From **American Dictation Technology** Labs

GUIDE

To Digital Dictation & Transcription

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

You're reading this Guide because you have an interest in learning more about digital dictation. Whether you're a busy professional who wants to be more efficient or a college student wanting to capture important lectures, you're interested to find out how – and if – digital dictation technology can be help.

In this Guide we intend to introduce you to the technology, terminology and equipment types relating to digital dictation, an exciting and cost-effective evolution in dictation.

FEEDBACK

We're always happy to receive feedback on our Guides. If you find an error or feel we should revise or add content to this Guide, please let us know. You may email us at support@AmericanDictation.com, or call us toll-free at 866-408-1383. We appreciate your help.

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL VOICE RECORDING

Before starting your search for the ideal digital voice recorder, it may be helpful to understand some of the key terms and concepts relating to this technology. This section will:

❖ Introduce you to the differences between analog and digital recordings.

❖ Discuss the various parameters relating to digital recording.

ANALOG VERSUS DIGITAL

Since the days of Thomas Edison's cylinder phonographs through the recent age of cassette tapes, audio (and video, for that matter) recordings have been "analog" recordings. Analog refers to the methodology by which sound waves are converted to continual waves represented by the grooves on a vinyl album or the magnetic fluctuations of a tape. These waves are not discrete units, but continuums of ups and downs which, when converted back through the vibrations of a speaker cone, result in actual sound waves.

Digital recordings, in contrast, are made when a sound is "sampled." Each instance in time is represented by a length of zeros and ones, or "bits." Sounds are usually measured in lengths of 8 or 16 bits. Music CD's are sampled over 44,000 times each second. That means that each sound that is to be recorded is comprised of 44,000 units of 8 or 16 bits for each second of the reproduced sound. Digital sampling has been around for quite some time, but the challenge until recent years has been the ability to store the amount of data produced by sound samplings. That is one reason a 700 megabyte CD can only hold about ten or twelve songs. There simply isn't enough room on a CD for more.

You can record both analog and digital to tapes. For instance, you may have a digital camcorder which uses tapes for storing the recorded images. Analog recorders store the sound on tapes by manipulating the magnetic orientation of the metal molecules embedded on the surface of the tape. This orientation is not exact and can "bleed" outside of the defined surface area. You may have old cassette tapes or have listened to ones which were recorded over, and heard faint sounds from other tracks or previous recordings. Digital recordings, on the other hand, manipulate the magnetic properties of the tape to be either on or off (think of it as moving a bar magnet where the North end represents "on" and the South end represents "off"). Since digital recordings are a continual string of ones and zeros, there is rarely any "bleed" and the recording is more precise, as it is not affected by such things as tape stretch, recording speed, etc.

Analog recordings - most specifically tapes - have long suffered several negative characteristics:

1. Tapes lose their magnetic qualities over time. This loss becomes much more apparent in analog recordings as they are usually represented by static, fading or other poor sound qualities.

2. Analog recordings lose quality each time they are copied. This is referred to as generational loss, each copy being one generation removed from the original. A simple cassette recording of a lecture may sound quite clear on the original recording, but duplicate that tape, and duplicate the duplicate, and you quickly begin to hear the sound become muddled.

Digital recordings overcome all that. To appreciate this, think of digital recordings as what they are: computer files. Like the files on your computer which represent documents, photos and applications, digital sound files are just another type of computer file.

Just as you are able to copy Word documents, for example, from your computer to a floppy disk to another computer, and still have the document complete and without missing pieces, digital recordings never lose their quality as they are copied from one digital appliance (computer, recorder, CD, etc.) to another. Only when that sound is converted to analog (such as through speakers) and recorded onto another device, will the recording lose fidelity.

This is the inherent beauty of digital recordings, particularly in a business, school or other professional endeavor. Rather than worry about protecting fragile tapes, digital recordings can be quickly downloaded onto computers, memory cards or burned to CD for immediate back-up or distribution. Each time without losing the quality of the original recording.

DIGITAL RECORDING PARAMETERS

There are two important factors that affect the quality and size of digital audio recordings: compression and sampling rate. Compression is how a particular file format is reduced in size (for faster transfer between recorder and computer, and computer to computer). Sampling rate refers to how many times each second a sound is converted into the binary code (ones and zeros) that represent the recorded audio.

