



Spring 2018 e-Newsletter edition

President's Message

By: Melanie Sonntag



Happy New Year, everyone, and welcome to a fresh, new slate for our careers! I've mentioned previously our theme is getting "Back to Basics," and I always feel like a shiny new year is a great time to do just that. Lucky for us, STARtech18 is just around the corner, April 13 to 15, and loaded with opportunities!

As you'll see, Nancy Bistany and Linda Fifield have put together an amazing educational lineup with something for everyone—CATalyst users, firm owners, everyday reporters—wrapped around some great networking opportunities in the STAR Lounge and fantastic food events with our loyal and supportive vendors at the beautiful Drake Hotel in Chicago.

We'll kick off STARtech18 on Friday afternoon with a look at your "basic" tools for financial planning and comfortable retirement while Cindi Lynch simultaneously debuts the "anythingbutbasic" updates in Case CATalyst Version 19. After a network break to scout the talent on the vendor floor, kick back with a cocktail and enjoy STENOtalks, "Myth Busters: Fact vs. Fiction" hosted by Stenograph President Jeremy Steele and his creative and comedic team.

One of the greatest parts of every STAR convention is the food! Our Friday night welcome dinner with exhibitors will leave nobody hungry, while giving you a chance to explore new products, meet new friends, reconnect with prior acquaintances, all of which "basically" run you right to the STAR Lounge for the evening, hosted by our inimitable Irv Starkman.

You can [view the entire agenda](#) for the weekend here with deeper descriptions as you "get back to basics" and plan your attendance.

Saturday morning leads off with more networking during a hearty breakfast with our vendors, followed by concurrent sessions on valuable practices for networking seamless client service around the globe as well as a CATalyst-specific session on the countless details to achieve transcript perfection.

We're extremely excited to have TWO of Stenograph's top trainers, Cindi Lynch and Chicago-based Pam Szczecinski, with us for the weekend. The intimate nature of STAR meetings gives you almost personalized attention to the issues in your own game plan in addition to their professional tips and tricks.

Saturday morning's second session will open our eyes to the importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act, reporters' crucial role in it, and consumers who will share their personal impacts of equal accessibility.

Chicago is famous for its great food. Saturday lunch is on your own with plenty of nearby opportunities overlooking beautiful Lake Michigan. Hurry back, though, to learn far beyond the "basic" dangers of website hacking, malware, "basic" fraud prevention, and the ability to customize your CATalyst software to do far more than "merely the basics."

Our STAR members really shine during our double-tracked sessions Saturday afternoon. I enjoy Rosalie Kramm's blogs and social media posts, and she'll be joined by Todd Mobley to share the importance of frequent and thought-provoking blogging as one of the "basics" for your firm's success with their proven techniques and measurable metrics.

Simultaneously, ILCRA's Speed and Realtime Champion/STAR Director Donna Urlaub will be extolling the virtues of writing short, writing fast, and extending your reporting career by lessening fatigue and adding steno joy. She's collected

“basic” theory principles and briefing techniques and wants to share with us! Working reporters and firm owners alike will find gems and unexpected aids as Donna chronicles the enhancements she’s incorporated which led to some of her most exciting career highlights.

Grab a quick drink with your friends before Saturday dinner on your own, whether you create your own group or add your name at the registration booth to join other STAR singles.

Sunday morning leads off with another full breakfast and time with colleagues before Pam Szczecinski “basically” regales us with the best tech gadgets she’s found, after which she’ll close the conference with the most “basic” of all topics, our CATalyst dictionaries’ maintenance and optimization.

Fresh new years call for new adventures, and I hope 2018 brings prosperity and happiness for each of you in our STAR family. I know I always feel better when I take the opportunity for “spring training” in my professional life and get myself “back to basics” for the year ahead. If you feel the same, I look forward to greeting you in Chicago April 13 for STARtech18!



A Retirement Farewell to Tina Kautter

By: Christine Randall

Tina Kautter, our beloved STAR Executive Director, begins her retirement this year. As I write this article to thank her for her years of service to STAR, I know that I can never truly capture in words her grace and excellence and what she has meant to so many. There is, however, one quote by Maya Angelou that comes to mind:

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

I have worked with Tina as a past STAR president, past convention chair, and as the STAR newsletter editor. In all those years what stood out was Tina’s ability to guide a group of volunteers with class and dignity. She not only embraced every board member and encouraged their efforts, but she was STAR’s biggest cheerleader. She not only made us look good as a group, but, more importantly, she made those working with her *feel* good!

