CCRA online

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CCRA online

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CCRA
California Court Reporters Association

Advancing our profession for over 100 years.

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CCRA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the California Court Reporters Association is to advance the profession of verbatim shorthand reporting by promoting professional reporting excellence through education, research, and the use of state-of-the-art technology; establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice; and advocating before legislative and regulatory bodies on issues which impact the judicial system and others served by the court reporting profession of California.

President's Message — Let's Think About Technology

By Carolyn Dasher, CSR, RPR
CCRA President

As we move into the new year, let's think about technology. With our state budget in the mess it's in and the threat of alternative electronics replacing court reporters in the California courts, let us remember how our CAT systems have progressed and continue to lead the way in depositions and court proceedings.

Our technology allows judges, attorneys, and hearing-impaired litigants to read the written record simultaneously with the judicial proceedings. No electronically produced recording can achieve that feat.

Reporters around the state electronically produce and deliver daily transcripts before they head home to their families. Utilizing the wireless Internet, reporters are able to research faster and become more time efficient.

The advanced technology that is used by us makes us the most proficient and cost-effective way to produce the written record.

Our CAT software continues to progress. The new continuing education requirement by the court motivates officials to learn more about our software features. Our CAT classes at our annual convention in October will provide you the opportunity to learn in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

In February, CCRA will host its second California Action Team Training. We want to help you understand the issues facing the reporting community. You can learn how you can help save our profession.

It may not be an easy year, but let's make it fun and productive by learning together. Let's work together to educate others about how we do our jobs. Let's make 2010 a year to remember and do the best we can in what we do: report and preserve the record.

Carolyn J. Dasher

www.cal-ccra.org

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The Case of the Missing Gigabytes

Q. I have a Dell, 160GB hard drive. While checking the size of the drive in My Computer, I discovered that my C: drive has three partitions: a 71MB, a 4.27GB, and a 144.67GB. Adding those three together, I get a little over 149GB, so there seems to be approximately 10GB missing. Where did it go?

A. The apparent discrepancy is caused by differences in the units of measure associated with megabytes and gigabytes, one unit being rounded off, and the other not being rounded off. (Anybody getting a headache yet? If not, keep reading.)

Disk capacity is measured using decimal kilobytes (KB), megabytes (MB), and gigabytes (GB). In decimal units, 1KB equals one thousand bytes, 1MB equals one million bytes, and 1GB equals one gazillion bytes — okay, okay, just kidding. It equals one trillion bytes. But for file sizes, memory, and just about everything else computer related, for some strange, mysterious, and eternally confusing reason, we use binary kilobytes, megabytes, and gigabytes. In binary units, 1 KB equals 1,024 bytes, 1MB equals 1,048,576 bytes, and 1GB equals 1,073,741,824 bytes.

To convert your disk's 160GB decimal to binary units used by the rest of Windows, you have to divide by 1.073741824. Let me see if I can do it in my head. Nope. Not a prayer. Breaking out the official Mr. Modem simulated plastic slide rule (with faux Naugahyde sheath), the result is approximately 149GB — which is close enough to what you calculated. So when all is said and done, there really are no missing gigabytes. Mystery solved.

Q. I've been a subscriber of your excellent weekly newsletter for years, but I've never seen this question addressed: I suffer from RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury), so I have to find keyboard shortcuts for most of what I do at the computer. When reading articles online, every Web site requires a mouse to click the "Next Page" link. How can I move to the next page by keystroke instead of mouse click?

A. Using the Web pretty much assumes you are using a mouse, though that does pose a problem for many people in your situation. There is a way around it, however, by pressing the TAB key. Repeatedly pressing the TAB key will move from one link on the page to the next. When it reaches the link you want (such as "Next Page"), press ENTER to execute the action. SHIFT+TAB reverses direction through the links which may be faster if the link you're targeting is near the bottom of the page. Pressing the END key takes you to the bottom of a page; the HOME key takes you to the top.

Q. I have one telephone line and dial-up access to the Internet. Is there a way for me to be notified of an incoming call while I'm online, so I can go offline and answer the phone?

A. BuzMe.com (www.buzme.com) is a service that will display a window when an incoming call arrives, so you can then decide whether to accept the call or reject it. There are several BuzMe services available that range in price from $14.99 per year to $47.90 per year. The BuzMe Notify service provides notification of incoming calls. Complete information can be found on the BuzMe.com Web site.

