

Court Reporting Industry

2025 Trends Report

PRESENTED BY: The Brand Consultancy

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Study Background & Introduction

The legal industry is grappling with a question: How can court reporting professionals continue to meet the evolving demands of a legal system that increasingly relies on timely, accurate, and accessible transcripts?

The roots of this challenge are a decade in the making. Ten years ago, “The Court Reporting Industry Outlook Report” by Ducker Worldwide indicated a shortage of stenographers in the market. The decline was primarily attributed to a retiring stenographer pool that wasn’t being replenished with new talent. This shortage, due in part to a lack of interest by younger generations, has caused the closure of stenography schools and strained the legal system. Namely, it’s led to an unprecedented number of proceedings lacking a verbatim legal record, which stymies appeals and deprives litigants of their constitutional rights. While new capture methods and professionals (such as digital court reporters) have started to enter the industry in recent decades, they still face varying levels of barriers imposed by state laws and regulations and lack of education and awareness within the industry.

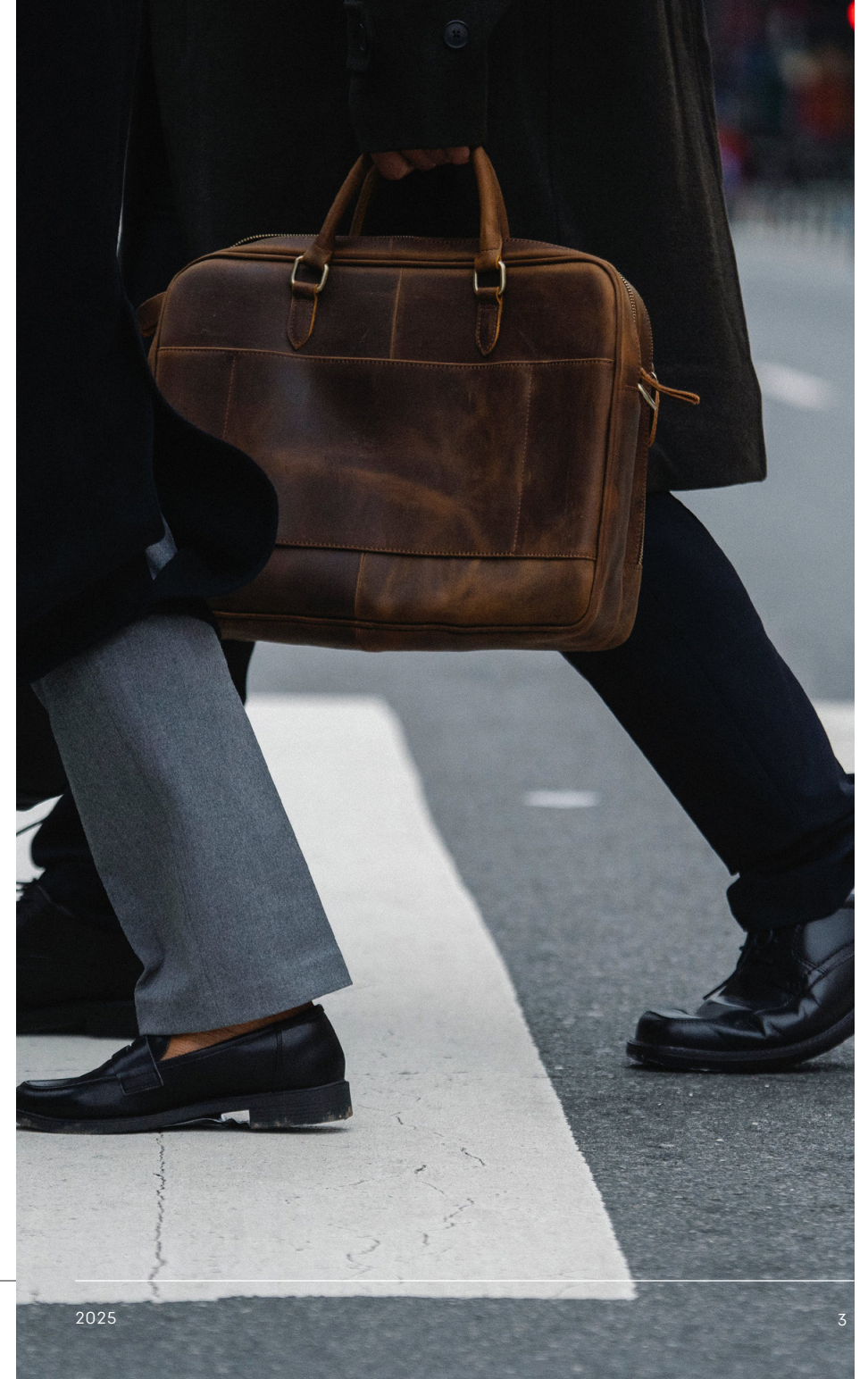
This study explores emerging trends, evolving technologies, and strategic approaches that may help ensure the profession’s vitality and sustainability in the years ahead.



Introduction

Industry Report Objectives

The goal of this report is to offer a comprehensive and objective analysis of the evolving court reporting industry. The report explores the longstanding significance of stenography and the increasing role of digital court reporting as a response to workforce shortages and technological advancements. It aims to provide valuable insights to all stakeholders in this profession by focusing on how the court reporting industry can strike an effective balance between utilizing both human and technological elements to enhance operational efficiencies. The report also looks at the future potential of these reporting methods to meet the growing demands of the legal system while maintaining high standards of accuracy and reliability.



Introduction

Study Objectives

Analyze Industry Evolution:

- Examine the current state of the court reporting industry, highlighting the shifting dynamics within stenography and the increasing adoption of digital court reporting.

Evaluate Workforce Challenges:

- Explore the factors behind the stenographer shortage using objective data and discover how digital court reporters can help address these challenges while upholding industry standards.

Provide Strategic Insights:

- Offer actionable insights for members across the industry to navigate the balance between traditional and digital methods, focusing on operational efficiency, timeliness, and accuracy.

Anticipate Future Trends:

- Identify and discuss emerging trends and innovations in court reporting to equip stakeholders with the knowledge to adapt to the evolving legal landscape.