Let’s go back and start at the beginning with BUG. Yes, Tina was first hired as Executive Director for the Baron Users Group in 1989 by Alan Agren and Ellie Corbett. In March of the next year, STAR was incorporated with the new name, and as Tina commented, *“And the rest is history.”*

Here we are 28-plus years later and STAR has grown to be the premier technology group in the industry. There is no doubt in my mind that is due in large part to Tina and her leadership and guidance.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention that Tina also has worked for the last few years with her partner Dave Wenhold and the rest of the Kautter Wenhold Management Group team to make her transition to retirement as seamless as possible. There is no doubt we are in good hands!

When President Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag approached me with the idea for this article, she shared her memories of working with Tina the last few years:

“I’d heard of Tina for years before I ever met her. Her prowess in association management long preceded our face-to-face introduction. When I started attending STAR and working with her on the board, I realized she surpassed even her legendary image. Her uncanny ability to know what was needed, who should do it, and when it should be done is amazing. Her instantaneous knowledge of history and tried-and-true methods – along with tried-and-failed attempts – kept us from repeating mistakes and helped STAR grow. I don’t doubt her reputation in the management field was the reason we’ve consistently gotten great rates at beautiful locations, and her southern charm has brightened the day of nearly every member, along with the hospitality professionals she interacted with.

“Thank you, Tina, for all you’ve done to help STAR grow and prosper. You’ll be succeeded as our executive director, but you’ll never be replaced.”

As I started working on this article, I knew the first person I should reach out to would be Todd Mobley, our long-time treasurer, who has probably worked with Tina longer than anyone in the group, and he sent me these kind words:

“I had the privilege to work on the STAR Board with Tina for 20 years. As the treasurer, you work quite closely throughout the year with the Executive Director. Tina was the epitome of a true professional. She knew the association business better than anyone I have ever had contact with before. More importantly, she was/is vital to the success of STAR and court reporting. She was so detailed over the last few years in transitioning duties to her staff and Dave. STAR is in a great place today because she is such a true professional and caring person. It has been an honor to work with her and I will miss her more than she can ever know.

“Thank you, Tina, for everything!”

Past Presidents Nancy Bistany and Linda Fifield also shared their thoughts about Tina and her retirement. Nancy has been with STAR since 2000 and wanted to share this:

*"When I joined STAR in 2000, Tina was one of the first to welcome me aboard. I have been honored to work closely with her as the past editor of STAR*STAR, a board member, past president, co-conference chair, and most recently, as simply a member.*

"I was amazed at how readily rules and regulations and the particulars of running an organization were always at the ready and easily conveyed to STAR members by Tina.

"As a friend, a leader, and the consummate professional, Tina will be missed by STAR. It's been my privilege and honor to know and work with her all these years, and I will cherish every single memory.

"Best wishes on your next adventure, Tina."

"Elegant solutions," that's how Linda Fifield describes Tina. And she goes on to say:

"Tina Kautter epitomizes grace, intelligence, class, and kindness. Having worked with Tina on various committees, and most recently as STAR's past president, it always amazed me how organized and in control she was when leading us through business meetings and events. It was all in the details. Having to work with busy volunteers with varying personalities and skills can't be easy. Tina faithfully guided us to make STAR what it is today, and always with a smile.

"My heartfelt gratitude to Tina. She's tops!!!"

With this assignment, I have been lucky enough to have some time with Tina, and she was kind enough to share with me her opinion on how to be successful. She told me the answer is threefold. First, always tell the truth. Second, treat all people (not just clients) the way you want to be treated. And, third, sometimes *"doing things right"* and *"doing the right thing"* are two diametrically different actions. *These are very wise words from my very wise friend!*

"A wise friend" – let's talk about friendship. We all know life can be a roller coaster. There are ups and there are downs. But no matter how cruel the world may be, or how rough the ride, life becomes less hard when you have a good friend. Tina is that to many of us. She is not just an amazing executive director who is retiring. She is a good friend who will be dearly missed at STAR events.