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Q. Sometimes I receive an email of an appointment in Outlook. Is there a way to forward this to myself on a certain day so that when I open my email, it will serve as a reminder?

A. After you compose or prepare to forward a message, instead of clicking Send, click the Options button (on the Send menu bar). Under Delivery Options select "Do not deliver before:" Date/Time options will appear from which you can select and schedule the date and time when the message should be sent. Close the Options menu, then send the message. The email will be saved in your Outbox and will be sent when the date and hour match the scheduled date and time selected.

Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month

AllMyFaves

A colorful, NASCAR-like search engine that includes what AllMyFaves considers to be the best sites in each of 41 categories. The categories aren't listed alphabetically, which would be helpful, but AllMyFaves gets an "A" for originality, regardless. Try it a few times and it will grow on you.
www.allmyfaves.com

Seafood Watch

A program of the Monterey Bay Aquarium (oh, the irony), created to raise consumer awareness about the importance of buying seafood from sustainable sources and to provide reliable fish facts to help us make informed purchases. Use the Seafood Search to find your favorite seafood's rating. Ratings range from "Good" to "Call the paramedics!" Each fish selected includes a consumer note, health alerts, and a summary. Hint: If you're planning to have giant scallops tonight, you might want to think twice about that. Ixnay on the allopsscay.
http://tinyurl.com/22r7zn

For plain-English answers to your questions by email, plus great computing tips, subscribe to Mr. Modem's award-winning WEEKLY newsletter. Subscribe using Promo Code 1046 and receive a free month with your six-month subscription! To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit www.MrModem.com

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Test Anxiety Guru's Program Helps Candidates Pass the CSR

By Benjamin Moss

Test Anxiety Guru, the leading provider of test anxiety reduction techniques, introduces a highly innovative program, designed to help prospective court reporters pass their oral and written Court Reporter exams.

The Certified Shorthand Reporter Exam or CSR is one of the most difficult certification examinations to pass. It is taken by professionals seeking to become Certified Court Reporters. What makes this exam so difficult is the oral section. Candidates are given a set of timed, court simulated exercises where every error made is counted against them. They need a 95% accuracy rate to pass. Candidates feel enormous amounts of stress to perform well and understand that minor amounts of nervousness or anxiety can spoil their performance.

Benjamin Moss, The Test Anxiety Guru, has been helping CSR candidates conquer this exam for the past 20 years during one to one sessions in his office. His new Test Anxiety Guru program has been refined and perfected to help test takers stay calm and focused in this highly stressful situation. His relaxation techniques not only help individuals stay calm he builds their confidence so they are mentally prepared to perform at their peak. Ben loves hearing back from the thousands of clients he has helped pass the CSR. As one client, Pauline Yokota, C.S.R. writes:

"I passed! It was my nerves that kept me from passing every other time — but this time was different. I was calm, focused and cool as a cucumber. Thank you Ben, I couldn't have done it without you."

For more information, please visit
http://www.testanxietyguru.com/CourtReporterExam/

About the Author:
Benjamin Moss has been in practice since 1989, specializes in enhancing test performance. Board Certified, Benjamin developed and refined his test-taking program during nearly 20 years of private, one on

one sessions with his clients. Benjamin now works with test-taking clients from all over the world, helping clients to pass exams in medicine, dentistry, law, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, accounting, real estate and computer science, as well as helping students with college and graduate school entrance exams. He works extensively with police officers and firemen to stay calm and focused for their professional exams.

Computerworld

Review: Track your stolen laptop for free with Prey

Prey's Open-source Notebook-tracking Service Involves a Few Compromises

By Howard Wen

Computerworld — If you're not worried about this when you're out in public with your laptop, you should be: What if someone steals your computer — and its precious data that comprises your digital personal and work life?

That's where tracking services such as LoJack for Laptops and GadgetTrak come in. You install a program on your notebook, and if it's stolen, these services can help track down and try to recover your computer — or at least disable it so the thief cannot access the contents of the hard drive. Most of these services require a monthly or annual subscription fee, ranging from $20 to $60 a year.