Introduction

Report Methodology

This report utilized a mixed-methods approach, beginning with 27 one-on-one interviews with industry stakeholders to explore the dynamics of the court reporting industry. These interviews provided qualitative insights into industry trends, usage, and perceptions of different methods of capture.

In addition to the interviews, an online survey was deployed to gather data from 550+ representative court reporting end users and providers. These responses are nationally representative across the U.S. and include attorneys, paralegals, court reporters, and administrators. The survey focused on awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of all capture methods. This also includes secondary data sources to triangulate the market supply and demand including census data, labor statistics, and legal trends. Together, these research methods offer a comprehensive and balanced analysis of the court reporting industry’s landscape.

One-on-one interviews
with industry stakeholders

27

Court reporting end users surveyed

550+

Summary of Key Findings

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

Over the past 10 years, there has been a 21% decline in stenographers nationally. This shortage is felt acutely across the industry. In fact, 63% of users agree that the number of stenographers in the industry is declining, contributing to a significant shortage. These facts point to a need for alternative solutions like digital court reporters. Nevertheless, stenographers remain the most utilized method for court reporting, with an 82% usage rate. This mismatch between the declining amount of stenographers available and their high usage rates is a weakness in the industry that exacerbates the impact of the stenographer shortage.

2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

The shortage of stenographers is having a measurable impact on users, with 76% reporting that it creates scheduling difficulties and 55% citing increased costs as a consequence. The shortage is not only causing logistical challenges but is also affecting the efficiency and affordability of court reporting services.

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

Accuracy is overwhelmingly seen as the most important key performance indicator (KPI) in court reporting, with 96% of users in agreement. Both traditional and digital methods have the potential to provide an accurate transcript. This suggests that digital court reporters have a key role to play in addressing the stenographer shortage going forward.

4. Digital Court Reporters Offer Consistent, On-Time Delivery & Efficiency

In addition to accuracy, digital court reporters are valued for their ability to provide consistent, on-time delivery of transcripts, with 30% choosing this as their top reason why they prefer digital court reporters over other methods. The speed of digital court reporters makes them an attractive option for handling the demands of the industry, providing a quick turnaround without sacrificing quality.

5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Technology is increasingly being recognized as a key driver in improving efficiency within the court reporting industry. This insight is further highlighted by the fact that the global legal technology market is growing rapidly and is expected to reach \$50 billion by 2027. The adoption of digital tools, including digital capture and automatic speech recognition-assisted transcription, can streamline processes, reduce costs, and support the growing demand for court reporting services. Technology holds the potential to address some of the industry’s most pressing challenges, from staffing shortages to long turnaround times.

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern



Declining Number of Stenographers

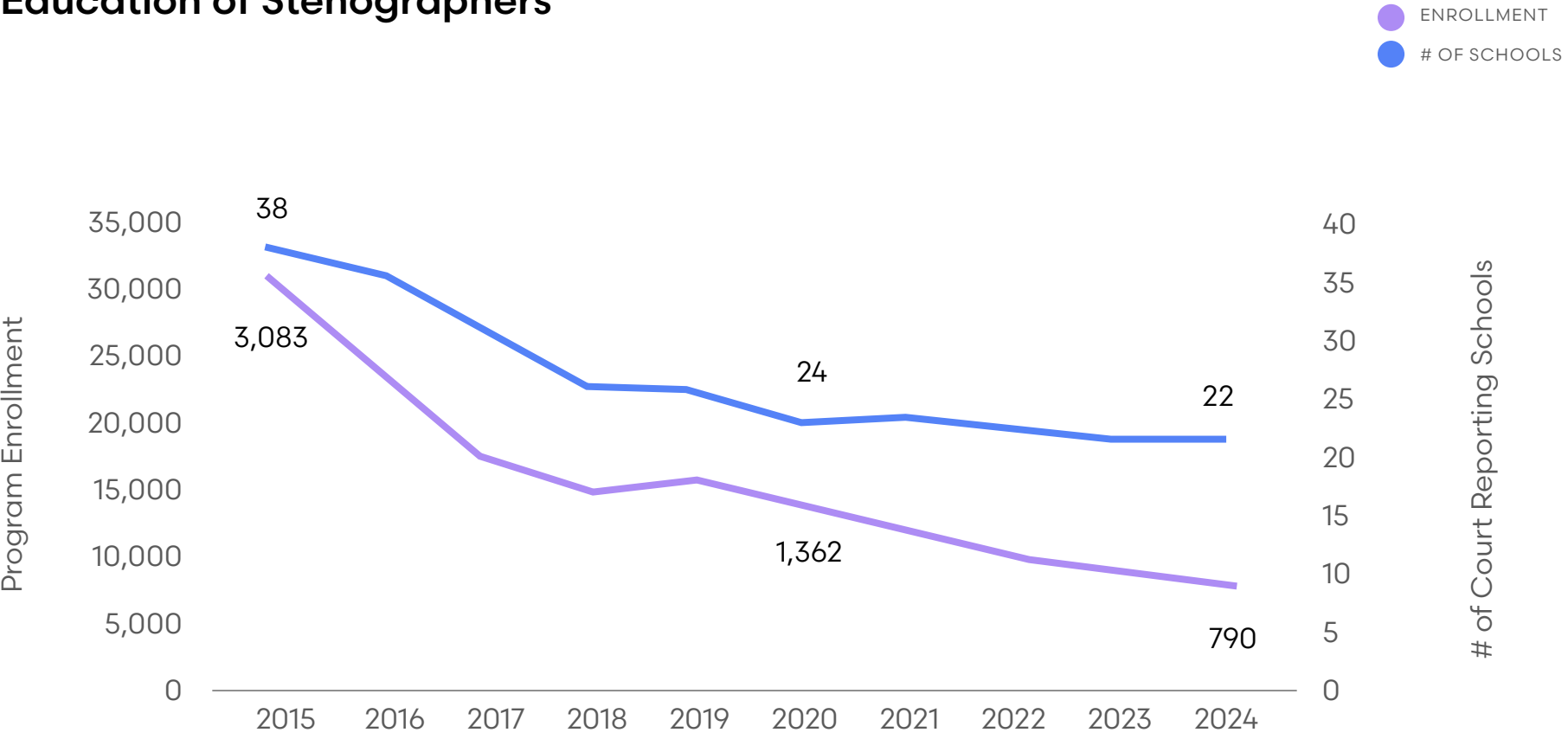
The court reporting industry is facing a significant workforce shortage, primarily due to the declining number of stenographers. This is due to several factors, including a retiring workforce, fewer options for training opportunities, and drops in school enrollments. Survey data supports these factors: Out of 500+ respondents, 63% agree that the number of stenographers is decreasing. Today there are estimated to be as few as 23K stenographers, which reflects up to a 21% drop across key states.