First, a quick lesson on how compression works. If your file (sound, graphic, document, etc.) contains many of the same pieces of data, then compression can work to substitute a smaller piece of data to represent the larger piece. For a simple example, let's assume that you have a Word document that contains the letter "a" 100 times. The letter "a" might be represented in binary code by "11110000." If I could substitute "10" for the letter "a," then I have reduced the size of that data by 90% by using "10" for every occurrence of the letter "a." When the file is "de-compressed," all occurrences of "10" would be substituted by "11110000" to present back to you the actual original content. This is referred to as "loss-less" compression: the de-compressed document represents the actual original content before compression. There is no loss of data.

In graphic and sound files, however, the quest to provide maximum compression results many times in a "loss-y" compression scheme: not all of the original data will be preserved during compression. The amount of data lost is determined by either the compression scheme itself, or by how much loss the person doing the compression will allow.

For example, many Web sites use JPEG (pronounced "j-peg") images for photographs (most text and line art is compressed using .GIF ("giff") compression). JPEG's can be compressed at varying degrees of "quality," meaning how much data loss is to be allowed.

Let's take a look at the following photograph.

This is a "high-resolution" photograph that has all the original data as provided by Philips (the manufacturer of the recorder in the photo). Now, let's look at a small portion of the photograph, enlarged to show the detail.

You may see some blurring around the sunglasses, but in general, this digital photograph contains quite a bit of good detail. It was saved at the highest quality setting for JPEG compression. The size of the file is over 740 kilobytes. The following is the same photograph saved as a JPEG with maximum compression. It's file size is only 8 kilobytes!

You can easily see the reduction in quality and the "pixelation" of the reflection in the sunglasses. JPEG compresses by averaging the color surrounding a given pixel and substituting the same color for all the pixels. The more the compression, the more the substitution. Therefore, this kind of "loss-y" compression reduces the quality in return for a smaller file size.

Compression in sound files works much the same way. High compression is generally achieved through the reduction in sound quality, although recent advances in compression schemes are successfully countering that. Originally, WAV (pronounced "wave") files were extremely common. WAV files record with very good fidelity (range and depth of sound), but compress poorly. WAV files are large and consume a good amount of time and bandwidth when transferring, particularly over the Internet. WAV files are frequently used in digital dictation, but are generally overkill for use with voice-only recordings. The human vocal range is very limited in terms of sound frequency (about 4,000 to 7,000 kHz), a very small portion of the entire range of sound. One problem with WAV files as a digital recording format is that not all WAV files are alike! Some vendors alter their WAV formats.

MP3's, which are very commonplace today in iPods and other music players, presented the first great compression scheme that preserves fidelity yet provides a smaller, more portable file format. MP3's are sometimes used for digital dictation, but, like WAV files, they are more than is commonly needed.

Several years ago, the emerging leaders in digital dictation (Olympus, Philips and Grundig) established a sound compression scheme that preserved the vocal range, but virtually ignored other frequencies. This format is called DSS and stands for Digital Speech Standard. This format produces very small files that are easily transported. Sony has created their own proprietary format with similar compression benefits, called LPEC.

Recently, the DSS format was improved to DSS "Pro" which not only increased the fidelity of the recording, but also added extra features to allow for "in-recorder" encryption and additional demographic information. DSS Pro is used in the Olympus DS-5000 and DS-5000iD, the Philips DPM 9600, and the Grundig Digta 420.

The second aspect of digital sound recording that affects file size and quality is sampling rate. Generally, sound files are sampled 8, 11, 22 or 44 thousand times each second. Obviously, the more times a sound is sampled each second, the more exact the reproduction. Dictation does not require the clarity that music demands. The human voice can be understood at a lower sampling rate than you would desire if listening to music. Most dictation files are samples at either 8 kHz (8,000 times per second), or 11 kHz (DSS Pro samples at 16 kHz). When recorders indicate two time capacities for recording, they are usually referring to the ability of the recorder to sample at two different rates. If you need a longer recording time and a slightly less quality result is acceptable, you might choose the lower sampling rate. Sampling rates are usually indicated by QP (for Quality Play), SP (for Standard Play), LP (Longer Play), or EP (Extended Play). You should consult the specifications for each recorder to determine the sampling rate that applies to each.