For the budget conscious, there are in fact a few free, open-source options for tracking a stolen notebook. Aside from the price tag, one reason you might want to use an open-source tracker over a commercial product is that you can examine the code to ensure it isn't doing anything shady with your private data, and compile it yourself.

A Matter of Trust

The big question, though, is the reliability and long-term stability of these free-to-use services. With a well-established company, you can feel pretty sure it will be around in two years if your laptop is stolen. But can you

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have the same confidence in a free alternative?

About a year ago, for instance, there were a lot of complaints that the University of Washington's free laptop-tracking service, called Adeona, wasn't working properly. As of this writing, the Adeona Web site actually advises people against downloading and using it. (A warning on the site says the network that the Adeona program uses to track notebooks is currently being tested.)

Then there's The LaptopLock, which apparently hasn't been updated since February 2007. You can still download the program and install it, and it appears to function. Yet is its tracking network being maintained? Is anybody minding the store? (I tried to contact the developers of The LaptopLock, but had not heard back from anyone by deadline.)

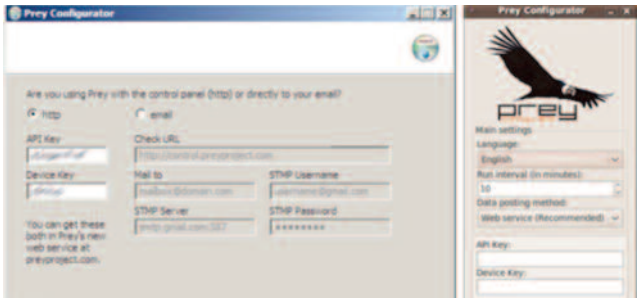
That leaves two free, open-source notebook tracking services standing: Prey and Pombo. Since Pombo works only with Linux, I'm focusing this review on Prey — which supports Windows, Mac OS X and Linux — as being useful to a much wider audience. Fortunately, not only does Prey look good and work well, it's in steady development by an active community that's improving and adding features to it.

On the downside, Prey doesn't have the resources to work with police to recover your laptop, as many paid services do. What's more, it provides no way to physically delete files from the stolen machine, and the tracking software can be removed by savvy thieves.

How Prey Works and a Major Weakness

Currently in version 0.3.3, the Prey tracking software runs in the background processes of your notebook. It "wakes" at a specified interval, goes online (if your laptop isn't already connected to the Internet, Prey tries to connect to the nearest open Wi-Fi access point) and checks in with a specified Web address to see what you have ordered it to do. If said address doesn't issue a command to the laptop (such as telling your computer that it is considered stolen), the Prey software returns to sleep and will wake up again at the next time interval.

If your laptop is stolen, you can use another computer to sign in to the Prey Web site, mark the laptop as missing, and follow the whereabouts of your purloined system through a control panel — assuming the thief takes your notebook online or the software manages to connect to a Wi-Fi access point.



Configuring the Prey software (Windows version on left, Linux version on right).

Be aware that the Achilles' heel of Prey — and many other notebook tracking services, whether free or paid — is that the tracking program itself can be stopped, removed or deleted if found by a tech-savvy thief. And, of course, the program will be useless if the thief simply reformats your laptop's hard drive.

This can be somewhat thwarted by going into your notebook's BIOS settings and disabling the option for the computer to boot from a USB device or network connection, and locking down access to the BIOS with a password. (I say "somewhat," because the thief could still physically remove the hard drive from your notebook, and access its contents by connecting it to another computer.)

Some of the paid notebook tracking programs are difficult to render inoperable because they are not written to your notebook's hard drive: LoJack for Laptops' software resides in the BIOS of your notebook, for example. Prey doesn't do this.

Control Your Stolen Laptop Through the Web

Interacting with your stolen notebook works one of two

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ways in Prey: In standalone mode, you get messages from your notebook by e-mail, but setting up remote-control operations can be cumbersome. Most people will want to use the service the second way, via a Web control panel on the Prey site. It's easier to set up than standalone mode, and makes it simpler to track and remotely control your notebook. This review focuses on the second way.

Using Prey's Web control panel.

The control panel features toggle settings that allow you to set up and run individual remote operations. This is all presented within a dead-simple, user-friendly interface. Through this panel, you can flag your notebook as missing. Then, if your notebook manages to "phone home," you can tell it to send you a report detailing the IP address it's connected to, command it to take a screenshot of the desktop, and, if your notebook has a built-in Webcam, take a snapshot to capture the image of the person using the computer. You can even send an instant message to the suspect to tell him you're watching him.