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

*Est. 74% drop
in enrollment*

*Est. 42% drop
in schools*

Education of Stenographers



Source: Estimated based on NCRA annual school reports

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

Contributing Factors to the Shortage

Several factors are driving the stenographer shortage, including a retiring workforce and limited access to training. The average age of stenographers is rising, and fewer young professionals are entering the field. With a 42% drop in the number of stenographer training programs, it's hard to find the educational opportunities to become a stenographer in the first place. This creates a negative feedback loop for the supply of stenographers, with top programs such as Brown College of Court Reporting shutting down their court reporting programs due to low enrollment rates¹.

Another contributing factor could be the length of time needed to complete a stenography program. While digital court reporters can complete their training in as little as a month, stenography certification takes at least two years, and the pass rate of state certification tests is typically less than 10% even once one completes two years of schooling.

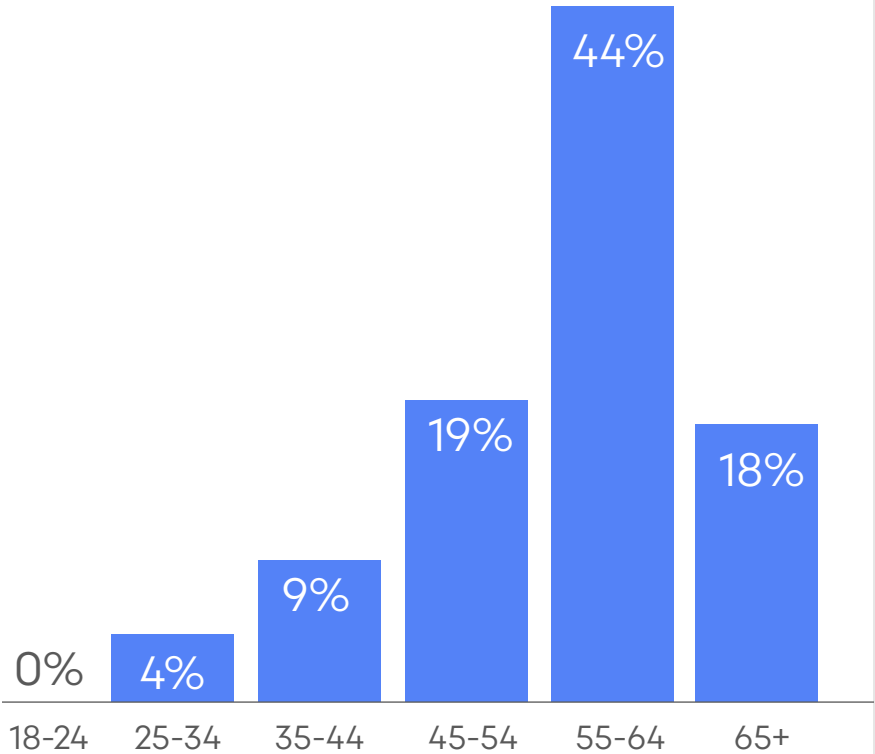
¹ Courtscribes.com "Georgia's Only Certified Court Reporting College Closing Doors"



1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

Another contributing element is the difficulty of replacing a retiring workforce. A concerning majority of stenographers are 55 and over, and there are few new graduates.

Age of Stenographers



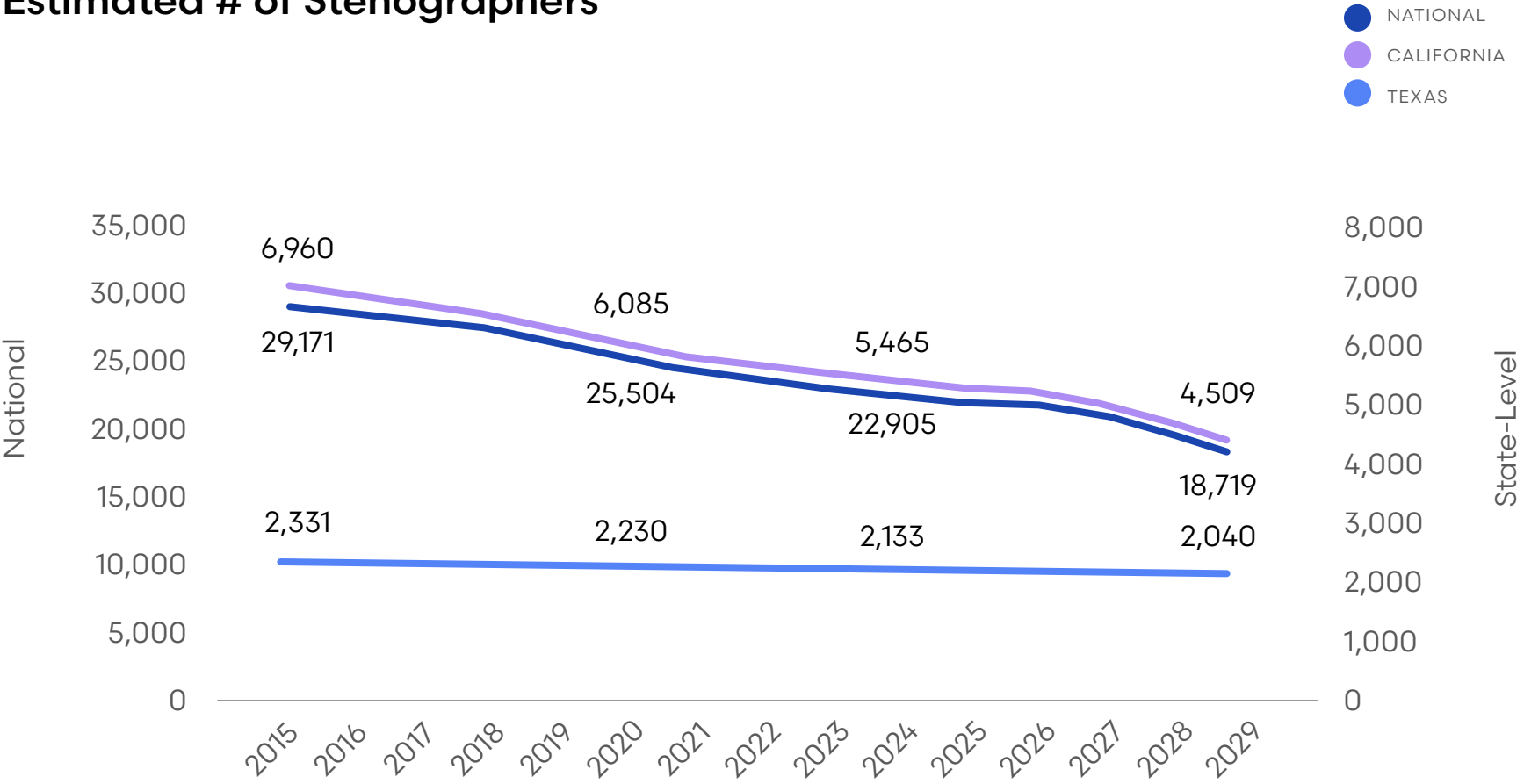
It is also clear that the demand for court reporters will not decrease anytime soon. COVID-19 introduced a backlog in the court system which hasn't been fully addressed. In addition, since 2020 there's been an 11% growth in court filings.