The ultimate determination on which file format or sampling rate to use can really only come through experimentation or consultation. If you are new to digital dictation, you may wish to consult with American Dictation™ or others who are familiar with digital dictation to determine which format is best for your intended use. Many recorders support multiple formats, too, which can give you increased flexibility. On the other hand, if your needs are rather focused, you may not need to spend the extra money for capabilities you won't use.
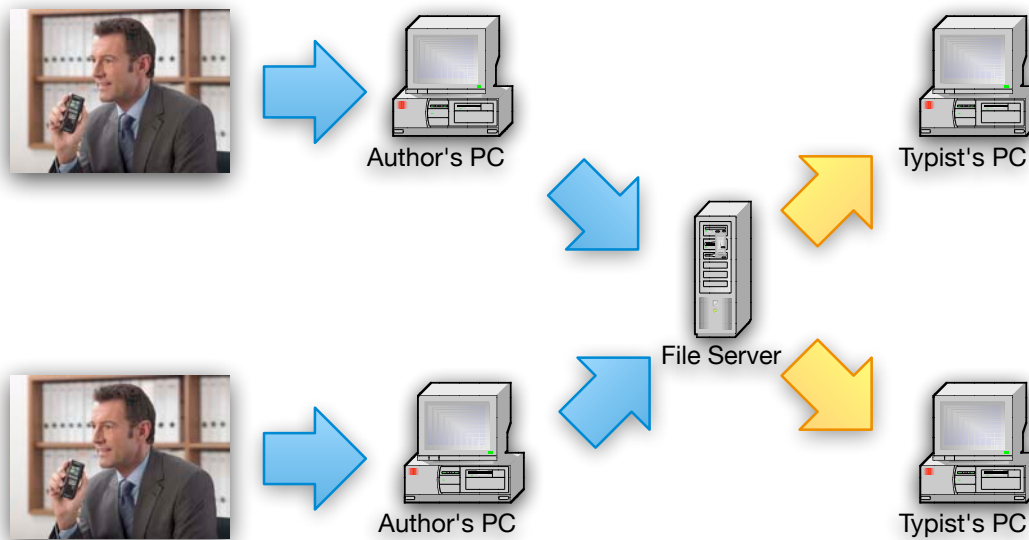
DIGITAL DICTATION WORKFLOWS

HOW IS DIGITAL DICTATION PROCESSED IN THE WORKPLACE?

With analog systems, the dictator would record onto a cassette tape or over the telephone. The transcriptionist would either pick up the tape, transcribe, erase the tape and return it to the author. Or, in a telephone-based dictation system, the transcriptionist would use a special unit which would call into the recording system and playback the dictation from a complex and mechanical tape carousel system. Either system was subject to mechanical failures, high maintenance and costly repairs.

SINGLE OFFICE FIRM

In offices where both the author and the transcriptionist are on a PC network, digital voice files can be easily transferred from the author to a server or shared folder to be accessed and transcribed.

Author's PC   File Server   Typist's PC
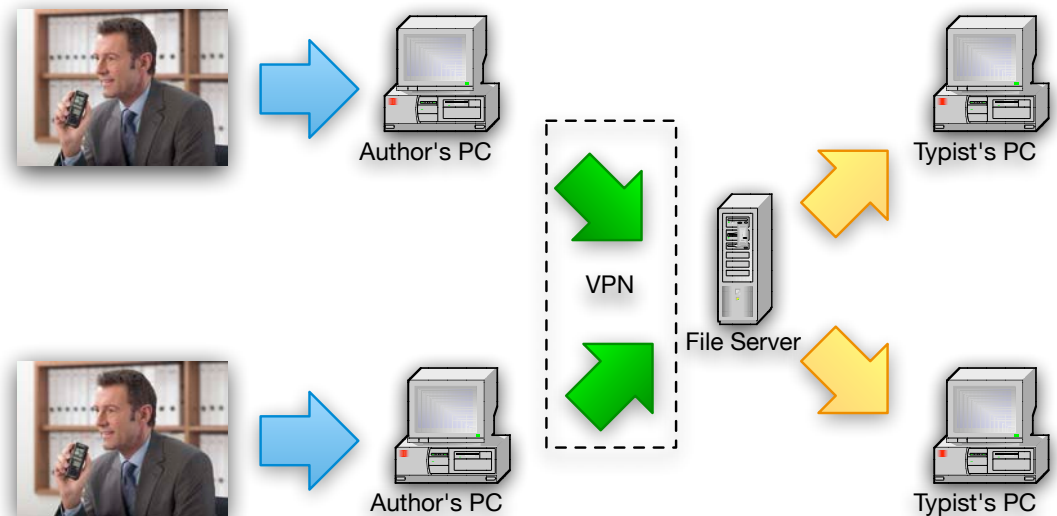
Author's PC   Typist's PC