Prey Works as Advertised

I installed the Windows version of Prey's tracking software on an old Dell Inspiron 1300 laptop running Windows XP Home and on the Linux version on an Asus Eee PC 1005HA netbook running the Jolicloud Linux OS. Installation was a snap for both versions.

I quickly signed up for a free user account and registered my laptop and netbook on the Prey site. The site gave me an "API key" (a unique series of numbers and letters assigned to each user account) as well as two unique "device keys" — one each for the laptop and the netbook.

From this point on, I decided to test Prey with the Eee PC netbook since it has a built-in Webcam, handy for snagging photos of the thief. I entered my API key and the netbook's device key into the tracking software running on the netbook, then set the software's run interval (the number of minutes that pass before it wakes and tries to connect to the Internet) to 2 minutes. After this, there was nothing more I needed to do to configure the software.

A report from the "stolen" device.

All the major functions worked well when I tested them. I left the Eee, connected to the Internet and with the Prey program running, in my office. Then I took my other laptop with me to a coffeehouse, connected to the establishment's Wi-Fi, logged onto my account at the Prey Web site, and marked the Eee back in the office as missing.

Within 2 minutes, I received a report that correctly listed the IP address my Eee was connected to, the Eee's MAC address, a screenshot of the Eee's desktop, and a Webcam shot of my unoccupied office chair. So far, so good.

Then I realized that had my netbook really been stolen, there wasn't much I could actually DO from that point. Prey doesn't let you remotely erase your personal files as the Premium Edition of LoJack for Laptops does.

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You Have to Contact the Police

So once you have the information about the location of your laptop (or, as in my case, netbook) and a mug shot of the probable thief, what next? It's up to you to contact the authorities and convince them to take action based on this evidence. As you might predict, this could be difficult if you're out of your home jurisdiction — if, for instance, your notebook has been taken to another city, state or country, or if you lost it when you were traveling.

This is where a free service like Prey falls short. Its developers can't do the job of contacting the relevant authorities for you. Some paid services like LoJack for Laptops, on the other hand, have a support staff on call to do their best to get your notebook back with the authorities' help. That personal attention is what you're buying when you subscribe to certain paid tracking services.

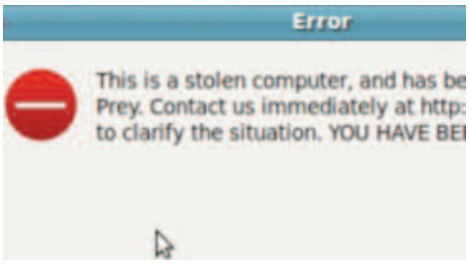
With Prey, and any other free service, all you can really do is stalk your notebook from afar. (Looking up the suspect and personally confronting him is, of course, not advised.) Prey's developers even advise you to be careful about sending messages to the thief, because constant harassment could lead to the person finding and disabling the Prey tracking program.

(And, yes, let's be up front here: Prey can be used for nefarious purposes. One could install it on another person's notebook without their knowledge or consent and track them. We strongly advise against this. But there can also be legitimate surveillance purposes for Prey, such as using it with your notebook's Webcam to keep an eye on your home or office while you're away.)

Can a Free Notebook Tracker Sustain Growth in User Base?

Since the software is given away for free and you are not charged for using its tracking service, a question arises as to how Prey can continue to operate over time, and how it will be able to handle growth in the number of users who rely on it. All the money this project receives presently comes from donations by its users.

Prey creator Tomás Pollak, responding in an e-mail, admitted that maintaining the scalability of Prey's tracking network has been a big challenge for him and his team, especially as more people sign up and use it. "We're serving approximately 10 million requests a day coming from Prey clients. The Web service is being constantly hit by different devices all over the world, minute by minute. Thankfully, I've had some experience building large Web sites, so we've managed to handle the load pretty well."



Sending an alert to the thief.

The team is looking to sell subscription plans to businesses. Pollak explained, "We've gotten a ton of requests from big organizations who want to use Prey on their whole set of machines, so we decided to offer them subscription-based plans."