Source: The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

Furthermore, this perception is grounded in reality as it is estimated that nationally and within key states there's up to a 21% drop in the number of stenographers over the past 10 years. If these trends continue, there could be a further drop nationally to ~18.7K by 2029.

Estimated # of Stenographers



Source: Estimated based on NCRA, Bureau of Labor Statistics, California State Board, and Texas Court System.

1. Stenographer Shortage is a Growing Concern

Key Takeaway

A shortage of stenographers is being felt across the industry. The shortage is continuing to worsen as increasing numbers of stenographers retire and new stenographer enrollments continue to decline.

2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

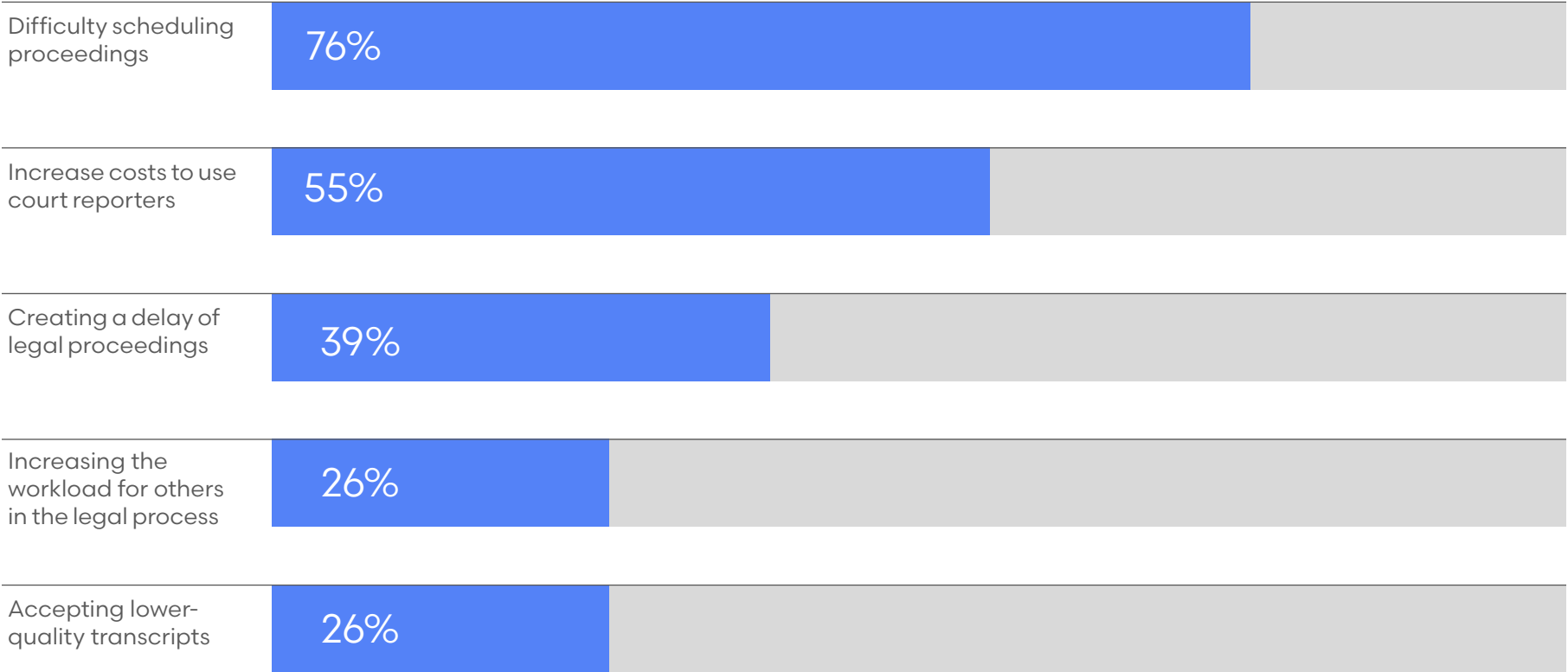


Scheduling Difficulties

The shortage of stenographers is causing significant scheduling difficulties across the industry. Seventy-six percent of end users report that finding available stenographers has become increasingly challenging, leading to delays in securing reporters for court proceedings. As a result, court schedules are disrupted, and legal proceedings may be delayed. This affects the overall efficiency of the judicial system.

