

TP Transcription - October 2025 - Celebrating 25 Years

Welcome to our Transcription News update. Our group of companies celebrate 25 years of trading with a special £25,000 donation to Cure Parkinson's, 10 lessons learnt from 25 years of business and Word Error Rates (WER) in transcription. You can read the entire content below or in PDF format at www.tptranscription.co.uk.

25 Years in Business - 10 Lessons Learnt

This month the Ten Percent Group of companies (which includes TP Transcription, TP Translations and University Transcriptions) celebrates 25 years since we started trading. We have worked in locations ranging from London to as far away as the Falkland Islands and with a diverse range of clients from government departments to world-famous rock bands. Since starting up we have stuck true to our value of donating 10% of our net profits to charity, with over £270,000 given away to date.

Here are 10 business lessons learnt in the last 25 years - usually the hard way!

Business is Hard Work

We thought setting up a business was the hard bit and the money would flow in. Global success, a Caribbean island and lots of time off was our 5 year plan! After a few years in business the reality sets in; although you can have a very comfortable existence owning your own business, it takes a lot more than just trading to ever enjoy a level of success that leads on to a path of riches. Running a business is hard work and consumes a lot of your time.

Money Doesn't Buy Happiness

We work with clients who are on the path to untold wealth - expansion, huge plans for the future, large bank loans, financial backing - and you can hear the stress in their voices. Happiness (we think) comes from a good work life balance and doing things you enjoy.

Be Yourself

Our USP is our uniqueness as a business. Trying to be something else or like someone else never works. Be yourself and make sure your clients know what you stand for, whether this is (for example) personal service, efficiency, or being realistic at all times.

Stick to Your Principles

Clare & Jonathan Fagan set up the Ten Percent Group in 2000. Like anyone else going into business, we wanted to make lots of money and never have to work again. At the same time though we thought that it wouldn't matter much if we donated a bit of our money to charity (10%) and what a great idea it was to call ourselves Ten Percent!

We have stuck with this through thick and thin, partly because we do genuinely believe in philanthropy but also partly because we are both incredibly stubborn. We said we'd donate 10% to charity and that's exactly what we've done for 25 years. Its difficult at times, but philanthropy is rewarding and you do get to fund some amazing charities doing wonderful things.

All of our companies donate to our charitable trust, without exception. The principle has stayed the same throughout; business can be a force for good and making money is not necessarily a bad thing.

Charity Donations Are Not Good For Business

To date we have donated just over £270,000 to charities across the U.K. and Africa. We are a group of companies with a turnover the same as most small-medium law firms, with a similar sized staff team. When we write articles about charity donation, I usually include a quick note to dispel a few myths.

Is there a tax benefit to donating? No.

Do we get any financial benefit from donating? No.

Business is More Than Making Money

We've realised over time that success in business is more than just making money. It's about giving staff a job and a career, it's about helping clients and it is of course about enjoying your own life. When you forget these things, business becomes an unpleasant place to be.

Work with Clients You Like

There are a lot of good people out there to work with. We love working with these clients; we want to do the best we can and help them by providing our services.

Try to Avoid 'Horrible' Clients

Get over the concept as quickly as you can that there is no such thing as a bad customer. There most definitely is! We try to avoid them at all costs. Clients rarely believe me when we say that there are certain medium sized law firms in the UK who appear to actually have a policy of not paying their suppliers unless court proceedings are issued.

Ronseal is Right

We like the Ronseal motto – always do exactly what you say you'll do. If you say you will phone a client on a particular day at a particular time, do it. If you promise a turnaround time of 7 days, make sure you return the transcription in 7 days.

Have a Plan

This is the one piece of advice we are not very good at sticking to. Have a plan with your business; where do you want to be in 5, 10 or 20 years' time and what do you need to do in order to get there? We want to travel; but how do we get our business into a position where we can effectively be digital nomads and travel at the same time? If you are looking to retire when you are 50 years old, how much money do you need to amass in your pension or assets, or have you got a fully functioning business that runs without your involvement?

Thank You

Finally a big thank you to all the clients who have used us over the years and kept our business going. Whether you signed up with us because you liked the concept of supporting charity through business, or you use our services because of our professionalism (or you accidentally found us online), it doesn't matter. Thanks to you, we are still going strong. Here's to another 25 years in business!

Jonathan Fagan, Founder Ten-Percent Group

The Ten Percent Group donates £25,000 to Cure Parkinson's

A Milestone of Giving: Ten Percent Group Marks 25 Years with a £25,000 Gift to Cure Parkinson's.

To commemorate 25 years in business, the group's charitable arm — the Ten Percent Foundation — has donated £25,000 to Cure Parkinson's, the UK charity dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease. This is our largest donation to date.