As we all wish Tina well in her retirement and thank her for her years of service to STAR, I want to close with a quote from Irv Starkman:

"You go through life and you have certain good friends. Tina Kautter is far above a good friend. She is the person who is there for your every need. She is there in good times and bad. I have laughed with her and also cried. She is my true hero. She will take a tough situation and turn it into a joyous moment. There are not enough adjectives to describe her -- kind, loving, helpful, caring, understanding – but, most of all, just an absolute pleasure to be around. It has been my extreme honor and pleasure to have worked with a person of Tina's quality and character.

"I wish Tina and her husband Bill good health, happiness, and the very best in the coming year."



Realtime Talk Steno to Me How Do You Write...?

By: Donna Urlaub, RPR, RMR, CRR, donna@urlaubbowen.com

Well, here I am up against a deadline, and wondering what to share that you don't already know? I always assume the basic outlines are old news – until I see a reporter's post asking, how do you write produce/production (PROU/PROUK). Then I realize ...

So I'm a member of a group on Facebook where we commit to practice at least 15 minutes a day for 100 days. I've discovered TED Talks to be a great practice vehicle; they're interesting, inspiring, and, yes, educational.

The topic of today's TED Talk was making a goal a habit. I went through the text looking for useful words to share. I'm thinking you already have briefs for most of these, but hoping there are a few here and there that you'll find helpful.

KMIMT = commitment

SKOLG = psychology

SKRI = psychiatry

SKRIFT = psychiatrist

SKRIK = psychiatric

YAOUFRS = universe

SNAOID = inside
KPAFT = capacity
KPERZ = exercise
KPERSZ = exercises
PLAENT = planet
STRUR = structure
POUFL = powerful
KUFM = custom

NERBL = incredible
FLEBL = flexible
FLEBLT = flexibility
SID = acid
L-FS = all of a sudden

SPLIN = discipline
KWERT = convert
SKINT = consistent
SKINL = consistently

ROIZ = recognize
R-LZ = realize
MENL = mental
SPLI = simply
GRIFM = algorithm

Take on a leadership role at STAR!

You love STAR for its great seminars, informative business topics, Case CATalyst software training, awesome networking opportunities, and super fun social events.

Ever think of becoming more involved in STAR? The Nominating Committee is looking for inspired members who would like to give back to this amazing organization. Work with some outstanding individuals who share a vision of promoting the profession with technology and business. If you are interested or if you know someone who is interested in being considered for the STAR Board, please send the nomination to Linda Fifield, STAR Immediate Past President, at lfifield@doriswong.com. A brief resume and thoughts as to why you or someone else should be considered would be greatly appreciated. Interviews will be held in the spring of 2018.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Project Steno — The Plan to Save Court Reporting



Advertorial Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are those of Project Steno. They do not necessarily reflect the view of STAR.

Court reporters are in demand. We need more reporters! Yet 22 schools have closed their doors in just the last two years. Graduation rates are low. Reporters retire at triple the rate of newcomers entering the field. How can we reverse that trend?

Project Steno is our bold plan to meet that challenge. It's never been tried before! It can work, but it needs your support to succeed.

How will freelance firms satisfy their clients' needs if they can't find reporters to hire? Where will the CART providers and broadcast captioners come from if there are not students in school and graduates in sufficient numbers? What about our court system?

These are the challenges that Project Steno confronts head-on. A key part of our plan is offering tuition assistance to students – it's never been done before! – and monitoring their progress through school and out into the workplace. Our research shows education cost is a major impediment for many would-be students.

We need your help to succeed. Our program is ambitious, and it costs money. Our first-year projected operating budget is \$500,000. Already we have raised almost \$100,000 in contributions! Project Steno is organized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible. (See <http://projectsteno.org/support-us/>)

Project Steno addresses four key areas. We will: Launch a nationwide awareness campaign, featuring a professionally produced video, so people will know what court reporting is and the great career it has to offer; leverage the success of the A to Z Program to produce a pipeline of students into court reporting schools who have already self-selected as most likely to succeed; accept into our program only students who agree to meet milestones in school that are designed to graduate them in two years; and award each student we accept into our program tuition assistance (not a scholarship) worth \$2,500/year for two years, contingent on meeting educational benchmarks.

Project Steno has one goal: get students into school, and graduate reporters into the ranks. Please visit our website at ProjectSteno.org.