2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

“What is the impact of not having enough stenographers?”



Source: The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

Increased Costs

In addition to scheduling problems, the stenographer shortage is also driving up costs. Fifty-five percent of users indicate that the lack of available stenographers is leading to increased expenses for court reporting services. With fewer professionals available, prices for stenography services have risen, placing added financial strain on law firms, courts, and clients. This rise in costs is a concern for those working with limited budgets, making it more difficult for smaller firms or courts with fewer resources to manage expenses effectively.

Detrimental Impacts on Legal Processes

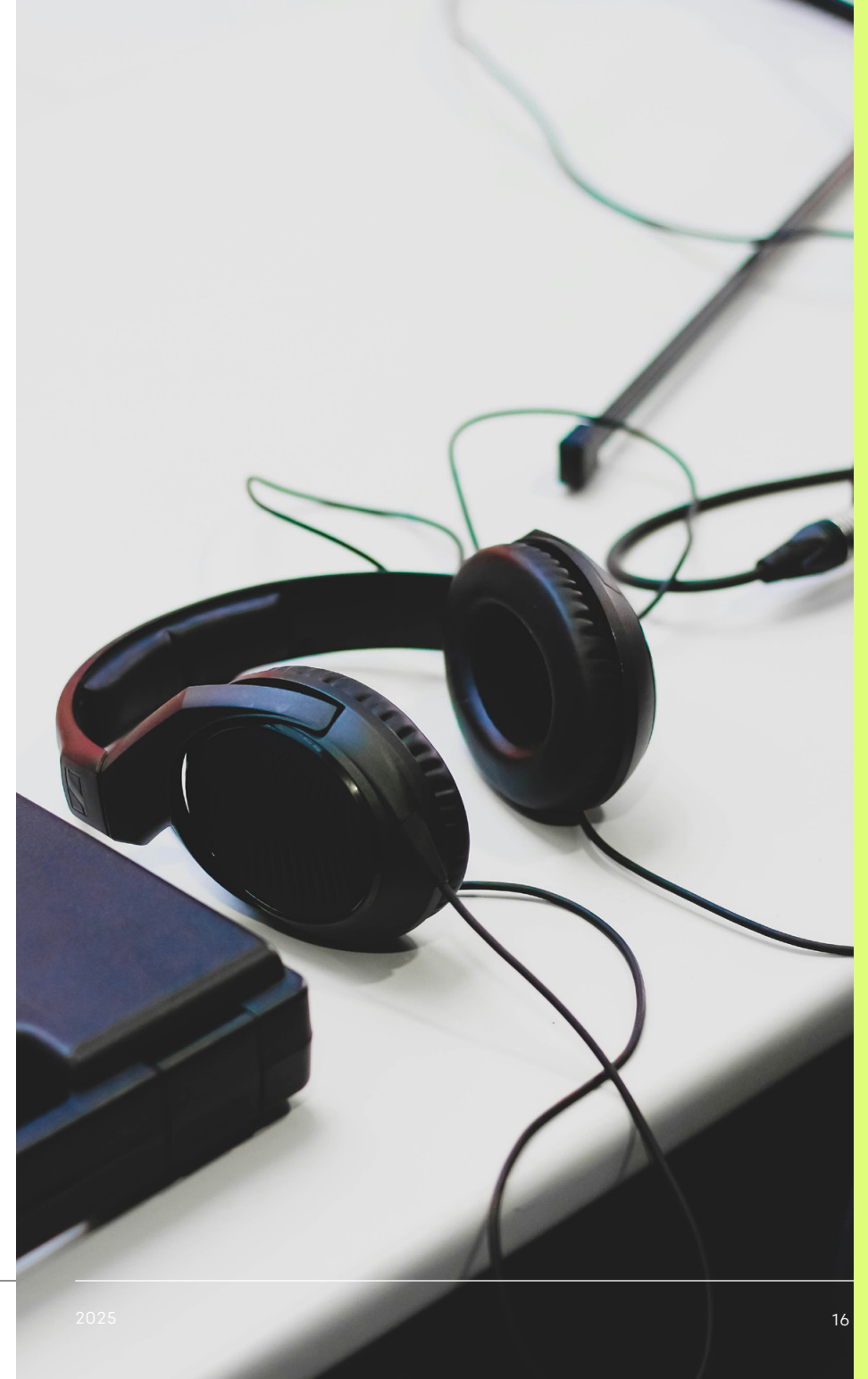
The shortage is also having broader detrimental impacts on the industry. Delays in scheduling qualified stenographers who are balancing higher workloads can result in slower turnaround times for transcripts, which can hinder the progress of legal proceedings. These delays can be costly and undermine the timely administration of justice, causing frustration for legal professionals and clients alike. In addition to slower turnaround times, more than one in four users believe the lack of court reporters is increasing the workload for others in the legal process and also resulting in courts accepting lower-quality transcripts.

55% of end-users indicated a lack of available stenographers. These delays can be costly and undermine the timely administration of justice, causing frustration for legal professionals and clients alike.

2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

The Need for Solutions

The widespread impact of the stenographer shortage underscores the urgency for finding additional long-term solutions. With demand for court reporting services continuing to rise, addressing workforce shortages and ensuring access to accurate, timely court records is critical. As the industry adapts, embracing new technologies and alternative reporting methods will be essential in filling the gaps and maintaining the quality and efficiency of court reporting services in the face of these challenges.



2. Shortage of Stenographers is Impacting End Users

Key Takeaway

The impact of the shortage on end users and the broader judicial system is unsustainable. Therefore, a viable solution to address this shortage is critical for the health of the industry.

