e-CourtReporter Presents:

e-Tips Newsletter

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"Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of."
Benjamin Franklin

Wil Wilcox: Editing PDF Files
Keith Vincent: An Affordable 30” HDTV-Ready LCD Monitor

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Wil’s e-Tip

Editing PDF Files

Now that we have the capability to create PDF files of our transcripts that maintain the exact layout of the originals, you may ask, "How do you convert a PDF transcript into a format that a proofreader or a scopist can edit, such as a Microsoft Word document or an RTF file?" The best solution is with a software program called ScanSoft PDF Converter 2 which is a Microsoft Word 2003 plug-in. PDF Converter 2 retails for just $49.99. Of course, if you have the time, money or inclination to buy a more expensive and complex program, with the full version of Adobe Acrobat Professional, you can edit PDF files as well, but it will set you back $449, almost 10 times as much.

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a faster turnaround time on your transcripts. This has the potential to save reporters, scopists, proofreaders and agency owners and court administrators a lot of time and money. Our jobs just got a lot easier with the addition of the very user-friendly and powerful program, PDF Converter 2.

**Keith's e-Tip**

**An Affordable 30” HDTV-Ready LCD Monitor**

In November 2002 at the Comdex expo in Las Vegas, I saw a prototype of a 30" LCD Monitor/HDTV by Viewsonic. I really liked the idea of having a large flat-panel computer monitor with simultaneous picture-in-picture viewing for TV broadcasts. I could imagine a captioner buying a single screen for watching a broadcast and captioning with Eclipse AccuCap. What I couldn't imagine was paying the projected $3,000 price tag.

Two years later, I came across forecasts that the prices for LCD displays of 30" or greater would fall 30 percent as Taiwan shifts production to larger screens. When my old computer monitor started dying, that was all I needed to start shopping. Plus, my birthday was coming up. Could there have been any clearer sign that it was meant to be? Well, the holidays will soon be here. So I'll pass on what I've found, just in case you're writing your letter to Santa.

I actually did purchase a 30" Viewsonic unit for $1750. Beautiful, but with one fatal flaw. It did not let you listen to what was viewed in the picture-in-picture (PIP) window. I then tried out a 32" Samsung unit. It did allow listening to the PIP window. As a TV, it was outstanding; as a computer display, it was unexceptional. Plus, it cost $3500.

To make a long story short, the ideal display for me has proven to be the 30" Westinghouse Digital W33001. Phenomenal picture quality, outstanding PIP features, and connections for just about any device you can think of. I found it at Best Buy for $1999, but I've seen it on the Internet for as little as $1679 (plus $35 for shipping). You can use this link and then "Search" for "W33001": [http://store.yahoo.com/nextpowerusa/](http://store.yahoo.com/nextpowerusa/)
Now for the details.

**Westinghouse Digital W33001**

Width: 34.8" Height: 21.1" Depth: 4.0" (8.0" with base)  
Weight: 40 lbs.  
Screen: 25.4" wide, 15.3" high, 30" diagonal  
Optimal Screen Resolution: 1280x768  
Built-in dual tuners for picture-in-picture display  
Built-in stereo speakers

A display of this size and resolution gives you a lot of options. Here's just one setup. I've given about two thirds of the screen to Total Eclipse, nicely magnified. That's about 16.5" wide, 14.5" high, 21.5" diagonal. That leaves room in a corner of the screen for a PIP TV window - 7.5" wide, 4.5" high, 8.5" diagonal. Plus, there's still room on the Windows desktop to display E-mail or some other program -- 9" wide, 9.5" high, 13" diagonal.

The Westinghouse Digital W33001 has by far the best picture-in-picture features I've seen in any LCD display. Consider the options:

**PIP** - 2 live displays. The smaller window can be positioned in a corner of your screen or in the very center. You can also choose the size of the PIP window -- 30, 40, 50, 60, 75. The largest setting (18.5"x11.25"x21.5") is definitely too big for my taste. However, I can certainly see a captioner loving this level of control over the PIP window.

**Split Screen** - 2 live displays, side by side, each 12.1"x7.5"x14".

**Pop 3** - That is, 1 large live display (17"x10.5"x19.5") plus 3 small screens (8.5"x5"x9.5" each) that continuously take snapshots of three additional channels that you want to follow.

**Pop 12** - That is, 1 large live display in the center of your screen (12.5"x7.5"x14.5"), surrounded by 12 small screens (6.25"x3.75"x7" each) that continuously take snapshots of additional channels that you want to follow.

If you'd like more information, here's a link to the manufacturer's website. There you can even download the full user's manual in PDF format. Like any manual, it could be more complete. Some features I stumbled on when I was trying out every button on the remote control. Still, it's nice to have access to this information before you purchase.

I should mention that to take advantage of 1280x768 widescreen resolution, I did have to update the drivers for my computer's video card. That didn't take too much hunting within Windows' advanced display settings. There I found a link to the website for my video card's manufacturer and ultimately a place to download driver updates.

Just a few years ago, you could easily spend $1700 for an average-sized flat-panel display. $1700 is less than what you'd pay for a good notebook computer. Now the same price will buy something much larger that can even be used for high-definition TV. That's definite progress.

Who Are We?

Wil Wilcox is a freelance court reporter in Los Angeles, California, and has been a technology consultant for reporters since 1995. Since 1998, he and Robert Denos have been the Advantage Software representatives for Southern California.

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Robert Denos is the manager and event coordinator for e-CourtReporter, LLC.

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