For us, this isn't just philanthropy; it's personal.



TP Transcription directors meeting the team at Cure Parkinson's in London in October 2025, following our £25k donation to the ProbucoL project. Jonathan Fagan, Founder of TP Transcription, is also running the 2026 London marathon in support of the charity.

A Donation For Memory

The Ten Percent Foundation has supported Cure Parkinson's annually since 2017. This year's £25,000 donation, however, holds special poignancy. One of the Foundation's trustees, John Fagan, passed away in 2016 after living with Parkinson's. His memory continues to inspire the group's ongoing commitment to the cause.

"This donation means more to us than simply celebrating 25 years in business," said Jonathan Fagan, founder of the Ten Percent Group. "It honours John's memory and supports a cause we care about deeply. From the beginning, our goal has been to show that business can be a force for good. Giving 10% of our profits to charity is part of that. But this donation is special – it's about family, memory, and hope."

Jonathan and Clare Fagan, founders of the Ten Percent Group, along with trustees Anna Gresty and Jeremy Fagan, recently visited Cure Parkinson's' London headquarters. There, they met with the charity's team to learn more about the research their donation will support.

Supported Project – ProbucoL: Slowing Parkinson's

The ProbucoL and Chlorogenic Acid Project is part of Cure Parkinson's International Linked Clinical Trials (iLCT) Pipeline Research Acceleration Programme. This initiative supports early-

stage studies that have the potential to move promising treatments closer to clinical testing for people with Parkinson's disease.

The project, led by Dr Poonam Thakur and her team at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Thiruvananthapuram, began in April 2024. It aims to uncover whether two compounds — probucol and chlorogenic acid — could protect dopamine-producing brain cells from damage, potentially slowing or stopping Parkinson's progression. The Ten Percent Foundation donation has gone towards filling a funding shortfall in the project. Probutol is a medication used to treat high cholesterol. It has been found to potentially reduce inflammation and improve issues with cell energy production.

The total cost of the project has been £128,000 and will take 2.5 years. It started in January 2024.

First Cure Parkinson's Project in India

This study is notable for being Cure Parkinson's first funded project in India, reflecting the charity's commitment to international collaboration. It is also bridging the gap between preclinical findings and real-world therapies. If the results confirm that probucol is safe, brain-active, and neuroprotective, it may well become a strong candidate for future clinical trials in people living with Parkinson's.

Cure Parkinson's: A UK Charity with a Global Vision

Founded in 2005 by four people living with Parkinson's, including one diagnosed at just 26 years old, Cure Parkinson's was born from frustration that research into treatments to slow or halt Parkinson's was being neglected. A lot of research was being spent on alleviating symptoms. Leading neurological surgeons advised the founders that they were wasting their time looking for a cure. Two decades later, that determination has evolved into a powerful international movement.

The charity has since invested more than £25 million in research projects worldwide, funding work that pushes the boundaries of neuroscience and drug discovery. Their goal is to find new treatments that can slow, stop, or reverse Parkinson's.

Unlike organisations that focus on symptom relief, Cure Parkinson's pursues what they call disease-modifying therapies — treatments that target the root causes of the condition. The charity has recently enjoyed backing from music legends Black Sabbath, who pledged part of the proceeds from Ozzy Osbourne's final concert to Parkinson's research.

Parkinson's: The Facts

Parkinson's affects around 153,000 people in the UK, and every hour, two more people are diagnosed. It is the fastest-growing neurological condition in the world.

While medications can help manage tremors and stiffness, no current therapy can halt the disease's progression.

The average age of diagnosis is around 60, but up to one in 20 people are diagnosed before 50, with some cases emerging even earlier.

The condition affects movement, balance, and coordination, often accompanied by anxiety, fatigue, and cognitive changes.

A Partnership with Purpose

Helen Matthews, CEO of Cure Parkinson's, expressed deep gratitude for the Ten Percent Foundation's ongoing commitment:

"We are so grateful for the support from the Ten Percent Group, which they give in honour of John, one of their trustees who passed away with Parkinson's. Their £25,000 donation to mark their 25th anniversary is especially significant. Their continued support is helping us accelerate research that will stop, slow or reverse Parkinson's."

The relationship between Cure Parkinson's and the Ten Percent Group is an example of how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can create lasting, global impact. Clare Fagan reflected on this ethos:

"We are only a small group of companies with a turnover of £1 million. But does it matter? We don't think so. Whatever size a company is, we can all make a difference to the communities around us through charitable giving."

