

CHOOSING A SETUP

- by Pat Gardiner

So, you have been practicing in your church and building up your "church" dictionary. You are now ready to take the plunge and actually start providing CART/captioning for maybe one person in your church or perhaps for your entire congregation. But, wait a minute! And next comes the question we are most frequently asked:

Q. What setup should I use, and how do I set up?

Several reporters/captioners that have in the past or are presently providing CART/captioning for a church, kindly share their setups.

Included in this article are brief overviews of the following setups:

- (1) using court reporting software and a laptop/desktop;
- (2) providing CART from a laptop/desktop to a television monitor;
- (3) using a projector;
- (4) providing CART/captioning remotely; and
- (5) using video, captions, and an encoder or character generator.

1) If you are already realtining in court, depositions, etc., the same setup might work well for you in a church service, letting one or two congregants sit beside you and view your screen. You need to be thinking about and discussing with the Pastor an appropriate place to set up. Will you sit in the front pew? Or, you might find that a table and chair works better for you, depending on what is available at the church.

(2) You might consider providing CART, going from your laptop onto a television monitor located somewhere in the sanctuary. Although Andrea Green, CSR, RMR, CRR, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, in Carrollton, Texas, now uses captioning software and an encoder, she did start out by providing CART at her church.

Charles Intravaia, the tech person at Andrea's church, explains: "Andrea originally used a laptop computer and took the VGA output to a scan converter. (ULTIMATE-Grand 2000, and it changes the VGA scan from the computer scan lines to the TV scan lines.)

"The scan converter output was sent to a VCR line input and the VCR output was sent through a coax cable to the TV's antenna cable input on Channel 3. At this point we were only operating one TV set using the CART system."

Joyce Malone, CCR, RPR, at Second Baptist Church in Warner Robins, Georgia, tells us: "I am on Eclipse and right now I sit on the front pew with a large TV monitor up front that I realtime to. I'm not actually captioning like on TV. I have the font at a large size and have what I think are not too many lines on the screen at once."

(3) Michael Buie, RPR, CRR, CCP, Susan Hahaj, RPR, and Jerry Callaway, RPR, RMR, RDR, CRR, CPE, at Fellowship Bible Church North, in Plano, Texas, use a setup using a projector. Michael says, "All three of us at our church are on CATalyst and connect from our computer into an AverKey which allows the image on the drop-down screen to be moved around to fit perfectly. In other words, what comes up on the computer screen just captures part of

the computer screen. But when it appears on the drop-down screen, it can be manipulated.

"From the AverKey, it's connected to a video projector (not a digital projector). Ours is a dinosaur, but it works well. The big difference is that the clarity (pixil level) is lower than other machines because of its age. Most importantly, this is much more economical for churches especially, many of whom, it seems, have these things gathering dust in a closet or stored in a classroom somewhere. We project onto a 4x8 drop-down screen, and we're rollin'.

"I find for large groups this works well as long as it is in line with the speaker or not a great distance away. They MUST be able to watch the speaker and quickly glance back to the text in order to get emotion, inflection, prevent neck strain, etc.

"If you're projecting to a television, you use another AverKey, this time to convert the digital image to video (this AverKey may be different from the one mentioned previously). If you have only a few people you're CARTing for, this TV setup works well. If you have only one person, all you may need is your laptop. As your group grows, you may be able to link TVs.

Beth Frazier, RPR, CRR, CCR, using a projector found at her church, provided CART for Smyrna Church of Christ in Smyrna, Tennessee. She has some great tips to consider if you are going to be using a projector. She sat in the front pew with the projector behind her and projected high enough so that people couldn't "walk through it" -- something to be very careful about, Beth says. Also, the wall had a slight curve or slant to it, so

it took some adjusting with the projector's display functions to get it just right.

Beth tells us, "I did not use any special software to enlarge the text, but I used the display functions with my software to get the letters as large as possible and, of course, used all caps. Although larger text would have been preferred, I think this worked fine and even people in the back rows (provided they had relatively good or corrected vision) could read the text with no problem."