The Project Steno Founders: Jim DeCrescenzo, Bill Weber, Glyn Poage, Nancy Varallo



What's New in CATalyst Version 19

By: James Kuta, Sr., Product Manager, Stenograph

Adding and improving features to better serve the needs of the court reporting community is at the heart of every CATalyst update. Here is a quick look at just some of the upgrades coming in CATalyst Version 19 that will make your life better!

These Oops Aren't by Accident

The Oops Categories feature of CATalyst Version 19 will make expediting your rough drafts easier. The Oops feature and Hotspots window are already great timesaving tools for your initial transcript editing, but now you can have your Oops items categorized by name and color. You will be able to quickly find what you're looking for when you want to check spelling, check audio, or whatever category you choose.

See Brief It Suggestions Phonetically

You may find it more natural to think about your steno phonetically. In CATalyst Version 19, Brief It gives you the option of seeing briefs phonetically.

A brief that Brief It might give you for the phrase "large imbalances" is /HRARPBLG. If thinking about the steno phonetically is more your style, you can have Brief It display /LARJ instead. And speaking of Brief It...

Unclutter Your Brief It Window

The Brief It window can fill up fast, hiding the briefs you've used, which are the ones you want to see the most! You can now tell CATalyst to remove all unused suggestions from the Brief It window any time you want. Any unused steno outlines will become available again for future brief suggestions.

Don't be Laid Out by Layouts

The Characters Per Line Assistant will help you with one of the most frustrating aspects of Page Layout creation and modification. If you know what your left margin should be, CATalyst will automatically figure out what your right margin should be to achieve your desired characters per line for each paragraph style!

Hear Each Word and Phrase Spoken in Dictionary Builder

Build your dictionaries in the most natural way. Hear the words and phrases and then write them phonetically! In CATalyst Version 19, Dictionary Builder will speak the words from Case Prep's Dictionary Builder list or any ASCII list!

No Guessing About the Cloud Backup Status of Your Files

It's now easier to know when Cloud Backup has safely stored your files to the cloud. A green dot will appear in Manage Jobs to indicate when a file/sub file is backed up. If the file has changed and is waiting to be backed up, a yellow dot will appear.

That's just a sampling of the smart, timesaving features you'll get with CATalyst Version 19. If you have an Edge for CATalyst Support Plan, you'll be eligible to upgrade when Version 19 is released. If you'd like to get back on an Edge plan, give Stenograph a call at 1-800-323-4247.

Five Tips for Effective Blog SEO - Part II

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

In Part I, we explored five topics related to creating an effective blog: categories, tags, goals, internal and external links, and images. Now that you've conquered those basics, let's move on to more in-depth tips for effective SEO blogging.

Keyword Focus – Long Tail Keywords v. Short Tail Keywords

What the heck is this? According to Moz:

“Keywords are ideas and topics that define what your content is about. In terms of SEO, they're the words and phrases that searchers enter into search engines, also called “search queries.” If you boil everything on your page — all the images, video, copy, etc. — down to a simple words and phrases, those are your primary keywords.

As a website owner and content creator, you want the keywords on your page to be relevant to what people are searching for so they have a better chance of finding your content among the results.”

Citation: <https://moz.com/learn/seo/what-are-keywords>

Keywords can be short – examples would be: court reporting, transcripts, shorthand.

Keywords can be long – court reporting for trials, court reporting for depositions in Houston, hyperlinking transcripts with deposition exhibits.

The longer the keyword (long tail), the more focused the search is, and the more targeted the result, and, logically, the ability to make a sale to a customer. Let's use this example:

Short tail keyword: Transcription

Lots of people who offer these services will use this keyword. So anyone searching for the keyword “transcription” will come up with many possibilities, including medical transcription, transcription by non-court reporting firms, etc.

Next short tail keyword: Legal Transcription

Now you're targeting people who are looking for legal transcription, as opposed to medical or broadcast, for example. You are narrowing the number of people who may visit your site, but you are also being more targeted about who you are trying to interest. In other words, someone looking for medical transcription probably won't be using your services, so you really aren't trying to attract them to your business.

Next keyword, now moving to long tail: Court reporter legal transcription

Now you're really trying to focus on someone who wants a court reporter to provide legal transcription. If someone who is searching the Internet for “court reporter legal transcription,” your long tail keyword pays off big time.