1. The dictating author records one or more voice files on their handheld recorder.

2. The recorder is "docked" or connected to their desktop PC.

3. The digital voice files are automatically copied to the network File Server, and a back-up of each file is made on the attorney's PC. The recorder is then automatically erased and within a few seconds, the author is back at work.

4. The typist receives an alert that dictation files are now available on the server.

5. The typist selects the file they wish to transcribe from within their Transcription Software. By selecting a file, others who may be eligible to type are prevented from listening to the voice file, thereby eliminating an unnecessary duplication of work.

6. Once the voice file is typed, it is moved out of the work queue and archived or deleted at a later time.

7. The typed documents are stored and shared according to your existing workflow.

MULTI-OFFICE FIRM

The main difference between a single office and a multi-office configuration is that if multiple offices wish to "pool" their transcription so that more than one typist can access the work regardless of the originating office, connections from each PC to a central server must be established via a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Other than that, the workflow remains much the same.

Author's PC   VPN   File Server   Typist's PC
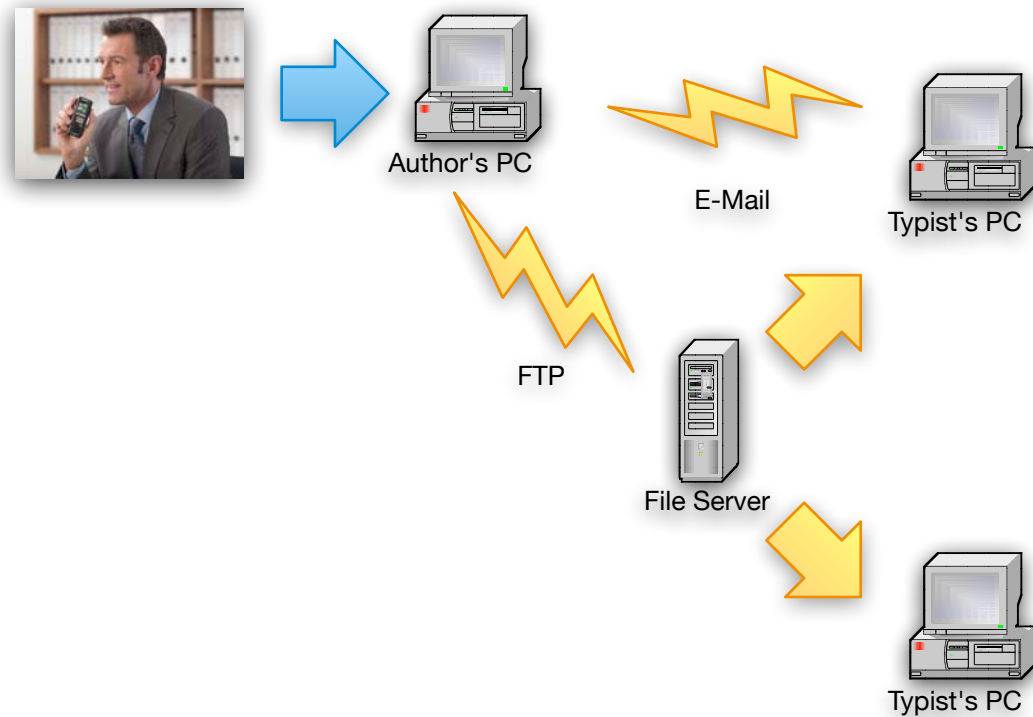
Author's PC   Typist's PC

1. The dictating author records one or more voice files on their handheld recorder.

2. The recorder is "docked" or connected to their desktop PC.

3. The digital voice files are automatically copied to the network File Server, and a back-up of each file is made on the attorney's PC. The recorder is then automatically erased and within a few seconds, the author is back at work.