Monette Benoit, B.Ba, CRI, CPE, realtimed to a large screen in 1993 for the St. Frances Di Paola Catholic mass dedicated to the Deaf community in San Antonio, Texas. Monette explained, "After consulting with the Deaf community, I realtimed to a large screen near the priest and sign interpreter. This permitted each member of the church to listen and to watch the sign interpreter and/or CART display.

"Most important, the large screen avoided asking people to sit in a specific area. This was important to children, teens and adults who wanted to sit 'with' friends, family. Often the congregation followed the text, even though many did not have a hearing 'challenge'. They enjoyed hearing and seeing the 'Word of God'. The screen permitted individuals with attention deficit, low reading levels, dyslexia, to 'fit in' and to avoid designated areas.

"Some people watched the screen looking for mistakes, hoping each would be funny. Children counted my errors out loud as they checked their spelling skills. They would sit in the front pews

to see if I was correctly spelling the words. The sign interpreters, visiting guests and our priest would often look to the large screen if they did not 'hear' a word. In short, I found the large screen to be a win-win for everyone."

The equipment Monette used was her steno-machine; software with the ability to edit on-line (Advantage Software, Eclipse); realtime cables, both long and short; notebook computer; overhead projector; LCD projection panel; and a portable screen. She tells us the overhead projector was placed on a pew with two legs on the floor and the two shorter legs placed in the pew to accommodate the viewing.

(4) Are you perhaps thinking of providing CART/captioning remotely? Perhaps the distance to the church is just too great. Edgar Payne, whom at the time attended Memorial Park Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, wrote a very informative article on providing CART/captioning onsite or remotely and you will find that in the Nov.-Dec. 01 issue of the JCR. The article is also on the web site at ncraonline.org.

(5) As mentioned earlier, Andrea Green started out by providing CART, and sending the words to a television monitor, but she tells us, "Now I use captioning software, through an encoder, sending to four televisions. The main difference is now there is a picture of the pulpit/preacher with the words underneath, like regular captions. Before, no picture, just text to TV."

Her tech person, Chuck, further explains, "Several months ago, we converted to a system that actually uses a closed caption system and a regular PC. However, the converter needs a fundamental frequency to transmit the caption signal to the TV sets. This is

done with the input of a camcorder video signal of the Church Altar (which also displays any activity in the Altar area) and the closed caption rides that signal to the TV set. We are now also using the Video Input on the TV set for better clarity.

"We have the caption system running through an A-B switch so that our PowerPoint presentation of the song lyrics and the sermon notes at our Praise Service can be displayed when Andrea isn't captioning the speaking parts of the service. We are now feeding three TV sets with the closed caption signal. We think that we have ironed out the 'bugs' that originally 'bugged' us."

Denise Agard, CSR(A), Joanne Anderson, CSR, RPR, Phyllis Doel, CSR, Diane LeBlanc, CSR, Caroline Sebastian, CSR, and Terry Wood, CSR, RPR, provide captioning using a character generator at New Life Church in Milton, Ontario, Canada.

They use captioning software, and both the captions from the laptop and the feedline from the video from the church cameras are connected to a character generator. The character generator combines the two together and directs them onto the proper lines on two television monitors in the sanctuary, and one television monitor in the nursery. (It's hard to hear when babies are crying, and captions come in handy!)

If you are looking for a desk for your setup, consider asking a local college. New Life Church asked Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario, to build them a desk, giving the college the specifications. The students generously built the desk, at no cost to the church.

I want to thank each person that has shared their setup for this article. Each one has kindly said you may contact them directly for more details on their particular setup.

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When thinking about setup, take into account the equipment at the church, and maybe the equipment you own as well. Work as closely as you can with the church technician or, if the church does not have one, seek the assistance of your software support people, a local computer shop or perhaps Radio Shack, and ask them what cabling and connectors you will require.

In conclusion, there almost always are "bugs" to be ironed out with any setup, so patiently work through them -- and remember -- others have done it and so can you!

JCR Contributing Editor Pat Gardiner is from Milton, Ontario, Canada. For more information on providing CART/captioning for a church, go to www.captioningtheword.com and/or e-mail plgardiner@hotmail.com for a package of information to be mailed to you.