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

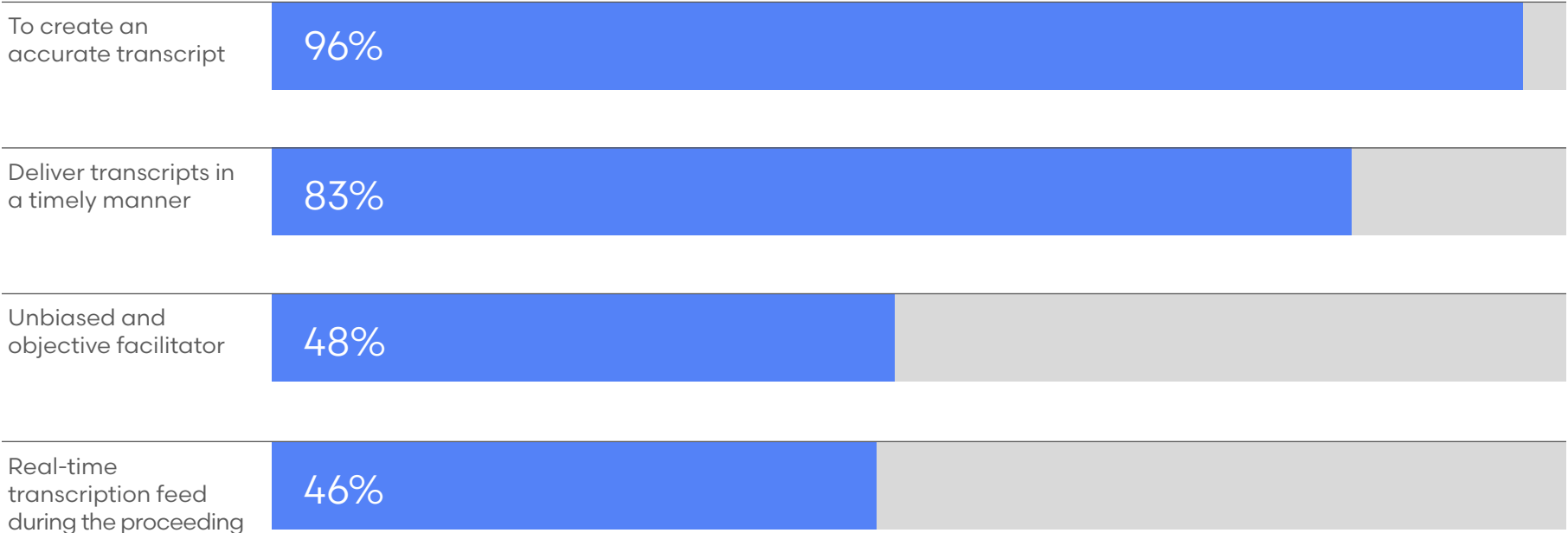


Accuracy is the Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

Accuracy remains the most critical factor in court reporting, with 96% of users agreeing that it is the key performance indicator (KPI) when selecting a court reporting method. The legal system relies on precise transcripts to ensure fair proceedings and maintain the integrity of the record. Thus, any errors can have serious implications for the case and its outcome.

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

“What is the primary goal of court reporters?”



Source: The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

Both Traditional and Digital Methods Deliver on Accuracy

Stenographers: The Established Method

Stenography has long been the most common method for making the record. As the industry has evolved, however, there has been growing interest in other well-established methods including digital reporting. Many legal professionals are now recognizing that humans, paired with technology, can achieve similar levels of accuracy to traditional stenographers.

The Rise of Digital Court Reporters

Digital court reporters have gained acceptance as a viable alternative to stenographers. While early concerns about the accuracy of digital transcripts existed decades ago, today’s legal professionals view digital transcripts as accurate and reliable. With proper training, oversight, and quality control measures, digital court reporters have proven to be just as accurate as their stenographer counterparts. As a result, many users now view digital court reporters as an acceptable and accurate option for court reporting.



3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

End User Perceived Top 3 Benefits of Each Method

	Stenographers	Digital Court Reporters
#1	Very accurate transcript	Very accurate transcript
#2	Very professional in the room	Fast delivery of the transcripts
#3	Is widely accepted method	Very professional in the room

Source: The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

Ensuring Accuracy with Digital Court Reporting

The key to ensuring the accuracy of digital court reporters lies in the combination of advanced technology and professional oversight. While the automation of capture and/or transcription with minimal human involvement can produce quick results, those results will not meet industry standards and do not reflect the capabilities of digital court reporting. It is the expertise of the digital court reporters that can ensure the quality of the recording. Skilled transcribers confirm the final product meets the high standards of accuracy required in legal proceedings. When these processes are properly managed, digital court reporters can consistently deliver transcripts that are as accurate as those produced by stenographers.

“Advanced technologies employed by digital court reporters minimize errors and ensure precision in capturing courtroom dialogue and nuances. This accuracy is essential for legal professionals relying on detailed and reliable documentation.”⁴

⁴ Courtscribes.com “The Rise of Digital Court Reporters”

3. Stenographers & Digital Court Reporters are Both Valued for Accuracy, the Primary KPI in Court Reporting

Key Takeaway

Accuracy remains the most crucial aspect of court reporting, and as long as an alternative capture method to stenography can meet this requirement—and users report that it does—digital court reporting will serve as a valuable solution to the current shortage.

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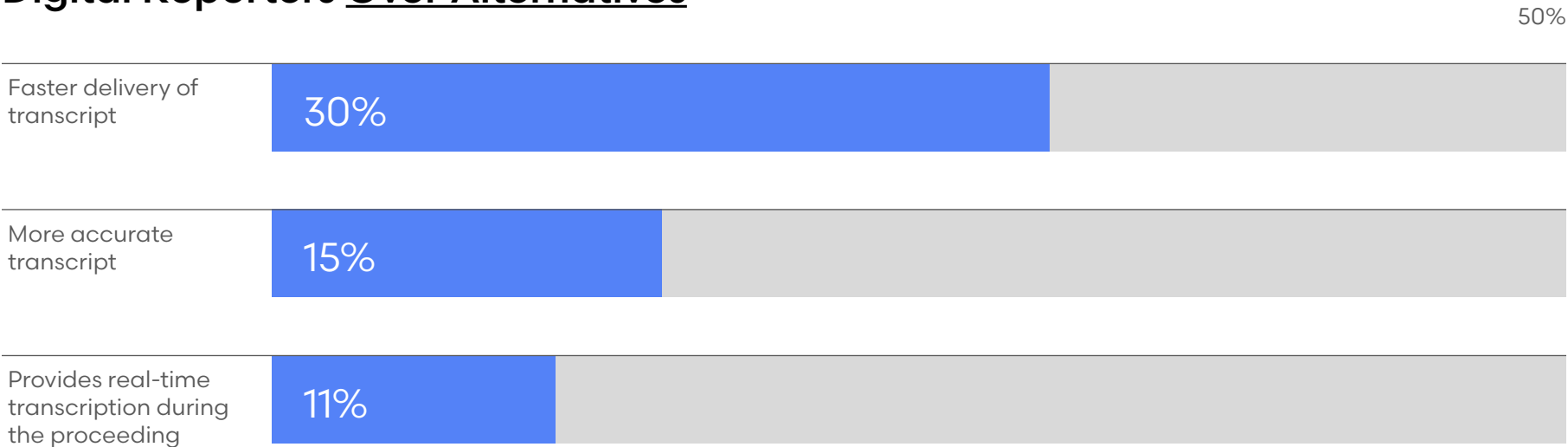
Digital Court Reporters Offer Consistent, On-Time Delivery & Efficiency