Last long tail keyword: Certified court reporter legal transcription

The person using these words in a search obviously has very specific requirements. If you have this type of long tail in your keywords, obviously you will attract a very small number of hits, but those hits will be targeted and very likely will produce sales results.

Readability

How long should your blog be? Google generally sees anything less than 300 words as “thin”; your target word count should be between 400 and 2,500 words. Also, bear in mind your intended visitor's reading level. Most of us are writing to a sophisticated audience, so your analytics score might flag your blog's readability (being rated as “difficult”). This shouldn't worry you. Do remember, though, that reading on a screen is more difficult than on paper.

Your sentence length is also important to bear in mind. Long, run-on sentences are a bad thing. Your sentence goal should be a maximum of 75% with less than 20 words. Use **transition words**, pictures, videos and infographics to break up your text. Use **subheadings** – Google uses these to ascertain content, and readers can quickly scan topics.

Examples of Transition Words

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| To enumerate: | and, first of all, also, another, furthermore, finally, in addition |
| Cause: | because, so, due to, while, since, therefore |
| Comparison/Contrast: | same, less, rather, while, yet, opposite, much as, either |
| Conclusion: | as a result, hence, consequently, therefore, in conclusion |
| Emphasis: | most of all, most noteworthy, especially relevant |

Examples of Headings/Sub-Headings

Heading codes, as illustrated here, are found as a tool in your website's platform (i.e. Wordpress, Hubspot). The meaning of the codes you can choose from is as follows:

<H1>/<h1> (title of your blog); <H2>/<h2> (think of this as the first “chapter” or area of importance of your blog); <H3>/<h3> (think of this as subsections within the “chapter”). Upper case “H” is the beginning of the heading/subheading; lower case “h” is the end of the heading/subheading.

To execute a heading, highlight the title you wish to code; pull down your platform's menu for the headings and select the appropriate heading code. Example:

<H1> **Court Reporting Services in the 21st Century** </h1>
<H2> **Rough Draft Services** </h2>
<H2> **Realtime Services** </h2>
<H3> **Onsite Realtime Reporting** </h3>
<H3> **Remote Realtime Reporting** </h3>

Permalinks and Slugs

Slugs, or permalinks, become the web address of your blog. The slug is created from your blog title; the permalink takes the slug and incorporates it into your web address. This example explains the concept:

The title of your blog is: How Rule 36(b) Is Applied in Cross-Examinations

Your slug would appear as: how-rule-36(b)-is-applied-in-cross-examinations

Your permalink would become: [http://www.neesonsreporting.how-rule-36\(b\)-applied-in-cross-examinations](http://www.neesonsreporting.how-rule-36(b)-applied-in-cross-examinations)

Maybe you don't want such a long title. You can edit your slug/permalink in your Wordpress or other platform to make it shorter. Your blog title will remain the same, but the link, which is searched for SEO purposes, can become much shorter.

Example: rule-36(b)-application-cross-examinations

The editor section of Wordpress looks like this for making changes:

Readability | Keyword: Neesons | + Add keyword

Snippet preview

Neesons Court Reporting Sponsors Advocates Society Medal Event
neesonsreporting.com/2017/02/10/neesons-sponsors-medal-event/ ▼
Stephen Grant is the recipient of the 2017 Advocates' Society Medal. Neesons Court Reporting is honoured to celebrate along with Stephen.

Edit snippet

SEO title
Neesons Court Reporting Sponsors Advocates Society Medal Event

Slug
neesons-sponsors-medal-event

Meta description
Stephen Grant is the recipient of the 2017 Advocates' Society Medal. Neesons Court Reporting is honoured to celebrate along with Stephen.

Close snippet editor

Focus keyword
Neesons

This article is [cornerstone content](#)

Who knew there was so much to know about writing a blog? While the words on the page are very important, ensuring that you work on the "back end" of your blog is equally important, and will help to attract existing and potential clients to your website through your blog.

One last point about writing blogs: don't make your blog an advertisement. Provide information, know-how and value to those who read your material. Blog writing is about contributing to the knowledge on the internet, not about direct selling of your services and products.

Kim Neeson is president of Neeson Court Reporting Inc., and also a working realtime reporter. Email her at kim@neesonsreporting.com.