Currently, a single user account on Prey can support up to three devices. Under Pollak's proposed business plan, you would have to pay a monthly fee to add more devices; pricing has yet to be determined. "We're still working on this and hopefully we're releasing it in the following weeks," said Pollak.

More Features, Smartphone Support, and Final Thoughts

Feature for feature, the current version of Prey matches what the $25-per-year GadgetTrak offers. So it's already on par with some paid tracking products.

Plans for the next version of Prey include providing Wi-Fi geolocation information for your notebook, an alarm system that will allow you to remotely trigger a loud siren, and the ability to erase sensitive data — like passwords stored in a Web browser — and personal files. This new version is being tested, but no release date has been set. Pollak said the team will also roll out a version for

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smartphones and other mobile handhelds, although he didn't state when this would happen other than "soon." Yet despite all these coming features, the ultimate weakness with Prey — and, it should be emphasized, any free tracking program — is that it's up to you to contact the proper authorities to try to recover your stolen notebook. A reliable, full-featured paid tracking service should have an on-call staff who have the expertise and know-how to do this for you.

So is using Prey better than using nothing at all? Of course. It's the best free notebook tracker, and hopefully Pollak and his team can keep their service running and offered gratis to individuals.

Still, it wouldn't hurt to also buy and use a security cable to add another layer of anti-theft protection for your notebook.

Cal-e-licious

By Gerie Bunch, SOS Committee Chair

SALMON AND ASPARAGUS WITH SAUVIGNON CREAM SAUCE

Ingredients:

4 (4oz) servings of salmon fillets
Cajun seasoning
1 large onion, chopped
½ bottle of Sauvignon Blanc,
(plus 1 glass for the cook!)
1 ¼ c. heavy cream
2 tsps. Mustard
Lemon juice (about 2 Tbls.)
Asparagus (about 20 – 25 spears)
Salt & Pepper

Preheat oven to 450. To prepare salmon, pull out any bones with needle-nosed pliers. Place skin side down on a greased baking dish and sprinkle with Cajun seasoning.

Simmer together Sauvignon Blanc and onion and reduce to just less than a cup. Strain and press onions to recover as much liquid as possible. Discard onion. Put wine liquid and cream into sauté pan and bring to a boil to reduce to a sauce consistency. Stir in mustard and lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste.

Snap tough bottoms off asparagus and steam until tender.

Cook salmon in hot oven for 8–10 minutes.

To serve, remove skin from salmon and place on top of the asparagus. Drizzle a little sauce over the salmon and around the plate. Garnish with dill and accompany with Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Gris. Serves 4.

Briefs Online

By Doreen Perkins

Looking for a quick brief for those hard-to-write words or common phrases? If you have a word or phrase that you would like a brief form for, let me know, and I will publish your requested brief in the next *CCRA Online*. If you have briefs that you would like to share with our members, please send them to Doreen Perkins, CortReptr1@aol.com or 1100 Van Ness, Dept. 50, Fresno, CA 93724-0002

During the current fiscal crises, you may find yourself being thrown into a criminal calendar, where you normally don't work, and the judge has his/her script down pat and recites it at 325 wpm. You will find these briefs very helpful.

Briefs to Share:

Admit	M-T	Plea agreement	PLAEMT or
Admitted	M-TD		PLAOEMT
Aggravated	GRAIGTD	Plea bargain	PLAOEB
Aggravated	GRAIGT	Police officer	PLEUFR or
Alcoholic beverage	KHOB		PLOFR
Assessment	SAEFMT	Present in custody	PRUND
Bench warrant	BARNT	Present out of custody	PRUD
Can you tell me in your own words	KMOURDZ	Prison	PRIZ
Can you tell me	CUMT	Probation report	PROERT
Change of plea	CHAIP	Probation	PROEBGS
Constitutional	KAOLGS	Pursuant	PAOURNT
Constitutional Rights	KAORTS	Release	RAL
County Jail	KAIL	Remand	RAND
Dangerous weapon	DWAP	Reside in _____ County unless	
Deadly weapon	DWEP	permission is granted in writing by the	
Dangerous or deadly weapons	DWAEPS	probation office to reside elsewhere	R-DZ/R-DZ
Direct your attention	DREN	Restitution	R-GS
Do you give up that constitutional right	DOUGTS	Security fee	SKAOUF
Do you give up that right	DOUGT	Special allegation	SPALGS
Electronic	L-K	State of California	STAIFL
Enhancement	HAEMT	State prison	STIN
Felon in possession	FLOEPBGS	Statute of limitations	STAFPT
Felon in possession of a firearm	FLARM	Statute	STAFP
Firearm	FAOIRM	Statutory	STOIFP
Good morning	G-M	Successful	SK-FL
Good morning, Your Honor	G-MS	The Court	T-KT
Good-conduct credit	G-KT	The defendant	T-D
Knowingly, intelligently and voluntarily	NOIF	The People	T-P
Last day for motions	LAFT/LAFT	Time estimate	TAOIMT
Mitigate	MAIGT	Waive time	W-FT
Mitigated	MAIGTD	Waiver of time	W-FRT
Modification	MOIFGS	Weapon	WEP
Obey all federal, state, and local laws	BAE/BAE	Work-time credit	W-KT
Parties ready to proceed	PRP or ROIP		
People of the State of California	PAFL		
Permission	PERGS		