4. The typist receives an alert that dictation files are now available on the server.

5. The typist selects the file they wish to transcribe from within their Transcription Software. By select-ing a file, others who may be eligible to type are prevented from listening to the voice file, thereby eliminating an unnecessary duplication of work.

6. Once the voice file is typed, it is moved out of the work queue and archived or deleted at a later time.

7. The typed documents are stored and shared according to your existing workflow.

One note: larger firms may require a more sophisticated "enterprise" solution to help manage workflow. If so, contact American Dictation for information on enterprise-grade configurations.

REMOTE DICTATION

If the author needs to send dictation from a remote location, such as a temporary office, home or hotel, the workflow changes only in the method by which the dictation is transferred to the central office.

1. The dictating author records one or more voice files on their handheld recorder.

2. The recorder is "docked" or connected to their desktop PC.

3. The digital voice files are automatically copied to the author's PC. The software will then send the files (encrypted for security purposes, if desired) via e-mail to a selected typist. Alternatively, the files can be transferred by FTP[1] to an FTP server in the office. The recorder is then automatically erased and within a few seconds, the author is back at work.

4. The typist receives an alert that dictation files are now available

5. The typist selects the file they wish to transcribe from within their Transcription Software.

6. Once the voice file is typed, it is moved out of the work queue and archived or deleted at a later time.

7. The typed documents are stored and shared according to your existing workflow.

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[1] FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol, a fast means of transferring files over the Internet. FTP avoids conflicts with e-mail use and is preferred for transferring larger voice files on a frequent basis.

There are several considerations to make when choosing which Internet protocol (e-mail for FTP) is best. Talk to an American Dictation Enterprise Specialist for more information.

REMOTE TRANSCRIPTION

Most common in medical offices, a transcriptionist may be working from a remote office or home. Using the built-in Internet transfer functionality of the software, the voice files can be encrypted (for HIPAA compliance) and sent to the Transcriptionist via e-mail or FTP.

1. The dictating author records one or more voice files on their handheld recorder.

2. The recorder is "docked" or connected to their desktop PC.

3. The digital voice files are automatically copied to the author's PC. The software will then send the files (encrypted for security purposes, if desired) via e-mail to a selected typist. Alternatively, the files can be transferred by FTP to an FTP server. The recorder is then automatically erased and within a few seconds, the author is back at work.

4. The transcriptionist retrieves the files from their e-mail or FTP server.

5. The transcriptionist selects the file they wish to transcribe from within their Transcription Software.

6. Once the voice file is typed, it is moved out of the work queue and archived or deleted at a later time.

7. The typed documents may be returned to the author via the Internet[2].

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2 At this time, only the Olympus DSS Player Pro software system can allow the transcriptionist to return typed documents via the same encrypted method by which the voice files are sent.

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PROFESSIONAL RECORDERS

Hand-held digital voice recorders fall into two general classes: professional and consumer. Professional recorders contain additional features that help users "manage" dictation workflow. Consumer recorder users do not generally have as demanding a workflow requirement, nor do they use their recorders as often.

Professional recorders also come with USB connectors to allow you to download recordings to your computer. Software to manage these files is included. Additionally, recorders in this class most often are part of a dictation system that include transcription "kits" (software, footswitch and headset) that gives the professional office a complete workflow solution (see "Dictation Systems" section).

Note: there are computer-based dictation systems that should also be mentioned. These are systems where you record directly to your PC. Some of the handheld recorders can also be used this way by setting them in their cradle or docking station. If you are interested in a PC-based dictation solution, please contact American Dictation™ for information and advice.

FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL RECORDERS

Before you compare models of professional recorders, it may help to understand some of the more important features to consider.

❖ **File Formats.** If your need is primarily for voice recording, you do not need WAV or MP3 formats. DSS or LPEC formats are acceptable and preferred due to file size (you can record more). DSS is the most common among different manufacturers, so if compability among different brands is necessary, DSS might be preferred. The DSS format has been updated to include a DSS "Pro" format boasting better fidelity and additional file "headers" for encryption and file management. LPEC is unique to Sony recorders.