Consistent Delivery and On-Time Proceedings

Beyond the accuracy of court transcripts, digital court reporters are increasingly valued for their ability to deliver transcripts at a much faster pace than traditional stenographers. In the study, 30% agree that the faster delivery of transcripts is their primary reason for using digital court reporters. This consistent, on-time delivery not only improves the efficiency of legal proceedings but critically it ensures that with digital court reporters, proceedings can remain on schedule and without delay due to a potential lack of available stenographers.

4. Digital Court Reporters Offer Consistent, On-Time Delivery & Efficiency

End Users' Primary Reason for Choosing Digital Reporters Over Alternatives



Source: The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

4. Digital Court Reporters Offer Consistent, On-Time Delivery & Efficiency

Time Efficiency in Court Reporting

The consistent, on-time delivery of digital court reporter transcripts is a direct result of advancements in technology. Unlike stenographers, who must manually transcribe court proceedings, digital court reporters can quickly generate draft transcripts, significantly reducing the time required to produce a finished document. This speed, thanks to workflow efficiencies and integrated tooling, is particularly beneficial in high-volume environments, where rapid access to transcripts is crucial.

Meeting Client Expectations for Fast Turnarounds

The ability to quickly provide transcripts is a critical factor in client satisfaction, as legal professionals often need immediate access to accurate records for case preparation, legal filings, or appeals. With a faster delivery process, digital court reporters help ensure that clients are not delayed by extended waiting periods for transcripts, which is often the case with traditional stenographers, especially when demand is high.

Competitive Advantage in a Demanding Market

The rapid delivery of transcripts through digital methods positions digital court reporters as an attractive option in an increasingly competitive market. As clients and law firms strive for faster resolutions, the ability of digital court reporters to provide transcripts efficiently adds value to their services, making them a viable alternative to traditional methods.

4. Digital Court Reporters Offer Consistent, On-Time Delivery & Efficiency

Key Takeaway

In addition to their proven accuracy, digital court reporters offer the valuable benefit of more efficient transcript delivery.

5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Enhancing Efficiency Through Digital Tools

As the court reporting industry faces challenges such as workforce shortages and increasing demand for quick, accurate transcripts, technology and digital solutions are playing a critical role in addressing these issues.

Two-thirds of end users have a positive view of technology's role in the industry, perhaps because stenographers already use recording software. Digital tools, including automated transcription software utilizing ASR-driven speech recognition technology, have the potential to significantly improve efficiency in the transcription process.

5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Gartner estimates the global legal technology market will reach \$50 billion in value by 2027.

Leaders in the space must consider new technologies to stay at the forefront.

“As various business functions pursue automation, legal leaders may find themselves facing some tough questions from senior leadership if they haven’t evaluated (technology’s) potential. New technologies can fundamentally change the way legal organizations do business.”

Chief of Research in Gartner Legal, Risk, and Compliance practice.

“ I generally believe technology will have a positive impact on the industry”

Court Reporting Providers



Users of Court Reporters



Sources: Gartner Predicts the Global Legal Technology Market Will Reach \$50 Billion by 2027
The Brand Consultancy Quantitative Survey fielded Q4 2024