Cure Parkinson's continues to push scientific frontiers, with new clinical trials and research collaborations expanding across Europe and beyond. Their mission — to conquer Parkinson's in our lifetime — is ambitious but not impossible. Every donation, from individuals to SMEs like the Ten Percent Group, accelerates that mission. Each pound funds the next study, the next breakthrough, the next glimmer of hope for people living with Parkinson's.

Further Information

Cure Parkinson's website - <https://cureparkinsons.org.uk/>

Ten Percent Foundation website - <https://tenpercentfoundation.org/a-milestone-of-giving-ten-percent-group-marks-25-years-with-a-25000-gift-to-cure-parkinsons/>

What is this all about?

TP Transcription Limited and TP Translations Limited donate 10% of annual net profits to charity via the Ten Percent Foundation, a charitable trust set up by our group of companies to distribute monies to charities in the UK and Africa. We have been doing this for over 25 years. The Foundation never incurs any administration costs (other than Triodos bank charges, which are minimal). All monies donated are distributed to charities and community organisations. www.tenpercentfoundation.org

Why do we donate?

We set up our companies over 25 years ago with the intention of being ethical in everything we do. As part of this, we decided that a percentage of our profits should always be earmarked for charitable work and set the rate at ten percent. A sudden burst of inspiration meant we called ourselves the Ten Percent Group.

Word Error Rates (WER) for Transcription: What Do They Tell Us?

Accuracy in Automated Meeting Transcription: A Comparative Review for the UK Market

Introduction

Automated speech recognition (ASR) technologies (AI transcription) have become embedded in professional practice across the United Kingdom. The proliferation of online meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this reliance. Yet accuracy remains the critical fault-line in adoption. Professionals require reliable transcripts and unfortunately as it stands none of the AI models are particularly accurate. Whilst the likes of Whisper and Turboscribe often promise near-perfect results, independent studies demonstrate time and again that these are more wishful thinking!

The principal measure of transcription quality, Word Error Rate (WER), quantifies the proportion of substitutions, deletions, and insertions relative to a reference transcript. Lower WER equates to higher quality. This article collates recent benchmarks of leading transcription tools—TurboScribe, OpenAI's Whisper, Otter.ai, Zoom's native transcription, and Microsoft

Teams transcription—evaluating their reported WERs, limitations, and practical performance in meeting contexts characterised by crosstalk and accent variability. Particular attention is given to conditions likely to occur in the UK, including overlapping speech and the presence of regional and international English.

Understanding Word Error Rate (WER)

WER has become the de facto metric for evaluating speech recognition systems. A WER of 0% would indicate a perfect transcript, while 100% would indicate complete failure. In practice, contemporary systems claim single-digit WERs under ideal laboratory conditions. However, field performance in meetings—replete with poor microphones, background noise, crosstalk, and varied accents—produces far higher figures.

- 2% WER is probably the absolute limit for most [human transcription](#), whether multi-speaker, cross talking, noisy backgrounds or poor quality recordings. As it stands, no AI version gets anywhere near this;
- 2-10% WER is often claimed to be “publishable” quality (we don't think so - if we returned transcripts with anything less than a 2% WER most of our clients would not be clients for long!);
- 10–25% can be “usable with significant editing. We often find it faster to simply transcribe from scratch at these levels, as the level of inaccuracy will be so high the amendments needed will take longer to complete;
- 25%+ typically requires a full rewrite. In fact, anything above 25% is almost guaranteed to be complete gobbledygook!

TurboScribe

TurboScribe is marketed as a premium transcription tool, claiming “99.8% accuracy”. This equates to a WER of approximately 0.2%, which if consistently achieved would exceed even human transcribers (and based on our experiences its a load of nonsense - Turboscribe is essentially running off Whisper (see below)). TurboScribe is powered by OpenAI’s Whisper model but layers proprietary processing on top. Independent validation is lacking. Unlike Whisper or Otter, TurboScribe has not yet been included in peer-reviewed benchmarks. Given that Whisper itself records WERs between 8–15% under difficult conditions (see below), TurboScribe’s claim should be interpreted at best with caution, and at worst as a completely manufactured figure by an unaccountable internet company! Marketing figures may be based on controlled audio with single speakers and professional microphones—conditions far removed from a typical team meeting with overlapping speech and diverse accents. Estimated performance in UK meetings: Based on its Whisper foundation and potential post-processing, TurboScribe may achieve 10–18% WER under crosstalk and accent variability.

Whisper

OpenAI's Whisper is an open-source ASR model trained on 680,000 hours of multilingual data. Its availability has spurred a wave of derivatives, from academic research to commercial products like TurboScribe.