❖ **Recording Modes.** Most recorders support Standard Play (SP) and Long Play (LP) modes. Additional modes for high-quality recording include Quality Play (QP), Stereo (ST), High-Quality (HQ) and Stereo High-Quality (SHQ).

❖ **Memory.** Recorder memory is either fixed or removable. Removable memory is becoming more popular as it allows you to increase recording capacity simply by using additional memory cards. Additionally, you can exchange memory cards and give the used card to a transcriptionist for downloading

into their PC using a card reader. Removable media is also safer, in that if you drop or damage your recorder, the memory card will most likely survive unharmed. The card can then be used in another compatible recorder and your previous recordings can be easily recovered.

❖ **Maximum Recording Time.** The figures shown in the comparison chart reflect the estimated maximum recording time for the default memory included with each recorder.

❖ **Display.** Today's professional recorders come with LCD menu displays. If you expect to use your recorder in a low-light situation, you should consider ones that backlight the display.

❖ **Switch Operation.** If you're used to using a traditional analog recorder, a slide-switch is probably more intuitive for you, as it works in much the same fashion. However, if you're just as comfortable using push-buttons controls, you will find recorders that cost slightly less with similar features.

❖ **Programmable Buttons.** In some units, there are one or more buttons that can be programmed either by the user or by your vendor. These buttons act as "shortcuts" to functionality or add "hidden" functionality not normally accessible.

❖ **Hands-free Recording.** Some recorders can be used in their cradles as hands-free recording units. This allows you to dictate while managing documents, files or your computer. For hands-free use, an optional footswitch may be required.

❖ **Folders & Files.** Professional recorders may allow you to store recordings in different virtual folders. Each folder may have a limit to the number of individual recordings that can be stored, although storage is usually limited more by memory than by quantity. Some recorders allow you to re-name the folders using the software included.

❖ **Cradle/Dock.** To make it easy to transfer files to/from your PC, some recorders come with a cradle or dock that connects via USB cable. Some cradles also recharge batteries in the recorder.

❖ **Voice Activated Recording.** To reduce pauses in conversations or dictation, you may want to turn on voice-activated recording.

❖ **Indexing.** If your dictation often involves multiple subjects (i.e., patient files) within one recording, you may want to "index" your recordings. This allows a transcriptionist with compatible software to scan your recordings by jumping from index point to index point and play the first few seconds. There is usually a limit to the number of index points that can be stored within one voice file. Some recorders only provide for "End of File" indexing (marking the end of one file), or "Priority" marks to indicate the priority level of a given file.

❖ **Microphone.** Is the microphone built-in? If so, is it mono or stereo. Stereo recordings are only useful if you are recording in WAV format and/or you need to record with maximum fidelity. Some prefer stereo recording for large lecture halls or meetings, as it contributes to the spatial effect and picks up

more sounds. However, stereo recordings are much larger in file size and severely limit the recording capacity of the recorder.

❖ **Microphone Sensitivity.** Usually there are two microphone settings on most recorders: "Dict" and "Conf." "Dict," or "Dictation Mode," adjusts the microphone pick-up pattern to a more "uni-directional" pattern meaning that it will pick up more sound directly in front of the microphone. "Conf," or "Conference Mode," widens the pick-up pattern - called omni-directional - to pick up more sounds around the recorder. Alternatively, some recorders offer a 3-level adjustment of "Lo" for noisy situations, "Med" for most uses, and "High" for conference room settings. Some recorders also use a "Lecture" setting for maximum microphone sensitivity in large venues.

❖ **Speed Control.** Can the recorder playback be adjusted? In some recorders, you can playback the recoding at a higher speed in order to abridge the listening time. Unlike analog recorders, faster play-back of digital files does not raise the pitch of the voice (i.e., no chipmunks-like voices).

❖ **Editing.** Some who dictate need to edit their recordings before giving them to a transcriptionist. In other cases, editing is to be avoided (such as legal proceedings or law enforcement). Editing can include such features as appending, overwriting or inserting. If you need robust editing features, please consult American Dictation™ for an in-depth review of recorder features.