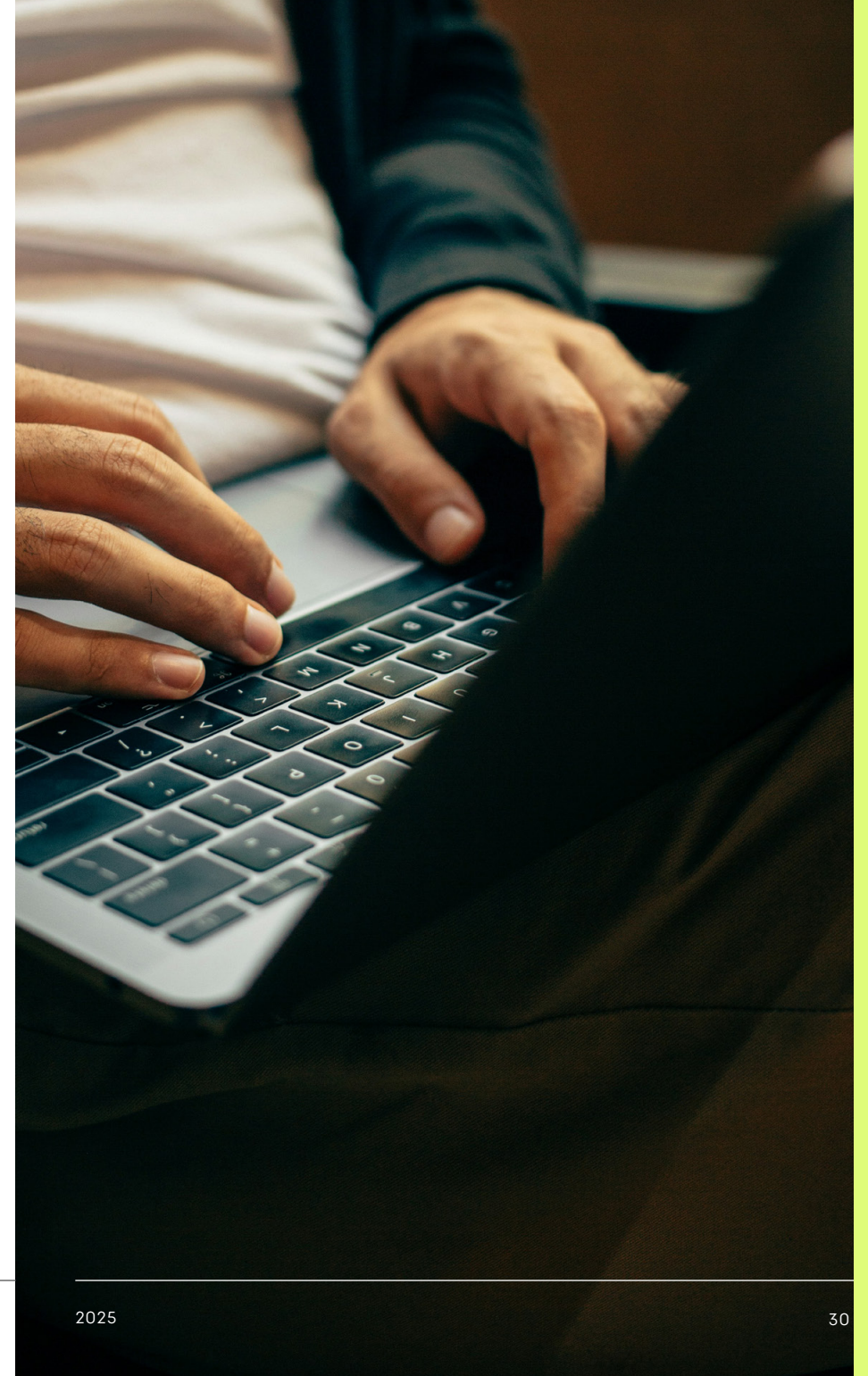
5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Greater Efficiency

One of the key benefits of adopting digital and technological solutions in court reporting is efficiency as automation can provide rough transcripts—which can later be refined by professionals—very quickly. As the shortage of stenographers continues and the supply of digital court reporters increases, digital tools provide a pathway for reporters to handle a greater volume of work, boosting the overall capacity for the industry. These efficiencies will only increase over time as technology advances. It's clear that digital advancements in automation, AI, and remote reporting will continue to support the industry.

Improving Accuracy and Speed

Technology also contributes to both the accuracy and speed of court reporting. Automated systems and digital recording devices can capture proceedings in real time, minimizing human error and increasing consistency. Additionally, the ability to quickly produce digital transcripts allows for faster delivery to clients, a crucial factor in today's fast-paced legal environment.



5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Improved, Cloud-Based Storage

More than one in three users mention backup or redundancy capture as a reason why they prefer digital reporters.

“Developments in cloud computing are making it easier to store and access digital files. This technology allows courts to maintain secure, centralized databases of court records that can be accessed remotely by authorized parties. As more courts adopt these technologies, digital court reporting will likely become the standard for creating, storing, and managing legal records.”⁵

Advancing Remote Reporting and Virtual Proceedings

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for digital solutions in the court reporting industry, particularly with the rise of virtual proceedings. Technologies such as video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet) and cloud-based storage systems have enabled court reporting to continue seamlessly even when participants cannot be in the same physical location. These tools ensure that proceedings can be recorded and transcribed remotely, expanding access and flexibility in the industry.

⁵ RLresources.com

“The Role of Digital Court Reporting Technology in Modern Courtrooms”

5. Technology Can Enhance the Industry

Key Takeaway

Technology and digital tools are becoming indispensable in the court reporting industry, offering solutions that improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility. As the demand for fast and accurate transcripts grows, digital advancements in automation, AI, and remote reporting will continue to support the industry.

Key Steps to Consider

- 1. Identify key technologies and familiarize yourself with the latest offerings: practice management software, document automation tools, etc.
- 2. Develop a strategic road map which identifies tech business objectives and timelines for evaluation and implementation.
- 3. Create a continuous feedback loop to understand the successes or failures of technology and identify what is and isn't working.

Conclusion

The court reporting industry is at a pivotal moment, with a growing shortage of stenographers creating significant challenges in scheduling, cost, and overall operational efficiency. This shortage is impacting not only the health of the court reporting industry, but also the full functioning of the legal system. However, this gap in the workforce presents an opportunity for growth and innovation. The rise of digital court reporters has already begun to alleviate some of these pressures, offering a viable alternative that not only maintains high standards of accuracy but also increases the speed and efficiency of transcription. As technology continues to improve, digital court reporters are expected to play an increasingly prominent role.

Looking forward, the industry has the opportunity to embrace digital tools and technological advancements that can enhance both efficiency and accuracy. Automated transcription software, speech recognition, and remote reporting are all shaping the future of court reporting, allowing for faster delivery of transcripts and expanded reach for services. By leveraging these technological solutions while also ensuring state laws and regulations are updated to help the industry more easily accept digital methods, the court reporting business can meet the growing demand for accurate, timely, and cost-effective services, ensuring that it remains adaptable and sustainable in a rapidly changing legal landscape.



About The Brand Consultancy

The Brand Consultancy is a full-service independent consulting firm delivering outcome-focused, research-driven brand strategy for over 30 years. Their team of seasoned experts works with clients across a variety of sectors, including mid-market and large enterprise companies, associations, and nonprofits. Through a collaborative approach and a commitment to excellence, the company delivers strategy grounded in data to provide tailored solutions that resonate with key audiences and drive growth.

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About the Sponsor

Founded in 1993, The American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers (AAERT) provides education and certification for professionals engaged in digital reporting, transcribing, and associated roles. AAERT seeks to create a court reporting industry where all court reporters, regardless of their method used to make the record, are certified and have equal access to provide their much-needed services to the legal system. The organization is growing rapidly—in a space where the average professional association grows 5% a year, AAERT has increased its membership by 20%.