Independent studies: A peer-reviewed investigation into transcription of psychiatric interviews compared Whisper with Amazon Transcribe and Zoom/Otter. Whisper recorded a median WER of 14.8% (interquartile range 11.1–19.7%)². Whisper underperformed Amazon (8.9%) but outperformed Zoom/Otter (19.2%).

Vendor benchmarks: Some industry reports claim more optimistic figures. For example, Gladia (2024) reported a median WER of 8.06% for Whisper-v2 in their internal testing.

Practical assessment for meetings: Whisper is robust to noise and accents, but struggles with crosstalk and domain-specific jargon. For post-processed meeting audio in the UK, one may realistically expect 10–20% WER.

Otter.ai

Otter.ai is well known in the UK business and education sectors for real-time transcription, often integrated with Zoom.

Benchmark data: In the same psychiatric interview study cited above, Zoom's Otter-powered live transcription yielded a median WER of 19.2% (IQR 15.1–24.8%)

Another blog-based evaluation suggested a WER of 12.6% for business meetings under good audio conditions.

UK meeting performance: In real-world UK settings, Otter is likely to yield 12–20% WER.

Zoom Transcription

Zoom offers built-in transcription (often using Otter.ai for English), and more recently integrated its AI Companion.

Independent vendor study: A 2024 report by TestDevLab, commissioned by Zoom, found that Zoom achieved a WER of 7.40%, compared with 10.16% for Webex and 11.54% for Microsoft Teams. Results may have been obtained under optimal audio conditions.

Peer-reviewed study: In the psychiatric interview comparison, Zoom/Otter again scored 19.2% WER, confirming that performance degrades in more naturalistic and demanding speech settings.

UK meeting performance: Post-processed Zoom transcripts in real-world conditions are likely to fall within the 12–25% WER range. Where audio is clean and speakers cooperative, performance approaches 10%. In dynamic, multi-accent discussions with interruptions, expect closer to 20%.

Microsoft Teams Transcription

Independent benchmarks: The TestDevLab report cited above recorded a WER of 11.54% for Teams compared with 7.40% for Zoom.

Other industry blogs suggest practical accuracy rates of 80–90%, i.e. WERs of 10–20%.

Limitations: Microsoft itself acknowledges that live transcription “will not be perfect”.

Accuracy is particularly challenged by accent variability and overlapping dialogue—both common in UK workplaces.

UK meeting performance: In post-processing mode, Teams transcripts are likely to range 12–25% WER, broadly comparable to Zoom, with occasional outperformance or underperformance depending on specific meeting dynamics.

Challenges: Crosstalk and Accents Crosstalk

Crosstalk — the simultaneous speech of multiple participants, which is a problem with online meetings — remains the Achilles’ heel of AI transcription models. Even state-of-the-art systems trained on vast datasets falter when confronted with overlapping speech. In meetings this issue is especially pronounced.

Accents

The United Kingdom is home to extraordinary range of accents. ASR systems trained primarily on American English often misrecognise these varieties, inflating WER. Whisper, with its multilingual training corpus, is considered to have better resilience to accent diversity, but no system currently achieves parity with human transcribers across the full range of UK and global English accents.

Summary

Despite bold marketing claims, no current ASR system guarantees near-perfect accuracy in UK meeting conditions. TurboScribe's advertised 99.8% accuracy remains unsupported by independent benchmarks. Whisper offers strong open-source performance, with WERs around 10–20% under challenging conditions. Otter.ai, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams transcription deliver comparable results, typically between 12–25% in real-world meetings with crosstalk and accents.

In reality, if anyone has the time to use the automated AI transcription alongside the time it would take to transcribe the recording from scratch, it is an option. However, because the word error rates are still so high, then anyone reliant on accurate recordings may well want to look at human transcription services. After all, if AI transcription produces errors, you cannot go back to Whisper to ask them to look again!

Peaceful Autumn Getaways in Shropshire



Ludlow Holiday Cottage - Sleeps 4

St Milburga Chapel in the Shropshire Hills is a cosy 4 person, Grade 2 listed holiday home in open countryside overlooking the Cleve Hills. Renovated in 2022, it is approximately 10 minutes' drive from Ludlow with its highly regarded restaurants, cafes and independent shops. The chapel is perfectly located for family holidays, weekend breaks and walking holidays. 10% of profits are donated to the Ten Percent Foundation. 10% discount code for newsletter readers: NEWS10

<https://www.stmilburgachapel.co.uk>

We hope you have enjoyed reading our monthly newsletter and look forward to hearing from you if we can assist further.

Kind regards

Jonathan Fagan (he/him), Founder & Director, TP Transcription Limited

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Part of the Ten Percent Group of websites, donating 10% of annual profits to charity

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