❖ **Voice Recognition Compatible.** If you are interested in using a Voice Recognition software applications, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking or MacSpeech Dictate, then you will want a recording that produces a sound file compatible with these types of applications. For more details, consult the software guide or contact American Dictation.

❖ **Software.** Professional recorders come with software to faciliate downloading of recordings and management of recorder features.

❖ **OS Compatibility.** The ability of a recorder to function with various operating systems is usually more a function of the software's compatibility than of the actual recorder itself. However, if you intend to transfer recordings to your computer, compatibility is important.

CONSUMER RECORDERS

If you're not expecting to subject your recorder to a full daily grind, or if you have little need to transcribe your recordings, you may find a "consumer" model more to your liking and your budget. Some models are able to store and play MP3 files. Usually, consumer models contain "flash" or fixed memory, rather than using interchangeable memory cards, as most consumers have less need to change memory card capacities for very long voice recordings.

FEATURES OF CONSUMER RECORDERS

To compare consumer-grade recorders, let's define some of the more important features.

❖ **File Formats.** If your need is primarily for voice recording, you do not need WAV or MP3 formats. DSS or LPEC formats are acceptable and preferred due to file size (you can record more). DSS is the most common among different manufacturers, so if compability among different brands is necessary, DSS might be preferred. LPEC is unique to Sony recorders.

❖ **Recording Modes.** Most recorders support Standard Play (SP) and Long Play (LP) modes. Additional modes for high-quality recording include Stereo (ST), High-Quality (HQ), Stereo Standard Play (SSP), Stereo Long Play (SLP), and Stereo High-Quality (SHQ).

❖ **Memory Type.** Recorder memory is either fixed or removable. Fixed memory is often referred to as "flash" memory.

❖ **Maximum Recording Time.** The figures shown in the comparison chart reflect the estimated maximum recording time for the default memory included with each recorder.

❖ Display. Today's recorders come with LCD menu displays. If you expect to use your recorder in a low-light situation, you should consider ones that backlight the display.

❖ Folders & Files. Recorders may allow you to store recordings in different virtual folders. Each folder may have a limit to the number of individual recordings that can be stored, although storage is usually limited more by memory than by quantity. Some recorders allow you to re-name the folders using the software included.

❖ Cradle/Dock. To make it easy to transfer files to/from your PC, some recorders come with a cradle or dock that connects via USB cable. Some cradles also recharge batteries in the recorder.

❖ Voice Activated Recording. To reduce pauses in conversations or dictation, you may want to turn on voice-activated recording.

❖ Microphone. Is the microphone built-in? If so, is it mono or stereo. Stereo recordings are only useful if you are recording in WAV format and/or you need to record with maximum fidelity. Some prefer stereo recording for large lecture halls or meetings, as it contributes to the spatial effect and picks up more sounds. However, stereo recordings are much larger in file size and severely limit the recording capacity of the recorder.

❖ Microphone Sensitivity. Usually there are two microphone settings on most recorders: "Dict" and "Conf." "Dict," or "Dictation Mode," adjusts the microphone pick-up pattern to a more "uni-directional" pattern meaning that it will pick up more sound directly in front of the microphone. "Conf," or "Conference Mode," widens the pick-up pattern - called omni-directional - to pick up more sounds around the recorder. Alternatively, some recorders offer a 3-level adjustment of "Lo" for noisy situations, "Med" for most uses, and "High" for conference room settings.

❖ Stereo Recording. Does the recorder support stereo recordings? Sometimes, stereo recording is only available with the use of an optional external stereo microphone.

❖ Music Files. Many of today's consumer recorders also support the storage and playback of MP3 and/or WMA music files. While most do not record in MP3 format, they may allow the uploading of MP3 files from CDs or other sources to the recorder.

❖ Speed Control. Can the recorder playback be adjusted? In some recorders, you can playback the recoding at a higher speed in order to abridge the listening time. Unlike analog recorders, faster playback of digital files does not raise the pitch of the voice (i.e., no chipmunks-like voices).

❖ Editing. Does the recorder allow editing of files in the recorder? For most consumer models, this is not an option, although in some models the included software may allow some editing of the file to remove or insert portions.

