyone around you – making you and your firm the winner!

Available now from Pengad professionally printed with the Scales of Justice in gold on a black hub. It doesn't stop there! Order 12 and you can add your logo making this the ideal promotional tool to promote your brand. The custom imprinted ChargeHub is available in 9 color options, with the ability to fully customize the 2.5" full-color insert.

Don't forget to use your STAR coupon code to save 10%.