A Parenthetical with An Appositive

By Margie Wakeman Wells
College of Court Reporting

An *appositive* is a noun or pronoun that renames another noun or pronoun.

I discussed it with my *friend* Susan before I did it.
We were alone only for a very short time — Bill and I.
Her brothers — she did not seem to go anywhere without *them*.

I spent the day with *Jason McIntyre*, the CEO, to try to move things forward.
We needed the help of his *wife*, JoAnn Norwood.
My *friend* Susan helped with that part of the project.

Sometimes, when a person wants to explain, reiterate, rename, or restate something — that is, he wants to use an appositive — he uses a parenthetical before the appositive.

...my family *doctor*, namely, Dr. Mallon...
...a most heinous *crime*, to wit, murder...
...in the *bedroom*, that is, in the master bedroom...
...on a *weekday*, for instance, on a Friday...
...*that he was here*, in other words, that he was present...

These are the expressions most commonly used before an appositive:

that is	*namely*
i.e.	*to wit*
for example	*in other words*
e.g.	*for instance*

RULE: When the parenthetical is followed by a fragment, use commas around the parenthetical.

I am sure it was a large car, that is, a sedan.
He was in desperate need of a specialist, namely, a surgeon.
She showed me the selections, e.g., the carpet samples.

RULE: When the parenthetical is followed by a complete sentence, put a semicolon in front of the parenthetical and a comma after it.

I am sure it was a large car; that is, it was a sedan.
He was in desperate need of a specialist; namely, he needed a surgeon.
She showed me the selections; e.g., I saw carpet samples.

RULE: When the parenthetical is followed by a list, put a colon in front of the parenthetical and a comma after it.

We toured four cities: that is, Reno, Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Tucson.
I sent it to them immediately: i.e., Jim, Bill, and Tony.
The tax errors were in several categories: e.g., supplies, travel, gifts.

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A Parenthetical with An Appositive

(continued from Page 14)

RULE: When the parenthetical is at the end of the sentence with the appositive and the entire element is removed from what the appositive renames, put a dash in front of the parenthetical and a comma after it.

I had a major headache when she called me into her office and was really having trouble concentrating — that is, a migraine.

He has been accused of a crime that is all too common in our society today — namely, grand theft auto.

That is exactly what we had discussed and settled on — that is, that he would pay off the loan in full by March 1.

RULE: When the parenthetical is in the middle of the sentence, put a dash before the parenthetical and a comma after it, and put a dash after the appositive.

I saw him early in the day — that is, around 7:30 — and did not see him again.
There were three — e.g., red, pink, and salmon — that she particularly liked.
I had several — i.e., John, Joe, or Harry — that I was going to recommend.

RULE: When a question is followed by a parenthetical, which is then followed by a second question or clarifying information, put an interrog after the question. Put a comma after the parenthetical and a period or an interrog at the end of the second element.

What time did this occur? That is, what time did he call?
Do you know the name he was using? In other words, his alias(?) OR (.)
Did he show you the line? For example, some of the power tools(?) OR (.)

Margie Wakeman Wells's book, Court Reporting: Bad Grammar/Good Punctuation, a guide to punctuating the court reporting transcript and a compilation of years of seminar information, is being released at the NCRA Midyear Convention in San Francisco in March, 2010. It will be available through the NCRA Online Store.