❖ Software. Many recorders come with software to faciliate downloading of recordings and management of recorder features.

❖ OS Compatibility. The ability of a recorder to function with various operating systems is usually more a function of the software's compatibility than of the actual recorder itself. However, if you intend to transfer recordings to your computer, compatibility is important.The following chart profiles some of the more popular consumer models currently offered by American Dictation.

TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEMS

If you dictate files that require transcription, digital voice recorders represent only one piece the overall puzzle. This is particularly true for doctors, lawyers and other professionals who record dictation or proceedings that must be transcribed to written documents.

When choosing a recorder for this purpose, you should also consider the means by which you plan to have your voice recordings transcribed, and in what setting your transcription will take place.

VOICE RECOGNITION

Software designed to convert spoken words to text is becoming more popular with the recent advances in conversion quality and faster computers. Voice recognition titles such as "Dragon Naturally Speaking" and "MacSpeech Dictate," have made huge gains in accuracy. However, you have to be prepared to "train" the software to understand the nuances of your voice, such as accent, dialect and pronunciation. You can find several digital voice recorders at American Dictation™ that are bundled with voice recognition software. Additionally, almost all the recorders we sell are compatible with one or more voice recognition packages.

Basically, a "VR" package listens to the voice file you have saved onto your computer and analyzes the digitized sound to figure out what is being said. Keep in mind that if you dictate for VR, you may have to adjust your dictation style to include punctuation (e.g., "is this correct, question mark."), and the clarity of the recording should be good.

If, on the other hand, you are recording dictation that:

❖ is of meetings or other events where the speakers are not including punctuation;

❖ may not be recorded clearly;

then Voice Recognition is probably not your best choice. This is particularly true if you are recording more than one speaker, as the software cannot discern between speakers. In these cases, you may need to support traditional transcription by using a transcription system.

PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS

For offices where there are several dictation professionals and who need to feed their dictation to one or more transcriptionists within their office or organization, an enterprise-level solution is warranted.

The Olympus AS-5000 Transcription Kit is a top-end match to the professional-series DS-5000 and DS-5000iD Digital Voice Recorders. This combination integrates workflow capabilities, such as author, priority, etc., with the automated sending and receiving of dictation and transcription files (voice and document). The software for both the recorder and transcriber includes encryption features to protect sensitive information. The kit comes with software for both PC and Mac (the Mac version does not have all the features of the PC version; contact American Dictation for details).

Philips also makes an enterprise solution using the Philips Executive Transcription Kit 7277. As with the AS-5000, the 7277 contains robust workflow management tools to assist in the receiving and delivery of dictation files, prioritization and processing. For Windows only.

SOHO SOLUTIONS

For smaller offices or home offices where the transcription is handled inside the organization, Olympus, Philips and Sony provide transcription kits compatible with their brands. All kits will process WAV files, as well, thereby giving each the additional capabilities for use in mixed-system offices.

The Olympus AS-2400 is much like the AS-4000, but does not include the higher-end workflow management tools including document receiving and sending. The AS-2400 is a great companion to the DS-2400, DS-71 and the full line of consumer recorders. The kit comes with software for both PC and Mac (the Mac version does not have all the features of the PC version; contact American Dictation for details).

Philips' consumer-grade transcription kit is the 7177, which include the SpeechExec Transcribe software, a USB foot pedal and stereo headset. It is only compatible with Windows PCs.

Sony's companion is the FS85USB PC Transcription Kit. This software supports MSV, DVF, WAV and MP3 formats and includes a voice e-mail function. Compatible with Windows only.

Each of the preceding kits include software, footswitch and headset. You can also use voice recognition software with these packages, thereby providing your transcriptionist with the ability to use both VR and traditional transcription to complete your dictation workflow cycle.

FILE TRANSFER SERVICE

In situations where you need to transfer dictation to a transcriptionist with utmost security, consider NovusFiles™ File Transfer Service, a Web-based application that requires no special software and provides full 128-bit encrypted transfer of voice and document files. Security is so robust that American Dictation™ meets the U.S. Government standards for HIPAA compliance - an especially important feature for those in the healthcare profession.

For more information about NovusFiles™ File Services, go to:
http://www.NovusFiles.com or call American Dictation™ at 866-408-1383.